

STUDY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES TO DEVELOP THE SCHOOL GROUP COHESION IN DISABLED CHILDREN

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Abstract

The group psychological and psychosocial knowing is subordinated to its use for the social group evolution and progress, for the harmony among its members, for its efficiency increase. The physical education teacher can influence the development of school group cohesion.

Aim: This research aims at finding methods and means able to develop the school group cohesion in special education.

Methods: We used both classical methods, namely documentation and observation, and methods specific to social group research, such as sociometric inquiry and test.

Results: Pupils possessing capacities to learn "quicker" the means specific to basketball game are more exerted in decision-making.

Conclusions: The group psychological and psychosocial knowing is subordinated to its use for the social group evolution and progress, for the harmony among its members, for its efficiency increase.

Key-words: school group, cohesion, methods, sociogram

Introduction

Physical education and sports activity, through its formative valences, represents a good environment for pupils' socialization, because at this age their integration into a complex group (class, team) develops personality under all its aspects, by helping them to better integrate into society (A. Dragnea, A. Bota, 1999).

The physical education curriculum is an

training and development (Teodorescu, S., Bota, A., 2007).

Adapted physical activities represent an important landmark to subjects' leisure time organizing, with benefits for the affective-motivational area (I., Holdevici, 1993)

Adapted physical education and sports activities valorize qualities, skills, attitudes and behaviors habitating the disabled subjects to participate in, as members of the society they

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essential component of any health program.

One of its most important objectives is the initiation into an active lifestyle that should accompany the child during his lifespan (M. I., Botez, 1996).

The physical education lesson is the main form through which pupils acquire attitudes, motor and behavioral skills (M., Epuran, V., Horghidan, 1994).

An integrant part of formative motor activities, adapted physical education and sports impose an institutionalized framework, a set of clearly specified competences, transdisciplinary strategies that aim at creating a value system significant to the individual and the society, able to throw a new light on the disabled person (F., Popescu, M.C., Porfireanu 2010).

Adapted physical education and sports place the subject in the hypostasis of a social being capable to exert an active role in his own

belong to (M. Zlate, 1996)..

Special or adapted physical education is a physical education branch that aims at subjects' recovery and social integration by promoting programs adapted to different types of disabilities (V., Horghidan, 1997).

The physical education content is related to motor behavior.

The objectives of physical education and sports for disabled children are derived from the education general objectives.

The general objectives of adapted physical education and sports are not fundamentally distinct from those settled for normally developed children, between them existing but some shades of difference.

Their aims refer to: the health state (resistance to illness, body strengthening habits, respect of hygienic conditions); body-related aspects (growing and development processes,

body correct posture, adaptation to effort capacity); motricity-related aspects (acquisition and improvement of motor skills and abilities, development of motor qualities); psychic and psychomotor aspects (stimulation of cognitive, affective, motivational and volitional processes, development of ambidexterity); social aspects (building up the socio-motricity elements, transfer of sports habits to social life) (Teodorescu, S., Bota, A., 2007).

Adapted sports is a sports branch that uses motor structures, specific rules, material and organizational conditions modified and appropriate to the requirements of different types of deficiencies (special needs) (U., Schiopu, 1997).

The category of mentally disabled children demands the specialists' particular attention, having in view their heterogeneity and most of all the possibility of an educational intervention, with very good results, through the practice of physical exercises (Teodorescu, S., Bota, A., 2007).

Basketball, as a physical education means with multiple influences upon the practitioners' development, is one of the sports adapted to mentally disabled children.

The "Special Olympics" organization, together with FIBA, organizes basketball competitions based on regulations adapted to children with a low intelligence quotient (F. Popescu, 2009).

Basketball, a team sports game, has significant influences on the development of the small group (team) cohesion (Popescu, F., 2009). The sports group cohesion has its own dynamics that is determined by its characteristics (mentally disabled children) and that can be revealed by the sociometric inquiry (G.W. Allport, 1981).

