

## INTERACTIVE TOURISM LESSONS WITH THE UTILIZATION OF SHORT ECOTRAILS

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Received: October, 07.2014.

Accepted: October, 31.2014.

Original Article

UDK 338.485:371.72

37.033

**Abstract.** Tourism is one of the most accessible and widespread physical activities used for physical and intellectual improvement, promoting health and enhancing the overall working capacity. Any willing individual without serious deviations in their health status can participate, regardless of their physical fitness level. Tourism education is widely practiced in the educational curriculum of physical education and sports as an addition to the main program of study and as modular education. The various forms of tourism include theoretical and practical classes, which can be held not only in nature, but also, in certain cases, in the gym hall or the school's surrounding area. The physical activities included in tourism influence and complement the physical activities included in the main program of study (track-and-field athletics, sports games and gymnastics) and vice versa.

**Keywords:** *Tourism, sport, Physical education, Theoretical and practical instruction.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most accessible and widespread physical activities used for physical and intellectual improvement, promoting health and enhancing the overall working capacity. Any willing individual without serious deviations in their health status can participate, regardless of their physical fitness level. Tourism education is widely practiced in the educational curriculum of physical education and sports as an addition to the main program of study and as modular education.

The various forms of tourism include theoretical and practical classes, which can be held not only in nature, but also, in certain cases, in the gym hall or the school's surrounding area. Physical activities were included in tourism influence and complement the physical activities included in the main program of study (track-and-field athletics, sports games and gymnastics) and vice versa.

Tourism is not just the means of physical and practical education. It also participates in the students' personal development. It's a wonderful medium for satisfying the innate necessity for movement, for strange and romantic adventures, for social relations and so on, which is typical of the students' age. Additionally, through it students discover some character traits and abilities that they have not been displayed in their normal learning environment. In this regard, tourism activities are particularly important for the teachers themselves, because through their usage they may become even more acquainted with each student. This will help them find the most suitable way to influence the students individually, achieve cooperation and mutual understanding.

Tourism is a wonderful and effective medium used for improving the adolescents' physical and mental traits, and for maintaining and strengthening their well being. Tourism education forms a number of highly valued personality traits and practical skills. Students add to the knowledge they received in geography, biology, astronomy or mathematics and they try to make sense by observing it from different aspects, thus converting that knowledge into a potential with practical implications. Instead of just talking about it, students are learning about teamwork, tolerance and overcoming obstacles in real life situations.

All this confirms the positive effect that

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tourism education has on the overall development of adolescents, and it exposes the necessity of improving this field so that it remains interesting and attractive to them.

A successful attempt along these lines is teaching tourism lessons by utilizing short ecotrails. The idea and the practical application of this innovative approach is credited to the authors of this paper. Such lessons have been successfully executed with students from Veliko Trnovo and Skopje, which are an indicator for their versatile nature and effectiveness, considering the proper conditions have been met.

**The purpose** of this article is to present the positive outcome of the attempt at teaching tourism lessons by utilizing short ecotrails, in accordance with the goals and objectives of tourism courses for fifth and sixth grade students in elementary school.

## 2. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

What is notable of a lesson such as this one, is its interactive nature and the possibility of teaching it in the open, on a short ecotrail 1300 meters in length which has excellent opportunities for learning. Essentially, the ecotrails are specifically organized, mostly with circular routes located in areas with remarkably beautiful untouched nature. The trails' terrain is varied and includes sections which are very difficult to overcome since they require quick wits and boldness. This leads to the logical conclusion that in the timeframe available in a single school day, such lessons can only be conducted in schools which are located near a woodland area or a park with natural vegetation. However, this is possible for students of any school, if conducted during a day off, since there is enough time to reach the respective ecotrail.

Considering the advantages of the interactive tourism lessons conducted on a short ecotrail, we come to the following conclusion:

- These activities are acquired emotionally by the students and they influence the development of the adolescents' value system.
- Not only do these planned recreational activities have a favorable effect on the students' physical and intellectual traits, but they also have a practical importance for enriching their personal experience.
- The ability to inform themselves in the environment gives them

confidence that they can handle any unexpected and complicated situations. The terrains, used for orientation lessons, offer an excellent opportunity for education by utilizing a topography map. In the educational program in nature it is appropriate to include various recreational sports with orientation elements.

- In order to move on the ecotrail the students will have to either walk or run, which is favorable from a methodical point of view since the intensity of the exercise can be regulated in the following aspects:
- Walking and running are natural cyclical human motions, and the physical exertion can be of low, moderate or vigorous intensity. Correct breathing and place are of great importance in these activities and they vary among each individual.
- Skillful selection of intensity can improve the blood flow and metabolism, and strengthen the muscles. That is why walking and running are recommended as activities that improve health.
- Increasing the overall working capacity allows the students to better deal with the overburdened school day by preserving and improving their health.

