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Study on the Opinions of Teachers and Students from Sports Program High Schools, regarding the School Subject “Sport Training Theory”

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Abstract

The initiated study was done to determine the opinions of a number of 33 teachers from Romanian sports program high schools, who teach the school subject “Sport Training Theory” (STT) from 9th to 12th graders, in order to outline the methodological coordinates according to which they do their activity. Due to the fact that all the efforts in the teaching activity are (and must remain!) centered on the students, in this research it was also considered relevant to know the opinions of a number of 103 students from vocational profile, interviewed at the end of 10th grade. It was chosen this level of study out of two considerations: after two years of intense studying of the analyzed school subject, the expressed opinions could have a higher degree of objectivity, and the expressed statements in this matter could constitute important themes and guiding points in the subsequent methodological measures to be taken, which have as target to shape up competences and to improve the teaching-learning-assessing strategies. Questioning the two categories of subjects (teachers and students) has led, on one hand, to the illustration of the teaching framework in which the STT school subject is quartered, in relation to the values and attitudes that it is expected to be achieved at the end of a learning cycle and graduating the high school sports sections, and on the other hand, to the identification of deficient/ disturbing aspects which leave their mark on the quality and efficiency of the teaching act in comparison with the real needs and expectations that the sports program high school students claim.

Keywords: *Sport Training Theory; teachers; students; curriculum products; teaching strategies.*

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1. Introduction

In Romania, at the vocational sports program high school, the teaching framework stipulates a differentiated curriculum for the inferior and the superior cycle for the school subject “Sport Training Theory” [8]; an integrative discipline, deep appraisingly, to which it is assigned 2hours/ week, the teaching process being made with the entire class of students, no matter the specialty.

The reason to understand the process of training and successfully participating in competitions are desideratum that demand changes in the class teaching process, as achieving performances needs superior cognitive competences: logical thinking, creativity, critical thinking etc.

The idea of promoting an active, formative educational system that could provide to the teacher a wider spectrum of freedom in forming the subjects, and who, in return, could discover and enhance the skill of synthesize, argument and objectively interpret the sports science coordinates, remains, at this point at least, a desire quite difficult to achieve, the causes being multiple and varied.

2. Problem Statement

The two documentation techniques (bibliographical and computerized documentation) that are used in the pre-experiential stage of the research, have led to the review of the most valuable materials that are in the methodical- scientific domain from the specialized literature. In regard to these frameworks, there have been pointed out a series of inconsistencies that influence (or could influence) the gathering, in both meanings, of multiple theoretical and methodological connections in the classroom to the practical reality of trainings and competitions. The synthesis of these “deficiencies” or “lacks” that “disturb” (or could disturb) the resulting product at the end of a high school cycle, has found its correspondent in the content of the two questionnaires applied to the main hosts (teachers and students) involved in the process of teaching, learning and assessing of the school subject STT.

3. Research Questions/Aims of the research

The fulcrum of this research was to scan the actual status of the school subject “Sport Training Theory” according to the opinions of teachers and students.

At the level of the two categories of questioned subjects (teachers and students), the following objectives were established:

- to identify the opinions of teachers regarding the methods framework according to which they perform;
- sketching a unitary vision of the attitudes of students regarding the teaching strategies used in the teaching- learning-assessing process during the STT classes.

4. Research Methods

The methods used in the entered upon research were the following: bibliographic documentation, the analyses method of the teaching- learning process documents, the survey based on the questionnaire, the statistical-mathematical method, the graphic and tabular method.

Bibliographic documentation has required to go through a logical research pattern, thorough and complex, following the triad: document-documentation- sources of documentation. There have been identified and collected the most relevant and appropriate information with theoretical and applicative value regarding the issue that was submitted to research.

The study of the school papers that have curriculum aspects was done using the analysis method of the teaching- learning process documents [4], [10]. This method has conducted to the extraction of the key problems related to the efficiency of the teaching- learning- assessing process during the STT classes and also to the elaboration of the contents and questions from the questionnaires, for the two categories of interviewed subjects (teachers and students).

The survey based on the questionnaire had as main objective to obtain some information in a way that would allow the elaboration of some generalizations regarding the researched topic, registering as small as possible number of errors but with a high degree of objectivity [6], [11].

This approach was used in order to analyze the opinions of specialized teachers as well as the ones of students, considering the aim of the research.

In this sense, there were formed and applied two written questionnaires, regarding the school subject “Sport Training Theory”, with opinion questions, *closed type* (pre-coded, with the possibility of choosing only one answer from the pre-set options), *open type* (free, post-coded, that allows the freedom to express a personal opinion in which a variety of situations could be described) and *mixed type* (dichotomous questions, with a closed

part and an open one, the latter being used to clarify the meaning of the closed answer) [2], [3], [5], [12].

