

THE PEDAGOGICAL AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING EVALUATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS FROM THE ECO TOURISM CLASS

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Abstract

Purpose: The paper in question wishes to point out the knowledge, skills and habits the master students have assimilated in the practical and methodical process within the tourist and ecological activities, on one hand, and to verify the contents of the curriculum regarding ecological tourism within the educational plans of the program mentioned above, on the other hand.

Methods: The main method that we used was the self-evaluation chart regarding the pedagogical and professional training, of the first year students engaged in the Tourist and Free Time Sporting Activities Master, graduates of the ecological tourism class.

Results: Through the self-evaluation chart, regarding the pedagogical and professional training of students, indicators of the degree of specialization for the future teachers have been obtained.

Conclusion: The pedagogical and professional training, realized with the help of ecological tourism, as a modern way of learning, has become an important methodological instrument that focuses on the way in which the objectives of the curriculum can be attained. Through a series of precise methods, which the theory highlights, the student is being trained to interpret and analyze the processes and the phenomena in the environment.

Key words: ecological tourism, evaluation, self-evaluation, students.

Introduction

Some authors, drawing their basis from their teacher/researcher experience, claim that between tourism and the environment lays a complex relationship which is manifested in both directions (Chiriță, G., 1983, Donoiaica, Șt., 1989). Within the professional training of students from the faculties of physical education and sport, the assimilation of knowledge regarding the tourist activity and its influence on the ecological environment become imperative. According to the Berlin Declaration, 1997, which states, among others, “attracting local population and institutions for applying the eco tourist actions”, the reorientation of the pedagogical and professional training of physical education students is imperative to what a special attention to the ecological tourism is concerned, an attainable thing through a special training from a new curriculum in the ecological tourism discipline (R Enoiu, 2007).

The New National Curriculum tries, and mostly succeeds, to orientate education according to the contemporary dynamic society, and in perspective, to orientate it on the social and economical needs, anticipating the necessities of Romania’s integration to the European Union (V. Guțu & colab. 2003). The dynamism of the social, economical and cultural phenomena asks the education to develop, on a superior level, the interdisciplinary connections of the scientific domains as a stringent demand of yielding the student’s personality and his active integration capacity in the contemporary society (L Hainaut, 1981). Both the content of the physical education and that of the sportive training must be reoriented so that the main direction of the instructive and educative process, as an integrant of general education, answers the demands of the contemporary society in which the future graduate will

move and develop as an important member of the big continental society (R.S Enoiu., 2000).

For many specialists, the quality of education is primarily related to results, and the latter, are usually appreciated if they are explicitly defined as being cognitive (M. Jigău & colab., 2001). Neglecting the emotional, moral and esthetical aspects of the social integration represents a lack of the evaluative system which claims to be signally objective and rigorous. All the knowledge, the capacities and the general attitudes are so tightly connected that the measure of one implicitly represents the measure of the other (P. Lisievici, 1997). From the technical point of view, the added value to the student’s professional yielding, with the teacher’s contribution, is being stratified to the general construct level of personality in the form of capacities, attitudes and skills incorporated inside individuals (E. Moldovan, 2008).

The evaluation theories, regardless of their orientation, mention two fundamental types of evaluation that is formative and normative (G. Meyer, 2000). While the first one deals with students, trying to develop their cognitive set as to attain certain skills, the second one deals both with students and teachers and favors the selection decisions as to predicatively admit/orientate or as to asset the presence of an assimilated capacity.

In the evaluation and self-evaluation activity the so-called unique theories have five components. In the following paragraphs, we shall present the fixed points that have become the basis of their construction (W.Shadish, 1995):

- The practical component: refers to the specifics of the eco tourism pointing out the relationship with the program beneficiaries (the pupils), the decision

taken under theoretical reflections, the temporal, financial, procedural and staff constraints;

- The knowledge component: marks the set of acceptable information regarding the evaluated domain (ecological tourism), with methods that can provide credible proves and philosophical assumptions of the worthiest knowledge available;
- The component of value: refers to the values that should be represented in the pedagogical and professional training evaluation within tourism in general and eco tourism in particular;
- The **practice** component: refers to the way in which one can use the information from the ecological tourism in practice and social programming, to the different types of practice, to the relative importance of each and every one and to the measure that can be taken to increase the using of programs;
- The **social programming** component: indicates the nature of the programs and their role in solving the social matters: the internal structure and the functioning of the programs, the relations with other institutions, the processes through which the programs and their components can be improved.

The research's premises

The instructive and educative process of the pedagogical and professional training of the students engaged in the Tourist and Free Time Sporting Activities Master within the ecological tourism class has been realized through accomplishing programmed objectives according to the pre established rigors of the educational curriculum. As a consequence one is able to combine the common activities with the individual ones bearing in mind the unfolding of the instructive and educative process in the context of the specific contents estimated in the "ecological tourism" discipline.

First of all, the purpose of this research has been the appreciation of knowledge, skills and habits assimilated in the practical and methodical process within the tourist and ecological activities implemented.

