

PLANNING AND TEACHING STYLES IN MILITARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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The success of acquiring information, whether theoretical or practical, depends to a large extent on the information's organization and structuring over well-defined periods of time, on its quantity, on the material basis available, but also on the quality and training of the military physical education specialist and on the way in which information is transmitted. Therefore, this material is divided into two parts. The first part deals, in a synthetic way, with the main documents of planning, organization and management of the military physical education activity, in some cases providing examples, in order to facilitate their understanding and performance. The second part of this article is directed to teaching styles in physical education, to the way of transmitting the information provided in the documents specific to military physical education, orientation that has in sight the teacher/specialist/trainer in this military branch.

Keywords: military physical education; plan; style; lesson; specialist; anticipation.

Introduction

The purpose of precise and valuable collective or individual training, anchored in the reality of the battlefield, must be based on the concrete aspects of the combat actions, carried out in the theaters of operations. Or, even in the case of military physical education, the completion of the training is also conditioned by this reality and by the projection in time of the information to be transmitted. In order to achieve a positive end, it is necessary for the military physical education specialist to possess a high level of knowledge, not only in the direction of the execution of motor actions, but also in the conception, in the precise and real planning to understand the phenomenon, and also increased interest in this military specialty.

If for the planning of the knowledge to be transmitted, vision and projection in time are needed – in my view, projection means performing an anticipation of the motor actions (in the case of military physical education) that the military personnel has to go through and ensuring the information and didactic framework, for meeting the objectives set, for the way the information is transmitted. It is necessary to have a high pedagogical teaching background, experience,

openness to the new and, why not, patience. Each human being is an individual entity, with a distinct personality, with possibilities of assimilating knowledge in different rhythms and moments.

Planning in military physical education

In approaching the main planning documents in military physical education, we start from the certainty of the existence of the specifications regarding the necessity of preparing the main documents for the organization, planning and management of the military physical education.

As it is known, planning is an activity of a man who seeks to achieve specific goals. It is one of the most important activities, performed by the specialist/trainer of military physical education, and has a "high degree of complexity... determined by a multitude of variables"¹. Such variables are: "The time period for which the cybernetic conception is elaborated, the nature of components of the physical education and sports model, the place of activity, the composition of the subject groups/classes by sex criterion, the composition of the subject groups/classes by the level of physical and motor training criterion"². The documents based on which the specialist scientifically enhances the instructional-educational process are the following: *the thematic plan, the calendar plan and the lesson plan/didactic project* (for education) or *the activity plan* (for training).

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The first planning document is the annual *thematic plan*³. In accordance with the Regulation of military physical education, this document is mandatory. It is elaborated for a period of one year and includes the components of the instructional-educational process (motor qualities, skills and motor abilities), the number of lessons in which they are dealt with, their positioning in the training year, the time allotted to each of the components. Some specialized works also admit the mention of tests.

The completion of an annual thematic plan can be done considering several aspects: the number of thematic lessons can be higher or lower, depending on the general objectives to be achieved; in one lesson, one, two (the time allotted to each topic is determined by the specialist, depending on the purpose and complexity of the lesson) or three themes (time is usually allotted equally, but here, also, it is the complexity that determines the distribution of time) can be addressed; the time mentioned is not the maximum for the lesson, 50 or 100 minutes, the thematic components being allotted 60-70% of the total minutes, the rest being found in the beginning (1, 2, 3) and ending segments (7, 8).

The second document, *the calendar plan*⁴, is also the most argued by all the great specialists. It is prepared for a shorter period, which may vary depending on the structure of the training year (quarterly, half-yearly, etc.). The calendar plan is prepared on the basis of the annual thematic plan, the components of the thematic plan can also be found in it. The major difference between the two is given by the *Appendix to the calendar plan*⁵, a document that includes all the systems and means of action (physical exercises) for each thematic subcomponent: speed, skill, strength, etc. and by the codified completion in the calendar plan of these means of action. Such means of action are taken and filled in the *Appendix*, having as sources of inspiration various specialized manuals, specialty magazines, observation of other specialists. Other means can be mentioned and used, but only after they have been experimentally validated, in relation to the teaching tasks.

