Considerations regarding the creative dimension of the physical education and sports didactic process

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Abstract

Starting from the premise that the students’ opinions can give us an image on the way a modern teaching process should be adopted, as a creative didactic activity, we conducted an inquiry among the senior students from the "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau. The information gathered from the 97 students we questioned has shown important aspects regarding this phenomenon, on the basis of which, an applicative intervention would benefit the harmonization of the process of educating the creativity of the Physical Education and Sports teachers, in compliance with the demands of an European education. The analysis of the answers has shown a coexistence of elements corresponding to a routinized and inflexible behavior, with elements linked with diminishing the authoritarian impact generated by the abusive use of commands, and exaggerated control of the teachers over the students' performances.

Keywords: creative dimension, didactic process, physical education;

1. Introduction

In today's world, where intelligence, creativity, and adaptability became key human resources for development, the teacher cannot manifest but as a promoter of creative thinking, of creative attitude and behavior. (Văideanu, G., quoted by Dobrescu, T. et al., 2008, p.91). In a continuously moving society, similar to the one described by Pierre de Coubertin, this competes to a modeling of the student's personality, to forming a free and creative person, capable not only to adapt to changes, but also to anticipate/project his/her development (Cojocariu, V., 2000, p.159). The creative dimension of leading the teaching process is associated with a trainer - modern manager, always dynamic, inventive, with an authority that is nuanced according to the situation (Păun, E., quoted by Dobrescu, T. and Constantinescu, E., 2008, p. 127).

The most important aspect of the creative dimension of leadership is creating an energizing, exciting climate, favorable for the development of the students' autonomy, initiative, creativity, and obtaining high academic performances. Understanding high performance not just as an athletic result, but as a complex process that allows the pupil to develop his/her personality (Boucherin, B. et al., 2001, p. 6), we are in complete agreement with A. Pieper (2001, p. 8), who suggests that this implies "also an aspect of freedom and creativity."

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Under these conditions, we must train creative Physical Education and Sports teachers, because "nothing defines more the nobility of human activity, but its effort to create, to innovate, its infinite desire to know, and thirst for knowledge" (Năstase, Șt. quoted by Dobrescu, T. et al., 2008, p.42).

2. Material and methods

Starting from the premise that the students' opinions can give us an image on the way a modern teaching process should be adopted, as a creative didactic activity, we conducted an inquiry, during the academic year of 2011-2012, among the senior students from the "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau.

In this research, we started from the hypothesis stating that knowing the creative dimension of the teaching process in the Physical Education and Sports faculties constitutes the starting point for an applicative intervention benefiting the harmonization of the training process within the context of an European education.

The research methods we used were: the study of the literature, the observation, the questionnaire inquiry, the statistical-mathematical method and the graphical representation method.

For this, we did an investigation that was based on 10 item questionnaire. For a greater relevance of the answers, most questions had prefigured answers. The questionnaire was applied to 97 students in the terminal years of the Faculty of Movement, Sports, and Health Sciences of Bacau.

3. Results

To the question that asks the students to consider whether creativity is an important dimension of the future teacher/trainer, 90 subjects answered affirmatively (92.78%). This proves that most of the subjects are aware of the importance of this quality in the teacher's personality that ensures the effectiveness of the didactic act.

The next item asked the subjects to enumerate the main traits that characterize a creative, inventive teacher. The 88 subjects (90.72%) who answered this question have enumerated 9 categories of skills, classified in 5 ranks. In Table 1 we can observe the ability of a considerable number of respondents who identified important elements for the character profile of future teachers.

Table 1. Traits of the future teacher, according to the students

| Rank | No. | Answers                                      | Total Answers | Percentage % |
|------|-----|----------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| I    | 1   | Originality, Imagination, Inventiveness      | 35            | 39.77        |
| II   | 2   | Intelligence                                 | 22            | 25.00        |
| III  | 3   | Spontaneity, adapting quickly to new situations, permanently looking for new solutions | 18            | 20.45        |
|      | 4   | Vast knowledge of the field, teaching experience | 15            | 17.04        |
| IV   | 5   | Conducting varied and attractive classes, the desire to accomplish something new, liking new things | 15            | 17.04        |
|      | 6   | Disposition for dialog, empathy, instating relations of collaboration, an open door for the students | 15            | 17.04        |
| V    | 7   | Promotion of diversity and stimulation of the students' imagination | 15            | 17.04        |
|      | 8   | Passion for the job, theoretical and practical background | 9             | 10.22        |
|      | 9   | Creative thinking                            | 9             | 10.22        |

Asked if they can lead in a creative way certain parts of the lesson, most subjects, 43 (44.32%) said they were ready to lead every section of the lesson, 29 students (29.89%) chose the thematic sections, and 25 students (25.77%), the first three sections of the lesson.

