



Science, Movement and Health, Vol. XVII, ISSUE 2 Supplement, 2017
September 2017, 17 (2, Supplement): 459-464
Original article

DANCESPORT AS A MEANS OF EDUCATION

PRALĂ Sonia Gabriela¹, TIUCA Ioana Codruța¹

Abstract*

Problem statement. Dance Sport started in Romania with the first competition in 1984, organized by Viorel Năstase, one of the founders of the Romanian Dance Sport Federation (R.D.S.F.) founded in 1991. However, since its establishment to the present time, no state structure, or more specifically, a structure belonging to the Ministry of National Education, was set up to organize the debut of young people in their career as performing sport dancers. They often get into a dance hall by pure chance. If dance sport was available to everyone, future champions would probably be highlighted and the selection would be more appropriate. Moreover, young sport dancers have the chance to go through the stages of learning only at private dance clubs, which further reduces the number of talented dancers who make a career in dance sport because they cannot afford the costs.

The aim of the research. A structure within the Ministry of National Education that can represent the stage of initiation in a sport dancer career is primary, secondary and upper secondary education. Within this structure, students can be involved in dance sport at Physical Education classes. In addition to general physical training and the development of basic motor skills, classes can be organized for students to learn about dance sport. Those interested may be further directed to integrated sports education or to state-owned schools specializing in extracurricular activities where they may reach the next learning stage.

Conclusions. I believe that introducing dance sport in the school curriculum for the Physical Education classes is a first step for young talents on their way to becoming performance dancers and results in the discovery of more talents in this field but also brings many general benefits: physical and mental health, socializing of the individual, motoric, psychological and socio-cultural education, aesthetic education, physical development and development of the effort capacity, competition and communication with others and with oneself, fulfillment of the performance aspirations. This is how dance sport is one of the most educative activities in which students learn to understand music, to know their body and express their feelings through movement.

Keywords: (dancesport, education, performance, competition, movement).

Introduction

Dancesport is one of the sports bringing joy to the young. Situated at the interface between art and sport, dancesport allows the development of physical, creative, cognitive, expressive, emotional abilities and it is also one of the most pleasant ways to practice physical activity and most certainly one of the most efficient manners in which one's morale and quality of life can be improved.

According to Walter Sorell (1994), dance is "the first language of mankind capable to arouse the deepest, most nuanced and lasting resonances of our vitality. It is the human language before its synthesizing".

Dance allows direct nonverbal communication with the spectators, as the dancers can transmit feelings, emotions through mimic and harmonious moves.

Năstase (2011) states that "dance is an expression of human existence, a creation of the independent

spirit of individuals and their desire for social identity, a way to experience feelings, adapt and aspire, a way for energy consumption, rehabilitation, therapy, achievement and assessment of oneself and others, to communicate with oneself, others and with the transcendental."

Dancesport is a sports branch accessible to ages between 4 and 60, it can be practiced as high performance sport, as fitness sport, for relaxation and mental rehabilitation, socializing and it is also a performance which sends a luxuriant artistic message with esthetical meanings and connotations.

Novere (1967) considers dance to be "...the art of creating combinations of steps, choreographic combinations with grace and precision, with imagination and ease, in direct connection to the melodic line..."

It has been proven that music, implicitly dancing bears a series of beneficial effects. The Mozart Effect has positive effects on the brain. The pleasure

¹ Faculty of Physical Education and Sports, University of Pitești, ROMANIA

Email address: sonianeagu11@gmail.com

Received 19.04.2017/ Accepted 18.05.2017

* the abstract was published in the 17th I.S.C. "Perspectives in Physical Education and Sport" - Ovidius University of Constanta, May 18-20, 2017, Romania



triggering agent being not the lyrics but the music, the melody, the sounds, the rhythm. The latter seems to play the most important role and it can also be found in dance. Dance generates a series of tonic emotional states, it induces calm, leading to the reduction of tension and anxiety, allowing an escape from everyday, also increasing resistance to effort, contributing in the same time to the overcoming of obstacles and facilitates interpersonal communication.

However, this activity also has a strong social impact on those practicing it. The partnership in dancesport develops interpersonal relationships and a general state of wellbeing. Dancers trust themselves and children, along with harmonious development and pleasant personality, also have a group where they can learn the specific etiquette of dancesport. Recreation, spending time in an active manner, developing the habit of independently practicing dancing, self-organization are additional contributions of dancesport for children.

