CAPITALIZING THE CROSS-CULTURAL DIMENSION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS BY THE EDUCATIONAL ACTORS IN ROMANIAN SCHOOL

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Abstract: *This paper emphasizes the formative potential of physical education and sports in shaping students' personality, highlighting the potential of physical education to be capitalized by educators in shaping transversal skills - cooperation, team spirit, competitiveness, tolerance, civic attitudes, intercultural communication, social and emotional intelligence, etc. - skills increasingly needed in order to meet the challenges of contemporary society. The cross-cultural dimension of physical education and sports is outlined through the skills they train and which become a universal language, a useful tool to assimilate and adapt to various conditions, values, attitudes and practices in any society and in an immense cultural diversity. The comparative study conducted by us sought to highlight the formative potential of "Physical education" subject on the direct beneficiaries - students - as well as the indirect ones - teachers, community, professional and civic organizations.*

Key words: *prospective pedagogy, diversification of school's functions, "new educations", models of curricular design.*

1. Introduction

1.1. Rethinking education from the perspective of prospective pedagogy

Prospective pedagogy proposes a change in the point of view on the fundamental function of the school, because it no longer has role to conserve the past, but becomes an institution with the highest sensitivity to new, with maximum aperture on contemporary world's problems. This translation is done by following two directions:

a) educating the children of today to meet the demands of the coming decades (direction that requires the analysis of present trends in order to detect those which will later have a strong echo and which will result in facilities and hazards over 2-3 decades) ;

b) possible education of children who will live over 2-3 decades (this direction requires the analysis of determinant factors shaping tomorrow's education: demographic evolution, economic change, social and political change, cultural mutations and scientific progress, etc.).

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We can easily notice that the design and implementation of physical education can be achieved in both directions. Conclusions of numerous international studies are likely to highlight the consequences of movement, physical exercise and physical and nutritional education on the development of human body and the impact of demographic economic, cultural and political factors will have on the status of physical education subject matter in the whole system of education (secondary and tertiary).

1.2. The impact of rethinking education on the goals and curriculum of physical education and sports

Rethinking the concept of education is a requirement increasingly more stringent, so that "educators of today and tomorrow be in the best position to discover the immensity and nobility of their task: to show the way for the development of thought and behaviour, thus giving rise to a new civilization" [3]. Education, seen as a series of deliberate or unintended influences, express or implied, systematic or unorganized, which in one way or another contribute to the formation of humans as humans, to positive behaviour change, to qualitative and quantitative changes of both physical and mental possibilities of man and the community he belongs to, does nothing more than illustrate the many perspectives from which it can be addressed (as process, as action of leading, as social action, as human and social interrelation, as social transmission, as set of influences) and also the functions it performs (cognitive, axiological and economical) and its forms (formal, non-formal and informal).

On the other hand, in the recent decades, works have been frequently written on the importance of prospective pedagogy, which suggests a revised position on the point of view on school - from the role of preserving the past, a stabilizing role in a changing world to an institution with the highest sensitivity to new - perspective that opens two ways: a) educating the children of today to meet the demands of the coming decades (direction that requires the analysis of present trends in order to detect those which will later have a strong echo and which will result in facilities and hazards over 2-3 decades); and b) possible education of children who live over 2-3 decades (direction requires the analysis of determinant factors shaping tomorrow's education: demographic evolution, economic change, social and political change, cultural mutations and scientific progress, etc.).

The answer we should give to fellows is detecting what might happen, not what will happen, which leads to the need of clarifying whether school should focus on cultivating the ability to adapt to change or on educating a critical attitude towards this change. A possible answer would be: school must cultivate the ability to control change, which means the training of critical spirit and of qualities required to create new values. The answers from the survey through questionnaire, administered by us, are meant to highlight certain features of how education is perceived today by educators and local authorities. We highlight several features that prospective pedagogy foresaw some time ago: school education can no longer prepare for the entire life, education is a process that will accompany man during its entire active life; education, in general, and physical education, in particular, leave their mark on most of the vital functions; school-type education will put an emphasis on applied activities; the educational system will have a much broader organizational support, materialized in a number of educational auxiliaries in

information technology and materials (multi - media) for training; more and more adult learners; more flexibility in how to organize school; new technologies do not lead to fewer teachers, because the essence of education is the interaction between educators and educated. [4, 5]

An interesting position is that relating to the objectives and content of education (anticipated since the early seventies of the past century by B. Schwartz and continued in the nineties by J. Delors): the education of "to be" - that should provide answers to the question "How to live?" - and aims at personality development; the education of "to have" - which must provide answers to the question "What should I do?" - and orients education towards preparation for life; the education of "to become" - which must provide answers to the personal / career development plan; the education to interact with others - that should provide answers related to mutual acceptance of values, practices and attitudes. [2, 4, 6] Regarding the content of education, respondents highlighted the following characteristics: the need of balance between scientific, technical, artistic, physical subject matters and practical activity; a more rigorous selection and ordering of appropriate knowledge in mainstream education and with a stronger formative impact; an integrated approach, both in the curriculum and the teaching process, of what must be known and what must be done.

