

ANALYSIS OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT EVALUATION SYSTEM IN HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

Along with other aspects of education, physical education is an activity indissolubly related to the training of the young generation. Organically integrated into the instructive-educational process, physical education is meant to participate in the growth and formation of a physically and mentally healthy generation that can meet the demands of society. In the context of the Romanian education reform, the physical education and sport subject should contribute to shaping the profile of the future high school graduate. [1]

This study will examine issues regarding the instructive-educational process in terms of evaluation system for physical education and sport in high school. The paper addresses the evaluation area and aims to improve this process by creating a conceptual framework based on the identification and proposal of directions in the evaluation system for physical education and sport in high school, which can be used as a benchmark in the future curriculum reform for this subject. We want these directions to contribute to and meet the current requirements of the student-centred education system by combining formal with informal and non-formal education.

Keywords: physical education; evaluation system; curriculum; high school.

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1. Introduction

Evaluation is important in any activity, being a permanent “X-ray” of the monitored process. Any human activity, therefore the teaching activity too, involves an evaluation process that can be conducted scientifically or empirically.

Evaluation becomes a fundamental element in any instructive-educational process that has well-defined objectives or standards.

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In the teaching activity, the concept of evaluation receives different definitions, depending on the professional training of theorists that have approached this field.

➤ Evaluation is an act by which the system is constantly improved. In this sense, evaluation becomes a moment of the process itself, the starting point in the self-regulation of the system and ultimately represents one of the prerequisites for conducting an instructive-educational process, its functioning principle that leads to changes in the objectives of the activity and the strategy used. [2]

➤ Evaluation aims to determine how the objectives set out are achieved in practical activity. [3]

➤ The evaluation of learning outcomes is the action that is integrated into the structure of the lesson as an internal resource of its managerial conduct. The process of integration into the organisational structure of the lesson is carried out through several specific functions developed within the general function of orientation-guidance of the teaching activity: the diagnostic function; the regulation-self-regulation function; the function of superior motivation for the activity, which ensures the stimulation of learning based on the results achieved. [4]

➤ Evaluation is a component of the didactic approach, which offers the teacher the opportunity to clearly specify the effects that the initiated instructive-educational process has on students during and at the end of each learning unit.

2. Literature review

Any evaluation process in the educational system needs to go through certain stages, which are presented by [5] as follows:

- establishing and knowing the objectives of the process to be evaluated;
- producing learning situations for students to adopt the behaviour that these objectives involve;
- selecting methods and tools to record and measure the results obtained;
- conducting the measurement and recording process;
- evaluating and analysing the collected data;
- drawing conclusions and making diagnostic assessments based on the results obtained.

The level of achieving the objectives set out at the beginning of the teaching activity can be determined only with the help of evaluation. Thus, the lagging behind of students can be prevented and changes to the designed strategy can be applied by identifying the causes and establishing the necessary steps.

Evaluation in physical education and sport is done through assessment tests presented in curricular documents that regulate the instructive-educational process for this school subject.

Therefore, the physical education and sport curricula for high school provide the general competences for the entire upper secondary cycle (grades 9-12) and the



specific competences for each year of study. The instructive-educational process aims at building these competences, whose level of achievement is determined by the initial, cumulative or summative evaluation and the continuous-formative evaluation.

Regarding student evaluation, the current physical education and sport curricula for high school no. 5099 of 09.09.2009 [6] mention the tests to be applied for the evaluation of students in grades 10, 11 and 12. These assessment tests are as follows:

1. development of segmental strength (two tests for different body segments);
2. an athletic event chosen from the two optionally practised;
3. an exercise of choice from one of the branches of gymnastics or a gymnastics vault;
4. efficiency in an optional sports game or performing a technical-tactical structure established by the teacher.

The organisation of the teaching-learning-evaluation process for grade 9 is regulated by the *Methodological benchmarks for the curriculum implementation in the 2021-2022 school year* [7]. The level of skill acquisition in lower secondary education is established through an initial evaluation that includes tests provided in the physical education and sport curriculum for middle school (Appendix 2 to the Order no. 3393/28.02.2017 issued by the Minister of National Education). The proposed tests are aimed at evaluating the development level of speed, strength and endurance.

The tests for motor acquisitions include:

1. tests to evaluate strength development in the main muscle groups (the student performs sets of 3 analytical and selective exercises for the development of muscle strength in the abdomen, back, upper and lower limbs);
2. an athletic event chosen from those provided in the school curriculum;
3. an exercise of choice from one of the branches of gymnastics or a gymnastics vault provided in the school curriculum; the student can opt for one of these two;
4. efficiency in an optional sports game or performing a technical-tactical structure established by the teacher;
5. alternative assessment tests, which will focus on:
 - Theoretical knowledge, evaluated through written tests.
 - The portfolio, which will include sports-themed reports, the presentation of champions or new sports, etc.