The means of action listed in the Appendix to the calendar plan must be very clearly described, specifying: "*the name of the motor act or action; the initial, intermediate or final position of the*

performer's body; the distance, duration or load of physical effort; the execution tempo; the number of repetitions; the duration of the pause between repetitions and its nature; the working group and the actual method of practice"⁶.

The means of action can be *simple*: force, F1 (F1 is exercise number 1, specified in the Appendix to the calendar plan, in the group of motor qualities) – from the position facial supported recumbent, flexion of the forearms on the arms, 2 x 20 repetitions, passive pause for 40 seconds between the series, frontal practice or *complex*: football, Ft2 (Ft2 is exercise number 2, specified in the Appendix to the calendar plan, in the group of motor skills and abilities specific to sports tests and branches), 1-2x, passive pause for 1 minute and 30 seconds; a) dribbling in a straight line on a distance of 25 m and executing a shot at goal, tempo 60%, 3 x, active pause for 20 seconds; working group: two rows of four students each; b) dribbling among six cones placed in a straight line at 2 m from each other, passing to a colleague who is located obliquely 5 m ahead of the last cone, receiving the ball again and executing a shot at goal; tempo 60%, 3 x, active pause for 30 seconds; working group: two rows of four students each.

The calendar plan is presented in two forms: *descriptive* – each means of coding is clearly filled in next to the thematic components and *graphic* – there is a coding next to the thematic components (1/2x, 3/4x, etc.). Whether it is conceived one way or another, the calendar plan must contain the same elements as the thematic plan to which it is added, mandatory *means of action* coded or clearly stated and *tests*. It is very important that in elaborating it, the following must be taken into account when recording the means of action: the time allotted through the thematic plan must be spent with the means of action and not exceed it, the way of filling in the boxes is not standardized – various written mention formulas may be chosen, so many means of action, as dosage, must be planned, so as to cover the time allotted to the theme in the annual thematic plan.

The third document of military physical education is *lesson plan/didactic project/activity plan* of the instructional-educational process. This document is the one that allows the achievement of the operational objectives of the lesson, which allows the management of the current lessons.

It represents the materialization of the detailed thinking of the specialist for carrying out the immediate tasks of the lesson. It is an embodiment of the anticipatory capacity of the specialist to meet the training objectives during the time allotted to the military physical education lesson.

In its preparation, a series of essential elements are followed, logically structured, in the same sequence each time. *The first element* aims to set the objectives that must be realistic, respect the allotted time, observe the training plans – the objectives are not addressed to the specialist, but they concern the military personnel; they must be explicit and show potential motor changes in the military; pursue a single operation through short expression; fit into a logical structure of general training. In order to understand the goal setting we will exemplify some of the keywords used in military physical education: list, state, describe, identify, cooperate, grant, execute, perform, development, improvement, verification, acquisition, consolidation, perfection, etc.

The second important element is found in the analysis of the human component available to the specialist (number of military personnel, sex, level of training), of the conditions for the instructional-educational process (materials, geoclimatic). *The third element* seeks to “*elaborate methodological-organizational strategies: allocation of the time allotted to the lesson for each segment, establishing the order of thematic approach*”⁷; choose the three “M”s (methods, means, materials) necessary to achieve the lesson objectives; effort dosing; working groups; types of practice.

The last, extremely important aspect, also called “*assessment of the efficiency of the current activity*”, aims to develop a system for assessing the quality of fulfilling the teaching tasks both by the military and by the leader of the instructional process. However, all these aspects of planning would be useless if they did not materialize concretely, if their content were not put into practice and if the teaching activity no longer took place.

Teaching styles in military physical education

Teaching in military physical education is defined as the activity of transmitting learning content, theoretical and/or practical, specific to the educational or training activity. Specifically, it

involves the content presentation, explaining the essential aspects of notions, developing practical and theoretical skills, all of these being based on the objectives and purposes of this activity and of the social order.

The efficiency of teaching is also conditioned by the style approached by the specialist in military physical education. The typology of teaching styles was first developed by Mosston M. and Ashworth Sara from the desire to conceive a guide for teachers in the field. According to them, the spectrum consists of 11 styles, of which five are centered on specialist and six on student/military. Teaching styles are absolutely necessary because students/military must be able to assimilate what the specialist teaches.

