Ovidius University Annals, Series Physical Education and Sport / SCIENCE, MOVEMENT AND HEALTH
Vol. XV, ISSUE 2 Supplement, 2015, Romania
The journal is indexed in: Ebsco, SPORTDiscus, INDEX COPERNICUS JOURNAL MASTER LIST,
DOAJ DIRECTORY OF OPEN ACCES JOURNALS, Caby, Gale Cengace Learning, Cabell's Directories

Science, Movement and Health, Vol. XV, ISSUE 2 Supplement, 2015
September 2015, 15 (2, Supplement): 347-354
Original article

ASSESSMENT MODALITIES FOR THE STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE

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Abstract

*Aim.*The scholarly literature frequently highlights the role of evaluation in the process of regulating and adjusting the education system. This thesis initiates from the necessity of arranging an objective evaluation procedure in order to meet students' expectations and to cover a diversified area of motor skills, thesis which takes into consideration a number of different degrees variables that have complexities of very diverse nature. The criteria, terms and ratings proposed for the evaluation process aim both the easy approach of each test and the stimulation of students' abilities and skills subject of their preferences. In this regard, no guideline for following the development of the students' motor skills is available.

Methods. Concerning this aspect, I have proposed four different sport tests (one for each semester) in order to evaluate the general motor skills; the final evaluation rating takes into account the completion of an optimum number of class presence. Also, I have developed a varied training program which I have adapted for the particularities of age group. The students have responded to a questionnaire regarding their options and their knowledge of proposed sporting activities.

Results. Following the evaluation process, there has been noted both an increase of motor skill performances and a special interest in training. The evaluation scales produced the motivation effect and the participation to university's sporting competitions.

*Conclusions.*The data gathered in this research shows that an evaluation process based on criteria that value students' potential have a positive outcome. This process requires very well defined evaluation criteria matching the training level of students.

Key words: assessment, trial/tests. motivation-simulation in preparation

Introduction

The specialized literature frequently highlights the role of assessment within the process of regulating and adjusting the educational process.

Whereas, in the past, the assessment was seen only as an examining and grading activity, nowadays, it has been made an integrative part of the educational process.

The necessity of establishing a correct value hierarchy in our society requires a thorough and accurate assessment of peoples' activities. As part of this process the students' assessment during the educational stage will enable them to conduct an accurate self-assessment, at a later stage, and by doing so to occupy the place they deserve in society.

Our attention is especially focused on selecting the best evaluation strategies and updating them in accordance with the requirements of the educational reform. This is to be achieved with a view to the implementation of stimulating and non-regressive strategies.

During the assessment of our students we have to ask ourselves: What are we assessing?

Since, the development of motor skills and personal abilities greatly influence the physical education assessment, it is very important for every studied subject, as it is for physical education in general, to clearly identify the aspects of assessment, as well as, its reference points.

So, who is actually responsible for setting up that value scale which subsequently to be used as a reference for assessing the students' performances?

In our opinion, such a value scale should be established by the course lecturer taking into consideration the following aspects:

- Curriculum requirements for the studied subject;
- Individual particularities of the physical and motor skills development;
- Individual progress made by the student.

Thus, the assessment of the physical education abilities should take into account certain changes that occurred recently and required a re-evaluation of the assessment strategies:

- The assessment must represent an integral part of teaching activities ensuring the

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Received 11.03.2015 / Accepted 15.04.2015

- Necessary feedback for the educational process;
- Considering a positive attitude towards the physical education activities, the personal training during classes and the participation to other sport extracurricular activities;
- Focusing the assessment on positive results and not on the negative ones;
- Treating the student as a genuine partner by means of self-assessment, inter-assessment and controlled assessment.

From our point of view, since, it ensures a formidable way for socializing, achieving personal goals, building self-esteem and respecting team achievements, the physical education must play an important role in forming the young generation.

Methods

This paper addresses the necessity of developing an objective assessment procedure meeting the students' expectations and covering a diversified area of motor skills. The assessment methodology has to take into account a number of different variables with different complexity degrees and very divers in nature.

Romanian education specialists define the assessment as an integral part of the teaching process, as follows:

Cerghit (2008) – "To assess means to formulate a valuable judgement.....with a view to adopting a decision aimed at improving the subjected entity".

Bontaș (2001) – "Knowledge assessment is a complex teaching tool integrated into the entire educational system which highlights both the quantity and quality of the acquired knowledge...".

