



# OPTIMIZATION OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS OF STUDENTS' MILITARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION FROM THE COMMAND MASTER'S DEGREE STUDY PROGRAMS, ORGANIZED BY "CAROL I" NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

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The article analyzes the evaluation activity in military physical education within the training process, in general, and of the students from the command master's degree study programs, organized by "Carol I" National Defence University, in particular. Also, during the article, the importance of the evaluation process is noted, and some solutions are presented that can contribute to its optimization.

**Keywords:** evaluation; military physical training; training; optimization; effect.

Human activity is an activity eminently oriented towards goals, which means that, regardless of its nature, a certain evaluation is required at a given moment. Looking at a general framework, in the training process, evaluation is a very complex phenomenon, often loaded with subjectivism. The theory and practice of evaluation in training records a wide variety of approaches and perceptions of the significance of evaluation actions. These are nuanced in relation to the understanding of the nature of the evaluation process, with whatever represents the object of this actions, with the functions it performs and with the ways of accomplishment. From the perspective of understanding the nature of this process and the way it is carried out, there are diversified points of view in evaluation theory.

Evaluation in training is "... a complex process of comparing the results of the instructive-educational activity with the planned objectives (evaluation of quality), with the resources used (evaluation of efficiency) or with previous results (evaluation of progress)"<sup>1</sup> or a "... a process of measuring and assessing the value of the results of the training system or of a part of it, of the resources, conditions and strategies efficiency used by comparing the results with the proposed objectives, in order to make decisions for development and improvement"<sup>2</sup>.

Therefore, the literature in the field includes a number of common views on the evaluation of training, as follows: this is not a product but a process, namely an activity carried out in stages over time; it is not limited to assessment and grading, but targets more complex areas (structures, training programs or the training system as a whole); it involves a large number of measures, comparisons, value judgments, based on which decisions are taken to optimize the activity in the areas subject to evaluation; it is nothing more than a measure of the staff training level / structures in relation to the performances provided in the standards.

Evaluation in military training can be seen as a set of processes through the performance of profile structures, subsystems and their components are assessed, measured and compared with the established objectives, to eliminate the deficiencies found and integrate positive deviations. The purpose of this activity is understood as a need to report the level, both of those who are trained and of the instructors, and to identify the place where they are compared to what they have proposed through the designed objectives. In other words, the purpose of the evaluation is to prevent the failure of training or to minimize it, ensuring an upward evolution of all military personnel.

In any type of management and, especially, in the management of military training, the evaluation must fulfill certain functions in accordance with the established criteria, aiming at its effects both individually and socially, as follows:

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- *the function of control* or finding and appreciation of the activity and results obtained. By exercising this function, the evaluation also has the role of feedback, both for instructors and trainees;

- *the function of regulating the system* or improving the activity and optimizing the results;

- *the function of prediction*, orientation and anticipation of results, as a follow-up to the expected measures;

- *the classification and selection function*, based on which the military structures/training institutions and the personnel to be trained are ranked;

- *the certification function*, materialized in the issuance of study documents;

- *the educational function*, through which one becomes aware of, motivates and stimulates the interest for permanent study, for improvement and for performance;

- *the social function*, through which the information of the local communities, of the family etc. is realized on the results obtained<sup>3</sup>.

In general, the functions of evaluation are intertwined, their distinct approach being usually imposed only by the didactic purpose. In relation to the purpose of the evaluation, some functions may have a higher weight than others or will be pursued due to a special purpose. Therefore, they must be developed at all levels, following their manifestation in the training process. This can ensure an effective approach to the training, but also to the assessment, necessary for military personnel.

Regarding the evaluation activity in military physical education, this represents a stable component of the training process, having mainly a regulatory role both for the training of personnel and for the improvement of teaching strategies.

The central purpose of the evaluation in military physical education is represented by the outlining of the functional, morphological, motor and psychic changes produced, of great intensity, volume and complexity. To summarize, the general objectives of the process of evaluating the military physical education activity are: highlighting the efficiency of the training process; reporting the results to the previously established objectives; verification and assessing the level of development of motor qualities, physical, mental and integral

training; testing the functional capacities of different systems, organs or functional mechanisms (aerobic, anaerobic); knowing the reaction of the military body to the efforts and particularities of the fatigue and recovery processes; verification the effort indicators (volume, intensity, breaks) specific to the different streamlined and standardized drive systems used in training<sup>4</sup>.