However, the choice of teaching styles may depend on the specificity of the motor actions, the homogeneity of the group and its level of preparation, the ability to understand the knowledge, the objectives of the lessons, the educational level and the experience of the specialist and, most importantly, from my point of view, on the interest and moral-social value of the group for this form of training. Understanding that people assimilate information differently, it is clear that there must be different teaching styles to adapt to learning styles.

“*The teaching style represents a set of behaviors selected and used by the specialist in order to achieve the educational objectives*”⁸. We can say about the teaching style that it is given by the individual-particular way of accomplishing the teaching process. The teaching style used in the lessons is purely the choice of the specialist. In listing these teaching styles in military physical education, we consider two directions of analysis: depending on the approach of the activity, we find *order, practical, reciprocal, “personal verification”, “inclusion” styles*; depending on the orientation of the action we have the direct and indirect style. To these styles others can also be added, which I place into a group of rather pseudostyles, when this way of transmitting information in the physical education system appears. These styles are the democratic and the negligent ones.

*Order style*⁹. The transmission of knowledge is made unidirectionally, the decisions being made only by the specialist, without the existence of any dialogue between the military and trainers in an

authoritarian, distant and cold way. It may represent the approach of the unprepared, confident, with teaching tendencies. In this case, only the military are to blame for the lack of knowledge, but this style is required and necessary when the military has to respond quickly and promptly to orders, when the safety of the performers is paramount and when the accuracy is sought. For example, this style can be used when a perfectly synchronized warm-up is required, in sports where synchronization is a requirement in order to obtain a higher score (synchronous swimming, martial arts, dance, etc.), in opening or closing festivities of major sports competitions, in marches and military parades.

*Practical style*¹⁰. The specialist demonstrates the motor act or action and sets the opportunity for the military to practice and develop their skills at their own pace. As the military perform the teaching tasks, the specialist will walk among them, providing individual and group feedback. For example, the specialist demonstrates how to perform a martial arts arm technique. As the students learn the technique, the specialist will go and provide an answer regarding the acquisition of this technique. Defining for this style is individual practice, even in private.

*Reciprocal style*¹¹. The defining features for this style are highlighted by social interaction, mutual help, offering and receiving immediate response to the motor actions carried out with the help of a partner. The role of the specialist is to indicate what needs to be executed, to provide answers and indications during the execution of the motor act or action by the work partners. The military will work together, in pairs, constantly providing feedback on what is being done and what is not. Suggestive for this style are the gymnastic exercises performed with the help of a partner and also the technical procedures of the different sports of wrestling.

*"Personal verification" style*¹². It is very similar to the reciprocal style, except that the military will perform motor activities on their own. They are offered performance criteria, assessment standards and a summary of mistakes they can make in executing motor actions. This style allows the military to practice and self-correct at their own pace and to assess their own learning and to check their own performance. During classes, the specialist will work with the students to set goals and objectives. Defining for this style is

self-assessment, based on specific criteria. This type is found in sports such as basketball, archery, golf, rock climbing, surfing and skateboarding in different exercises, performed in the gym.

*"Inclusion" style*¹³. The specialist plans and establishes a variety of tasks that have different levels of difficulty. Thus, the military decide which task is most appropriate for their abilities, aspirations and motivations. This style offers a customized and learning development approach. Important for this style is that the military can select the same didactic task, but with a higher level of difficulty, that can make them evolve faster. Difficulty levels are created by the specialist depending on the group to be trained. He/she also constantly adjusts the working level and verifies the performance achieved by the military in the training process, according to the criteria and standards established in the planning act. This style may be adopted within the lessons with martial arts themes, when the difficulty level of the technical procedures can be increased or decreased depending on the members of the training group.

*The direct style*¹⁴ is action-oriented from the trainer's perspective. By approaching this style, the efficiency of the practice is increased, the chances of error during the execution of the motor acts and actions are reduced, the chances of better coordination and management of the group participating in the training increase. This procedure also has its shortcomings, consisting of: the lack of the possibility to differentially approach the military and *"focusing on learning outcomes and not on the ongoing process"*¹⁵. A logical example of action sequences for this teaching style may be: explaining and demonstrating the content to be learned, executing motor actions by the military, correcting any possible mistakes, presenting methodical indications, correcting mistakes again and then, resuming the execution of motor acts.

