

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF TRAINING IN MILITARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION

LtCol. Lecturer Gabriel Constantin CIAPA, PhD*

The connection between theory and the application of theoretical knowledge in the practice of military physical education, is realized in some situations with quite ambiguity and difficulty. The result of this syncope will be found immediately in the training level of the trained persons. A cause of this syncope can be represented by leaving aside certain fundamental theoretical specialized knowledge, absolutely necessary for the educational act. Therefore, in the first part of this material, I will approach the training principles specific to the sub-domain of military physical education, in order to achieve an interpretation, necessary both for their understanding and for their importance in the act of training in the specialized military system. The second part of this material is dedicated to the classical methods of training in physical education. This material aims at a reiteration of the two fundamentals of military physical education, providing a synthesis and, possibly, a supplement of the specialized military literature.

Keywords: military physical education; principles; methods; training; practice.

Introduction

The subsystem of military physical education must be under permanent change and adaptation to the new conditions required by the military system. This is why a deep inclination to all the real possibilities that can lead to finding solutions for improving both the activity itself and the finished product – meaning the military/fighter – is required. Whether we focus on the material basis or on the theoretical scientific resources, they must converge and be found in the quality of the trained person.

Applying the theoretical knowledge from military physical education to the practice of training will only facilitate the acquisition of motion actions or the development of motor skills and abilities, under the conditions of lucid, real, rigorous, constant preparation of military for combat, of a rhythmic conduct of specific activities, of permanent assessment and control.

Military physical education, as a subsystem of general education, requires functioning according to clear rules, having precise functions and objectives, its own methodology and terminology. Also, military physical education uses a series of fundamental knowledge that have the purpose of

performing motor actions. Some of these training fundamentals in this military specialty are the principles of training and methods of training in physical education.

Training principles in military physical education

The instructional-educational process of military physical education is an activity that is carried out under the norms, provisions, rules or different training requirements. The necessity of such rules or requirements starts from the training needs of the army, in order to achieve its training purposes. Some of them bear the name of training principles¹, principles that have been established as necessary and mandatory in the specific training in this field, being recognized and observed by all great specialists of military physical education. These principles are the following: active and conscious participation, intuition, accessibility, systematization and continuity and linking the training with the requirements of the practical activity, thorough learning.

*The principle of active and conscious participation*². From the statement of this principle it can be understood that it follows two directions of analysis of the participants in the training process: the first direction is given by the requirement of the active involvement of the military in the training, and the second is aimed at their awareness regarding

**Military Technical Academy*
e-mail: ciapagabriel@yahoo.com

the training. The observance of the two directions, drawn by this principle, requires the fulfillment of several tasks by the training participants, trainers and military to be trained.

A first aspect is provided by the objectives of the instructional-educational process within the meaning of their understanding, why they must participate in such training programs. The role of the trainers is crucial in creating the correct and realistic motivational factor for the military to practice physical exercises.

The second point of interest follows the logical sequence of motor acts and actions that military must learn. This sequence must be understood, memorized and applied when appropriate. An extremely important role is given to the trainer who can, through the planning and structuring of the learning material, contribute to the facilitation or hindering of the learning or development of the motor structures, and he/she must also know the key elements of the methodological structure of the learning procedures.

The third aspect, that this principle pursues, is to create an appropriate attitude of military sensitization and accountability for learning the teaching material. They should be encouraged to work independently, they should be given the opportunity to choose from the solutions offered by the trainers and they should be stimulated and encouraged to adopt an objective attitude towards the training process towards the teaching methods.

The last side of this principle aims to train the military in the capacity of self-assessment and objective self-evaluation of executions of motor acts and actions, as well as of the results obtained after the training. There is almost always "somebody else" to blame for the lack of one's own performance, sometimes finding really embarrassing justifications for poor results and lack of participation in training.

