The place and role of specific aesthetic disciplines means in curricular and extracurricular activities in middle-school

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to verify the presence of specific Physical Education and Sports means in the educational process, trying to train the ability to perceive, internalize, and use the values of beauty, and that play a role in the education of the aesthetic sense in middle-school pupils. The research consisted in conducting an inquiry over a group of 120 pupils from three Bacau schools. At the end of the research, one can see that the pupils are interested and willing to use the aesthetic sense-developing exercises in the educational process, an improving intervention in this sense being welcomed, this confirming the hypothesis.

Keywords: Aesthetic disciplines; curricular; extracurricular activities; middle-school;

1. Introduction

Integrated in a general education that looks toward the future, Physical Education, as a component of the education process, competes, through its specific contents, to achieving a certain educational and social ideal, which is to model the human being's personality through education.

Referring to the teachers' role in the lesson, G. Văideanu (1971, p. 200) recommends us to focus, using the support offered by the educational system, on the "development of the aesthetic sense" of the pupils, emphasizing the fact that 'nothing would engage more the teachers' creativity than treating the didactic process as an art form, as a process that has its own well-defined techniques, but with aesthetic characteristics, being susceptible to become, according to the culture and talent of the ones that perform it, an artistic process in the best sense of the word".

Considering the goals of aesthetic education, the Physical Education and Sports teachers act to form the human personality through the reception, evaluation, and creation of beauty in the human motor activities, by aiming to:
- train the main components of the aesthetic attitude and the ability to perceive, internalize, and use the aesthetic values;
- cultivate the creative aesthetic aptitudes (Cumoş, 2002; Jinga & Istrate, 1998); train the skills and abilities demanded by the specifics of the motor activities, and develop the abilities to create new artistic values.

The transformations that happened in the Romanian education after 1989 generated the necessity to educate the

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youth not just intellectually, morally, or religiously, but also aesthetically. (Dobrescu, 2006, p. 26) These goals could be beneficial in forming the young people's personalities, considering that we are witnessing today the increasing rise of certain tendencies, such as:

- the degradation of the young people's taste for authentic beauty, and the promotion of non-values; (Dobrescu & Constantinescu, 2008, p. 17)
- the increasingly artificial participation of the pupils in the school activities, and their turning away from this institution;
- the diminishing role played by the school in forming the taste for the beautiful, and the aesthetic sense, as intrinsic human elements;
- the young people's tendency to associate themselves with groups that manifest hostile attitudes toward family, school, society, and that can incite to juvenile delinquency;
- the increase of the importance of the media in the youths' education, transforming from educational instruments to manipulating means, according to the commercial interests of the emitting sources.

Considering all these, this paper tries to bring its modest contribution to the existent considerations, presenting aspects regarding the role played by the gymnastics and dance means as aesthetic disciplines in the educational system, for the ones who have chosen the mission to promote exercise to middle-school pupils.

2. Material and Methods

This paper tries to capitalize on the materials selected from the published literature, emphasizing the importance of certain disciplines in cultivating and educating the aesthetic values through curricular and extracurricular activities.

The aim of this study is to verify the presence of specific Physical Education and Sports means in the educational process, trying to train the ability to perceive, internalize, and use the values of beauty, and that play a role in the education of the aesthetic sense in middle-school pupils.

Middle-school pupils can assimilate a lot easier and more efficient the aesthetic values promoted by disciplines belonging to arts, movement sciences, literature, etc., developing their aesthetic sensitivity, taste, and judgment. This is the time during their development when they can express in their creations more accurately the aesthetic values that they assimilated in the learning process, showing judgment in forming a hierarchy of aesthetic values. (Dobrescu, 2008, p. 75)

Starting from these premises, we formulated the hypothesis stating that the knowledge of the way in which specific aesthetic disciplines means are promoted in the physical education lesson and outside it, constitutes a starting point for an improving intervention in this sense.

The research methods used were: the study of the bibliographical material, the observation, the inquiry, the statistical-mathematical method and the graphical representation method.

The research consisted in conducting an inquiry over a group of 120 seventh grade pupils from three Bacău schools: "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", "Mircea Drăgan" and "George Bacovia". The questionnaire applied in the academic year 2011-2012 comprised 12 closed, and multiple choice questions, and it aimed to:

- see how much the aesthetic sense-educating exercises are present in the Physical Education lesson;
- identify the types of aesthetic disciplines means that can be used in the lesson;
- see in which part of the lesson such content can be used for educating the middle-school pupils' aesthetic sense;
- see ways to promote these means outside the PE lesson;
- express the desire to develop such structures as often as possible within the lesson;
- make the pupils aware of the importance of these means in forming their attitudinal and aptitudinal profile.