A particularly important, complex, and current function of education is related to lifelong learning. The complexity arises from the need for solid fundamentals of the need for continuous training of men, substantiation that must take into consideration economic, sociological, psychological, pedagogical, philosophical and anthropological reasons. From this point of view, we can summarize the responses to our survey in the form of

principles that transcend subject matters, cultural models, gender and age issues: Lifelong learning is an absolutely necessary phenomenon, large-scaled and with multiple meanings (the failure of educational systems to cope with all the problems; the multitude of factors that give education meaning such as: change and its effects; man - social organizations relationship; aspects of the crisis of contemporary civilization (alienation, imbalance in the natural environment - social structures - the spirit of man); overemphasis on production and consumption; increasing inequality; spiritual desert; goal-oriented learning should be extended throughout the entire life; education and humanistic values, etc.). Accomplishment of continuous education is possible through a variety of forms and ways (human capacity to learn throughout the entire lives - psychological data highlight the intellectual plasticity and development of the human being; diversity of mass-media and communications). Design and implementation of lifelong learning must take into account obstacles, preconditions and goals to be achieved (the new meaning of education; lifelong education's framework is heterogeneous and diffuse; the obstacles to be overcome by lifelong learning are related to: political will, social, cultural and economic factors, technology, teachers' rigidity, expansion of the educational system, attitudes and self-image, etc. Lifelong learning objectives can be grouped as follows: a) conventional objectives: abilities, social, practical skills and so on; b) objectives that require enhancement and renewal. They are more connected to society and are formulated as follows: the development of a society that achieves "peace", "democracy", and provides citizens "freedom", "happiness", or functions "efficiently", without "the repression of the human spirit" etc.; c) objectives of central importance by

providing a "new quality of life" (personal and collective). They aim at intra-psychic stability, emotional force, capacity to choose responsibly, the renewal of knowledge and so on; d) "instrumental objectives" of lifelong education. These can be considered both processes and products of lifelong learning. Examples: inter-learning, learning to learn, learning to be, to have, to become, increasing educability, etc.

Lifelong education's content is built around two axes: mandatory – optional, vertical - horizontal; lifelong learning is achieved effectively by learning processes, using materials, means and specific learning strategies (learning based on models of peers, family, community, etc.; horizontally and vertically integrated learning - opportunities offered by daily life, the rhythms of life, stages of cognitive development, social roles, etc.; variety of styles, models and forms of learning; learning opportunities offered by the media, information technology, extra-linguistic communication).

Lifelong learning is achieved more often through specific organization and structure (by de-formalization, as an effect of the introduction of the "adult self-education in school education" principle in order to establish the basis for self-directed learning; through educational and administrative decentralization by involving teams local teachers, parents, associations and so on in decision-making; through a flexible system of choice; through spreading education through "all human activities, wherever they take place" - open university, virtual university, community learning centres, radio, internet, social networks, etc.); through integrating learning resources (museums, theatres, art galleries, government agencies, public institutions, associations with recreational aims, etc.).

The permanence of education is justified by the education through which man is prepared to face the challenges that contemporary life offers: globalization, demographical explosion, environmental pollution, economic change, information explosion, evolution of the system of values. For answers to be firm and timely, we need appropriate strategies. One of these strategies is to promote "new educations" (environmental education, education for peace and understanding, demographical education, education for democracy, education for communication and media, leisure education, nutrition education, drug education, consumer education, intercultural education. The "new educations" or new types of content are education's answers to the challenges launched by the contemporary world issues, they are specific solutions that were outlined in the UNESCO and entered the curriculum of many countries.