*The principle of intuition*³. This principle highlights the importance of the first human signaling system: the sensory one. "Intuition implies knowledge of reality through the senses, analyzers, receptors of the human body"⁴. In the subsystem of military physical education, the principle of intuition aims to stimulate as many analyzers (visual, hearing, tactile).

Accessing them as a whole can be reflected in the speed and quality of learning the material.

Obviously, the military with deficiencies of such analyzers, although they should not exist in training in the military system, have to suffer in receiving and learning the motor acts. In order to obtain results, we try to stimulate the analyzers through the three classic methods of training: the demonstration, the presentation of iconographic materials and the observation of other military personnel, training methods that I will approach in the second part of this material. The principle of intuition requires that the material to be transmitted can be seen and accessed by all those attending the training; also, the principle requires the stimulation of the second signaling system of the human body.

*The principle of accessibility*⁵. This principle highlights the importance of carrying out the instructional-educational process according to age, sex and training level. Accessibility should not be understood as a minimum effort and objectives that the military must meet in the instructional-educational process, but as a requirement that, in order to be fulfilled, must exert physical effort, they must work if they wish to evolve.

In order to comply with this principle, military trainers must seek: "Careful selection of stimuli, especially physical exercises; establishment of an adequate dosage of physical effort; the use of methodical regulators to accelerate the process of acquiring motor acts or actions by the subjects; adapting the training and education methods and methodical procedures to the level of understanding and psycho-motor development of the subjects; differentiation of subjects' assessment"⁶ (according to the Regulation of military physical education, 2012, their assessment is carried out by age groups, education or training).

In order to apply this principle, it is necessary for the trainer to know the military attending the training to create a working rhythm related to the reaction of the military to the stimuli, and to apply the following teaching rules: from easy to difficult, from simple to complex and from known to unknown.

*The principle of systematization and continuity*⁷. This principle is relevant from the point of view of the activity planning and the correct preparation of documents for conducting military physical education lessons. Its central elements, systematization and continuity are essential conditions for achieving the objectives

of military physical education. In order for the principle of systematization and continuity to be found in the activity of military physical education, the following requirements must be observed: the ordering and logical programming of the contents to be transmitted within the same training cycle; the new contents to learn must be based on the old ones, already existing, which in turn become support for the following knowledge; the background of the instructional-educational process must be structured and programmed in such a way as to provide the possibility of logical links between the years of training or the years of education; the obligation of military participation in training constantly – absences can lead to the loss of knowledge acquired or create gaps in training.

*The principle of linking training to the requirements of practical activity*⁸. For many specialists in military physical education, this principle is not a priority, but rather something secondary. The principle emphasizes the importance of anchoring training in the reality of armed combat. In other words, what is learned must be useful in the potential situations of armed combat, truly gain practical value, and knowledge must be adaptable to the requirements of the combat. There are many situations in the instructional-educational process in which the content is

transmitted only to cover some learning material and nothing more. This happens precisely because of the lack of specialized knowledge, unawareness of the requirements of the armed combat and the promotion of the same old content year after year, irrelevant for the practice of real-life situations. The specialized literature also names this principle that of modeling, whose purpose is to create possibilities for generalizing the teaching material itself, to apply the knowledge learned under totally new, unpredictable conditions, other than those in which the instructional-educational process took place.

*The principle of thorough learning*⁹. The principle of sustainability, as it is also called in the specialized literature, is conditioned by the other principles. The sustainability of the contents learned is conditioned by: the large number of repetitions provided to the motor acts and actions during the training process; planning, preferably, of a small volume of the content to be learned in a certain period – conditions are ensured, as a time budget, for a greater number of repetitions than if a large volume of learning had been planned for the same time unit; awareness of the stage of military preparation and of the level of knowledge acquired by them.