Sociological observation has already showed long ago that "birds of a feather flock together", namely subjects become more naturally friends if they have almost similar common valences reflected through attitudes, aptitudes and behavioral traits.

The group cohesion fulfillment is a social modeling process requiring the adjustment of individual tendencies and intentions and their harmonization with the affective collective atmosphere (Epuran, M., Horghidan, V., 1994).

Hypothesis of the research

By this experimental study, we meant to find out if the basketball game, through its specific means, could develop the school group cohesion in mentally retarded children.

Tasks of the research

- * To co-opt and co-interest the special education teacher in this research approach.
- * To know the group of pupils and effectively participate in the lessons of the classes included in this research.
- * To use means specific to basketball in order to fulfill the themes and tasks of physical education lessons.
- * To choose the most efficient methods to communicate with mentally retarded pupils.
- * To know the school cohesion factors in order to increase school efficiency.
- * To conceive a sociometric test with questions accessible to the pupils included in this research.
- * To draw up the sociogram.

Research methods

- ✓ Scientific documentation
- ✓ Observation
- ✓ Sociometric inquiry
- ✓ Sociometric test

Content of the experiment

The experiment included 12 pupils (4 girls and 8 boys) in grade 5th A, the control class, while the experimental class, in grade 5th B, included 17 pupils (7 girls and 10 boys).

When investigating these two school groups, our main objectives were to know each pupil's position within the group, the relationships settled within each group, the group cohesion and the physical education influence upon the group building up and instruction, but also upon the group cohesion development.

In the experimental subjects, we mostly worked with means specific to basketball, while in the control subjects, we used means specific to gymnastics and athletics.

Within the social groups, there is a multitude and a variety of human relations that can be classified from numerous standpoints, the most significant one being related to their psychological content.

Observation is one of the most frequently used methods in psychosocial research, because it is relatively easy to organize and apply. We examined the group manifestations and reactions generated by its members' interaction, as well as

the influences exerted by different pupils upon the group.

Observation, combined with various group discussions, provided us information about the affective and communication relations among pupils, about the group decision-making, the way of solving different group-related problems, the relations among the formal and informal leaders and the group of pupils.

In the first investigated class, the number of pupils is reduced - 12 -, but the relations among them are various.

They influence one another, act one upon the other, cooperate or help each other - but not totally and not always.

There were pupils who, within the group behavior, felt marginalized, isolated and therefore they became malicious with their colleagues in the beginning of the test, but by its end, they were accepted and even asked to make some decisions. While playing, these pupils were given the task to lead the game, responsibilities that rehabilitated them in their colleagues' eyes.

The class activity leadership doesn't have an individual character, but a collective one in the decision-making process.

We examined the group manifestations and reactions generated by its members' interaction, as well as the influences exerted by different pupils upon the group.

The sociometric test applied to both of the classes reinforced the importance of knowing the different aspects of the group interaction process.

This test aimed at establishing each pupil's place within the group, the interpersonal relations within the group, as well as its cohesion.

The sociometric test consisted in three questions through which pupils were asked to express their sympathies and antipathies toward the other colleagues. At each question, pupils had to name three colleagues, in the order of their preferences.

The sociometric test questions were the following:

1. If you were asked to learn with other classmates, who would you prefer?
2. Who among your classmates you wouldn't like to learn with?
3. When you play during the breaks, what colleagues do you prefer?
4. Who among your classmates you wouldn't like to play with?
5. Who are your best friends among your classmates?
6. Who among your classmates you wouldn't like to be friend with?

The test questions were made up on three criteria, as follows: the first criterion - a and b, the second criterion - c and d, the third criterion - e and f (Table 1 and Table 2).

The test data were included into the sociometric matrix reflecting pupil's attitude toward the group. Relying on the matrix data, we calculated the sociometric indexes related to each pupil's social expansion and inclusion.

Pupils are registered on the matrix both horizontally and vertically, and depending on their preferences specified in the test, we put down each pupil's answers related to his elections and rejections. We allotted 3 points to the first election or rejection, 2 points to the second election or rejection and 1 point to the third election or rejection.