The second objective has been traced in verifying and estimating the contents of the curriculum for the ecological tourism discipline within the educational plans of the program mentioned above.

The structure of the curriculum for the discipline Ecological Tourism is presented down below:

General objective:

Valorize and protect the natural ecosystems through ecologic tourism sports activities.

References objectives are direction to 4 principals theme:

1. Health;
2. Professional-pedagogical;
3. Ecological;
4. Recreation;

1. Health objectives:

- Maintained health steady through specific ecotourism physical activities;
- Perfecting motor habit for practicing ecological tourism;

- Develop base motor capacity.

2. Professional-pedagogical objectives:

- Forming a "baggage" of knowledge's, attitudes and aptitudes specific for ecological tourism;
- Forming organize and lead capacity for ecological tourism activities;
- Forming capacities for making projects about protect environments through ecological tourism activities.

3. Ecological objectives:

- Forming ecological conscience;
- Comprehension fundamental notions about ecology and environment protection;
- Intellectual capability for connecting relationship between human – environment - bio systems.

4. Recreations objectives:

- Identify the trip and the excursion like recreation and active rest activities; learn to relax the joy of resting manifested by curiosity about ambient medium.
- Get knowledge's and cultivate interests for existent local and national ethnicity and traditions, on behalf of their valorization.
- Identify the stress sources and the modality to avoid them; relaxing in the nature for body comfort in support of raising physical resisting individual level.

Discipline content

Theoretical courses themes

- Tourism and ecology. History, content, terms significations, specifically pedagogy.
- Specific and distinct environments character education and ethical aspects.
- Tourism activities like education method.
- Organizing modes and forms of ecologic tourism activities.
- Eco-tourism's exemplificative itineraries. Importance and their functions. Itineraries types.
- Qualities, roles and aims that programs leaderships needs in ecologic tourism activities.
- Professional prepare of physical education and sports specialists for ecologic tourism direction.
- Different characters for excursion develop after followed type and scope.
- Program designed for ecologic tourism activities prepare.

Practical activities themes

Lesson 1; 2 – Equipments and materials that are necessary for practicing ecologic tourism.

Lesson 3; 4 - Ecologic tourism particularities and base notions for field orienteering and arrange places and containers for waste products.

Lesson 5; 6 – Presenting natural's habitual places and their most important characteristics.

Lesson 7; 8; 9 – Maintain and develop health steady through activities happened in natural cadre.

Lesson 10; 11 – Methods for arrange tourism path.

Lesson 12; 13 – Methods for earth work consolidation (against earth slippers).

Lesson 14 – Tourism competitions for ecologies natural habitually places.

Finality, in the vein of physical education results through ecotourism means, can be done throughout:

1. Obtaining ecologic consciousness;
2. Forming attitudes and aptitudes for conserve and protect ecosystems.
3. Forming professional – pedagogical of graduate student, from physical education end sport faculties, throughout sustain the needs of promoting moral and ethical responsibilities about ecosystems.

Methods and techniques used

Based on the components mentioned above one has conceived the self-evaluation chart regarding the pedagogical and professional training of the first year students engaged in the Tourist and Free Time Sporting

Activities Master, graduates of the ecological tourism class. The chart has emphasized the level of practical and methodical skills of students within the pedagogical practice and the level of applicability of the latter.

The evaluation and self-evaluation chart has been made based on eight components, each of them containing four items. The components have regarded the multilateralism of the pedagogical and professional training as well as the applicability of the acquired knowledge within the practical hours provided by the “ecological tourism” curriculum.

To each component one has assigned a number of ten points regardless of the number of items contained. The maximum score is of eighty points.

We point out that the results presented here have been validated considering the following grades (table 1):

Table 1
The obtained grades depending on percentages

100% - 80%	- Very well
79%-70%	- Well
69% - 60%	- Sufficient
Sub 60%	- Insufficient

Results

Next we present the centralized results out of the twenty-five charts of evaluation and self-evaluation of the group that attended the optional class of ecological tourism.

In the course of the students’ pedagogical practice the results have been centralized in table 2 depending on the components and the items used in the evaluation. To what the counselling activity is concerned, in the schools that undertook pedagogical practice, one has noticed that at both student and parent level a certain activity has been conducted which has proved to be very good, the revealed percentages, that is 96% for pupil counselling and 80% for parent counselling, confirming it. The pupil counselling has had the biggest percentage, the students undergoing their activity with terrific results, both individually and group oriented. In the case of the third component, “school and professional oriented activities”, the students have met certain difficulties in motivating the pupils and setting up thematic circles. This is also proved by the average score of the items contained in the component in question. Thus, the average for the “information” component has been 2,8, the “presenting your motivation” one 2,48 and the “setting up thematic circles” one 2,2. The percentage for this component has been one of the lowest, the students registering a percentage of 75,8% (grade – “well”).The forth component contained the self-evaluation of the planning and programming documents students have worked with in the eco tourism zone. To what this component is concerned, two out of three items have been totally realized, the latter pointing out “planning the ecological activity” and “programming a certain group eco tourist activity”. The third item created certain difficulties, especially when trying to communicate them