Dance also offers a dynamic context for learning through movement, relaxation, creativity and self-expression, which distinguishes itself from other learning methods. Dance requires the ability to think and act, to focus on the task, to persevere and to learn.

As it is a physical activity, dancesport first of all implies a combined type of aerobic and anaerobic effort (between 200 and 700 calories may be burned over one hour). There are benefits to the locomotor system, as dancing develops special posture and mobility.

Thus, maintaining and improving the physical and mental state of health, socialization, motor, mental and socio-cultural education of individuals, esthetical education, physical development, the ability to sustain effort, competing and communicating with others and with oneself, accomplishing performance-related aspirations are only some of the benefits of practicing dancesport.

An analysis of dancesport in Romania

Dancesport has lately met a spectacular evolution in Romania, from a simple form of expression and rhythm of physical exercise to a sports discipline that tends towards olympism, which has an internal and international competing system that is well organized and placing an accent on perfection in movement.

In terms of historical emergence, the first ballroom dancing competition was organized in Romania in 1984, in Pitești, under the name of Dansul Florilor (Flower's Dance) being organized by Viorel Nastase, one of the founders of the Romanian Dancesport Federation (F.R.D.S). Later on, others

have also been organized under the same name of "ballroom dancing" and in 1991 as the F.R.D.S. was founded, the modern term of "dancesport" was adopted. One year after its foundation, on January 1, 1992, F.R.D.S. affiliated with the International Dance Sport Federation (I.D.S.F.), becoming a member with full rights.

The organizing team of F.R.D.S. has constantly been preoccupied with creating a specific world of the Romanian dancesport, which had to gain its place along the other consecrated disciplines of the Romanian sport. Already from the first year after its foundation, the federation organized, together with TVR (Romanian television network) the first international dancesport competition in Romania.

Currently, 211 sport structures representing 33 counties and the municipality of Bucharest and over 5000 legitimate dancers are affiliated to the federation.

From a competitive perspective, dancesport emerged from the need to compete of those on the dance floor and who wanted to be judged according to objective criteria. The dancers' desire to perfect each move and dance has later led to specific figures performed as upscale as possible, in terms of body and musical movement. Thus, dancesport has precise rules for carrying out choreographic structures, with a number of dances included in competitions and classification categories.

Just like at an international level, dancesport is well structured at national level, too, as there are common rules and specifications. Thus, dancesport exhibits the following specific components (sections): standard dance: slow waltz, tango, Viennese waltz, foxtrot and quickstep and Latin-American dances: samba, cha-cha, rumba, paso-doble, juve.

Dancers from Romania may take part in the competitions organized by F.R.D.S. in the following performance components (superior dance classes): H (Hobby), E, D, C, B, A, S and age categories: 4-7 years, 8-9 years, 10-11 years, 12-13 years, 14-15 years, 16-18 years, 19-35 years and senior (35+). The accession criteria from one class to another differ just like the number of dances performed. Passing from one class to another is possible only based on the number of points acquired in competitions.

By analysing dancesport in Romania, from an educational perspective, we can observe that there are private dancesport clubs that are affiliated to F.R.D.S. (the Romanian Dancesport Federation) but it is poorly represented in the educational system in our country.

Based on the figure 1 (The evolution of an dancesport student in Romania), we suggest the introduction of elementary concepts of dancesport by means of general physical training, development of basic motor abilities, initiation in dancesport, participation in competitions within schools/between schools starting with the elementary (grades I-IV), secondary (grades V-IX) and upper secondary (grades X-XII/XIII) education. The pupils will establish certain connections by relating to this newly introduced sport.

The education system includes dancesport as a specialised sporting discipline in schools with

integrated sport programs (e.g. „Nicolae Rotaru” Sports High School in Constanta) or in public teaching units specialised in extracurricular activities (e.g. Children’s Palace in Sibiu, Children’s Palace in Pitești). At this intermediate level, the development of specific physical training and specific dancesport-related motor abilities is intended. Here, stress will be placed rather on the pupil’s creative abilities and their communication abilities than on technique.

