

THE LUDIC DIMENSION AND LEARNING THE MINIHANDBALL IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Elena BALINT¹

Abstract: *The initial process of motor learning/educating through the tailored contents in an adapted manner from the sport games constitutes at the level of training pupils from elementary education, a methodical issue which is approached differently and often misunderstood by teachers who teach the physical education discipline. The article tries to show that is still considered- even at school level - that training means related to initiation lead to the method of analytic practice of the basic technical procedures (which also is at the origin of appropriation of game habits). However, at the small school ages, the nature of the individual has a higher need of free expression, as regards emotional manifestations, relational and especially motor skills. In this context, we recommend in the learning process the use of ludic activities, in which the child is conducted to objectives pursued in designed education -without feeling it. The experiment applied to two groups of subjects from primary schools revealed that physical activity undertaken as a game represents efficiency during training. There are two reasons underlying this statement: firstly, the strong desire and proper wellbeing of students created within it, but especially through changes in driving behaviors and technical / tactical behaviors outcome from training and the effect it has on students. Thus, the results achieved when evaluating bilateral game, averages have ranged between 7 during initial testing and 9.27 during final testing for Group Ex., respectively for Group C, the average values started from 6.3 during initial testing and to 7.55 during final testing. For the two technical-tactical trails the EX group students achieved average of between 7.88 during initial testing and 9.11 during final testing, and those in Group C 6.38 during initial testing and 7.61 during final testing.)*

Keywords: *ludic activity, ludic dimension, motivations of motor practicing, training stages in minihandball.*

1. Introduction

Learning is "the process by which a

given activity arises, or turns, reacting to a situation, with the condition that the essence of the change cannot be explained

¹ Dept. of Physical Education and Sports, *Transilvania* University of Brasov.

on the basis of the body development of innate tendencies to respond or other temporary body conditions (fatigue, drugs, etc.)" ... as a process is to its result, as acquiring is to a possession, as painting is to a picture" ...as any series of actions or changes that directly impact the learning outcome". [6, 7]

She can be seen:

- as a result, in case it is expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, habits, acclimatization, adaptation, performance, etc.;
- as a process, when reference is made particularly to mechanisms that conditions it and in the development of the phenomenon itself, for example in terms of absorption, assimilation, change, restructuring, strengthening etc.;
- as operational action conducted pedagogically or independent, individual or collective, in which the terms are: teaching, training, practicing, self-training, verification, etc. [8]

2. The Problems

Methodological recommendations regarding experiences of learning/ motor education that pupils from primary education go through are predominantly oriented towards the maximum exploitation of the educational functions exercised by conducted physical activities and towards multilateral influences they have on the pupil's body. In physical education and contemporary school sports, it is believed that these desiderates can be achieved with more success through game integrative activities with their various forms of expression and the versatility of the effects that they induce. [4], [9]

Convergence and the interactions between the different levels of adapted motor contents from the sports domain, positive statistical results obtained after

selective teaching methodologies based on the ways of teaching the sport games in the initial stages of education have demonstrated the emergence, development and the implementation of the terms of the minigame-minisport game. If "minisports" suggests us in general the idea of sportsmanship, at a reduced "scale", of a branch / sport test (containing motor and simplified regulation, reduced operating spaces, materials and tailored equipment' s etc.) by combining the words "mini", "game" and "sport", the term "minigame" refers to a complex of ludic activities, polyvalent, with a taken and adapted content from the sports games. [1]

To this form of activity organization of the training it is featured a agonist component - of race, competition, confrontation with various unknown-controlled situations and is dosed depending on the degree of morpho - functional and psychological development of the subjects. It is considered that the agonistic element, proper to each individual (see the need of emulation of the human being), can and should become a useful tool for the growth and biopsychic maturing of students. Unfortunately, this favorable juncture, the role of the motivational support of motor activities is used only for a small proportion of educators and trainers in primary education. [5], [7]