Jinga (1998) – "Assessment is a complex process through which the results of the instructive and educational activities are compared to their planned objectives".

Cucoș (2008) – "Students' assessment is a process where useful information is selected, acquired and delivered, facilitating the subsequent decision making".

Manolescu (2010) –"Assessment is the activity where valuable judgements are made …based on pre-established quality criteria".

Summarizing the aforementioned, the evaluation specialist Hadji (1992) considers that "assessment is, nowadays, fundamentally multidimensional. The major difficulty in addressing it consists in the lack of an unitary approach".

The lack of a generally accepted and unitary system for assessing the students and rating their abilities is exactly the difficulty faced by the academic educational system in Romania.

At university level (not including here the specialized faculties), the assessment of students' motor skills is not based on a generally accepted and clearly guided assessment system. The assessment criteria are different from one university to another, spanning from numeric rating to qualification such as "Passed" or "Failed".

We, therefore, consider that the implementation of a quarterly assessment scale, allowing students to exploit their motor skills potential, has become a necessity.

The criteria, terms and qualifications proposed by our assessment systems pursue both the accessibility of each test, as well as, the stimulation of students' skills and abilities according to their own preferences.

Thus, the assessment value can be identified by the following features:

- Identification of acquirements value – through which individual results, acquired during the instructive-educational process, are assessed and analysed, allowing us to monitor certain aspects within the instructive process and to accordingly adjust the learning-teaching strategies, carefully considering the student's individual capabilities;
- Pedagogical value – stimulating and result consolidating, offering the student the possibility of self-assessing his training level and allowing both him and the teacher/trainer to identify what actions are to be taken for performance improvement;
- Educational value – self-assessing capacity developed by students during the self-assessment process. Self-assessment requires both an optimum reference model used as a bases throughout the process and, at the same time, a target to be reached by every individual student during training;

The assessment of physical education must be achieved as a measurement of knowledge and motor skills abilities, as well as, of the degree of their development. This stage should be seen as a process integrated into our activity and not as a separate stage artificially added to the instructive-educational process. In this context, the assessment will provide us with the possibility of validating the learning stages achieved, through calendar planning and a better control over the contents of the pre-established educational targets.

Such estimation is even more efficient when it generates certain information bearing a regulatory and self-regulatory functions.

The components of the physical education model provided by Tudor (2005) are:

- Methods for evaluating the theoretical knowledge;
- Methods for evaluating the level of physical development;
- Methods for evaluating the level of motor skills development;
- Methods for evaluating the capacity of using

motor abilities and/or skills;

- Methods for evaluating the practical capabilities of independently practising physical training."

This is to be noted that the proposed model addresses the physical education in general and not the physical education provided in the specialized academic environment in particular.

Therefore, we have opted for the assessment of motor skills based mainly on the student's individual potential.

From this point of view, an important role is played by the continuous feedback acquired during the instructive-educational process.

Consequently, in order to assess the overall motor skills acquirement, we have put together an assessment grid for four different sporting tests (one for each semester); the final rating is taking into account an optimal level of class attendance. We have, also, prepared a diversified training program adapted to the age particularities.

Table 1. Students' assessment grid

Period	Indicators	Tests
Semester I	General motor skills	Applicative course
Semester II	Motor skills quality; Strength	Running course (specific women / men)
Semester III	Motor skills quality; Speed and Ability	Sport games
Semester IV	Motor skills quality; Endurance	Aerobics or jogging at a moderate pace

The assessment grid consists of a series of criteria and sub-criteria according to which the student assessment is achieved.

The most frequent assessment grids, specific to physical education, include criteria concerning the performance quality or quantity:

- "Poor", "Sufficient", "Good", "Very good", "Excellent";
- Numerical scale: from 1 to 10;
- Ratings such as "Passed" or "Failed".

In order to differentiate the assessment grids, each assessment level should be evaluated based on certain assessment items: what does 10 or "Very good" or "Passed"/"Failed" mean? which are the thresholds representing the maximum intensity of the assessed variable? etc.

