

# TRANSITION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN SYSTEM, BASED ON THE EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM (ECTS)

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## **Abstract**

We all know that Physical Education is important to students in being active, healthy and successful in their everyday life. PE has evolved significantly over the last decade. The introduction of the third class, several years ago in the curriculum of primary and high schools, and the approval of the law for implementation of tandem hours of PE from the first elementary class by PE teachers and teacher of the lower classes, makes it even better to understand the importance of this school subject. But, often we come across the question, "Which PE is better, Traditional PE or Progressive PE?". There are, of course, differing opinions on this issue, some with more emphasis on traditional education as being more radical but effective, while others, on progressive or modern education, are being justified by modern technology and the opportunity for sharing information. But, there are also those who think that mixing both traditional and modern education is the best solution (hybrid form of education). Thus, we cannot conclude which education is better, because both types have their own importance. The two opinions/types are at the same time similar and different from each other. Both, traditional and the modern education, should be given equal importance. As the needs of the people are changing, the education system also has to change, and this change should be accepted by the people. With the passing of time, things which were a luxury at that time have formed the basic needs now. As the needs grew, the education had to grow as well. If the education did not evaluate, then it would be difficult to fulfill the needs of today. In the Faculty of PE of Tetova, we have the experience of both programs. The old program has been implemented until ten years ago, while the last decade, the new ECTS program is in use. This year we are starting to work with both programs simultaneously. It remains to be seen which of the programs will survive in the future!

*Keywords:* Physical education, traditional education, modern education, ECTS.

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## **The term and concept of PE in Europe**

Physical education, also known as Phys Ed., PE, and known in many commonwealth countries as physical training or PT (The Daily Telegraph, 2008), is an educational course related to maintaining the human body through physical exercises (i.e. calisthenics) (What Is Calisthenics, 2018). It is taken during primary and secondary education and encourages psychomotor learning in a play or movement exploration setting to promote health (Anderson, D.

1989). Physical Education is "education through the physical". It aims to develop student's physical competence and knowledge of movement and safety, and their ability to use these to perform in a wide range of activities associated with the development of an active and healthy lifestyle. It also develops student's confidence and generic skills, especially those for collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking and aesthetic appreciation. These, together with the nurturing of positive values and attitudes in PE, provide a good foundation for student's lifelong and life-wide learning (Education Bureau, Honk Kong). According to the World Health Organization it is suggested that young children should be doing 60 minutes of exercise per day at least 3 times per week in order to maintain a healthy body. There appears to be no ready general consensus of the meaning of the term, the function and range of concepts of physical education. Culturally specific 'local' interpretations are widespread. Thus, degrees of congruence and diversity are juxtaposed in a 'globalisation'/'localisation' debate (Hardman, 1998). The reasons for diversity are not just culturally related because firstly it depends on the definition of the term concept and secondly of the function and structure of Physical Education as a school subject (Bain, L. 1994). Across Europe, concept of Physical Education e.g. Italy, Spain, Portugal English term PE is translated literally, in France the term is L'éducation physique et sportive, in Sweden it is Idrott i halsa (Sport and health) in Germany it is Sportunterricht (Sports teaching), (Bain, L. 1994). The central function of a Physical Education concept is related to Physical Education practice, Physical Education, Teacher Education and Research on Teaching Physical Education (Crum, B. 1994).

### **Historical root and concepts of European PE**

Viewed from the historical aspect, five concepts of Physical Education have been distinguished in historical contexts: 1. "the biological oriented training of the PE", is linked with Swedish gymnastics; 2. "the pedagogical education through movement concept", is linked with Austrian school of PE.; 3. "the Personalist movement educational concept", Is linked with Dutch/Netherlands/Holland authors; 4. "the conformist Sport socialization concept", is linked with German authors; 5. "the critical-constructive movement socialization", recommendation by Crum. (Crum, 1992, p.89; 1994, p.522). Gymnastics from Sweden spread throughout Europe after 1840s. The English public school model based on Sports and Games was diffused particularly during the 1880s and 1890s. After 1900s, the traditional concept of PE was revived and developed through various additional national initiatives in some European countries. Each European country developed a unique collection of exercises and methods of instruction and where variously identified. After War II, a process of 'Sovietization' began in the early 1950s with a "Physical Culture". In the early 1960s, first wave of Europeanization became visible (Roland, N. 2003).