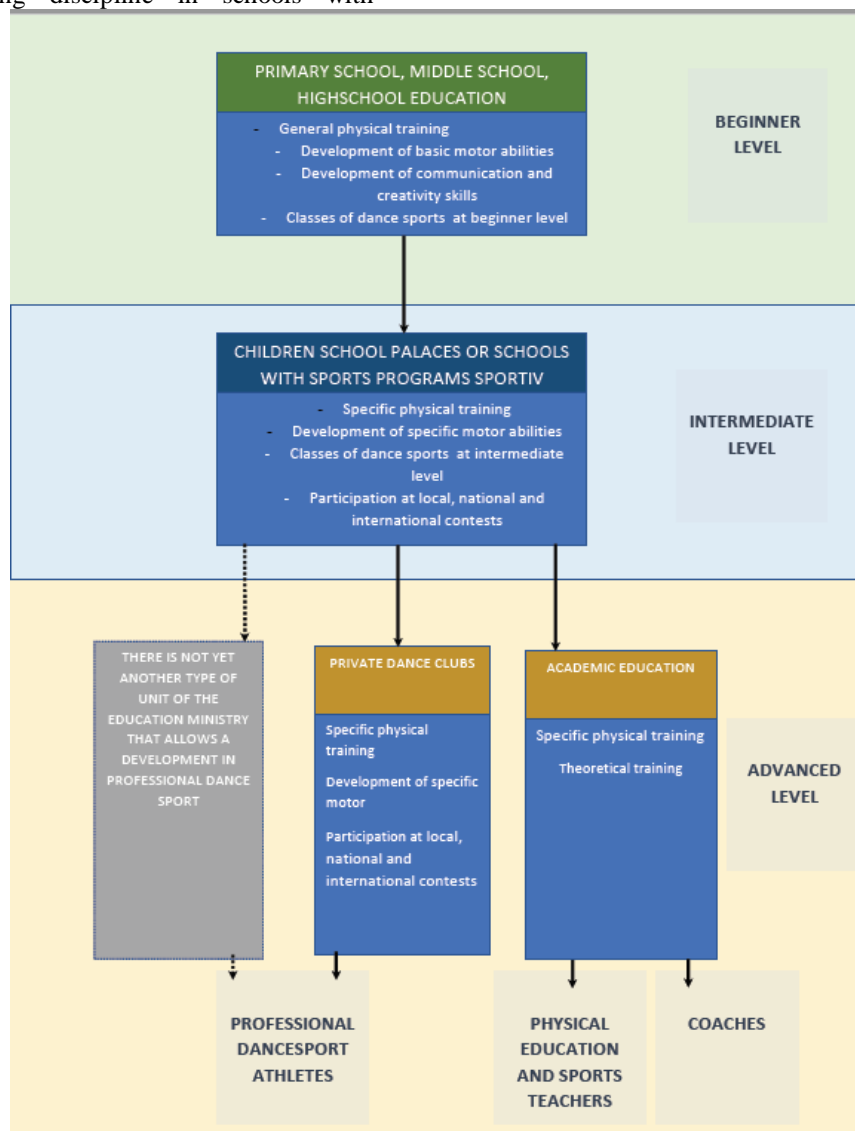


Figure 1. The evolution of an dancesport student in Romania.



In the career of professional dancers, after passing through the beginner's and intermediary levels, there is no public institution in which they can be trained at an advanced level, however this is a permanently growing trend among private associations and clubs in this field. Therefore, the results in competitions are numerous. Romanian sportspeople have managed to make their way to the elite of global dancesport, achieving extraordinary performances, among which 8 world champion titles one European champion title, 8 world and European vice-champion titles and numerous 3rd place titles. At this advanced level, dancers possess theoretical and physical knowledge in dancesport and participate in national competitions organised by F.R.D.S. and international competitions organised by I.D.S.F. They participate in these competitions as F.R.D.S approved ballroom dancers.

Currently, in university education -dancesport- is represented by Viorel Năstase – the initiator of dancesport in Romania, at the Physical Education and Sport Faculty in Pitești. He is also the one who, in the past, promoted dancesport in various teaching institutions. The graduates of such courses become either physical education and sport teachers or dancesport teachers.

Thus, in the context of public institutions, dancesport is not as well promoted as in private institutions, as there are numerous gaps in the educational process. Namely, if a talented child from the Children's Palace in Sibiu manages to reach an opportune competitive level, he advances to another class and age category, followed by an enhancement of the performance level. How can this be achieved? If the talented pupil wishes to study further, he might do so at the Physical Education and Sport Faculty in Pitești, which comes with numerous sacrifices (financial and social).

