

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS
BUCHAREST**

ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

Author: Zahiu Mihaela

Scientific coordinator: Prof. PhD Sabina Macovei

**Title of the thesis: MANAGING THE INITIAL TRAINING OF HUMAN
RESOURCE TO OPTIMIZE TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN
DANCESPORT**

Keywords: dancesport, educational management, human resource, teaching skills

Introduction

To train teachers is hard work, because beyond the transmission of knowledge, shaping their personality is also required. The profession of educator is a vocational one, which could be characterized by the statement: *“A good teacher is like a candle. It consumes itself to light the way for others”* (Mustafa Kemal Atatürk).

Success in managing the educational process and implementing the teaching-learning strategies should occur under the motto expressed by Academician Grigore Moisil: *“It is known that a good teacher is the one who makes harder things to seem easier”*.

Motivation and purpose

In physical education and sports field, numerous professional specializations are needed to manage the instructional process, which provides the completion of a wide range of motor activities and sports disciplines. This interdisciplinary field builds and requires many specific skills, their training management being essential to ensure the quality of teaching. Consequently, choosing this theme has come from the need to prepare future graduates according to the diversification of educational offer and options for diverse motor activities.

The experience gained during the 8 years of teaching dancesport in the physical education activity and the analysis of its benefits to children and

adolescents have determined the choice of this theme for the doctoral thesis. Thus, the thesis aimed to develop a training strategy for physical education teachers, which can optimize teaching methodology in dancesport and can be implemented in profile faculties. The research was conducted at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports (FEFS) within the National University of Physical Education and Sports (UNEFS) of Bucharest, and the subjects were 1st year students having in their curriculum the compulsory course named “Theory and practice in expression sports”.

Given the growing impact of dance on student education, we considered it appropriate to conduct a research on the most suitable style to be used in human resource training for teaching dancesport in school or at the beginner level.

Theoretical, methodological and operational framework of the research

According to the requirements of Regulations on the organization and development of doctoral studies at UNEFS, the thesis is structured in three parts, Part I dealing with the theoretical foundations necessary to clarify the preliminary research steps, described in Part II, and the experimental ones, presented in Part III.

Theoretical foundations start with a debate on the topicality of the theme in specialized literature, followed by the presentation of two concepts, “educational management” and “human resource”, in the education process. It continues with a synthesis of the initial training characteristics and requirements on human resource, with specific references to the dance field as an expression activity through which aesthetic education is achieved in schools, followed by a theoretical approach to dancesport. The traits of the activity and the consequences of teaching in the field of physical education and sports are discussed in relation to the necessary skills for a teacher to provide the teaching-learning process.

Conclusions of the theoretical part highlight an increased number of works on dancesport, but it should be noted that their topics are rather addressed from the perspective of technical descriptions and less from that of establishing clear and scientifically grounded methodical lines. The works approaching issues related to human resource training for teaching dancesport within various forms of activity are insufficient and, from this perspective, the theme of the thesis becomes appropriate and shows originality.

Part II is a preliminary research that aimed at developing a unitary methodical line to optimize teaching methodology in dancesport, regardless of the type and category in which it is included, Standard or Latino section. In parallel, the research aimed at investigating the opinions of students about dancesport, their preferences for different dance styles and how they perceived the role of dance, as an educational subject, in their professional training.

The research took into account the recommendations and principles established in the guide for students, teachers and higher education institutions regarding the *student-centered education*, with reference to student awareness of the activity performed for their professional training, as well as their motivation and active engagement in the learning process.

The starting premise was that students should be trained for building the necessary skills to teach dancesport through a useful and attractive activity.

In accordance with the established purpose, the research conducted between October 2013 and January 2014, during the first semester of the academic year 2013-2014, had two directions of action:

- developing and implementing a methodical line project for teaching dance during the course of “Theory and practice in expression sports”, which takes place in the first semester of the 1st year of studies at FEFS, the course being compulsory for both specializations and including 14 practical works, according to the curriculum;
- conducting an opinion questionnaire survey addressed to students.

Two questionnaires were designed within the survey.

The first questionnaire survey aimed to capture the common trends, as well as the variations in the subjects’ initial knowledge and preferences for certain musical and dance styles, interest in the body expression activities, level of information about them, knowledge of dance styles and desire to become dance instructors. The respondents, 105 in number, represented the total of all groups of 1st year students who attended the first lesson of the course.

The use of the second questionnaire, complemented and enhanced, is motivated by the desire to see to what extent the course has influenced the opinions of subjects. Questionnaire no. 2 was filled in during the last lesson of the semester, in the 14th week. The respondents, 154 in number, represented the total of all groups of 1st year students who attended the final lesson of the course.