At the fourth question, which invited the students to indicate which lesson themes demand their creative thinking, 94 subjects answered (96.90%). The first place, with 37 answers (39.36%) belongs to lessons with gymnastics themes, followed by invasion games, with 24 answers (25.33%), 21 (22.34%) think that no lesson is difficult to teach, and 12 (12.76%) indicate the track and field lessons.
Thus, we can see the teachers' preoccupations for promoting tendencies toward the cultivation of imagination and creative thinking, especially in gymnastics (acrobatic, rhythmic, aerobic gymnastics), volleyball, handball, basketball, and Physical Education didactics. (fig. 1)

![Figure 1. Ways of approaching the lesson and its thematic](image)

The next question gave the subjects the possibility to assess how often the teachers have presented new means of organizing and conducting their lessons, aiming to stimulate the interest of the students. These novelties were represented by the way in which the ideas were presented, the teaching means and methods. 25 subjects (25.77%) think that these changes are constant, 46 (47.42%) believe that they are often, and 26 (26.80%) - rarely. None of the subjects said that the changes do not exist. (fig.2)

![Figure 2. The frequency of renewal in the lesson](image)

The 3 times higher number of positive answers (73.19%) proves that most of the respondents are aware of the existence of preoccupations for making the didactic methodology more flexible and diverse, for performing didactic
activities in an original way, a fact that expresses the creativity in the teachers' behavior. Only a quarter of the subjects think that there still exist tendencies toward routine, rigidity, conservative nature, conventional content, and stereotypical procedures.

At the question “Did the teachers encourage you to give original solution to the themes (problems) that you had to solve?” 94 subjects answered, representing 96.90%, out of which 6 subjects said never (6.38%), and 18, rarely (19.15%). The answers prove that the teachers encourage often (74.47%) the students to find varied and original solutions, being preoccupied with the development of innovative thinking., and the training of the ability to operate originally and independently. However, we observed that there are still among them some who use more the simple gathering of information, the mere reproduction of knowledge, who still demand that some problems be solved using a model that shows a conformist thinking.

With the next question, we wanted to see if during the lessons there was a permissive, collaborative, and interesting atmosphere. 5 subjects (5.15%) thought that there was never such an atmosphere, 12 (12.37%) – rarely, 51 (52.58%) – often, and 29 (29.90%) – always. (fig. 3) The data presented above highlights a smaller number of authoritarian, autocratic, directive teachers, who create a closed climate, restrictive and inhibitive relations. The 82.48% certifies the presence of teachers with a non-authoritarian behavior, who promote a permissive atmosphere, based on trust, and on relaxed, democratic relations. These create conditions for the development of creativity, and the stimulation of high academic performances. Of course, there exists some form of authority in this case that encourages the search, favors the development, tries deliberately to suppress the student's dependence on the teacher, and tries to develop the autonomy, in thinking and socio-emotionally.

![Figure 3.](image)
The presence of democracy and collaboration in the lesson

The subjects who answered the question "In assessing your knowledge, did the teachers take into consideration original answers?" expressed their opinion as follows: 3 (3.09%) – never; 17 (17.52%) – rarely; 49 (50.52%) – often; 28 (28.87%) – always. (fig. 4). The answers show that the students' assessment rarely refers to the reproduction of assimilated information, as a well-consolidated system used to do, leaving unexploited not only the essential intellectual qualities, and it emphasizes the aspects of a formative education (beliefs, practical organizational skills, imagination, etc.). The teachers who evaluate the students in this manner contribute to the education of an innovative thinking, the development of critical and creative thinking,. The stimulation by marks the student's individual study, original answers, interpretation, independent thinking, and applying the knowledge, will lead to positive results. Beside these characteristics, the creative teacher can frequently use the change of the assessment's character, to the development of the self-assessment ability, and the students' tendency to surpass their abilities and perfect themselves.
In order to determine the persons who have constituted a model of creative behavior, the students were asked to make a hierarchy, based on the given importance, of the first 3 persons in the following categories: teachers of the Physical Education faculty, Physical Education teachers from the schools where they have studied, teachers of other disciplines from the schools where they have studied, coaches, Physical Education teachers from the schools where they had their pedagogical internship, colleagues, other persons. At this question 93 students answered (95.87%), 1 student (1.03%) gave an incomplete answer, and 3 (3.09%) gave null answers. 43 subjects (46.24%) put the faculty teachers in the first place, 19 subjects (20.43%) thought that the contribution of the coach and of the PE teachers in the schools were they had their pedagogical internship were equally important. In third place, according to 12 subjects (12.90%) were the PE teachers in the schools where they have studied. (fig. 5). The other categories had very few votes. The relatively high percentage of the students who appreciate the creative behavior of the teachers is encouraging. We can see that more than a quarter of the inquired people place in first position the teacher in the higher education institutions, which constitutes a positive assessment, and represents the belief that in those institutions there are preoccupations for a creative approach of the lessons, and modeling the teachers with creative competencies.
22 subjects (22.68%) think that the university teaching is very good, 46 (47.42%) good, 28 (28.88%) average, and 1 subject (1.03%) thinks it is poor.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the answers highlights the existence of elements that would diminish the authoritarian impact generated by the abusive use of commands, excessive control of the performances, in cases of a routine and inflexible behavior.

We also observed some aspects regarding the emergence of a democratic teaching style that stimulates the cooperation, the initiative, and the participation of the students when decisions are to be made, the active and creative involvement in the teaching process, combining leading with self-leading.

Starting from the idea that modern education demands inventiveness and competence, initiative and responsibility from teachers, we can conclude that in teaching there is a tendency to overcome an embarrassing tradition and to promote a new way of thinking and teaching style, open to an authentic renewal of the teaching and education methodology.

Thus we can create the premises for training a competent specialist, who is receptive to new ideas, contributing to a full formation of the psycho-pedagogical profile of the future Physical Education and Sports specialist, a profile that includes, without a doubt, a competence regarding creativity.

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