To find out the opinion of the pre-university specialists concerning the methodological framework in regard to the formation of specific competences of the theoretical sports training, there were interviewed 33 teachers that teach this school subject, and who got together on 12th-15th of April 2018, in Targu Mures, when the Sport Training Theory National Olympiad took place, for the 9th to 12th graders.

To emphasize the opinions of the 103 students (10th grade) from the Sports Program High School, Suceava, the application of the sociological questionnaires was deployed in June, 2018.

The scientific objectivity in the ongoing research was given by the use of the statistical- mathematical method. Interpreting the meaning of the statistics had the role to facilitate the integration of the research results in the specialized literature dedicated to the studied problem. The statistic study has made its debut with the statistic observation, which consisted in the recording of the gathered individual data regarding the peculiarities of the studied groups, these ones being centralized and systematized afterwards, the obtained results being presented as tables and graphics.

The graphic and tabular method made easier to present the orderly, complete and centralized data that were gathered from the studied groups. The statistic table sketched the overall image of the studied phenomena features using their numbers value, and the graphic representation, made by diagrams, sketched the content of the processed data [7], [9].

5. Findings

5.1. The content of the sociological questionnaire and the interpretation of the interviewed teachers

The questions given to those 33 interviewed teachers (Table 1) were formed in such manner to surprise as objectively as possible the main aspects regarding the curriculum products (programs, textbooks, auxiliaries) but also those related to the use, during the teaching process, of some teaching strategies that would make more efficient the teaching-learning-assessing process during the STT classes [1].

Table 1. The centralized results obtained after applying the questionnaire to the teachers that teach STT

No.	Question Content	Answering options	No. of answers	%
1.	Do you consider that in the present school programs for Theoretical Sport Program, the specific competencies completely reflect their associated contents?	a. completely b. to a great extent c. large extent d. small extent e. very small extent f. no extent	1 11 13 6 2 0	3 33 40 18 6 0
2.	Mention two school programs contents that are in the superior high school cycle to which you have noticed that students encounter the most difficulties in understanding and processing information correctly.	<i>Prevailing Answers - 11th Grade</i> 1. Sport Selection. 2. Training content in different sport training stages. <i>Prevailing Answers - 12th Grade</i> 1. The sports form and the staging of sport trening. 2. The structure of sport training.		
3.	The learning and assessing activities proposed by the authors in different chapters from the textbooks lead to the enforcement of learning and to the setup of logical, flexible, original and critical thinking?	a. completely b. great extent c. large extent d. small extent e. very small extent f. no extent	0 4 6 13 10 0	0 12 18 40 30 0
4.	Do you know any school auxiliaries that support the teaching- learning process and the assessing during the STT classes?	YES NO	33 0	10 0
5.	Did you use, in certain situations, during the TST classes, as teaching-learning- assessing	a. no b. few times c. occasionally d. many times.	33 0 0 0	10 0 0 0

approach, the method of
graphic symbols and
mathematical procedures?

To question number 1 from the questionnaire: “Do you consider that in the present school programs for Theoretical Sport Program, the specific competencies completely reflect their associated contents?”, 3% have mentioned that there is an optimal report between specific competencies and their contents, 33% of the interviewed teachers said that there is a correspondence “to a great extent”, 40% mentioned that there is “to a large extent”, 18% “to a small extent”, 6% “to a very small extent” and no teacher with “to no extent”.

The answers that prevailed to question number 2: “Mention two school programs contents that are in the superior high school cycle to which you have noticed that students encounter the most difficulties in understanding and processing information correctly” were targeted at 11th graders: “Sports selection” and “Stages of sports training”, and at 12th graders: “The sport form and the staging of sport training”, respectively “Sports training structure”. The contents that were pointed out draw also attention because of the frequency and importance that are treated in the specialized literature.

To question number 3 from the questionnaire: “The learning and assessing activities proposed by the authors in different chapters from the textbooks lead to the enforcement of learning and to the setup of logical, flexible, original and critical thinking?”, 12% of the teachers stated that this aspect is realized “to a great extent”, 18% “to a large extent”, 40% “to a small extent”, 30% “to a very small extent”, 0 answers registered for “completely” and “no extent”.

As general remark, a very small percentage of the interviewed teachers (12%) showed their complete agreement towards the major role of the textbook in forming cognitive competences.

To question 4: “Do you know any school auxiliaries that support the teaching-learning process and the assessing during the STT classes?”, all interviewed teachers (100%) answered “no”.

The last question in the questionnaire, question number 5: “Did you use, in certain situations, during the STT classes, as teaching- learning- assessing approach, the method of graphic symbols and mathematical procedures?”, concluded with an unanimous answer (100%), as all the interviewed subjects answered “no”.

