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THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND THE APPLIED METHODS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EGER (1856–1918)

A TESTNEVELÉS TANÍTÁS HATÉKONYSÁGA ÉS AZ ALKALMAZOTT MÓDSZEREK ÖSSZEFÜGGÉSE AZ EGRI KÖZÉPISKOLÁKBAN (1856–1918)

Abstract

The appearance of different physical exercise methods (German, Swedish, Danish) in schools has brought about the formation of varying methodological practises.

The nature of the education varied in the systems depending on how much it has considered the individual's and society's needs.

The types of education developed towards more effective use of the allocated time. By using more varied body positions they achieved a more enjoyable and effective way to exercise. There were noticeable differences in the curriculum and the use of the necessary equipment by considering the structure of the human body and its physiological limitations. The level of individual development got an important role in the assessment of the students' achievements.

The lesson was divided into three sections which have ensured the age appropriate preparation, development and winding down of the body.

The physical exercise methods which can be clearly defined in time have shown improvement with regard to the applied procedures as well.

Keywords: method, curriculum, physical education, the structure of the lesson, evaluation, effectiveness, development.

Összefoglaló

A különböző testgyakorlási rendszerek (német, svéd, dán) iskolai megjelenése eltérő módszertani eljárások kialakulását eredményezte. Az oktatás jellege attól függően változott a rendszerekben, hogy mennyire vette figyelembe az egyén és a társadalom igényeit.

A foglalkoztatási formák a hatékonyabb időkihasználás irányába fejlődtek. A testhelyzetek változatosabb alkalmazása a testgyakorlás lehetőségeinek élényszerűbb és eredményesebb kihasználását jelentette. Az emberi test felépítését és fiziológiai törvényszerűségeit figyelembe véve különbségek fedezhetők fel a tanítás anyagában és a szükséges szerek felhasználásában. A tanulók teljesítményének értékelésében fontos szerepet kapott az egyéni fejlődés mértéke. Az óra szerkezetének hármas tagolódása biztosította az élettanilag megfelelő előkészítést, a szervezet fejlesztését, majd lecsillapítását.

Az időben elhatárolható testgyakorlati rendszerek az alkalmazott eljárások tekintetében is a fejlődés irányába mutattak.

Kulcsszavak: módszer, oktatási anyag, iskolai testnevelés, az óra szerkezete, értékelés, hatékonyság, fejlődés.

Training with the German gymnastics method

In the middle and at the end of the 19th century, physical culture trainers who worked in Hungary, due to their lack of experience, took as example the physical culture system in Germany, the closest of the three influential countries (Germany, Sweden and Denmark). The way they trained, the gymnastics equipment they used and the educational material as defined in the curricula featured the gymnastics developed by Guts Muths, Spiess and especially by F. L. Jahn. Initially, in Eger as well, educators in the gymnasium (a highest level grammar school) and the reáliskola (a medium level German type secondary school) carried out their job in the spirit of the German gymnastics system. Otherwise, German education literature, especially Herbart and his followers, exert extraordinary influence on the Hungarian educational life, both in theory and practice. The influence the herbartism, which did not leave untouched physical education either, can be felt ranging from Mór Kálmán to Ernő Finánczy, and even in the period that followed.

In 1856 the gymnasium providing literacy in the humanities integrated physical education as well in its curriculum. The first physical culture educator, Ferenc Buraky, a dancing-master, was unable to supervise all alone the students doing exercises simultaneously on more than one event during the trainings. He charged the most skilled and the most competent high-graders of promoting younger students. Older students competed with each other to become an assistant to the “master”. In the next school year, one major and two minor accidents occurred. In order to avoid similar mishaps it was necessary to increase the educator’s supervision and to approve the student assistance system. They wanted to achieve the same order and discipline in physical training classes than in all other classes.

The rules and regulations of physical culture created in 1860 were delivered to the students at the beginning of the school year. Over the years that followed rules were read out at the beginning of each class. All infringers were reprimanded.

At the sessions the diversity of body development, especially the strengthening of the upper body was sought. In accordance with Spiess’s system, in the first half of the class free exercises and exercises of order and discipline were carried out. In the other half of the class, a variety of exercises with devices and events promoted by Jahn (horizontal bar, parallel bars, pommel horse, still rings, ladder) were performed. The fast-paced and extremely long exercises with only one leg or arm at a time, to be carried out

only in standing position meant more forced labor for students than recreation.

During the classes the method of training in groups was applied. Students were classified in teams on the grounds of their ability and they were assigned to the event where they performed exercises one after another under the supervision of a chief gymnast. The educator explained the exercise, and the chief gymnast demonstrated it, then the latter helped the team members to execute it. He was also charged of keeping order in the team. But his fellows made noise while waiting and were undisciplined. In vain was required military order, when ten or fifteen minutes later it was their turn, they performed the exercise inaccurately, with hastily implemented moves.

Another deficiency of the German physical culture system was the fact that the exercises were not classified by their effects on the human body but on the grounds of gym equipment. This „event-centered” gymnastics with „military perspectives” invoked the ancient Spartans and Romans, to whom the goal was not to achieve the beauty of the body, but to improve the body’s performance. Initially, games were also ignored in the classes.