The methodical line project was applied to all groups of students according to the FEFS curriculum. Its content complies with the course description and includes general notions relating to the aesthetics of movement, rhythmicity and musicality, and also the essential aspects needed to acquire the basic technique.

The knowledge gained by studying this course was practically applied, the investigated students participating in the 1st edition of the competition “Cup of 1st Year Students - Dancesport”.

Data obtained by analyzing the questionnaire responses were interpreted using the statistical method and the results were significant.

Preliminary research conclusions emphasize that, by knowing the preferences of students for different dance styles, we can gather relevant data to manage the teaching process and orient the teaching contents so that we combine

the useful with the pleasant. In this regard, building a positive attitude among students for attending the course of “Theory and practice in expression sports” and achieving competences in the dance field should be added to a coherent teaching methodology that takes into account the preferences of young people. Its usefulness will be found in building the motivation of future specialists for teaching dance in the physical education activity.

The course had a positive impact, proven by the questionnaire responses, which has entitled us to consider it beneficial, as it brings really valuable and useful competences for training specialists in the physical education and sports field. We think that the designed methodical line applied to the entire academic year is valid, has achieved its objectives and can be developed within the original research, which will aim to establish a managerial strategy of human resource training for teaching dancesport in the physical educations and sports activity.

Part III of the thesis, namely the experimental research, has started from the premise that educational services provided by higher education must always aspire to excellence, by introducing quality management as a complex action based on accurate monitoring procedures and tools. The prestige of an institution that provides training is gained through the value of graduates and the formation of their competences for the field in which they have been trained.

The research aims to improve the educational process of human resource training in physical education and sports and to provide it with specific skills and knowledge for teaching dancesport at the beginner level and during physical education lessons.

Preliminary research **objectives** aimed to:

- Establish strategic directions in organizing and directing the teaching design of the course entitled “Theory and practice in expression sports”.
- Improve permanent and final assessment methodology, together with that for appraising the skills acquired after completing the dancesport course.
- Improve teaching system using the “reflexive teaching” method to consolidate knowledge and immediately assess the level of acquired practical-methodical knowledge, abilities and skills.

Research hypotheses

1. Using a unitary methodical line and reflexive-type teaching, characteristic to active-creative learning, ensures quicker and easier assimilation of learning contents, in parallel with the formation of practical-methodical competences.
2. Applying an assessment system differentiated by types of competences highlights the knowledge acquired by students during their professional training.

3. Using interactive methods and means for teaching dancesport can lead to optimization of some personality traits in students at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports.

The experiment was conducted at FEFS, within the UNEFS, between 1.10.2014 and 23.01.2015, and the subjects were 1st year students at both specializations, Physical and Sports Education, and Sports and Motor Performance.

Experiment groups included:

- 2 groups with specialization in Physical Education and Sports (EFS) - 11 EFS and 12 EFS;
- 2 groups with specialization in Sports and Motor Performance (SPM) - 16 SPM and 17 SPM.

Control groups were 3 in number: 13 EFS, 14 SPM and 15 SPM.

The choice of groups was made randomly, according to time schedule set by the Deanship, and participation in testing of the subjects from each group took into account their attendance and involvement in the activity carried out during the 14 compulsory practical works provided in the curriculum.

The research had three directions of action:

1. Development of an instruction strategy in compliance with the standardized scheme for achieving the instructional design, according to E.D. Colibaba.

The general content of teaching was the same for all groups of students (experiment and control ones), respecting the unitary methodical line, completed and presented within the preliminary research, and the requirements specified in the course description.

The independent variable was applied to experiment groups and referred to the teaching methods and means used. Thus, compared to control groups where classical teaching was used, for the experiment groups, it was introduced the “reflexive teaching” method, considered in specialized literature as attractive, with potential to stimulate creativity, communication and cooperation skills, and also motivating for the learners.

2. Psychological testing performed at the beginning and the end of the course, using the Five-Factor Personality Questionnaire (CP5F).

Testing aimed to find out whether and to what extent the course influenced the subjects’ personality as well.

Testing was done in cooperation with the UNEFS Psycho-Pedagogy Laboratory, under the direct supervision of psychologists Georgiana Mitache, Associate Professor PhD, and Radu Predoiu, Assistant Lecturer PhD.

Result analysis was performed comparing the experiment groups, control groups and a sample of subjects called “experts”, represented by dancesport coaches, using the statistical indicators of central tendency and dispersion, as well as the Wilcoxon test.