For our practical training, attended by the students of Psychology Faculty, the participants were assessed in accordance with the "Passed"/"Failed" methodology, as summarized in the table below:

Table 2. Assessment items

Tests	Passed	Failed
Applicative course	• Finishes the course in a correct manner; • Finishes the course within the given time; • Applies in a creative manner the acquired motor skills; • Attends extracurricular competitions; • Meets the minimum class attendance requirements.	• Makes errors during the course; • Does not finish the course within the given time; • Does not meet the minimum class attendance requirements.
Running course	• Completes the running track at the required pace; • Finishes the running within the given time; • Attends extracurricular competitions; • Meets the minimum class attendance requirements.	• Makes errors while performing strength exercises; • Does not meet the set target; • Does not meet the minimum class attendance requirements.
Sport games	• Applies in a creative manner the acquired motor skills; • Follows the game's rules; • Displays a fair-play attitude towards the opponent; • Attends extracurricular competitions; • Meets the minimum class attendance requirements.	• Does not apply in a creative manner the acquired motor skills; • Is not familiar with the game's rules; • Does not display a fair-play attitude towards the opponent; • Does not meet the minimum class attendance requirements.
Aerobics or jogging	• Performs movements in all directions	• Does not maintain the optimum

at a moderate pace	(side/forward/reverse) while walking, running and making other specific steps, in a sustained manner, over a long period of time, synchronizing the steps to the music; • Sustains cardio sessions alternated with recovery paces during an optimum amount of time of continuous effort; • Is able to jog at a moderate but sustained pace for 10-15 min.	rhythm and stops; • Does not fully control the movements and does not have a correct field orientation; • Does not succeed to fully sustain the cardio sessions; • Is not able to jog at a sustained and appropriate pace for a given period of time .

The aforementioned items have been explicitly formulated in order to guide the student in his/her training activities. This proper and clear description assists the student in applying the theoretical knowledge to the independent practical activity and in demonstrating his/her attitude towards the physical education.

Results

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013. Physical Education and Sport at School in Europe Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union states that most European countries issue clear recommendations on assessment methods to be used for the evaluation of physical education.

According to the respondent countries, the two most common methods of assessment in physical education are formative and summative. Formative assessment is mainly qualitative and descriptive (i.e. expressed orally or in writing). It identifies the learning outcomes and achievements of pupils over a given period, as well as further improvements they might make.

Taking into account the aforementioned aspects, we considered as very beneficial to get the students' feedback regarding the best accepted assessment methodologies by .providing them with a questionnaire.

The assessment process was attended by forty first year psychology students and forty second year female students. Students' participation in the process resulted in a sensible increase of their motor skills, as well as, in a special interest in training.

Knowing beforehand the assessment criteria has motivated the students both in training and in actively participating in sports competitions organised at university level.

The results of the questionnaire based survey regarding students' opinion on the presented and applied assessment methods, are as follows:

Questions	Nr. of answers		Procentage	
Do you consider that the mentioned tests are diversified enough?	64	16	80% - Yes, they are	20% - The diversity should be increased
Do you believe that the established performance standards are easy to meet?	60	20	75% - Yes, they are	25%-They are quite difficult to meet
Practicing systematically the sports activities is very beneficial.	72	8	90% - I agree	10% - I don't have enough time for sports activities
What type of assesment methodology do you preffer?	56	24	70%- final assessment, motor skills tests	30%- continous assesment
What do you prefer to be emphasized during the assessment process: motor skills performance or the benefits of a systematic performance	36	44	45% - motor skills performance	55% - the benefits of a systematic performance
What type of assessment do you prefer: numeric rating or qualifications?	28	52	35% - numeric rating	65% - qualifications

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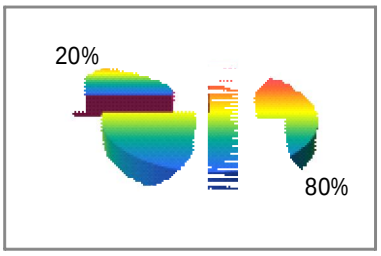

Fig. 1

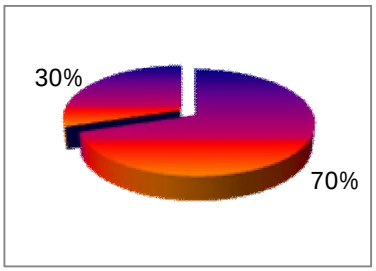

Fig. 2

At the first question regarding the type of tests performed, 80% expressed their contentment with the tests diversity; 20% stated their preference for other options such as swimming or tennis, but, due to the lack of proper pools or courts required for practical training, the answer was just a theoretical exercise.

At the second question regarding the performance standards, 75% of the students believed they can successfully meet the high standards without difficulty. 25% believed they would have difficulties due to lack of proper physical training.