3. Purpose of the study

The study aims to analyse the current evaluation system for the physical education and sport subject in high school and the possibilities to improve it.



4. Material and methods

This research is based on the study of the literature and official documents that regulate the educational process in Romania as regards the evaluation of high school students for the physical education and sport subject in order to have a broader vision on this topic.

5. Findings

The evaluation of physical education teaching mainly includes the evaluation of students' performance. School performance in the physical education and sport subject for high school students especially refers to their motor achievements as presented in the National School Evaluation System (approved by Ministerial Order no. 4063/09.07.1999). [8]

The tests and evaluation criteria provided in the National School Evaluation System are concerned with the level of achieving both the framework objectives and final performance standards specific to each education cycle and the reference objectives established for each grade as regards the development of general and specific motor competences needed to practise the sports branches listed in the school curriculum that has been in force since 1999.

A question that arises is whether these tests can determine the level of acquisition or formation of all general and specific competences provided in the school curriculum.

Table 1. General competences and assessment tests for high school students

General competences	Grade	Assessment tests
1. Using specialised language in communication relationships	9	- theoretical knowledge, evaluated through written tests
	10-12	-
2. Using information, methods and means specific to physical education and sport in order to optimise health and harmonious physical development	9-12	-
3. Using knowledge, methods and means specific to physical education and sport in order to develop motor skills	9-12	- development of segmental strength (two tests for different body segments)
4. Applying the system of rules specific to the organisation and practice of physical education and sport activities and adopting appropriate behaviour in interpersonal and group relationships	9-12	- an athletic event chosen from the two optionally practised - an exercise of choice from one of the branches of gymnastics or a gymnastics vault



General competences	Grade	Assessment tests
		- efficiency in an optional sports game or performing a technical-tactical structure established by the teacher
5. Using body language to express and understand ideas, emotional states and aesthetics [9]	9-12	-

Analysing the five general competences provided in the school curriculum for the physical education and sport subject in high school and the assessment tests used for students (Table 1), it can be seen that only two of them are aimed at grades 10-12, namely:

- using knowledge, methods and means specific to physical education and sport in order to develop motor skills; [10]
- applying the system of rules specific to the organisation and practice of physical education and sport activities and adopting appropriate behaviour in interpersonal and group relationships.

For the 9th grade, the alternative assessment tests also aim at the competence of using specialised language in communication relationships.

In the current evaluation system, there is a lack of provisions to highlight the knowledge and skills acquired by students during physical education and sport lessons or the progress made by them, so that the instructive-educational process can be student-centred, and evaluation can focus on the formative component.

Table 2. Content areas and assessment tests for high school students

Content areas	Grade	Assessment tests
Health and physical development	9-12	-
Individual protection	9-12	-
Development of personality traits	9-12	-
Culture	9	- theoretical knowledge, evaluated through written tests
	10-12	-
Motor abilities	9-12	- development of segmental strength (two tests for different body segments)
Motor skills: locomotion, stability, manipulation	9-12	-
Sports disciplines	9-12	- an athletic event chosen from the two optionally practised - an exercise of choice from one of the branches of gymnastics or a gymnastics vault



Content areas	Grade	Assessment tests
		- efficiency in an optional sports game or performing a technical-tactical structure established by the teacher
Alternative sports disciplines	9-12	- each teacher prepares assessment tests

Analysing the content areas of the school curriculum, it can be seen that not all of them benefit from assessment tests, as shown in Table 2.

Evaluation is focused on two content areas, namely Motor qualities and Sports disciplines.

As regards the content areas: Health and physical development; Individual protection; Development of personality traits; Culture; Motor skills: locomotion, stability, manipulation; and Alternative sports disciplines, there are no unitary assessment tests at national level. For these content areas, only the curricular document *Methodological benchmarks for the curriculum implementation in the 2021-2022 school year* mentions the possibility for the teacher to prepare alternative assessment tests (theoretical knowledge and portfolio).

In terms of student grading, the National School Evaluation System presents the minimum scale for grade 5, but the grading scale is established by each teacher or methodological commission at the level of educational units, which leads to a non-uniform evaluation in the public education system for the physical education and sport subject.

Motor performance in assessment tests is the main evaluation criterion mentioned in the National School Evaluation System, which also takes into account the health status, the attitude towards the subject in question and the progress made, but without specifying their share in the final score.