3. Results

After the bibliographical study, a series of means were identified, aiming to educate the aesthetic sense during the physical education lesson. The questionnaire-based inquiry conducted for this study has recorded much diversified answers. The first question asked the subjects to say how whether they can identify exercises aimed to educate the
aesthetic sense in the physical education lesson. From the recorded answers, one can see that the aesthetic disciplines means are present and recognized, during the physical education lesson, only by 20% of the pupils. The fact that 50% of the inquired pupils answered "I don't know", and a number of 36 respondents gave negative answers (30%) proves that most pupils do not identify them, or the teachers did not try enough to promote these educational contents. (Figure 1)

![Figure 1](image1.png)

Figure 1. Degree of identification of aesthetic exercises in the physical education lesson

When analysing the answers regarding the identification of certain types of means used for aesthetic education in the PE lesson, one can see that the dance, aerobic and rhythmic gymnastics elements are among the most recognized means by the pupils, being considered to be very attractive and diversified forms of promoting this type of education. (Figure 2)

![Figure 2](image2.png)

Figure 2. Identification of the aesthetic disciplines means that are promoted in the physical education lesson

Asked to identify the contents that play a role in stimulating the aesthetic motor skills during the lesson, the majority of pupils (75%) said that these were concentrated in the thematic part of the lesson. One category of respondents (35%) said that these means could be found also in the warm-up part of the lesson, while others (7.5%) saw them in the closing part. (Figure 3)
The sixth question asked "Through which ways these means are promoted outside the physical education lesson?" The most used activities in the extracurricular area, as seen by the subjects, were the scenic performances, or the sports demonstrations organized on the occasion of various school events, and a lower percentage of the subjects (12%) have recognized the value of cheerleaders in educating the aesthetic sense. (Figure 4)

One category of questions asked the pupils to emphasize the importance of these gymnastics and dance means that are promoted during curricular and extracurricular activities. As such, 89% of the subjects appreciate their existence due to the pleasant way of reaching the aimed goals, the engaging possibilities in certain moments of the lesson through the use of music, for educating the aesthetic movement, and for training the aesthetic sense. There is however a smaller number of pupils (11%) who did not perceive the influences that these exercises had (Figure 5).
The last questions asked the pupils if they would like that the PE lesson or some extracurricular activities are approached using means from aesthetic disciplines. The subjects had also several answers to choose from, in regards to their motivation for promoting these exercises.

The majority of the questioned pupils (93%) thought that the promotion of these contents in the school and outside school activities is beneficial, and they wanted them to be diversified. Out of these respondents, most (41%) thought that these exercises create an atmosphere that allows you to work without feeling tired, and you can perform pleasantly new tasks. Thirty-eight per cent of the respondents emphasized the value of these means in creating a good mood for the performed activity, overcoming certain moments of monotony (13%), while 8% said that they stimulate the artistic creativity and imagination. (Figure 6)

4. Conclusions

After conducting this research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The bibliographical study and the recorded observations confirm the existence of multiple valences for the specific aesthetic disciplines means in the physical education lesson, and outside it, as well as for the role they play on the personality of middle-school pupils.
- From the analysis of the results of the study, one can see that in the schools where the inquiry was conducted the PE teachers were interested in using aesthetic exercises during their lessons. The results from the inquiry certify this fact and come with concrete arguments for each item.
The inquiry showed also that there are very diverse educational means that can be used by the teachers in the PE lesson, and in the extracurricular activities, although only a part of the respondents has recognized their value.

- At the end of the study, one can see that, although the specific aesthetic disciplines exercises are different through their diversity and applicative multivalence, they are only partially capitalized on during the lesson.

- Most of the respondents considered that the presence of these exercises in the Physical Education lesson exerts an involvement in an activity that allows the performance of tasks and overcoming certain moments when the body is put under too much pressure.

- At the end of the research, one can see that the pupils are interested and willing to use the aesthetic sense-developing exercises in the educational process, an improving intervention in this sense being welcomed, this confirming the hypothesis.

References