Table 1. Sociometric matrix – rejections – the second group

	BM	CI	CM	CM	FC	FM	FN	GR	GG	HM	ID	PM	RD	SC	SE	SG	SN
BM		2	3 2	3		1		3					2				
CI			1				3	2	3			2	3				1
CM	2	1 1		2 3						3				2	3	1	
CM	2 1								1 3						3 2 3		2
FC	1 1	1					3 1				2 3			2	2		3
FM				3				2	1					3	1		2

	3																2
FN	1		3								3				2	3	
GR		1	2						3	1						2	
GG				3		3				2				3		2	1
HM		1					1	2							3		3
ID	1		2			2	3										1
PM							1	3			2						
RD	1		3				1	2			1						
SC								3			2					1	1
SE	1		3		2		1		3		2						
SG						1		3			2			3			3
SN							1	1		2			3				
Received rejection	4	3	5	2	0	2	5	8	3	2	5	0	0	2	3	2	4
	4	3	2	2	0	1	3	3	2	0	7	1	2	4	5	3	3
	2	2	1	5	0	6	3	1	4	0	6	0	0	5	2	2	3
Rejection value	5	4	13	5	0	3	11	18	3	6	9	0	0	6	7	5	6
	7	5	4	6	0	2	4	9	4	0	14	2	5	11	10	6	6
	4	2	2	14	0	14	5	3	8	0	13	0	0	9	4	4	7

Table 2. Sociometric matrix – elections – the second group

	BM	CI	CM	CM	FC	FM	FN	GR	GG	HM	ID	PM	RD	SC	SE	SG	SN
BM						2			3		1	2	3	2			
CI				1	3					1		1	2				
CM					1				1			2	3				
CM		1			3			1		2				1			
FC				2						1		3	2				
				1		1		3		3		2					

FM		2			3 3 3				2 1		1	2					
FN		2		2	1	1		1	2			3 3 3					
GR		2			3 2 3	1	3		1		1	2					
GG	1 2 2			1							2 3	3 1 3					
HM					3 1 3	2		3				1	2				
ID				3					2 1 2			1			2		
PM	1			2	2				1			3 3 3					
RD						3 3 3					1 1 1		2 2 2				
SC		1 2 3		2 1	3 3 2												
SE	1 3 1										3 2	2 1 1					
SG	2				2				2	1		3	1		1		3
SN		2 2		1	3 3		3			1 1			2				
Received election	2 4 2	2 3 5	0 1 2	1 3 4	12 7 11	0 6 0	0 3 1	0 3 1	2 1 1	7 5 10	0 0 2	11 4 3	12 4 5	1 2 2	1 1 0	0 1 0	0 1 0
Election value	2 8 3	2 6 11	0 2 3	2 4 5	31 18 29	0 9 0	0 9 1	0 9 1	5 1 3	10 7 15	0 0 6	20 10 7	25 7 11	3 6 4	2 1 0	0 2 0	0 3 0

Conclusions

The affective relations we noticed in the two groups converge to the idea that “diligent” pupils elected as formal leaders have a great influence on the other members. Communications take place around them, different activities are proposed around them, they are frequently required to make correct decisions.

The group knowing leads to the fulfillment of a triple finality: praxiological – through its contribution to the increase of school group efficiency; organizational – from the organization and management theory perspective, it facilitates the psychological phenomena directing, improvement and optimization; diagnostic and prognostic – it facilitates the school group current

state understanding, explaining and interpreting, but also its future dynamics anticipation.

Through the physical education means, but particularly the basketball game, we can obtain educative results with a major effect on school groups. Basketball, through its regulations and possibilities to adapt to disabled children, eliminates negative attitudes manifested within the school groups.

Physical education, mainly through the means specific to sports games, favorably influences interpersonal relationships, being susceptible to induce in participants a positive affectivity.

Depending on the motricity level of each mental deficiency subcategory, physical exercises

should be practiced both under their non-competitive and competitive forms.

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