The sport mini-game (minihandball, minibasketball or minifotball) orients the motor activity in a specific way and represents a means which is addressed both to a single individual and to relatively homogeneous groups of subjects. It allows the application of game contents without generating an incompatibility between its own characteristics and motor potentialities of the children. It also can represent a sequence of intermediate training for practicing, under a proper ludic and sport form from the "presports" category, with the

marking of certain educational objectives such as respect for the opponent, for regulation, for the hierarchy of the group, mastery of emotional states, mobilization and expression of individual and group capacities with a view to obtaining success etc. [6], [8]

Sport minigame doesn't exhaust all possible education uses and exploitation of all psychological components of the educational process through actions which concern only relations between teammates, those towards opponents, respect for rules and roles (positions), etc. because it contributes in a significant way to shaping the behavior, enhance personal autonomy, development of the capacity of motor speech, communication and social relationships. In synthesis and in a significant way, we can say that minigame-sports allows you to change the degree of development of the biological, cognitive and relational potential of the one submitted to the training process and it provides guidance in choosing future sports activities. [1], [4]

Following the same reasoning, we can conclude that the minigame-sport contributes to building the capacity of the independent practice of physical activities where the specialist shall be guided in action, by a general principle which governs the scope of the motion, namely the one which stipulates that: "children need to play in the moment when he has with whom to play and when he is alone." [13]

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Theoretical and Methodological Considerations and Minihandball Game Characteristics in Primary Education

The teach of specific content of the minihandball game in the context of primary education should have the propose of an organic merge of the features of the didactic approach serving the reference

objectives provided on this direction, with the traits and trends towards ludic activity of small pupil. In reality, in the Romanian system of physical education and school sports, we can affirm - by virtue of experience - that although various projects and proposals of motor contents offered by the teachers to the children for learning correlate with the program requirements, they are however not significant from the point of view of the relationship of dependency between the content taught and ludic behavior exhibited.[5]

Starting from this fact, we believe it is necessary at the level of the small pupil, to initiate in the learning process an integrative approach, which would lead to the development of motor skills and elementary presportive abilities as they are reflected in the current game activity. The trainer must provide children, using a unitary training, rational and natural steps of technical and psychological progression through the implementation of specific motor activities. The attention has to be centred on the "full game" because this approach of the learning content stimulates "reliving pleasure" created by following previous practice sequences and encourages the motivation on the subjects on the personal engagement in the motor activity which is considered as being close to the original ("practiced by the great").

The initial scheme of the ludic dimension or the 4 "blocks" of notions that are included in minigames and minihandball, presents the following positive psycho-social skills:

- the pleasure of knowledge itself (body, their motive and others motor potentialities with which the subject is in relationships in the game), ambience, space and time, different materials used in motor skills, etc.;
- development of the taste for the game, choosing with the teammates the best actions to play the ball;

- discovery and improving the driving action in dealing with an opponent that constrains him the concerned to mobilize his own resources to anticipate an opponent's movements, forcing him to resort to "inventions", and gestual feinting and "scams", all intended to thwart the creation of situational advantages;
- full and deep involvement of the subject in action by mobilizing all the resources necessary for carrying out a game, both psychologically and motor.[6], [13]

To achieve these four dimensions, it requires thorough preparation and for a bigger period of time of the game activities, fixing at the same times the progress criteria's in achieving the specific objectives. Equally, we must take account of the recommendations and methodological guidelines for the design of teaching (according to the motors, psychological and of age characteristics of the subjects. It is also necessary to deal with more patience and perseverance the activities aimed at improving the general and the specific motor capacity of the child, in situations in which it is known that during the progress of a game, the motor actions can be performed both in conditions alike or different and the contents can be solved either predominantly through the basic or the specific motor skills. [7, 8]

For a correct programming, in primary education, of a motor learning unit within minihandball, you need to know its main features:

- it has an accessible (motor content => simple and easy,
- the content is easily transposed into practice within the framework of the lesson
- addresses to general technology through games,
- runs through a special program (distinct) training
- presenting a variety of means, which

staggered through a proper academic design activity that offers children a diverse but coherent range of specific activities of motor skills;

- is ludic - the majority of the content can be practiced through specific games ("preparatory" games),
- is has a formative character - arms children with basic sports skills-without training it "through practice ways inappropriate to the age,
- is has a creative character - motor situations seek ways to solve, based on discovering, problematization and contribution of known skills [1,2,3].