Training at the time of the introduction of the Swedish gymnastics method

When the German gymnastic system became outdated, it was replaced by the Swedish system in Europe. In schools in Hungary as well education in the spirit of Ling was starting to spread, which was initially attributed only physiotherapy character. This is what we can clearly see in the curriculum of the gymnasium in Eger for the academic year of 1885-86. Physical therapy was carried out in the system of Dr. Dániel Gottlib and Dr. Mór Schröder, while the Swedish physical culture exercises in that of Dr. Henig. Their initiative will stop after one year of trying. Its pedagogical significance will be verified only later.

In 1908 the executive director in the school district encourages the compliance with the Ministerial Decree on the introduction of Swedish gymnastics. In the next school year fifteen minutes will be paid to perform the Swedish free exercises during each physical education classes. Illustrative images are posted on the gym’s wall. With the guidance of Mihály Bély, expert in gymnastics, the Swedish gymnastics equipment is mounted.

What is new and more suitable in the Swedish system of physical education? It requires simpler and less expensive equipment. It is perfectly appropriate to train a community, a whole class at the same time.

In addition to the standing position, exercises on the back are also performed in gymnastics. Exercises are implemented in very slow moves and characterized by inhalation and exhalation linked to the exercises of the body and arms. Therefore, they were extremely boring and students did not find anything attractive in them during the quarter of an hour reserved for it.

With the use of the new gymnastics apparatus, the so-called “Swedish equipment” the nature of the training changes completely. The relationship between the equipment and the gymnast changes as well. The exercises are edited with regard to the structure and the needs of the human body. To these exercises appropriate equipment is made: stall bars, balance benches, vaulting boxes, balance beams, oblique grids, diagonal ropes.

The new exercises and the new equipment altered the training methods as well. Within a lesson the exercises were grouped according to physiological and kinematic principles. Accordingly, the structure of a class and the forms of training changed.

A physical education class consists of three main parts. Within one class it trains three times the whole body of the student in a healthy way: prepares for exercising, strengthens and develops, finally cools down and soothes.

The class material for the school year of 1911-12 shows already this trichotomy. The material of the main section, which is used to train the upper and lower limbs, can be clearly distinguished from the exercises of order and those of warming-up. The post-training exercises were carried out in the last section of the class.

We can learn a lot about the conduct of modern physical education classes – which at that time meant Swedish-based exercise classes – from the minutes of dr. József Ottó, gymnastics school superintendent’s visit in the major state secondary school (reáliskola) in Eger on the 24th November 1913. Since the task of school physical education is to bring up a strong and healthy generation, educators do not have to deal with individuals but with the mass.

New approaches for physical education classes

While marching they enhance the mood of the class by singing. For health reasons the use of gym shoes are compelled. Health protection rules and regu-

lations are always disclosed and posted in printed version on the walls.

The physical culture educator's method of teaching has also changed a lot. Students with weaker physique are dealt with separately. Free exercises are carried out without excessive combinations. Particular attention is paid to the military discipline and the accurate performance of event exercises carried out by students.

When teaching a new exercise, it is brought clear by explanation, and proper implementation is assisted. Particular efforts are invested in the training of the chief gymnasts. They attend common trainings specially held for them after classes to learn the material of the next class, as well as assistance administration during implementation.

Evaluating the performance of students

During the introduction of the Swedish gymnastics in order to enhance the effectiveness of the class and the more visible progress of the students, a new evaluation system is tried out: from 1908 body measurements are introduced. The body, strength and skill assessments are widespread in the country.

The formation of the gymnastics teams, which were given differentiated trainings, was based on height, arm muscle perimeter, chest size data measured at the beginning of the school year and on the grounds of performance in the implementation of the required tasks.

An objective evaluation was given based on the performance of students: all students had to perform a compiled task of gymnastics and athletic exercises of arm and leg strength.

Strength measurement exercises were as follows:

Parallel bars: dips (pushing up so that arms are straight from bent position and lowering yourself again in between the bars).

High bars: pull-ups (chinning from hanging position).

Heeling: jumping on both feet in a way that heels touch the thighs.

Each successful execution was awarded with two points. The points which were scored in these three exercises added up for the total of "power points".

Skill drills were carried out on high bars, parallel bars and pommel horse.

Points could be gained depending on the implementation: exemplary - 5 points, impeccable - 4 points, good - 3 points is, medium -2 points, weak – 1 point, zero performance - 0 points.

Folk exercises: high jump, the starting height is at 100 cm and awarded with 1 point. Each additional 20 cm: 1 point. Pole climbing: according to the speed, top score: 5 points.

With this method, on the grounds of the measured data at the beginning and end of the school year, changes in the performance of students could be detected. As for evaluation, it established a more realistic assessment of the students' grades. The grades obtained from objectively measured performance were received by students with great peace of mind.

In the period following the Dualism, further developments can be seen in the application of new educational techniques. To the range of teaching methods adds the Danish Niels Bukh's gymnastics.

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