The evaluation in military physical education of the students / trainees from "Carol I" National Defence University is carried out having as benchmarks the norms for ensuring the quality of educational services and the provisions of the *Code of Ethics and University Deontology*. This includes:

- *verification* – the action by which the individual/group is subjected to a test. The test has rules or scales, which express the value scale it is performed at. Physical fitness tests consist of verifying the most important physical qualities: cardio-respiratory endurance and muscle strength;

- *assessment* – the stage that follows verification, necessary for decisional optimization. It resides in the reflection of reality in the conscience of the specialist and, as such, some value judgments are made through this manner of estimation. Given that, in our case, in the test subject to verification, the results are measurable, the assessment is real and it does not require a special effort on the part of the evaluator, especially because in that test there is a table with rules;

- *grading* – it represents the result of the dialectical unity between verification and assessment. This is materialized by giving grades, as an act of displaying a label as a result of learning. Also, the grade is the index that corresponds to the achievement of performance and can fulfill several roles: information; training process regulation; therapeutic; pathogenic. The fairness and validation of grading consists in expressing in a just manner the object it measures. A test is valid, conclusive or accurate when once repeated it leads to identical assessments and marks by the same evaluator, at different times, or by different evaluators simultaneously.

Verification is performed during the teaching activity, tests for the development of motor qualities, acquisition of basic and utility applicative motor skills and those from the *Military Physical Training Regulation*, according to the educational



planning and management documents drawn by the *Military Physical Education Department*. The assessment and grading is performed by the teaching staff who directly conduct the military physical education activity, according to the norms and scales provided by the *Methodology regarding the evaluation of military physical education of students and trainees from the National Defence University "Carol I"*<sup>5</sup>.

According to the *Military Physical Education* discipline sheet and the above-mentioned methodology, the learning outcomes of the students participating in the command master's degree study programs are determined by the following forms of evaluation:

- *initial evaluation* – performed at the beginning of the discipline within the study program, with the role of providing the teacher with information about the level of skills and attitudes that the student possesses, and which are necessary for further development. The initial evaluation is not graded and has no implication on (does not influence in any way) the final grade;

- *progress evaluation (formative)* – carried out throughout the educational activity, it aims to diagnose, guide and support students in developing and improving the level of physical training. Also, the progress evaluation gives the teacher feedback on the quality of the educational activities they carry out (continuity; capacity and interest in independent practice of physical exercises; attitude towards discipline; participation in sports and application-military competitions). According to the discipline sheet, the progress evaluation is graded and has a certain weight in the final grade of the discipline equal to 50%;

- *summative evaluation (balance)* – performed to determine the level to which the objectives of the discipline have been achieved (level of individual physical training, motor performance) and includes the tests of the *Assessment Test of the level of physical training of military personnel / Regulation of physical education military* (push-ups, abdominal exercises, endurance running). This form of evaluation also aims at ranking and selection. The summative evaluation represents 50% of the final grade of the discipline.

In accordance with the specific regulations, in the curricula of the command master's degree programs, *Military Physical Education* is provided

as a compulsory subject in all four semesters and is completed with a grade at the end of each semester. Participants in command master's degree programs are assigned to units at the end of their studies, depending on the graduation average according to the provisions of the *D.M.R.U. 11 / SMG 48/2015, Norms regarding the distribution and appointment of graduates of the initial professional training programs of the active military personnel, of the master studies and of the residency*. In this context, it results, unequivocally, that the evaluation of this educational discipline is of major importance in the equation of the distribution of graduates.