Testing results showed significant improvement in the manifestation of some personality traits in the experiment group subjects compared to control group subjects. We consider that this evolution is due to the preparation programme that has used active teaching methods and means, creating an appropriate environment and situations adapted to the specific field, an aspect recommended by the psychopedagogical literature.

3. Development and implementation of an assessment system differentiated by types of competences

Assessment was achieved on three levels:

Initial assessment consisted of *oral questioning* and was applied at the beginning of the experiment, in the first lesson. Questions were general, relating to dance and music, and aimed to detect the subjects' knowledge about them.

Continuous assessment used the observation method and consisted in applying the "reflexive teaching" method (initiated by D.R. Cruickshank and presented by N.V. Florea in the work "Training, coaching, mentoring") to experimental groups.

Final assessment consisted in the development of a checking system differentiated by types of competences, which highlighted objectively the level of knowledge acquired by students after completing the course description. This assessment included three categories of tests:

- theoretical test (multiple choice test);
- practical-methodical test, focused on the practical-methodical skills and abilities acquired during the course;
- competition test.

Assessment was performed based on an evaluation sheet structured on criteria, related skills and the scoring system used.

To analyze data from the final assessment of the course, there were used, as calculated statistical indicators, the central tendencies (arithmetic mean), dispersion and form of distribution (standard deviation, coefficient of variation), and the independent Student test, in order to test the differences between average values of the seven groups of subjects.

We think that the significantly better results achieved by the experiment groups emphasize the added value issued from the use of a stimulating and evaluative strategy focused on enhancing, in each lesson, the skills acquired by students. We consider that applying the assessment system structured on skill-related criteria reveals the level of knowledge gained by students during their professional training, the research results being supported by the statistical analysis used.

By valorizing in each lesson the knowledge acquired by students, it was possible for us to apply an active and stimulating intervention, in order to build the teaching skills necessary to the physical education and sports field.

Conclusions

In the field of sports and physical education science, human resource training is a complex activity, in which the future specialist's personality is fully engaged, from the bio-psycho-socio-cultural perspective.

The graduates' level of awareness and confidence in the acquired knowledge, the developed competences and skills and the lived experiences is related to their motivation for the performed activity and is reflected in their level of satisfaction.

Initial training of human resource for teaching expression activities - dancesport - within the physical education and sports activity should use a complex managerial strategy based on interactive-creative learning, which provides students with the ability to use the acquired knowledge and skills.

The strategy developed by us and applied to experimental groups was in compliance with the standardized scheme for achieving the instructional design, according to E.D. Colibaba (2010: 79). Its content aimed to implement a unitary methodical line, which could be adapted to any dancesport style, regardless of its category.

We consider that applying the "reflexive teaching" method to experimental groups has improved the teaching system, as well as the system of building the subjects' competences. At the same time, permanent and final assessment methodology has improved, together with that for appraising the skills acquired after completing the dancesport course.

Validity of the strategy is supported by the statistically significant results achieved by the experiment group subjects in both the theoretical and practical-methodical assessment and the personality test.

In the context of the above-mentioned statements, we consider that hypothesis no. 1 of the research has been validated.

The applied strategy led to quicker and easier assimilation of learning contents, in parallel with the formation of practical-methodical competences, which raised the attractiveness of lessons and the motivation of students for the performed activity.

The quality and efficiency of instruction was appraised using three main ways of assessment:

- continuous assessment, present in each lesson and achieved through the "reflexive teaching" method and its related means;
- final assessment, differentiated by competence-related criteria, which emphasized the knowledge acquired after completing the course description;

- psychological assessment, which proved optimization of some personality traits in the experiment group subjects, due, in our opinion, to the teaching system used.

In the context of the results achieved at the theoretical and practical-methodical final assessment, also supported by the statistical analysis used, we consider that hypothesis no. 2 of the research has been validated.

Analysis of the psychological testing results has proved that the experiment group subjects had positive evolutions in the manifestation of the five scales for assessing personality traits, and that for three of them, consciousness, emotional stability and agreeableness, the differences were statistically significant. We attribute these developments to the teaching system used, which, through interactive methods and means of teaching dancesport, has led to optimization of some personality traits in students at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports.

Given the obtained results, we consider that hypothesis no. 3 of the research has been validated.

We think that the research conducted to establish the way of managing the initial training of human resource for teaching dancesport in school has reached its purpose and contributes to improving educational services in profile universities. When expressing this opinion, we have in view both the preliminary and final research conducted by us.

Preliminary research has proved that, by knowing the opinions of students regarding the impact and benefits of completing a course for their professional training, we can collect feedback-related information, which is useful to ensure a student-centered education.

Final research has proved the usefulness of applying a professional training system based on rigorous thinking and the promotion of interactive and creative learning methods.