This practical method is directed not only toward physical improvement, but also toward stimulating the students' cognitive activity, thus, opening opportunities for them to broaden their outlook on sports and tourism, and to develop healthy lifestyle habits.

We now propose we turn our attention to the contents and consistency of a variant of an interactive lesson with the utilization of a short ecotrail.

**Lesson subject:** Tourism and tourism skills.

### **Tasks:**

- Educational: developing physical qualities and abilities by walking and running on a tourist trail and learning practical tourist skills.
- Well-being: advancing the students' general endurance, strengthening the cardiovascular system.
- Disciplinary: building a sense of teamwork and improving communication, initiation and creativity skills.

**Necessary equipment and appliances:** flags, tents, wooden beams,

topographical marks, a collection of plants, a chronometer.

**Lesson duration:** 90 min. Thus, connecting the duration of two school classes. The entire class warms up for 8-10 min., after which they are divided into 2 groups. While the students in the first group are performing the tasks on the ecotrail for 35-38 min., the students in the second group are aligned at the stations where they observe the correct manner in which the lessons are expected to be completed. Afterwards, the two groups switch roles and perform the appropriate activities. The entire class participates in the final part which takes place for 5-6 min.

Table 1. Interactive lesson with the utilization of a short ecotrail

	Contents	Duration
<b>1.</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>9 min.</b>
1.1.	Class lining up and announcing the tasks. Dividing the class in two groups.	1 min.
1.2.	Students take their own pulse for the first time.	1 min.
1.3.	Advancing toward the trail's start line by running with light intensity.	2 min.
1.4.	Warming up in pairs (whole body exercises).	5 min. (5-6 ex.)
<b>2.</b>	<b>Main part</b>	
2.1.	Indicating the dangers and instructing how to safely complete the tasks at the stations which the students have to reach by alternating between walking and running.	1 min.
2.2.	Taking a starting stance.	2 min.
2.3.	Station 1. Setting up a tent.	6 min.
2.4.	Station 2. Going on a route on which there is a small brook. Practical exercises are performed over it using equipment made from natural materials (beams, stumps, stakes etc.)	3 min.
2.5.	Station 3. Tying knots. 6 of the knots used in tourism are chosen, depending on the teachers' capabilities. Walking - running 400 m.	3 min.
2.6.	Station 4. Overcoming a "precipice" by setting a beam and walking over it. Walking - running 200 m.	3 min.
2.7.	Station 5. Carrying an injured person on a 20 m. Distance using various methods. Walking - running 100 m.	2 min.
2.8.	Station 6. Reading a map with topographical marks. Walking - running 300 m.	3 min.
2.9.	Station 7. Identifying plants - differentiate which have medicinal properties and which do not. Walking - running 200 m.	2 min.
2.10.	Station 8. Throwing pinecones at targets - trees that are located at varying distances.	2 min.
2.11.	Station 9. Disassembling and packing the tent.	3 min.
2.12.	Station 10. Preparing fire with the "well", "star" and "shack" method. (it is not ignited)	3 min.
2.13.	Finish. Students take their own pulse.	1 min.
2.14.	Groups switch roles.	1 min.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Final part</b>	<b>5 min.</b>
3.1.	Announcing the end result of the performed tasks by giving an account of the achievements and mistakes.	1 min.
3.2.	Giving directions and recommendations for further independent recreational activities.	1 min.
3.3.	Returning to the school facility.	3 min.

### 3. CONCLUSION

1. The described experiment of a tourism lesson demonstrates that searching for and implementing modern methods of approach in educational activities has positive results. Rest assured, these lessons are applicable and can be carried into effect. The presented lesson represents a practically valuable example because it can be applied in a real educational environment and it corresponds to the modern

trends in this area.

The positive effect is achieved in the following:

- by reaching the necessary intensity with the exercises, the students' complex physical traits are developed;
- their motor functions and practical skills are improved;
- their endurance and their curiosity are increased;
- they learn to listen to their classmates' opinion and make decisions independently;
- the mutual understanding between the PE (physical education) teacher and the students is increased.

It's particularly important to prepare preliminary instructions for the lessons regarding the organization, the equipment and the teachers' competence.

By examining the proposed pedagogical experiment analytically, we can infer the following general conclusion:

1. There is a necessity for a more decisive break down of the didactical patterns, and a need for adopting current models that promote student interaction, communication with nature and an increase in their physical activity.

2. Tourism education should be used more purposefully to increase the students' physical, and mental health and to strengthen the adaptive ability of their organism against the unfavorable environmental factors.

3. The teachers' professional competence and motivation in collaboration with the public institutions are the main factor in achieving success in this area.

4. By gaining the parents' trust and finding a common cause for assisting in the various activities and gaining their trust, they can be attracted to share the same views.

### Conflict of interests

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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retrived 11.01.2014.