

PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Keywords: physical education, curriculum, higher education, qualification of teachers

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Summary

The aim of this chapter is to explain physical education in higher education. In this context, it provides some information about historical development of physical education teaching programs and defining characteristics of a qualified physical education teacher in higher education.

A brief history of physical education begins in the nineteenth century. There was growing popularity of formal physical education programs all across Europe where calisthenics and gymnastics were all the rage. American schools looked to follow the European model by incorporating physical education into the curriculum for primary and secondary schools. Additionally, institutes of higher education gradually built up extremely successful sports programs. The content of a physical education teacher education program is affected by the expectations and the culture of a society. Changes in school practices and the contents of physical education within a socially transformative period also shape the contents of a physical education teacher education program.

A physical education teacher has the necessary psychomotor skills, intellectual knowledge and positive attitudes to achieve the objectives of a physical education curriculum means. In other words, a teacher should also be a physically educated person. Also, she/he should have good habits, adopt a balanced and active life style, realize the needs of his/her students or other people, create the learning media that will increase student participation in physical activities and sports in the light of their own skills, and should be a person who is aware of his/her individual and social responsibilities.

1. Introduction

The first activities to come to mind regarding the teaching of movement skills are physical education (PE), sports, physical activity, exercise and the culture of human movement. Today, the instructors who lead these activities have been trained in higher education institutions. These programs prepare the physical education and sports related professionals including physical education teachers, coaches, recreation leaders and fitness instructors. When the issue of physical education is considered in relation to primary and secondary schools, physical education teachers within these institutions are responsible for developing children and adolescents the attitudes, knowledge and psychomotor skills that they need, as well as the health related fitness. Within the framework of the curriculum prepared by experts and institutions, the primary responsibility of the physical education teacher is to conduct physical education lessons effectively and to contribute to the holistic development of children and adolescents.

It is possible to conduct effective physical education lessons if teachers have sufficient knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards their profession. As these qualifications are gained through higher education, the goals and contents of the educational program for physical education teachers should be aligned with the curriculum for physical education courses in schools. A person who wants to become a teacher begins the education program, and graduates from having attained these objectives. After graduating, the prospective teacher becomes a teacher in training for a certain period of time, and then a fully accredited teacher.

Therefore, physical education teaching is a profession, and a profession is defined as a job with certain rules, which is based on systematic knowledge and skills obtained through a particular education, and which is undertaken in order to provide people with products, to offer services, and for the individual to earn money (TDK, 2012). Also, Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (2013) describes a profession as, "*requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation*". The achievement of the aforementioned teaching qualifications covers a knowledge-base of the teaching profession and an awareness concerning the general culture as well as specialist teaching knowledge, all of which are obtained through higher education. When a prospective physical education teacher has acquired the required qualifications provided by the teacher education program, the teacher is considered able to conduct efficient and effective lessons and to be in a state of continuous professional development.

In Section 2, some concepts related to physical education and sports are explained, the differences between physical education and sport are addressed, physical education courses and curriculum are introduced, teaching and physical education teaching in particular are defined, the historical development of the teaching of physical education is examined, the qualifications of a teacher and a physical education teacher in particular are explained, and predictions are made about the future of physical education teaching in the light of the physical education teacher education (PETE) program and its content, respectively.

2. Physical Education and Sports

The concepts of “*physical education*” and “*sports*” should first be explained in relation to schools, students and physical education teachers; because physical education curriculums in schools consist of basic movement skills, specialized movement skills, sports skills and health related fitness. These skills are also supported by cognitive and effective domain objectives. These learning domains are included in both physical education and sports. The difference between these two concepts is that sports activities within physical education at schools do not mainly stress competitive performance. However, many politicians, school administrators, teachers and parents consider physical education lessons to be the basis for competitive sports. To what extent this situation coincides with raising an individual in terms of a holistic approach to development is a controversial issue, this is because physical education and performance sports are different things. Capel (2000, p.132) states that physical education and sports are not synonymous but rather they are related concepts that are mutually beneficial. Capel (2000, pp.132-135) explains the reason why they are considered to be synonymous as follows:

- The physical education profession is not sending a clear message about what physical education is and how it is different from sports.
- It is the common-sense view of many that physical education and sports are the same.
- Politicians often reinforce the view that physical education and sports are the same.
- The media often reinforces the view that physical education and sports are the same.

Also, Capel (2000, pp.137-141) explains the reason why physical education and sport are different as follows:

- Physical education is essentially an educational process whereas the focus in sports is on the activity.
- Physical education involves motor skills development and need not involve sporting activities.
- Physical education is a concept broader than sports.

One of the best explanations in this regard is that of the National Curriculum Physical Education Working Group (NCPEWG) in England and Wales. The NCPEWG describes sports and physical education as follows (Capel, 2000, pp.136-137):

Sport covers a range of physical activities in which adults may participate. Physical education on the other hand is a process of learning the contents being mainly physical. The purpose of this process is to develop specific knowledge skills and understanding and to promote physical competence. Differing sporting activities can and do contribute to that learning process, and the learning enables participation in sports. The focus however is on the child and his/her development of physical competence, rather than on the activity.