Establishing assessment tests for the physical education and sport subject only to evaluate students' motor skills does not comply with the idea of differentiated treatment, leading to a decrease in the motivation of high school students with low motor skills or above-average body weight. It is worth noting that motivation is very important in physical education and sport. [11]

The fact that the National School Evaluation System mentions some assessment tests of different complexity for acrobatic gymnastics and sports games, which allow students to obtain a maximum score of 8 or 9, represents a differentiated evaluation of students who choose to perform these physical education and sport tests, given that they do not have the possibility of getting the maximum score.

A different approach to the evaluation criteria can be observed for grade 9 in the *Methodological benchmarks for the curriculum implementation in the 2021-2022 school year*; thus, this curricular document provides evaluation criteria for each assessment test, but the motor performance criterion has a share of only 25-50% of the final score.



Considering the educational paradigm of the education system, namely that of student-centred learning by training general competences and competences specific to physical education and sport, this school subject can contribute to shaping the young generation by equipping it with three categories of capabilities:

- know-how – knowledge acquisition;
- how to do – learning, consolidation and improvement of physical skills and abilities;
- how to be – educating social skills.

The formation of general and specific competences, which are reflected in the acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes, contributes to shaping the profile of the future high school graduate.

In our opinion, setting performance standards with well-established performance indicators for school physical education and sport would stimulate learning, increase the motivation of students and develop and train them in accordance with the needs of today's society.

By raising awareness of the role and importance of evaluation in determining the participation of high school students in physical education and sport lessons to build the general and specific competences provided in the curriculum for this school subject, the teacher can influence children's motivation to be active during classes. This can be achieved by choosing assessment tests aimed at meeting the performance indicators and therefore reaching the established standards, thus leading the student to be more active during physical education and sport lessons.

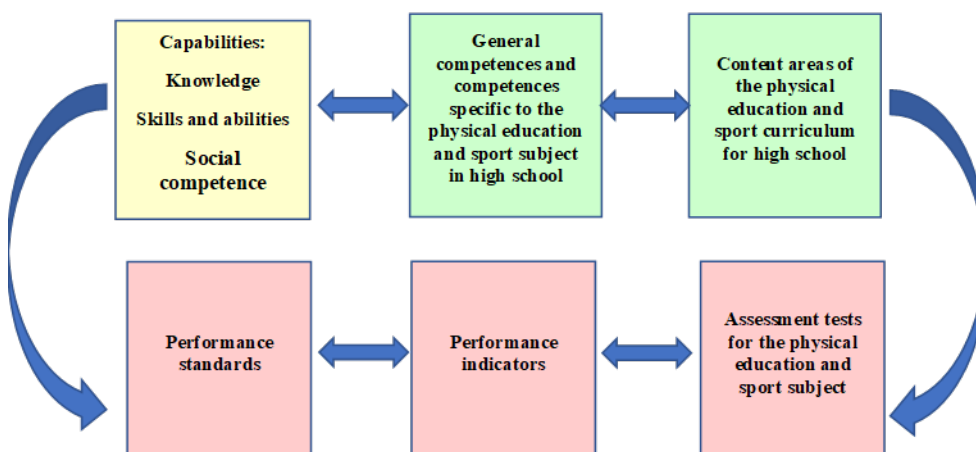


Figure 1. Relationship between capabilities-competences-evaluation



We believe that, in order to verify the achievement of competences set out in the curricula for school physical education and sport, the evaluation system should include the following aspects:

- ✓ setting performance standards for each content area of the physical education and sport curriculum for high school per year of study;
- ✓ preparing assessment tests for all content areas that currently do not benefit from them: health and physical development; individual protection; development of personality traits; culture;
- ✓ taking into account that the trend towards autonomy needs to be present in any evaluation system, which should include a sufficient number of quantitative and qualitative assessment tests to enable students and teachers to choose the appropriate ones from a wide range of proposals, depending on the level of acquired motor development;
- ✓ introducing applicative routes as assessment tests, given that admission to higher education is conditioned (in some universities) by the successful completion of such routes;
- ✓ establishing scales for measurable assessment tests in order to have an objective and unitary evaluation at national level.

6. Conclusions

The conclusions of this research point out the need to reform the evaluation system for the physical education and sport subject in high school.

Establishing performance standards for each year of study and each content area of the physical education and sport curriculum for high school would highlight much more clearly the progress made by students. The unitary application of a properly standardised evaluation system at national level can lead to the interpretation and comparison of students' achievements in the physical education and sport subject at the end of each year of study or at the end of the high school cycle.

The evaluation process should become a regulatory factor of the entire teaching-learning activity, constantly requiring adaptations of both the curriculum and the evaluation system, but also of teachers and students.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have equally contributed to this study and should be considered as main authors.



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