If there is no complete educational system in our country, how can we achieve performance in dancesport?

Most Romanian champions have carried out their training activity in private dancesport clubs. By following the successful trajectory of the national champions Ramon and Rami Zedan we can see that they only performed in private clubs (the "Pas în doi" private club in Bucharest). Two siblings for whom destiny created a common path in life – dancesport. The young couple can set forth 10 national champion titles and 4 vice-champion titles in the categories Standard and Latino. Rami Zedan (2006) said "he discovered something interesting which caught his attention: the magic of dancesport. I was compelled

to come to dance classes. I wasn't as fascinated by this sport as my sister."

All in all, in the case of the Zedan siblings, we can say that the pleasure to dance was absent and that it only emerged in the process. However, many dancers step into a dance room by chance. If dancesport was open to everyone, probably future champions might emerge and selection would be more opportune. Moreover, dancesport practiced in private clubs is never free of charge. The Zedan siblings practiced at the *Pas în Doi* club, but they had to bear the costs of competitions and training themselves (a dress for the Standard category costs over 1500 Euro).

As a conclusion, in order to create a complete educational system in Romania, except for public clubs, a change should take place in the syllabus of physical education and sport classes in elementary, secondary and upper secondary education, so that pupils may get in contact with dancesport and learn the basic concepts. They may continue the path to a career in dancesport in the already existing teaching units, such as sports schools or public teaching units specialised in extracurricular activities, where they can carry out intermediate level training. For now, the upper level in preparing ballroom dancers is available only in private clubs affiliated to F.R.D.S, as for the time being there is no state-funded structure in which young talents could be trained to achieve performance.

The need to introduce dancesport in the syllabus of Physical Education and Sport classes of elementary, secondary and upper secondary education

The need to implement dancesport in schools is the key to success in the attempt to define and occupy the place it deserves in the current sports hierarchy.

In physical education dancesport is introduced to a very small extent in lessons because there are no specialists at the moment, but where it is introduced as a sports discipline in schools, it is done so with other sports branches with common objectives, but also specific objectives determined by the specificity of dance.

Aducovschi (2007) considers that "in school, by practicing a certain form of dance, the following objectives are aimed: achievement of optimal general physical education, training motor memory, learning and consolidating choreographies, teaching motor expressivity, training emotional factors, self-control, development of rhythm and spatial-temporal orientation."

This is why, dance can be successfully used in almost all the links of physical education, thus



contributing to the improvement of coordinative and conditional abilities of pupils, to the teaching of motor abilities and last but not least in physical rehabilitation and achievement of good mood.

The study of dancesport in school is important because it helps develop self-consciousness, functional and confident movement, broadening of creativity, increase of competence and confidence and expansion of the understanding of dance as an integral part of our culture and society.

I believe that the implementation of dancesport in teaching units and its development as a sport for the mass is opportune not only because sport maintains health, but also to provide other sports activities to pupils.

This new approach aims at synthesizing a specialised didactic basis in dancesport. This sports branch, which hasn't sufficiently developed within the Romanian educational system, is represented mostly in private sports clubs. Therefore, the biographic resources are insufficient, so that new orientations need to be introduced in terms of the training process, the development and nutrition of sportspeople.

Ciomag (2010) believes that "dance, as a form of education used in the syllabus, is placed at an initial, incipient level, without emphasis on corporal technique but strictly on communication, expression of the emotions and meanings defining it, of building personal motor expressiveness by participating in the process of artistic creation."

Dancesport as a sports branch is subjected, just like any other discipline, to the pressure exercised by the circulation of information and it is obliged to stay in close connection with the constant updating of the training process and systematization of the used methods and means. Performance and longevity in sports is in close connection to training.

Thus, Năstase (2002) believes that "the development of motor abilities is an integral part of training and general and specific physical training is indispensable for the complete training of sportspeople from a biometric perspective." We may find that before gaining any motor ability that is specific for a certain sport, the pupil must start to shape and consolidate his general physical training and after acquiring specific motor abilities pass to a form of training which is specific to dancesport.

Optimizing sport training in children and juniors implies knowledge of their growth and development particularities in different stages. Only based on these can one develop a training plan that is appropriate to

age and development level, but also to the needs and desires expressed by the pupils.