2.2. The Peculiarities of Motor Manifestations to Children in Primary Education and the Learning Stages of Minihandball

In addition to the taste for the game, the child is attracted in practicing sports, the minigame of minihandball, due to the desire to "look great", copying the adult. This trend cannot be satisfied except by fulfilling the motor tasks for a specific need through which children are given a higher value, just because they belong to the adults. Starting from this consideration, the child is eager to participate in the games organized by using rules, you can establish reciprocal relations to assist with his teammates and have a relative adversity rate with the subjects of the opponent group. In this juncture, the rules of the game are no longer a constraint, but become a necessity and although you can alter the requirement situations, it allows the child to retrieve himself, to be in a familiar universe.[8], [10]

The discipline imposed by the requirements of the school imposes the child a life which he had strictly individualized and can manifest itself in terms of social life, he finds refuge in the game. Taking advantage of this "asset", the educator must have the skills to adapt the

game, organizing it and heading it after certain educational standards enshrined from the psycho-pedagogical point of view and viable through their implementation in daily life. From the perspective of motor learning, motor manifestations, prior to integrate in a coherent, integrative activity, fluctuations of the qualitative parameters of execution and the exercises are for the child, without purpose and finality. The attitude of the child is one of revolt and its actions are geared entirely towards a particular function of the activity (for example, if he discovers that he can run easily, the pleasure to run makes him forget his friend, and if has possession of the ball, that fact makes him forget his teammate). The child lives the present, even if the present situation is not directly involved in the current action, he raises the foot when a teammate is throwing, he defends even if he isn't on the trajectory of the throw, etc. He is able to understand the goals of the game, to distinguish between the elements that compose it, but he can't combine and generally feels the need for a "step by step" learning. To this end, the teacher or the educator will have to schedule a methodical approach to the child's teach, recalling the child - in the difficult moments of learning - that in order to reach the adult, to become "mature", careful preparation is needed, through a process of systematic and continuous training. [7, 8], [13]

2.3. Motor Stages of Expression of the Ludic Content

The approach with maximum efficiency of the training on the motor content and on theoretical concepts that define minihandball, assumes permanent reporting capacities of learning and motor speech of pupils in the primary education cycle.

In this sense, we consider that "playing minihandball" presumes the following steps that interrelate to each other:

Stage I - The accumulation of knowledge and movement skills - "the primary knowledge" that includes: improving the own motor skills, assessment of the capacity of motor speech skills to other subjects, knowledge of the real atmosphere in which the ludic activity runs, the knowledge of materials and equipment which can solve the tasks of the game;

Stage II - Deployment of the game activities by performing actions with the ball in the presence of a teammate;

Stage III - Implementation of what has been accumulated in the learning process, in the presence of an adversary with which he deals aiming to achieve a predetermined operational objective;

Stage IV - The dispute of a game on a regular field of minihandball. [11,12, 13]

Each stage has its own objectives, methods and means of learning, customized to manage the content proposed by the assimilation of the curriculum on the mini-sport games category.[9], [12]

3. Materials and Methods

The experiment was conducted on two groups of subjects covering basic learning processes in bilateral handball game. The experimental group followed the global way of playing the game, with numerous trainings applied as a race, and the controlled one followed the instruction by the analytical method and the traditional bilateral game with simplified rules. Checking the teaching learning process was done through three controlled tests which consisted of: two applied trails and one the bilateral game, which were assessed with grades from 1 to 10.

Statistical and mathematical data processing included arithmetic average, standard deviation and coefficient of variation.

4. Presentation of Results

The applied tests have as argument the evaluation of the programming and

planning process of the motor content for the students enrolled in the experiment. Data are shown in Tables 1, 2, 3.

Results achieved on initial and final testing – Test 1.

Table 1

Gr.	X			S			CV		
	Ti	Tf	D	Ti	Tf	D	Ti	Tf	D
Ex	6,88	9,11	2,23	0,75	0,67	0,08	11%	7,4%	3,5%
C	6,38	7,23	0,88	0,77	0,75	0,02	12%	10,3%	1,8%
Dif	0,50	1,88	1,35	0,02	0,08	0,06	1%	2,9%	1,7%

Results achieved on initial and final testing – Test 2.