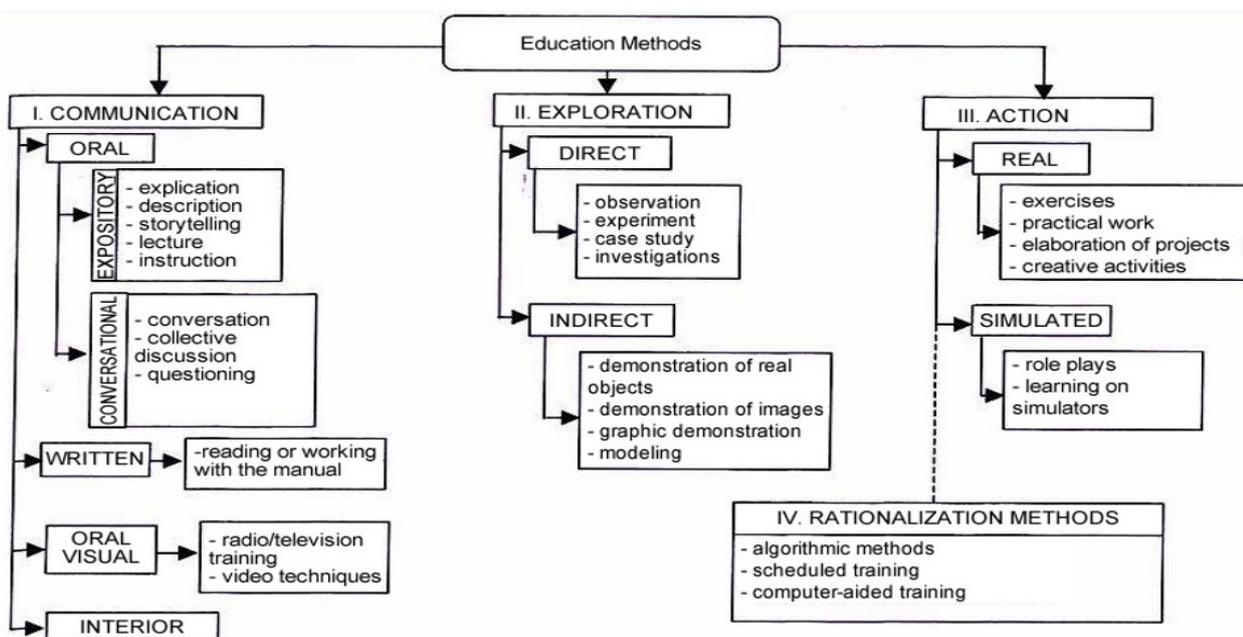


Figure 1. Classification of educational methods¹⁰

Methods of training in military physical education

Pedagogy calls the method the *way to* achieving the goals and a way of working. This notion will always arouse defining tendencies from all specialists. In my view, the method represents the totality of the didactic elements used to achieve the objectives of the military physical education or the operational objectives of the lesson through logical actions, designed in time. The choice of training methods and their use in military physical education lessons rests solely with the science of those conducting the activity. Such training methods are closely linked to the means of achieving the goals of the lessons and reaching the goals set. The method and the means are indissolubly linked and mutually interconditioned. A solid support of theoretical and practical knowledge will facilitate the choice of the training methods necessary for the instructional-educational act.

Over the years the specialists in the field have tried several taxonomies, according to various criteria. Eventually, in each of them the same methods are found. In figure 1 we illustrate such a taxonomy and will develop the one established in this field.

In the opinion of some of the specialists in physical education the methods of training are verbal (explanation, exposition, storytelling etc.) and nonverbal (practice, practical assessment, demonstration etc.). But most specialists in the field accept more easily the classical approach to training methods. These methods also apply to the subsystem of military physical education. According to the classical approach we have verbal, intuitive and practical training methods. The verbal methods are based on the ability to transmit the knowledge through language of the leaders of the educational act. These verbal methods are as follows: *lecture* – a method that applies to higher education, especially, and is based on scientific arguments and appropriate specialized terminology; *explanation* – this is the most used method and for some trainers, the only one, unfortunately. The explanation must be logical, precise, clear and intervene at the right time. In the instructional-educational process, the explanation may precede the demonstration, intervene after the demonstration or concurrently with it (the use of these two methods at the same time is harder to achieve and not recommended in case of learning

difficult technical procedures).