*The indirect style*¹⁶ is action-oriented from the military personnel's perspective. With this style, they are considered to have the opportunity to choose the path for the fulfillment of the didactic tasks, resulting in their better involvement in the didactic act. The indirect style can be attributed two major disadvantages: a longer time for performing tasks and the lack of control over the group to be trained.

The *negligent style* belongs to whom is disinterested in the outcome of their work, lacking the motivation for the educational act. He/she will accept any proposal from the trainers, he/she is passive in military physical education lessons, not demanding, maintaining a low level of training, below the real potential of the military.

The *democratic style* is based on a very good cooperation between the military and the trainer, the stimulation of the initiative, a strong motivation and confidence given to those to be trained. Yet, in some cases, this style may lead to the trainer's instructions being neglected and even the attempt not to perform the motor action. It is considered a beneficial style for the act of socialization and motor evolution, but from my point of view, it and should not be used as a fundamental permanent style in this military branch.

From my point of view, the military physical education specialist should not adopt only one of the styles and only use it in the teaching act. He/she must combine the positive elements of them, adapt them to the group whom he/she addresses to and manage the whole activity according to the objectives and tasks to be fulfilled. Moreover, the quality of military physical education specialist/trainer is acquired through adequate training as a result of participating in forms of training in specialized institutions, and requires a summary of psycho-pedagogical, professional, didactic and communication skills, which aim to their orientation towards achieving the objectives of the learning act, for the benefit of the trained persons and the military institution.

Conclusions

Projection, planning and teaching are three concepts and, at the same time, defining activities for the purpose of the training act. Without a clear vision and without the anticipation of the actions, that the military can undergo in real combat situations, the military physical education training will lack the adaptation of the training content to the fundamental requirement of the army: accomplishment of combat missions. The embodiment of the projection of the training content in the planning documents represents an important step in achieving the objectives of the military physical education, a rational and normal direction, after all, for the specialists in this field.

The transposition of the training content in the lesson, the performance of the teaching act itself represents the essential stage through which the transfer of knowledge from the specialist to the military is made. How is this transfer made? The quantity and quality of the specialized and pedagogical knowledge acquired prior to the teaching act, the pedagogical and life experience, the quality of the superior cognitive processes of those managing the activity, the capacity for social interaction, the desire to reach the objectives set at any cost the perseverance are just a few reference points and reasons with which the physical education specialist builds his/her own modality, his/her own teaching style. Stating these few reasons makes us believe, at the same time, that a specialist in military physical education is not built from one day to another.

NOTES:

- 1 Ghe. Cârstea, *Theory and Methodology of Physical Education and Sports*, Ed. AN-DA, Bucharest, 2000, p. 137.
- 2 *Ibidem*.
- 3 Ghe. Cârstea, *Educația fizică: teoria și bazele metodicii*, Ed. ANEFS, Bucharest, 1997, p. 197.
- 4 *Ibidem*, p. 201.
- 5 *Ibidem*, p. 207.
- 6 Ghe. Cârstea, *Teoria și metodică educației fizice și Sportului*, Ed. AN-DA, Bucharest, 2000, p. 144.
- 7 A. Dragnea și colab., *Educație fizică și sport – teorie și didactică*, Ed. FEST, Bucharest, 2006, p. 185.
- 8 *Ibidem*, p. 163.
- 9 M. Mosston, S. Ashworth, *Teaching Physical Education*, First Online Edition, Spectrum Teaching and Learning Institute, SUA, 2008, p. 76.
- 10 *Ibidem*, p. 94.
- 11 *Ibidem*, p. 116.
- 12 *Ibidem*, p. 141.
- 13 *Ibidem*, p. 156.
- 14 A. Dragnea și colab., *Educație fizică și sport – teorie și didactică*, Ed. FEST, Bucharest, 2006, p. 163.
- 15 *Ibidem*.
- 16 *Ibidem*, p. 164.

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