Also, dancesport can be advertised through different projects. In 2016, under aegis of F.R.D.S and of the national school inspectorates, an educational project was launched under the name of "Lumea mea în pași de dans" (My world in dance steps), which aims at the development of dance in schools through the discipline of dancesport, by means of a program including initiation activities suggested to pupils under the coordination of their physical education teacher.

The main target of the project is the acknowledgement of the equal status of educational curricular and extracurricular activities with that of formal education, from the perspective of equal contribution brought to the development of the child's personality and social integration. This project aims at developing fondness towards physical activities, strengthening health, development of positive character features, of the spirit of fair-play in sports competitions.

On the other hand, small steps are made towards development and dancesport will be present at the Olympics. The International Olympic Committee chose three new disciplines for the Youth Olympics that will take place in 2018 in Buenos Aires. One of these is dancesport, through its component Breakdance.

Ciomag (2010) asserts that "in school, dance will play a special role by developing corporal communication abilities, with special highlight on developing creative possibilities, regardless of the technique. Subjects will be advised to reproduce the move suggested and executed by the professor as accurately as possible, from a technical perspective, being of course also encouraged to add a personal interpretation, to express what they feel, imagine and what inspires them or what the accompanying music suggests.

The choreography combinations shown by the professor will train the motor memory and coordination, will aim at the concentration ability, availability, appreciation of guidelines and inner desire for self-perfecting, self-knowledge, awareness of one's body in movement through the image provided by the example, but also by their own mental image."

As a conclusion, dancesport is one of the most educational activities. Thus, by dancing, pupils learn to understand music, know their bodies, express their feelings through movement. Education through dance is achieved throughout the performance of the activity.



The young dancer becomes disciplined and more aware of his body and dynamic. This awareness helps very much in improving the specific technique. Balance, synchronisation and motor coordination are qualities that are shaped and perfected through sustained effort and well established training programs.

Therefore, along with the fact that dancesport classes have a positive influence on the development of pupils into grownups, it also represents a first contact of the pupils with this sports discipline, it teaches them the basic concepts and may represent a start in their career as professional dancers. For these reasons, we support the introduction of dancesport in the syllabus of the Physical Education and Sport classes in the elementary, secondary and upper secondary education.

“Dance may take an important place in the physical education activity being one of the main means for developing special abilities of children from a very young age, being the communicating bridge between physical and aesthetic education. The latter is achieved by shaping artistic sensitivity, training kinesthetic sense, musical sense, educating musical culture, which allows them to penetrate the meaning and content of ideas of a musical piece which they then carry out through motor participation” (Moraru, 2014).

Conclusions

I believe that introducing dance sport in the school curriculum for the Physical Education classes is a first step for young talents on their way to becoming performance dancers and results in the discovery of more talents in this field but also brings many general benefits : physical and mental health, socializing of the individual, motric, psychological and socio-cultural education, aesthetic education, physical development and development of the effort capacity, competition and communication with others and with oneself, fulfillment of the performance aspirations. This is how dance sport is one of the most educative activities in which students learn to understand music, to know their body and express their feelings through movement.

Aknowledgements

Thanks to everyone who helped me to realize this material, which I have provided bibliographic materials.

References

- Aducovschi, D, 2007, Dans sportiv la copii, Bren Publishing House, Bucharest.
- Ciomag RV, 2010, Exercițiul fizic prin dans, Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest, Marahon, vol 2, no. 1, pg 21.
- Jelescov C, 2006, Curs de dans sportiv, Fundația România de Mâine Publishing House, Bucharest.
- Năstase VD, 2011, Dans sportiv. Metodologia performanței, Paralela 45 Publishing House, Pitești.
- Năstase VD, 2002, Tehnica în dansurile latino-americeane, Paralela 45 Publishing House, Pitești.
- Noverre JP, 1967, Scrisori despre dans și balet, Bucharest, Muzicală Publishing House.
- Sorell W, 1994, Storia della Danza, Arte, Culture, Società, Editrice, Il Mullinio, Bologna.
- Libertatea "Frate si sora, campioni la dans", 2006, available online at URL <http://www.libertatea.ro/ultima-ora/frate-si-sora-campioni-la-dans-132538>, accessed on 11.04.2017.
- Moraru CE, 2014, Teoria și practica în sporturi de expresie-dans sportiv, pg 70, Iasi, available online at URL <https://www.scribd.com/doc/295675954/Dans-Sportiv-2014>, accessed on 05.05.2017.