to the school board and school inspectorate. Thus, during the pedagogical practice, fifteen students out of twenty-five have managed to organize an eco tourism contest. The students’ intention was to realize a contest with the participation of all schools, but the challenge proved to be very difficult, in the end the contests being held at the level of each school. The average score for this item has been 2, 32, managing to diminish the score for the forth component up to 83, 2%, the grade still remaining “very well”. Obtaining the thematic materials provided in the fifth component presumed getting in touch with the local library for procuring ecological maps and guides, on one hand, and establishing certain contacts with the Local Directive for Youth and Sport and other tourist and orientation sporting clubs, from which one has obtained different specific eco tourism equipments used during practice hours in schools, on the other hand. The degree of accomplishment for this component has been very high as well, the student group managing a general percentage of 82, 4%.Students have reacted unexpectedly well in the sixth component – “net working”. Thus, the average score for the first two items has been maximum, the collaboration with teachers, colleagues and other institutions involved in the tourist activity being extremely good. To what the third item is concerned, “registering in different local, regional and national school activities”, the students have met major difficulties. This was due to the fact that the students did not spot associations that had tourism as an object in general and ecological tourism in particular. Once identified, these associations stipulated that the registration in the school circle be realized by a teacher, employee of that same school. In this case, students came up with a solution, which is setting up a school association called “The Little Eco Tourist” with the

participation of five school form the Brasov. The average percentage for this component has been of 80%, a very good one.

Table 2 Centralizer of the pedagogical and professional self-evaluation charts of first year Master students (n . 25)

Nr. crt	Components/items	Maximum score/item	Obtained score/item/group	Average score/group	Total score/component	Component obtaining percentage/group
1.	Counselling pupils on the importance of eco tourism	10				
a.	-groups	5	120	4,8	240	96%
b.	- individually	5	120	4,8		
2.	Counselling parents on the eco tourist activities	10				
a.	- groups	5	125	5	200	80%
b.	- individually	5	75	3		
3.	School oriented and professional activities	10				
a.	- information	3	70	2,8	187	74,8%
b.	- presenting your motivation	3	62	2,48		
c.	- setting up thematic circles	4	55	2,2		
4.	Planning and programming documents	10				
a.	- ecological activity plan	3	75	3	208	83,2%
b.	-programming an eco tourist group activity	3	75	3		
c.	-organizing a contest called „young ecologists”	4	58	2,32		
5.	Obtaining the thematic materials	10				
a.	- maps	3	72	2,88	206	82,4%
b.	- guidance/ecological educative guides	3	71	2,84		
c.	- specific eco tourism out fit	4	63	2,52		
6.	Net working	10				
a.	- collaborating with other institutions	3	75	3	200	80%
b.	- collaborating with colleagues/ teachers	3	75	3		
c.	- registering in local/national associations	4	50	2		
7.	Professional yielding	10				
a.	- participating in scientific student sessions	3	75	3	211	84,4%
b.	- perfectioning classes	4	81	3,24		
c.	- school exchange	3	55	2,2		
8.	Attracting material resources	10				
a.	- sponsors	3	67	2,68	152	60,8%
b.	- donations	3	65	2,6		
c.	- participating in local projects	4	20	0,8		
	Total	80			1604	80,2%

In order to provide a real connection between the theoretical demands and the practical possibilities offered by the schools in which the pedagogical practice has been conducted, the needs of the eighth component have regarded the attraction of material resources, mostly from donations, sponsors and the participation in different projects. Surprisingly, the first two items, the ones referring to attracting sponsors and donations, have successfully been accomplished by the majority of students. The latter, as a consequence of a good parent counseling (the second component) have managed, basing their actions on a great relationship with the pupils' families, to attract certain sums of money destined to implementing different eco tourist activities and thematic materials (boards, books, two tents, ropes, etc.) Instead, the last item of the component, referring to the participation in different projects, has created the biggest problems for the future specialists.

This was due to several factors of which we point out the following: little time available, the weak collaboration at local level of the institutions capable of generating projects and the general difficulties generated by the weak information regarding the minimum and necessary conditions of participating in such projects in the first place. All of these difficulties have had certain implications in accomplishing the item that summed the lowest average score, 0, 8 with repercussions in the general percentage of accomplishment of the eighth component as well, which was the lowest 60, 8% („sufficient”).

Discussion and conclusion

In a nutshell, one can state that through the self-evaluation chart, regarding the pedagogical and professional training of students, indicators of the degree of specialization for the future teachers have been obtained. In this sense, one can invoke the percentages obtained to each of the eight components, as well as the general percentage totalized in the twenty-five self-evaluation charts which have summed up 1604 points out of 2000 possible, the percentage of

the proposed activities being extremely high, almost 80, 2%.

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