Other methods are: *storytelling* – it addresses children, mainly, and the information transmitted and its assimilation are helped by the references related to the elements of everyday life and known by the little ones; *description* – is made through a content of the language suitable for the group to be trained; *conversation* – highlights the need for permanent dialogue between military and sports trainers; *individual study* – is carried out on the establishing of teaching tasks for military by trainers and their guidance towards studying specialized bibliography; *brainstorming* – it is not used often, but it stimulates the active involvement of the military in training. According to this method, motivated points of view are expressed which are also accepted, but not defined as solutions for the didactic tasks. In a relatively short time, for several days, the unresolved educational task is brought into discussion, motivated opinions are presented again, and the most efficient solutions are admitted under the guidance of the specialist.

The first intuitive method is *demonstration* – together with explanation and practice, it is the most used in military physical education. In order to be effective, it must be carried out at model level either by the specialist (it is also called a direct demonstration) or by another military from the training group, whose technical training allows it (it is also called intermediated demonstration). The second intuitive method is *observing the execution of other military personnel* – it is a choice of the trainer through which the negative or positive aspects of the executions of the colleagues are highlighted. The last intuitive method is the one using “*iconographic material*”¹¹ (sketches, drawings, kinograms¹², video materials, graphics, etc.). It is used when there is no possibility to perform the demonstration at the model level or as a supplement to it.

The third group of training methods, the practical ones, can actually be reduced to a single, generally accepted one: the *practice method*. The practice method involves the execution of the content to be learned in a conscious and systematic way. It follows in the logic of learning, in military physical education, after the verbal and intuitive methods. It is addressed entirely to the military who must be trained, under the guidance and supervision of the trainer.

Ghe. Cârstea names six types of practice: *“practice for developing motor skills and abilities; practice for development, education of motor skills; practice for the optimization of physical body development* (it is realized, in particular, within the third link of the lesson of military physical education – the selective influence of the locomotive apparatus, through exercises specific to the basic gymnastics); *practice for developing organizational capacity* (it is realized in each lesson due to the use of the means specific to basic gymnastics, of the front and formation exercises, developing the capacity of self-organization and self-management of the military); *practice for developing the capacity to practice autonomous physical exercises* (understanding the structure of the military physical education lesson as well as the means used may determine the military to freely work certain sequences of the lesson, under the supervision of the trainer); *practice for developing the capacity to practice independent physical exercises* (in the military physical education lessons, theoretical and practical bases necessary for practicing physical exercises during the spare time are laid)”.

In the development of motor skills and abilities, the exercise method can take the following forms¹³: *“group practice* – repetitions follow only one motor skill before moving on to the next; *separate practice* – the military does not perform identical tasks in successive attempts; *variable practice* – the motor act or action is acquired regardless of its parameters (direction, speed, tempo, etc.). It can be illustrated by the fact that it will be very easy for the military to make the transfer of motion information in order to make a precision grenade throw at a distance of 25 m, if they had previously prepared at distances of 15 m, 20 m, 30 m; *constant practice* – only one parameter changes during executions (for example, movement direction or reaction speed); *mental practice* – aims at the mental achievement and repetition of the succession of exercises to be performed, imagining the motor act or action can be an advantage in learning motor tasks; *analytical practice* – follows the breakdown of difficult technical procedures into smaller learning units and the work to acquire them (it is not necessary to insist on the use of this form because the wrong dynamic stereotypes can be created and can be explained by the lack of fluency in the complete

execution of the technical procedures, their speed of execution, etc.); *global practice* – it aims at the complete execution of the motor skills and can be used alone in the case of very simple skills, in which learning can be produced by imitating the actions of the trainer.