In Macedonia it is Physical Culture even though study programs are named as Physical Education and health. As you can see from the above, this remains after the Second World War after the 1950s during the "Sovietization" process the term "Physical Culture" began to be used. I

hope that in the future there will be a need to change the term from Physical Culture to Physical Education, as it is in most states around the world.

### **The “Sportification of the PE process”**

In mid 1960s, sport had become an integral part of the PE curriculum, that time started a real “Sportification” of the whole PE curriculum. In 1980/81 started the de-construction of sport disciplines by general movement activities (e.g. running, jumping, throwing and non-competitive games). 1980 was not only a decade of transition of the PE curriculum and concept of teaching PE, but it is also known by the ‘pop songs’ refrain “*Teachers, leave your kids alone*” it also characterized the change to de-schooling, de-education, de-sporting activities, de-moralization in PE and devaluation of former standards in PE. The transition to an ‘*anything-goes-concept*’ in PE, beginning in the 1990s. A Danish colleague Jorgensen (1999) has compared this process of transition of former PE concepts to a “supermarket”, where everyone may take what he/she wants for teaching PE (Roland, N. 2003). The four main vectors of European Physical Education can be explained as: 1. The vector of cultural heritage of Physical Education; 2. The sport education vector; 3. The movement education vector and 4. The health education vector. As a conclusion, the Physical Education concepts “Sport education” and “Physical education” have been transformed to the “movement education” and “health education” have been continued to develop (Roland, N. 2003). The “Harmonization” of Physical Education concepts in Europe is the best solution of diversification of former national PE concepts.

As seen above, the discipline and seriousness of PE is not the same as before. It is true that today the schools are dominated by collective sports compared to individual sports, because of the fun character. It is also known that individual sports that have more complex movement structures and are less entertaining are always being overlooked. When older teachers talk about traditional education being better, then new teachers think they express nostalgia. But that is not the case, the excessive freedom and the influence of many global factors on students has led us to seek the physical education of the past and the effective value it has had. A popular saying of the recent times that students use is "The pupils know the Teacher by the hand", because the teacher starts the hour by throwing the ball out from the door half open, which means that the pupil has not even seen his face but only his arm or hand. Finally, PE classes are dedicated to students, so they should be organized according to the needs and requirements of students, but not departing from the three main principles of PE classes, such as education, health and recreation.

### **Traditional education**

The definition of traditional education varies greatly with geography and by historical period. Traditional education is also called customary education or conventional education. The main motive of Traditional education is to pass on the values, manners skills and the social practice to the next generations which are necessary for their survival (Targetstudy...). Traditional education, also known as back-to-basics, conventional education or customary education, refers to long-established customs that society traditionally used in schools. The chief business of

traditional education is to transmit to a next generation those skills, facts, and standards of moral and social conduct that adults consider them necessary for the next generation's material and social success (Dewey, J. 1938). Historically, the primary educational technique of traditional education was simple oral recitation: In a typical approach, students sat quietly at their places and listened to one student after another recite his or her lesson, until each had been called upon. The teacher's primary activity was assigning and listening to these recitations; students studied and memorized the assignments at home. A test or oral examination might be given at the end of a unit, and the process, which was called "assignment-study-recitation-test", was repeated. In addition to its overemphasis on verbal answers, reliance on rote memorization (memorization with no effort at understanding the meaning), and disconnected, unrelated assignments, it was also an extremely inefficient use of students' and teachers' time. This traditional approach also insisted that all students be taught the same materials at the same point; students that did not learn quickly enough failed, rather than being allowed to succeed at their natural speeds. This approach, which had been imported from Europe, dominated American education until the end of the 19th century, when the education reform movement imported progressive education techniques from Europe (Beck, R. H., 2009).

In Northern Macedonia we call old programs or traditional that were used until the last decade, or in other words until the implementation of ECTS. The sports that dominated the old program are listed below. Sports that have the greatest impact on the physical education program are individual sports: athletics, gymnastics, swimming and martial sports. Popular games or otherwise known as sports games or team sports in PE: football, basketball, volleyball and handball. Subjects that are important for teaching PE are: pedagogy, didactics, methodic, sociology, psychology and history of sports. Information about the human body and its development, organs, their function and motion, prevention of diseases and injuries, development and evaluation of skills, belong to the medicine field: biology, anatomy, physiology, kinesitherapy, biomotoric and biomechanical Sports that are listed in the second plan who were given less importance are: tennis, table tennis, folk dances, modern dances, rhythmic gymnastics, recreation, mountain sports such us: skiing, hiking, climbing and trekking. English as a foreign language was represented with few hours, computer technology and the subject of computing (informatics) was missing, although there was a subject for scientific researches entitled research methodology and statistics. The collaboration between universities as well as exchange of information, academic staff and students was also lacking. In other words, the old education system known as traditional education, had its advantages and disadvantages, as is the case with the current new education system that will be further identified in the future when it is treated as an old or traditional system of education.