The main point of the discussion is that physical education focuses on movement throughout the entire process, while sports focus on the results. That is, physical education focuses on the holistic development of children, while sports focus on the

teaching of psychomotor skills. Physical education is acquisition-centered, while sports are content-centered. Competitions are not priorities for physical education, while they constitute the basis for sports. Physical education aims to be beneficial for all students, irrespective of their interests and needs, while sport allows for the participation of only a few talented children. Therefore, physical education is a broader concept than sports. The following definition explains the idea thoroughly, “*Physical education is an educational approach towards the physical development of individuals from the pre-school period to the end of their school lives*” (Ursprung et al, 1995, p.15). For this reason, physical education and sports should not be considered independently but rather together by finding the most appropriate way to facilitate participation inside and outside school. In addition to Murdoch’s approach (Murdoch, 1990), it is important to consider the needs of children and adolescents in terms of “*education*” in light of their developmental characteristics and physical needs; because physical education is a necessary tool and activity to educate not only the body, but also to develop the integrity of human beings.

3. A Historical Approach towards Physical Education

According to the literature on the cultural background and its general relationship to education, the gymnasiums of ancient Greece were places where both physical and mental activities were conducted (Mechikoff & Estes, 2002, p.55). However, in the 1000-year period that followed the ban on Olympic sports in 393 A.D., physical education and sports activities were affected negatively, and then they were revived through the efforts of the middle class in 15th century Europe, and along with the Renaissance and Reform movements, and regained their importance. Before the New Age, physical education and sports were in school curriculum in Italy, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, France and Spain, and were considered to be important factors in raising more conscious and successful individuals at educational institutions (Alpman, 1971; Erdemli, 1990; Knapp & Leonhard, 1968). Physical education activities, which had been offered at select schools, were only open to the children of aristocrats, were later included in the curriculum of schools as regular courses.

Although the main movements affecting physical education activities included as regular courses in the curricula varied from country to country, there were also some international movements. Among them were Swedish and German gymnastics. German gymnastics aimed to create a stronger human body based on artistic gymnastics, while Swedish gymnastics aimed at a health-based gymnastics that supported the anatomy and physiology. Considering their aims and contents, German gymnastics was more traditional and focused on performance, while Swedish gymnastics focused more on health and exercise.

Many countries were influenced by German and Swedish gymnastics until the end of the Second World War. In the 1950s, schools in the former Soviet Union, England-Canada-USA, East Germany, West Germany, Sweden and People’s Republic of China conducted their programs in line with traditions (Sturzebecker, 1973; Wade, 1969).

Traditional approaches change over time; traditions and traditional approaches cannot last forever. Sometimes they disappear completely; sometimes they evolve over time.

This is quite natural because new requirements bring along changes; changes result in new perspectives, new movements emerge; and new opinions and movements create their own traditions over time. Change occurs in a dynamic way within this cycle.

In the history of physical education, there were some philosophical and content-related movements in different countries in addition to the movements mentioned above. John Dewey's educational progressivism movement, based on a pragmatic approach, resulted in the concepts of a child-centered education in connection with nature and democracy entering the education literature. The French naturalist philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau highlighted the relationship between physical education and social life, "*physical education provides children with cooperation and competition behaviors.*" In light of this movement, the school of John Bernhard Basedow focused mainly on physical education in its curriculum. An educational reformist, John Heinrich Pestalozzi believed that action-movement formed the basis of all knowledge. Friedrich Froebel stated that games and sports enabled children's physical, mental and character development. In the 1930s, a German migrant, Rudolf Laban, developed a human-movement philosophy in England, which then influenced the USA after the Second World War (Siedentop, 2004, p.77).

The concept of "*physical culture*" represents another perspective on this issue. The concept of physical culture, which is related to the body, is not only limited to the activities in physical education courses but also includes performance sports and recreational activities. According to Jirasek (2003), this concept is widespread in Central Europe, Finland and France, and especially in Russia and China. The Soviet Union and China are two important examples in this regard; e.g. according to the practices in the Soviet Union after the 1920s, physical culture "*includes physical education for all children and young people, the improvement of health of the workers, training for labor and defense, strengthening of the body, development of will thoroughly physical exercises and a number of related areas*" (Sturzebecker, 1973, p.69). The concept of "*physical culture*" appeared in China after 1949. It meant all kinds of modern and traditional exercises, factory sports programs, and the leisure time for sports in schools, as well as propaganda and change (Glassford & Clumpner, 1969). In this context, according to Sturzebecker (1973) and Glassford & Clumpner (1969), physical culture focused more on needs in the Soviet Union, while it included traditions as well as needs in China. This situation in China may have resulted from the fact that traditionalism is more common in eastern countries than in the west.