Table 2

Group	X			S			CV		
	Ti	Tf	D	Ti	Tf	D	Ti	Tf	D
Experiment	7	9,27	2,27	0,48	0,46	0,02	6,9%	4,9%	2%
Control	6,3	7,55	1,25	1,61	1,22	0,39	9,9%	8%	1,8%
Difference	0,7	1,72	1,55	1,13	0,76	0,37	3%	4,9%	0,2%

Results achieved on initial and final testing – Test 3.

Table 3

Gr	X			S			CV		
	Ti	Tf	D	Ti	Tf	D	Ti	Tf	D
Ex	7	9,05	2,05	0,68	0,72	0,04	9,7%	8,0%	1,7%
C	6,72	7,61	0,89	0,57	0,56	0,01	8,5%	7,3%	1,1%
Dif	0,28	1,44	0,16	0,11	0,16	0,03	1,2%	0,7%	0,6%

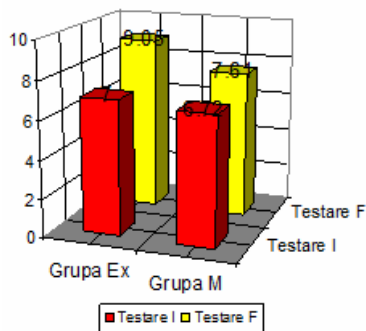


Chart 1. Results achieved in Test 1

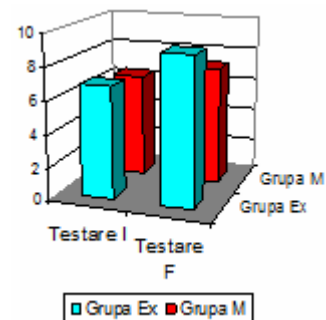


Chart 2. Results achieved in Test 2

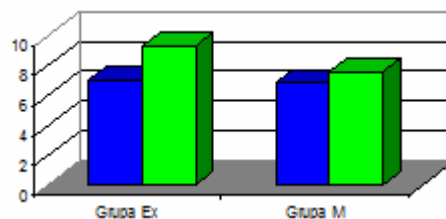


Chart 3. Results achieved in Test 3

5. Discussion

Technical Route 1

At first technical route, the experimental group had the arithmetic average 7 during initial testing, and 9.05 during the final testing, which gives us a breakthrough of 2.05, while the controlled group had an average during initial testing of 6.72, and 7.61 during the final testing, which shows a progress only of 0.89.

Regarding the degree of homogeneity of the two groups, we appreciate that both groups have a poor homogeneity, which falls within 0-10%. Thus, the coefficient of variation of the experimental group was 9.7% at the initial test and the final 8%, while the control group was 8.5% at the initial test and of 7.3% in the final one. (Table 1 and chart 1)

Technical Route 2

The average obtained by the experimental group during initial testing was 6.88 and at the final testing of 9.11. The control group had an average of 6.38 to 7.26 from the initial testing and final testing. Comparing these results we can say that progress in the experimental group was higher than that achieved by the control group. Progress made by students of the experimental group was 2.29, while the control group students have progressed by only 0.88. This reveals the fact that the way of action selected and used were efficient, in this experiment the independent variation being built from motion games specific for the initiation for handball game for 4th grade students. (Table 2 and chart 3).

Regarding the degree of homogeneity of the two groups of students participating in the experiment should appreciate that initial testing was 11% for the experimental group and 12% for the control group. As a result of the experiment the homogeneity degree has improved in the final testing, the homogeneity of both groups falling within

the 0-10%. (7.4% E and 10% C). We believe that low rate of homogeneity recorded in the initial testing is due to the fact that the 4th grade students don't have sufficient motor skills developed, plus the lack of outstanding knowledge from the teacher specialized in primary education in terms of teaching the subject - physical education and sport.