## **The new education system based to the ECTS**

### **What is it?**

ECTS is a credit system designed to make it easier for students to move between different countries. Students can transfer their ECTS credits from one university to another. ECTS aims to make national systems more compatible, as well as delivery and evaluation of study programs, and makes them more transparent.

### **Why is it needed?**

The differences between national systems can lead to problems with the recognition of educational qualifications from other countries and of periods of study taken abroad. Greater transparency of learning achievements simplifies the recognition of studies done in other countries.

### **How does it work?**

ECTS credits represent the workload and defined learning outcomes ("what the individual knows understands and is able to do") of a given course or programme. 60 credits are the equivalent of a full year of study or work. A typical "first cycle" (or Bachelor's) Degree, would consist of 180 or 240 credits, whereas a typical "second cycle" (or Master's) Degree, would consist of 90 or 120 credits, with at least 60 credits at second cycle level. The use of ECTS at the "third cycle" (or Ph.D. level) varies. ECTS has been adopted by most of the countries in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The European Higher Education Area is the result of the political will of 48 countries which, step by step during the last eighteen years, built an area using common tools. These 48 countries implement reforms on higher education on the basis of common key values – such as freedom of expression, autonomy for institutions, independent student unions, academic freedom, free movement of students and staff. For all these countries, the main goal is to increase staff and students' mobility and to facilitate employability (ECTS).

As we can see from above, the new ECTS program has a completely different approach to the educational process. This innovation on higher education has been adopted by most of the countries in the (EHEA). Adaptation and implementation of this educational system besides facilities also has its difficulties. The preparation of academic staff both professionally and in teaching foreign languages (especially English), as well as the preparation of laboratories with sophisticated tools for advanced science, are the most important tasks for the development of higher education. When mentioning PE, it is indispensable to mention higher education. Higher education is the only institution that prepares professional PE teachers. Higher Education in Republic of Macedonia has some similarities with the trends in the wider region, but also some specifics. Today, in Republic of Macedonia there are 20 Higher Educational Institutions, of which 6 are state universities and 14 private. The process of reforms started more intensively with the process of adoption of Bologna standards in 2003, with full implementation in 2004, and multiplication of higher educational institutions and study programs. This produced debates on quality of the education vs. quantification and dispersion of the study programs on one side,

and de-monopolization and accessibility to higher education on the other. Also, we should notice the problem of ethnification of the higher education in Republic of Macedonia. 10 Beside universities where the educational process is based on the Macedonian language, there are three state funded Albanian universities and several private, as well as some private Turkish universities. Also, there are some universities as University American College in Skopje and partly the University of South-Eastern Europe in Tetovo and Skopje, where the educational process is based on English language (Strashko, S, at al. 2018). The segregation based on ethnicity and language of usage can be found in all educational levels, from primary school to university education. This is one of the basic factors for creating segregated society (Bakiu and others, 2016). Segregation of education in multi-ethnic countries is part of a global debate, especially in post-conflict countries like Macedonia. This type of segregation, especially between Macedonians and Albanians, does not promote contact and the creation of positive identities which can tackle discrimination and prejudice thus leading to reconciliation. Ethnicized divisions create parallel societies within a country, which mistrust one another (Kavaja, 2017). The main problems of the higher education can be traced to insufficient investment in education by the state, where many recommendations are suggesting up to 5 % of national GDP to be allocated to this sphere (Shaqiri, 2017). The results of PE's Tandem teaching class with students of 6-11 years old (I-V classes) show that Innovative teaching hours have greatly influenced the development of motor fitness (coordination, agility and speed), there is also an increase in strength ability (abdominal muscles - repetitive force, long jump - explosive force and hand dynamometry - static force) while in flexibility ability no significant results have been shown. Also body parameters have not shown significant changes (Innovative Tandem class... 2017).

### **Advantages and disadvantages of the new program**

#### **Advantages**

- More subjects, getting more information's in general,
- The opportunity for Collaboration between all members of ECTS,
- The opportunity for exchange of students and professors,
- The opportunity for exchange of knowledge and experience,
- Opportunity to collaborate with projects such as: Tempus, Erasmus +, Mevlana, Balkan Universities Association (BUA)

#### **Disadvantages**

- Small number of hours for each subjects (one semester),
- Treatment of all subjects equally,
- Teaching nonessential subjects,
- Small opportunity for reinforcement of teaching units...