Western educationists and scientists also use "*physical culture*". Furthermore, they use "*body culture*" (Grössing, 1991; Eichberg & Henning 1998; Bale & John 2002). For instance, according to Kirk (1999), "*the term physical culture refers to a range of practices concerned with the maintenance, representation and regulation of the body centered on three highly codified, institutionalized forms of physical sport, physical recreation and exercise.*" Grössing (1991) states that the human being's creation of culture, movement and physical education are means of creating a body culture. In the light of these descriptions, it can be said that Kirk's *physical culture* and Jirasek's *physical culture* concepts are similar; that is, physical culture provides individuals with a movement culture and helps the biological, psychological and social development of children.

The concept of physical culture is addressed differently in western and eastern cultures from a philosophical point of view. In eastern societies, a culture composed of the mystic life style imposed by nature, the effects of wars and of philosophical worldviews considers physical education to be a tool for enabling the balance of body and soul, and its use is widespread (Alpman, 2001, pp.36-37). In western societies, the fact that body culture is characterized by an intense sense of competition caused the emotional dimension to be neglected and physical education to become under control of a certain community which shares the same history, traditions, or language (Alpman, 2001). This may have resulted from the powerful-weak distinction based on a biological perspective, which was also responsible for the vicious part of capitalism and was attributed to Darwin; however this concept was never claimed by Darwin, and is seen by many commentators as unreasonable (Aydin, 2009).

Another discussion in physical education is about human body. This discussion is important to physical educators because according to Mechikof & Estes (2002, p.12), what we know and how we teach is determined by one's philosophy and corresponding position about mind and body relationship, and this position is usually determined one's culture. For instance, monistic and dualistic perspectives towards the body should also be considered. The monistic perspective considers the human not only as body and mind but also as body and soul in their entirety (Ponty, 2005, p.26). In other words, if your opinion about the body is whole, mind and body are not separate and the body will be valued. Also, movement and physical education will be valued more. According to dualist approach, human being is composed of body and mind, and the superiority of the mind over the body.

“*Movement education*” is another approach that can be observed within the historical process. The “*movement education*” approach inspired by Friedrich von Schiller and developed in Europe in the 1930s, moved to the USA in 1950s and was the first significant change in the traditional structure of sports education. A humanistic approach was taken in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1970s, play education based on art, music and drama was proposed by Siedentop, and in 1986, “*sports education*,” also proposed by Siedentop. Meanwhile, the approach of outdoor-adventure education was also an influence. Other important philosophies and curriculum approaches became known as fitness models in the late 1970s. These coalesced into health-related physical education, and the academic-integration model emerged, which extended and depended on the combination of knowledge bases related to sport, exercise, and physical education. One of the most important instructional approaches, designed by Donald Hellison, in physical education is Teaching for Personal and Social Responsibility. It has been most widely used for personal growth and social development. During and after World War II, Adapted Physical Education actually began in response to many soldier injuries. This field began to grow in 1970s. Today, an approach of expanding wellness and lifelong activities based on standard, development-oriented objectives and supported by human movement and sports sciences for every part of society, is commonly accepted (Siedentop, 2004, pp.66-85, pp.241-261). Another approach that should be addressed is Teaching Games for Understanding. Teaching Games for Understanding is a learner and game centered approach to sport related games that emphasize learning integrating a constructivist approach. This approach was introduced by R. Thorpe in 1982 and R. Thorpe, D. Bunker and L. Almond in 1984 (Griffin &

Butler, 2005, p.1). This approach allows students to become active within the game mentally and physically.

Physical education has been through many changes and become an academic field moving beyond being simply “*the education of the body.*” However, there are some problems in the field resulting from factors such as lesson content, student participation, sometimes ignorant attitudes of school managers and parents regarding physical education lessons, the focus on teacher-centered and subject-centered rather than student-centered classes which result from a fixed culture that affects teachers and other stakeholders, and insufficient physical resources.

As a result, today, physical education requires a serious paradigm shift, because according to Cheng, Laker and Tinning, PETE currently maintains a relatively weak position amidst the information economy led by mathematics, science and technology (Collier, 2006, p.400), also, most of students believe the curriculum is not relevant in their real life physical (Dyson, 2006, p.331). At the same time, PE is perceived as a low status subject area by the society (Evans & Davies, 2006, p.109). This situation may not constitute a problem in sensitive societies where the term “*physical education*” is used in its real sense and is supported when it contributes to the overall development of the health of individuals. However, sometimes, this term is misunderstood and used only referring to the “*body.*” Sometimes, this leads to more problems in physical education activities in schools and societies. Whatever the reason for the problem is, what matters is the solution. Suggestions for the solution are as follows: Physical education should undergo a philosophical and conceptual change, and this concept should support the educational integrity of individuals. In addition, the paradigm shift in physical education should be reflected in education programs designed for physical education teachers.

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