Given that the distribution of functions is an activity of particular importance, especially for graduates of command master's degree programs, but also that evaluation is a fundamental element, a stable component of the level of physical training of any individual, I believe that the following measures, which are available to any teacher, can optimize the evaluation process for military physical education, as follows:

- regarding the *initial evaluation* – the implementation of this type of evaluation is the option of each teacher, but I consider that it should become mandatory because for the evaluation in 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> semesters, it is possible that due to severe weather conditions (blizzard and snow / heavy rain, ice-covered running surface, etc.), the endurance running test cannot be performed and the performance of the initial assessment must be taken into account in the calculation of the final grade;

- regarding the progress evaluation (formative) – given that progress is more difficult to interpret and respect and that it is "always higher in those with a lower initial level and lower in those with a higher initial level", I consider it opportune for each teacher to draw up an observation sheet and record of the following aspects: the student's attitude in different hypostases of their activity, the results recorded at sports competitions, the results recorded after determining body composition (BMI-body mass index or BFI-body fat index), the level of independent practice of physical exercise, quantity and quality of acquired elements, the subject capacity of generalization (application in practice), restructuring, assembly of acquired elements, performing organizational tasks; establishing an intermediate assessment leading to an increase



in the level of training required at the date of the summative evaluation and which may be in full or in part, namely a sequential assessment of each component (strength test – push-ups and abdomen tests, endurance – running test);

- in terms of *summative evaluation* – the competition for obtaining the best possible position in the assignment can be among members of the same study group or among members of different study groups but, usually, from the same military branches. In this regard, it is necessary to set up an evaluation committee, consisted of at least two members of the specialized department, to eliminate any suspicions about the assessment of evaluators and because this may be a solution to improve the evaluation, for the benefit of those to be trained and, certainly, of that system.

Also, the development of military physical education assessment of students in command master's degree programs by a joint commission is of major importance from another perspective as well. Thus, an extremely important aspect that argues, in a positive sense, this form of evaluation, makes reference to the errors that may occur in the specific activity of evaluation in physical education, namely the effects that can distort the value of results. The main effects that may produce substantial changes in recognizing the evaluation objectivity of the activity performed permanently only by the teacher, designated to conduct the teaching activity to the respective study group, are:

- *the "halo" effect* – according to this, the assessment of results is achieved as a result of the extension of other positive assessments from other disciplines in the curriculum; in the evaluation of behavior, two variants of the "halo" effect can be found: the "gentle" effect (the evaluator shows a higher degree of understanding for those he knows better, than those he knows less) and *the effect of generosity* (in this case there are different reasons to present the situation in a much better way than the real one);

- *Pygmalion effect* – the assessment of the results is made as a result of a fixed opinion made by the evaluator about a person;

- *the personal equation of the evaluator* – each specialist makes his own evaluation standard, some being better than "others", whereas others being "worse";

- *contrast effect* – it is encountered in the situation where after a very good evaluation, another less good one follows for the same result (the reversed variant is also valid);

- *the order effect* – certain evaluators are more permissive in assessing the results at certain times of the day, week, year (in other words they are not consistent in assessing the results from the perspective of the time component);

- *the logical effect* – it is represented by the replacing the main objectives with the secondary ones, in the evaluation of the results<sup>6</sup>.

In conclusion, we can say that evaluation in training is a problem originating in the past, but with modern connotations, it is a controversial topic, due to its moral load, because through this activity classifications and selections are made, verdicts are assigned, so fate is decided some people (in our case the military structure is decided where the graduates will carry out their activity for a period of at least one year). In this context, the optimization of the evaluation process in military physical education and, especially, the active participation of students in all forms of evaluation included in the system, have a positive influence in the equation to units' assignment of officers graduating command master's degree programs. Moreover, due to teacher abilities, assessment should not become a chore for students, but to develop and support their interest in the work carried out, to guide them in order to maintain or increase the level of physical training.

#### NOTES:

1 I. Jinga, *Managementul învățământului*, Academy for Economic Studies Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 79.

2 I. Țoca, *Management educațional*, Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, p. 56.

3 <https://www.academia.edu>, accessed on 02.07.2020.

4 I. Andrei, M. Braboveanu, G. Penciulescu, *Influența funcției de evaluare a managementului în optimizarea activității de educație fizică militară*, *Bulletin of "Carol I" National Defence University*, nr. 4/2005, p. 302.

5 <https://www.unap.ro/index.php/ro/prezentare/docu-mente-institutionale>, acceset on 02.07.2020.

6 A. Dragnea and colab., *Educație fizică și sport – teorie și didactică*, FEST Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 211.

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