The methodology of capitalizing "new educations" undertakes the following strategies of "implementation":

- penetration of the curriculum in the form of recommendations or independent study modules, also broadcasted by modern communication systems: television, radio, computer networks, and so on;

- involvement in educational programs designed as alternatives in different pedagogical formulas: additional training modules (formal - non-formal), guides, methodological guidance, fundamental works centred on major problems of the contemporary world (economic development, technology of the information society, lifelong education, democratization of school, the reform of education);

- rethinking the systems of selection and organization of information within a curriculum that either "introduces specific modules" integrated as separate subject

matters in education or "introduces the specific content of a new education within several subject matters" through "the infusion approach" [7].

We can add to these strategies a typical trend of cross-subjects projects: addressing a problem or even a subject matter by contributing with methodological knowledge from all contents integrated generically in the formula "new education".

The "new educations" evolve according to the processing done on the level of the proposed objectives that also give the "name" of each content structure, that can be designed as a module or a subject matter, strategically designed in the curricular plan, but especially in the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary plan.

2. Models of integrated curriculum design [1]

Fragmented curriculum - Features:
– intradisciplinary integration between
– themes and concepts
– students have a holistic view
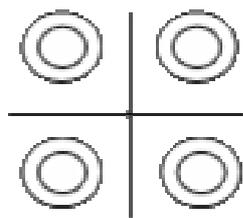– subjects remain separate

Fig.1. *Model of Fragmented Curriculum*

"Conical" / "nest" Curriculum- Features:
- Focus on the types of skills in the same curricular area
- A theme contributes to the development of many dimensions of student's personality;
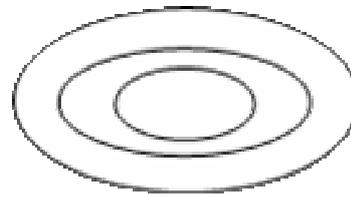- Difficulties in tracing conceptual priorities

Fig. 2. *Model of Conical Curriculum*

Integrated curriculum can be *an multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary or crossdisciplinary approach.* The teaching strategy used are: thematic teaching / learning, problem-based teaching / learning project-based teaching/learning.
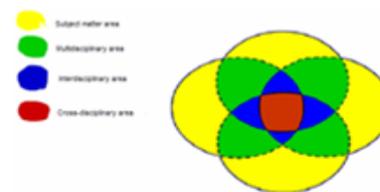

Fig. 3. *Model of Integrated Curriculum*

3. Conclusions

Cross-curricular themes - structural models of curricular integration are a challenge for physical education and sports teachers. The competences of curriculum design will be important for teachers. We present a few models of cross-curricular themes.
Infusion model
It consists of formulating objectives / general competences / cross-disciplinary thematic areas, common to all subject matters in the curriculum or for a group of subjects.

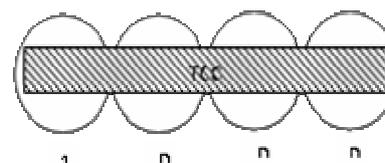Examples of themes: health education, quality of life education

Fig. 4. *Model of Infusion Curriculum*

Hybridization model

When complex goals are aimed.

Integrated contents form independent subfields.

Examples of topics: health and hygiene, traffic education; entrepreneurial education; household education; environmental education.
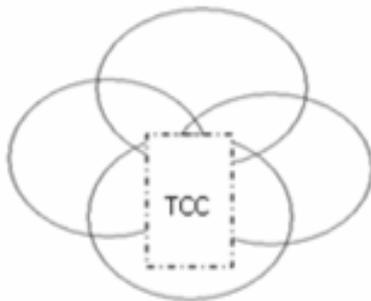

Fig. 5. *Model of Hibridazion Curriculum*

Satellite model

An important theme within a subject matter is opened for an integrated approach from other subjects which become satellites for the main subject matter.
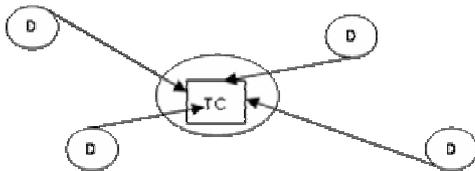

Fig. 6. *Model of satellite curriculum*

Insertion model

It means the introduction into the curriculum of themes outside any subject matters. It can be an optional subject matter, on the school's decision.

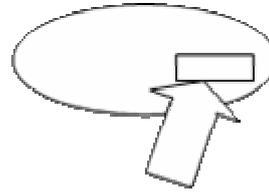*Examples of topics*: education for physical movement, education for the media, poverty, etc.

Fig. 7. *Model of Insertion Curriculum*

Our proposal is that you, the experts, perform a few exercises / applications based on these strategies and models to find their exceptional pedagogical potential and physical education's great openness to integration, not only in school education but in the entire educational system (official / formal, non-formal and informal).

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