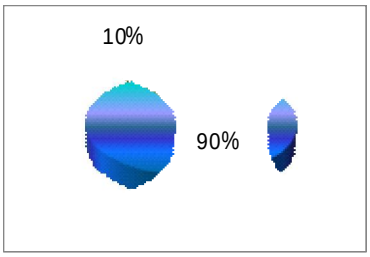

Fig.3

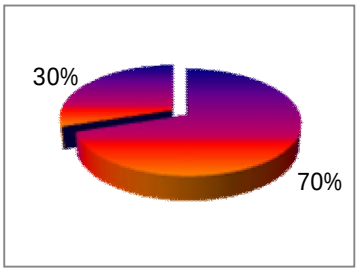

Fig.4

At the third question regarding practicing sports in general considering the overall benefits, 90 % of the students agree that regular physical exercises gives them an optimal tonus and they wish to practice it in an effective manner. Only 10% of students stated that, although they are aware of the aforementioned benefits, they do not manage to find the necessary time to exercise.

The forth question addresses the students' opinion regarding the type of assessment they prefer, respectively, whether the assessment to be continuous, extended throughout the semester or final, based on pre-established tests. The students' answers went in their great majority towards the final assessment: 70% of the students preferred this option and only 30% the continuous assessment.

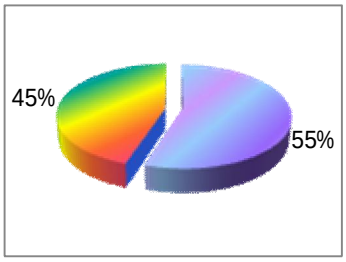

Fig.5

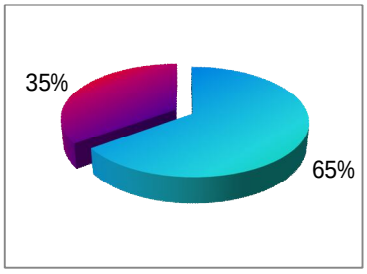

Fig.6

The fifth question focuses on the students' opinion regarding two aspects, namely, whether they want the motor skills performance to be emphasized within the assessment process instead of the systematic performance. At this question the students that regularly practice sport activities preferred the motor skills performance - 45%, while 55% considered the other option as more appropriate.

At the sixth question, respectively, whether the students consider that the assessment based on numeric rating from 1 to 10 would be more acceptable than using qualifications like "Passed", "Failed" or "Very Good", "Good" and "Satisfactory", 35% would prefer numeric rating and 65% qualifications (50% opted for "Passed"/"Failed" and 15% for the other option).

In this regard, we have prepared an organisational chart including both the objectives set at the beginning of the course and the performance standards, enabling us to ensure the necessary feedback for training.

This chart includes the minimum and maximum standards for the rating Passed.

Table 3. Objectives and performance standards

Objectives	Contents	Standards
OPM_1 – to cover in a correct manner the applicative course and to creatively use the acquired skills; OA – to stimulate the physical exercise and extracurricular activities	• Exercises with portable objects • Application courses • Physical development exercises • Sport games • Eurhythmic exercises • Athletic exercises	**S min.** – 30sec **S max**. - 25sec
OPM_2 – to cover in a correct manner the running course OA – to follow the conduct rules on and off the teaching process and during the extracurricular activities	• Strength exercises for each muscle group (arms, legs, abdomen, back), both free exercises and with portable objects/equipment • Application courses • Physical development exercises • Aerobics on stepper	***For women*** ***S min***.: ***10 push ups*** with leg support on a fit ball ***20 abdominal flexions, 15 full body extensions*** (frontally sat on a fit ball) and ***30 jumping rope*** exercises ***S max. 18 pushups*** with support legs on a fit ball, ***30 abdominal flexions, 25 full body extensions*** (frontally sat on a fit ball) and ***50 jumping rope*** exercises. ***For men*** ***S min***.: ***20 push-ups*** ***25 abdominal flexions, 20 full body extensions*** (frontally sat on fit ball) and ***25 jumping rope*** or ***squats*** exercises; ***S max. 30 push-ups*** ***40 abdominal flexions, 30 full body extensions*** (frontally sat on a fit ball) and ***50 jumping rope*** or ***squats*** exercises.
OPM_3 – to creatively apply to the thematic games the game specific requirements following at the same time the game's rules; OA – to respect both the team and opponent, showing fair-play while performing this activity.	• Exercises of catch and pass • Dribbling exercises • Basket throwing - different procedures; • Technical-tactical structures; • Thematic games • Bilateral games • Regulation notions	***S min.*** – participates bilaterally, without creativity but following the rules ***S max.*** - participates bilaterally, is creative, scores, is fair-play.
OPM_4 – to sustain an uninterrupted physical effort for minimum 10 min.		***S min.*** - 10 minute ***S max.*** - 20 minute

Notes: S min.- minimum standard

S max.- maximum standard

Since a unitary assessment system (such as the one developed for high school education) is missing, putting in place such an instrument has become a priority.