Bilateral game - minihandbal

During this test, the results obtained by students of the experimental group were superior to those achieved by control group students. Initial testing of the experimental group students recorded an average of 7, and the control 6.3. At the final testing, experimental group had a breakthrough of 2.27, with an arithmetic average of 9.27, while the control group had an average of 7.55, which indicates an improvement of only 0.72. During this test, homogeneity of the two groups was very good, initial testing experimental group recording a coefficient of variation of 6.9% and 4.9% in the final, while the control group had a coefficient of variability of 9.9% during initial testing and 8% during final testing.

Analysing the results obtained during the course of this research we can say that the game of handball can be taught effectively using themed games which have simple tactical actions and specific dynamic games because they meet the spirit of playful students at this age level. Also the strong desire and wellbeing of students during the experiment was considerable due to the large number and variety of specific structures during the handball learning process.

6. Conclusions

The most effective method and also a mean used in physical education and sport, in particular at the level of the school population, is in the form of playing activity.

The benefit of it materializes and synthesizes the theoretical aspects, such as relational and psychological motive:

- The spirit of competition, the competition develops relational behavior, of collaboration and assist to achieve the pursued aim; (Results achieved in assessing bilateral game averages have ranged between 7 at the initial testing and 9.27 a in final testing for Group Ex., respectively for Group C the values of 6.3 in initial testing and 7.55 in final testing.)
- in the learning activity, will affiliate to purchases and relative motor skills during the isolated or fragmented executions, as requested in the context of global - game gestuale communication; (For the two technical-tactical trails the Ex group students achieved average of between 7.88 during initial testing and 9.11 during final testing and those in Group C 7.61 during initial testing and 6.38 during final testing.)
- the game can be designed as a multi-purpose activity dialing at the applicative runs, relay races, circuits, etc.;
- the game presents a wide range of forms, from the symbolic games to the imitation and imagination games;
- minihandball is a significant and complex sport activity that carries multiple influences on physical training - education and pupil's psyche.

References

1. Balint, E.: *Teoria si metodica activităților ludice (Theory and methodology of playful activities)*. Braşov. Editura Universității Transilvania din Braşov, 2009, pp. 45-49.
2. Balint, E.: *De la jocurile pregătitoare la jocul de minihandbal (From preparatory games to play minihandbal)*. Braşov. Editura Universității "Transilvania" din Braşov, 2005, pp. 82-89.
3. Balint, E.: *Educarea relațiilor specificice jocului de minihandbal la elevii din ciclul primar (Education of the specific relationships to the minihandbal game at primary school)*, Revista de Educație Fizică și Științe Conexe - Sport și Societate nr. 2, Publicație a Fundației Altius Academy, Facultatea de Educație Fizică și Sport „Universitatea Al. I. Cuza” Iași, 2007, pp.100-103.
4. Balint, E. : *Les facteurs impliqués dans le jeu de handball, enfants 10-12 ans*. In: Buletinul Institutului Politehnic din Iași, Secția Științe socio-umane, 2005, pp. 199-204.
5. Besson, M., Vanroose, Ph.: *Des ballons et des jeux*. Paris. Editions Revue EFS, 2004, pp.11-17.
6. Borboun, B., Chabas, N., Lattes, M., Moronval, C.: *Approche transversal des sports collectifs. Cahiers des sport*. Paris. Edition Revue EFS, 2005, pp.129-146.
7. Bower, G. H., Hilgard, E. R.: *Theories of Learning*. N.Y. Englewood Cliffs, PrenticeHall, 1981, p. 647.
8. Develay, M.: *Apprentissage, enseignement, formation*. Revue EFS 1, Education Phisique et activités sportives des 3-11 ans, N072, Paris, 1995, pp.2-7.
9. Gueniffey, P.: *40 jeux de handball*. Paris. Editions Revue EFS, 2004, pp. 17-23.
10. Negovan, V.: *Psihologia învățării (Learning psychology)*. București. Editura Universitară, 2007, pp. 134-136.
11. ****Aria curriculară educație fizică și sport (Physical education curriculum area)*. București, 1999, 2000, 2009, 2011.
12. ****Curriculum național - Programa școlară pentru clasele I-IV (National curriculum - curriculum for grades I-IV)*. București, 2005.
13. ****Progetto di centri scolastici di giocosport - Esperinza assistita nella scuola elementare*. Roma. Federazione Italiana Gioco Handball, 2004.