5.1. The content of the sociological questionnaire and the interpreting of the interviewed students answers

Using the content of the five questions from the students addressed questionnaire (Table 2), it was considered as a starting point that their opinions regarding the way they perceive the school subject STT are relevant, at least from two considerations: after a two year study of the subjected discipline, the expressed opinions could have a high degree of objectivity, and the formulated opinions in this matter could constitute an important guiding mark so as to establish later on the approach in teaching strategies during the STT classes.

Table 2. The centralized results obtained after applying the students questionnaire

No.	Question Content	Answering options	No. of answers	%
1.	The school subjects that are in the school curriculum and that you prefer, are the ones that have most:	a. theoretical content b. practical/laboratory content c. both	18 64 21	18 62 20
2.	The contents that were studied during the 9 th and 10 th grade at the school subject "Sport Training Theory" were perceived as:	a. very accessible b. accessibles c. relatively accessible d. difficult to understand e. completely incomprehensible	12 20 34 29 8	12 19 33 28 8
3.	At the school subject "Sport Training Theory", do you find difficult to learn new information that are:	a. theoretical b. theoretical-practical c. both	49 43 11	47 42 11
4.	Do you operate with graphic symbols and mathematical procedures at the theoretical school subjects?	a. no b. rarely c. occasionally d. yes, many times	84 7 11 1	81 7 11 1
5.	If one of your	a. yes	6	6

teachers	would	b. partly	10	10
change the teaching-		c. no	68	66
assessing strategies,		d. I don't know.	19	18
considering the				
results were, at least,				
just as good (no extra				
effort for you), might				
this thing create any				
discomfort for you?				

To question number 1 from the questionnaire, where the students were asked to express their preference towards the character of the contents of different school subjects, 18% of students have chosen the “theoretical” content, 62% the “practical/ laboratory” character type, and 20% showed their preference for “both”.

The answers regarding the students’ perception towards the complexity of contents that were studied during the 9th and 10th grade at the school subject “Sport Training Theory” had found themselves in question number 2 from the survey. Hence, most of them, 33%, have answered with “relatively accessible”, 28% have specified that they are “difficult to understand”, on the next position, with 19%, there were found the answers that were about the accessibility of the approached contents in 9th and 10th grades, 12% have chosen the answer “very accessible”, and 8% from the questioned students said that they are “completely incomprehensible”.

In regard to the difficulty that students find in getting and processing the information at the school subject “Sport Training Theory”, 47% have mentioned that most of the problems they have are in learning the pure theoretical knowledge, 42% in learning the theoretical-practical knowledge, 11% of the students claiming difficulties in both situations.

To question number 4, concerning the frequency that these operate with graphic symbols and mathematical procedures during the teaching-learning process, 81% of the questioned people answered “no”, 7% have stated that it happened “rarely”, 11 % “occasionally”, and only 1% choosing the option “yes, various times”. The percentage of 19% formed from the students answers that said they operate with graphic symbols and mathematical procedures during the teaching- learning process (7% “few times”, 11% “occasionally”, 1% “yes, many times”) could be explained by the presence in the class syllabus at the Science section/ profile (mathematics, physics, chemistry, computer programming etc.), where the contents require symbols, graphic signs and different calculating algorithms.

To the last question from the questionnaire: “If one of your teachers would change the teaching- assessing strategies, considering the results were, at least, just as good (no extra effort for you), might this thing create any discomfort for you?”, 6% have answered “yes”, 10% “partly”, 66% “no”, and 18% of the subjects “don’t know”.

6. Discussions

There are still opened to discussion the subjects that can constitute the theme for some studies and researches regarding the causes that have led to the defective character of the school programs or the lack of school auxiliaries.

Another discussion topic is in regard to the contents of school programs to which students encounter difficulties. This aspect is all the more sensible because the claimed study units are of decisive importance in the evolution of the sport type student, aspect that is outlined even more by the major percentage of these topics dedicated to in the specialized literature.

The customary teaching methodologies have their reflection in the learning and assessing activities proposed by the 9th and 10th grades textbooks, in the way that they don’t lead to shaping up a mindset that sustains learning and encourages self-evaluation.

Nevertheless, until a further (re)positioning of the school subject STT in a correct framework, in order to develop the teaching-learning tools of cognitive competencies that a sports program high school student should have, the teachers must remain focused on the great need of change in teaching methods, that could conduct to students’ efficient actions, in the classroom as much as in training and in competitions.

7. Conclusions

In accordance with the established objectives of the research, the conclusions that stand out show the importance of the accomplished study, the arguments of the above affirmation being based on the following considerations:

- the implemented research framework identified inside the system some flaws of the syllabus and outlined some features/ elements that require improvement in the teaching-learning-assessing framework for the school subject STT;

- the complexity of the specific contents of the school subject, but also the lack of attractive teaching strategies, showed a weak empathy for the questioned subjects, in regard to the STT school subject;
- remediation/ harmonizing and/or fighting against the perturbing variables that interfere directly or indirectly with the educated characters, must remain a constant preoccupation for all the agents involved in the teaching process.

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