Analytical or global practice, in the development of motor skills, can have as effects “precision of movements, safety, speed in execution and low energy consumption provided there is a judicious control of the training program”¹⁴. Epuran¹⁵ presents the benefits and effects of practice: “gradually shortening of the time for performing the tasks; gradual specialization (acquiring new motor skills and abilities over time); gradual removal of unnecessary movements and muscle strain (by forming automatisms, the coarse movements disappear and even a muscular relaxation is obtained in the execution of the technical procedures, these becoming very precise); fixation of new combinations of movements; decreased sensitivity towards the different external barriers; tendency to shift attention from process to outcome (during the execution of the movements, the military are no longer focused on the execution of the technique but on its outcome); fatigue reduction (by practice, the appearance of fatigue is delayed as a result of programming and directing the effort within the instructional-educational process); better selection and interpretation of external and internal indicators (appreciation of spatial-temporal parameters is a good example); gradual reduction of execution errors (as a result of the repetition in a sufficiently large number of a motor actions, any mistake in carrying out the process or technique itself can be eliminated); unification of partial actions (in case of technical procedures during the learning or development of the difficult motor skills, as a result of the analytical exercise and the summation of motor gestures, one can gradually arrive at manifesting motor action as a unitary whole)”. All these effects of the practice are, eventually, in the quality of the trained military.

Conclusions

Starting from the need to understand the military specialty theory of military physical education, to apply such knowledge in practice, this material pleads for the acquisition and application

of the fundamental knowledge of this subsystem of general education, it pleads for building the skills to conduct training activities specific to this field, based simultaneously on theory and practice, it reinforces the idea that the training activities should be conducted by specialists in the conditions of a correct attitude towards the theoretical bases. Also, this material militates to raising awareness on the importance of specialized theoretical knowledge, respect for specialists and their quality, especially since this field may be considered a foundation for the development of other military specialties.

NOTES:

- 1 Ghe. Cârstea, *Teoria și metodică educației fizice și Sportului*, Ed. AN-DA, Bucharest, 2000, p.77.
- 2 *Ibidem*, p.78.
- 3 *Ibidem*, p.79.
- 4 *Ibidem*, p.80.
- 5 *Ibidem*.
- 6 *Ibidem*, p.81.
- 7 *Ibidem*.
- 8 *Ibidem*, p.82.
- 9 *Ibidem*, p.83.
- 10 I. Cerghit, *Metode de învățământ*, Ediția a III-a, Ed. Didactică și Pedagogică, R.A., Bucharest, 1998, p. 98.
- 11 *Ibidem*, p.88.
- 12 Successive and logical graphic representation of the basic movements that make up a process or a technical element.
- 13 A. Dragnea și colab., *Educație fizică și sport – teorie și didactică*, Ed.FEST, Bucharest, 2006, p.152.

14 G. Ciapa, *Self-defense – physical and psychological support in military modern conflicts*, Strategic changes in security and international relations, Strategii XXI, Vol. 3, p. 299.

15 M. Epuran, V. Horghidan, *Psihologia educației fizice*, ANEFS, Bucharest, 1994, p. 180.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cârstea Ghe., *Theory and methodology of physical education and Sport*, AN-DA Ed., Bucharest, 2000.

Cerghit I., *Methods of education*, Third Edition, Didactic and Pedagogical Edition, R.A., Bucharest, 1998.

Ciapa G.C., *Physical training of the Romanian military in modern conflicts*, "Carol I" National Defence University, Bucharest, 2018.

Ciapa G., *Self-defense – physical and psychological support in military modern conflicts*, Strategic changes in security and international relations, Strategii XXI, Vol. 3, Bucharest, 2015.

Dragnea A., et al., *Physical education and sport – theory and teaching*, FEST Ed., Bucharest, 2006.

Epuran M., Horghidan V., *Psychology of physical education*, ANEFS, Bucharest, 1994.