The data gathered during the research activities have shown that an assessment program based on students' potential could have a positive outcome. Such program must contain well defined and well quantified assessment criteria in accordance with the student's training level.

The above presented assessment system allows all students to achieve good performances at physical education and at the same time stimulates the individual training aimed at improving personal performance.

The training required for passing the tests has to be stimulating and not a source of anxiety and tension caused by the possibility of failing the sport tests.

The evaluation must constitute an activity of gathering, organizing and interpreting the collected test data aimed at making some educational decisions based on their thorough analysis.

The implementation of a performance based system satisfies the need of ensuring a compatibility between grading/rating process and the results obtained, namely:

- Students' awareness regarding the training tasks and expected performance;
- Stimulating students' ability to accurately self-assess their training level during various stages of the instructive-educational process;
- Increased transparency of the assessment process focused on strengthening the credibility of the judgement value during the current assessments with a direct impact on the final assessment;
- Establishing a professional consensus between the instructor making the assessment and the candidate, on a permanent basis or throughout various competitions.

Our teaching experience has helped us understand that the performance descriptors must follow a few sensitive aspects, such as:

- Identifying age specific competency elements with a high degree of subjectivity, especially in the affective area;
- Direct correlation between teaching stages, assessment, and the results achieved by the student throughout his training (the level of performance achieved compared to the initial test);
- Using alternative assessment methods;
- Generalization of other tasks involved in the instructive-educational process.

The following main effects are the result of the implementation of this assessment method (applying the performance descriptors to the physical education produces):

- Increased level of trust regarding the performance assessment, both during the current evaluation (formative or summative) and during students' training;
- Consolidation of the awareness regarding the importance of individual training and the implementation of a specific approach (strategies, algorithms etc.).

Discussions

While studying the specialized literature, we have not identified works specifically addressing the activity of physical education within the non-specialized academic environment. All assessment studies look at this matter from a pedagogic point of view and focus especially on the theoretical learning, other curriculum subjects and less on the development of the motor skills.

However, there are also works addressing the assessment in professional sport but they usually refer to the university sport environment only, which is just a segment of our assessment activity.

We will emphasize in this regard the study titled "Măsurare și evaluare în cultură fizică și sport" [Measurements and assessment in physical education and sports], Ed. ALPHA, Bucharest by Tudor, (2005) of UNEFS Bucharest, and "Evaluation en éducation physique et sportive", Dakar, by Nowlan, (1996).

The International Committee for Education instituted by UNESCO in 1993 raises the following issue: What type of education should be approached in the XXI century and for what type of society?

From our point of view, within the educational system, the physical education must have a top spot since it ensures an outstanding way to socializing, achieving personal goals, building self-esteem and respect towards team achievements.

The experience of recent years has shown that the physical education in the academic environment must meet students' aspirations and get as closer as possible to their individual aptitudes and options. Thus, the physical education will truly make its mark on the personal development of the young generation.

Conclusions

The data gathered during the experiment allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

a) Within the non-specialized academic environment, the physical education should not be transformed into a purpose in itself, but rather – such as

for assessment and self-assessment – into a ground of minimum training according to the career choice;

b) The competences acquired during the classes must help the students fit successfully into society and enable them to: communicate, make decisions in key moments, socialize in various environments, effectively use certain information (hygiene, nutrition, maintaining a healthy life-style etc.) in everyday life;

c) The assessment actions must consider the level of progress reached by the student's performance in accordance with the formative and educational objectives;

d) Using certain evaluation methods in order to minimize stress which implies the existence of a partnership type relationship between the assessed and assessor.

e) Knowing beforehand the assessment items determines an increased students' motivation.

A unitary assesment system to be created and implemented for all universities at national level, in accordance with EU requirenments and aimed at faciliatating the transfers of students between universities;

The implementation of a unique ***reference value scale*** for providing standard ssessment criteria to the whole physical education system and, at the same time, for ensuaring the basis for a fair evaluation of teaching performances at national level.

Aknowledgements

Thank you to all of participant to this study.

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