## **Difficulties of the staff of PE during transition of the educational process from traditional to modern education**

- The tendency for the old style of work - step back,
- Dilemmas between traditional education style, and contemporary education style,
- Difficulties with foreign languages and new technology skills,
- Insufficient budget for contemporary education and being with contemporary science,
- Difficulties with impact-factor publications in renowned magazines.

## **Comparison of the new PE program and the old PE program**

### **The Old Program**

- 4 Study years
- 2 semester subjects
- 28 obligatory and 2 elective subjects
- 60 practical and 30 theoretical hours
- 1 colloquium for each subject

### **The New Program**

- 3-4 Study years
- 1 semester subjects
- 58 obligatory and 15 elective subjects
- 15-30 practical and 15 theoretical hours
- 2 colloquiums for each subject

As you can see from the table above, the old program has fewer subjects than the new program and all are two semesters. This type of study is more limited in terms of number of subjects, but is more professional. While the new program has more subjects than the old one and all subjects are one semester. New program has more study subjects, including health, nutrition, general subjects as well as more elective subjects. Compared to the old program where every subject is two semesters and have only one colloquium per year, the new program enables the subjects to be one semester and have two colloquiums per semester. This increases the administrative work of teachers, but makes it easier for students. Another important case is that, the old program has 1-3 elective subjects, while with the new program the number of electives is much higher. In case of not attending the new ECTS program, then in the case of exchange students cannot be done compatibility of subjects in academic years. And finally the most important thing for any higher educational institution is the exchange of knowledge, students and academic staff, it can be done only if there is compliance with the programs based to ECTS. This is not possible by the old program, but the new ECTS program enables these issues and many other benefits and collaborations with EHEA member states.

## **Conclusion**

As the needs of the people are changing, the education system also has to change, and this change should be accepted by the people. With the passing time, the things which were a luxury at that time have formed the basic needs now. As the needs grew, the education had to grow. If the education did not evaluate, then it would be difficult to fulfill the needs of today. It is possible that the needs of people will grow in the future, so the education will be more reformed after few years that what we are learning now would be considered totally useless than or will be considered as traditional. Compared with Traditional education, Modern education is very

different even it is just on evaluation of Traditional education. Modern education teaches about the skills required today such as skills of science and technology. Also, the teaching methodology used in the Modern education is definitely better, it is more interesting and understandable. We cannot conclude that which education is better because both the types have their own importance. Both the types are similar to each and different to each other. The traditional education and the modern education, both should be given equal importance. (Targetstudy...).

As seen above, PE as well education in general is in continuous development. Some people prefer traditional education, some modern and some combined. Undoubtedly, neither the traditional nor the modern educational process is perfect, both systems of education have their advantages and disadvantages. But one is certain that the education process is always changing and evolving. Therefore, it has to be adjusted according to the time, the needs of the students and the market demand. Every higher education institution should follow the ECTS. In case of not attending the new ECTS, we will not be able to enjoy the benefits of this great European family. This does not mean that other programs cannot be accredited and applied as required by the market. The preparation of academic staff both professionally and in teaching foreign languages especially English, as well as the preparation of laboratories with sophisticated tools for advanced science and increasing information technology, are the most important tasks for the development and increasing quality of higher education.

PE's Tandem teaching class is one of the latest innovations in the education reform process. This reform will provide new employment opportunities within the coming years, and is therefore welcomed by those looking for new jobs. Regarding higher education, the main problems of Macedonia's universities are related with the wider context of the region with some specifics. Ethnification of educational space of all levels, including higher education, creates parallel societies, especially between two biggest ethnic communities- Macedonian and Albanian. Another major problem in the state of Republic of North Macedonia is the lack of employment immediately after finishing high school. As a result of globalization, the phenomenon of migration is increasingly widespread. Recently the decline in the number of primary and secondary school students and university students is worrying. As the number of students decreases, competition also declines and other problems arise in the whole education process. This anomaly is widespread in the Balkan lands and beyond. Therefore, for a better future, the Ministry of Education and Science in collaboration with Higher Education Institutions, Primary and Secondary Schools, Educational Development Bureaus and other state institutions should prepare long-term and hopeful projects for a healthier and safer life.



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