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PHILOSOPHY, METHODOLOGY AND REAL PRACTICE IN SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Philosophy means literally “the love of wisdom”. Wisdom affects every choice we make in order to do something. Philosophy deals primarily with ideas – things that cannot be touched, weighed, or measured in another way. Though their mystifying character philosophic questions are necessary for everyone field of knowledge. The purpose is to eliminate everyone doubt or misunderstanding that may exist when things are analyzed and decisions are taken, so that the truth is found and the best and correct result is achieved.

In the field of physical culture, physical education and sports as philosophic questions can be determined: “Should you devote yourself to one of the physical professions when society seems to value the mental activities more highly? What role should movement play in human existence? How important is winning? Should biological health be the ultimate goal of physical education? Should young children be placed in high-intensity athletic environments? What role should movement play among older adults who now find it difficult, even painful, to move much at all?”(R. S. Kretchmar, 1994, p. 5).

In this paper we use the way of thinking of the eminent American scholar Prof. Robert Scott Kretchmar, PhD, Penn State University. In reality, though abstract, philosophic questions in physical culture field of knowledge can be numerous and they always beg for attention.

Long time ago people realized that locomotor movements can be useful for the well-being of the humankind. By and by there emerged artificial gymnastic exercises, marching, etc. Primarily and later on also by one or another reason often their use was attended with frigidity by one or another group of people. Though this fact nowadays we rely on diversity of sports and other motor activities.

The right answer of how useful are physical exercises, physical activities, and sports depend on knowledge that is a subject matter of different sciences and scientific disciplines (physiology, biochemistry, psychology, didactics, medicine, etc.). So, task of philosophy is to determine the *holistic method as basis* of understanding, discussion and investigations. Meanwhile, posing questions and pursuing answer to them is an art and a science at the same time, as answers are grounded on repeatable methods that are objectified and explained (science) and on “intuition, tendencies, and flashes of insight that can neither be fully predicted nor accounted for (art) (R. S. Kretchmar, 1994, p.5).

In this train of thoughts we can determine the other general methods of study that are typical for philosophic knowledge, and they are *the inductive, deductive, and transductive methods*.

Philosophic knowledge as a background of all other sciences is boundless. So, in our occasion, the last things we want to share are the always pursued tendencies for **freedom, ethics, and esthetics**. There must be freedom mainly in choice of practical and research activities but all this in the frames of the inner balance of the systems and the necessary ethic and esthetic norms.

Everyone science has its subject of study. At the same time, there are spheres of knowledge where the subject of study is the same but pursued purposes and tasks are different, so different are the gathered analyses and conclusions. In the occasion we speak about scientific disciplines. In this aspect we can speak about sports sciences, but never about a sport science (exclusion is done when this science is previously concreted in the context) neither about sportology (M. Batchvarov/М. Бъчваров, 2000, 2005) as a gathering science in the field of sports with all its content and definitions. D. Medvedev (1999)- at that time Master of Sport Management at the Russian State Academy of Physical Education, also uses the term “sportology” but the included by him content is radically different. It is much more “sportography” and the purpose is to make more “transparent” each kind of sport by development of “comparative” ”sportology”(or “sportography”). All this is for the necessities of sports marketing on all its levels. At the same time D. Medvedev shows the necessity not only of specialists in marketing with large diapason of information on market conjuncture and development but also the necessity of philosophers and sociologists, ”who are studying in complex dynamics all branches of human activity” with the purpose to put order in it.

The President of ICSSPE Prof. Dr. Gudrun Doll-Tepper (2007) pays attention to the cultural differences and the different ways of education – something that leads to different terms, all of them keeping different philosophy. So, a man can meet with the terms human movement studies, sport science, motor science, movement science, etc.

Different are the names of the school subject engaged with the movement and sport culture of the young generation. Most often a man meets physical education (Great Britain, France, Spain, etc.), sport (Germany), physical culture (Russia), physical education and sports (Bulgaria), physical and health education (R. Macedonia’s offer of B. Mihajlovski/Б. Михајловски, 2001), etc. All these names also hinder in themselves different philosophy and tendencies in school physical education development. Nevertheless, aims and tasks of human oriented physical education of young generation all over the world are one and the same.

Electronic space is overloaded with information of all kinds including physical activity, physical education, sports and their influence. In it nowadays is the same chaos and anarchy as a decade ago about which at that time warns us D. Medvedev (1999). We will go further saying that this overloading will lead to “blocking” of “the core” information making it useless to a great extent for the real scientist or student. In this case still leading and to a great extent irreplaceable will be the role of the old good books and other papers but published according to the many demands put in front of authors and editors. Righting of such kinds of books and papers depends also on good database put on correct philosophic backgrounds. Question that arises is the use and necessity of young generation to work much more with computers than with paper bearers of information.

One other thing cannot be denied. By having a look to the different information in Internet a man can pick up some new ideas or data which he can use in his forthcoming researches. This information can be from “the other end” of the world but the scientist can use it according to his/her point of view.

The diversity of ideas and tendencies in physical and movement education depends on local cultural traditions. But all they have also their methodology. Methodology is supposed to be the totality of cognitive means, methods and approaches, used by a science, according to its special characteristics. Scientific findings have not only subject but methodological content as well. Different methodological content can lead to differences in the used term apparatus and the critical interpretation of given data. So, task of scientists is to develop methodological knowledge as well. Correct methodology secures objective analysis of scientific acts and activities through which subject knowledge and content are worked out.

Typical methodological problems for elaboration of scientists are:

- 1) Stages of scientific knowledge and their description through analysis.
- 2) Analysis of the used language and terms.
- 3) Continuity of single procedures and methods, their explanation and proof through experiment.
- 4) Analysis of the explored principles, approaches, and conceptions by reduction, elementariness, systematic approach, etc.

G. Bizkov/Георги Бижков (1995), a full professor in Pedagogy at the Sofia University, settles the roots of methodology of pedagogical investigations in the worked out at the beginning of XX century *experimental pedagogy* when changes for the better in theory and practice were reported and registered as a result of the introduction of methods like observation, experiment and statistics. Later on follows the stage of *reformatory pedagogy* with all its school trends. Last is the purposeful establishment of *experimental schools* in Western Europe, USA, and the USSR where concrete practical adoption of certain ideas and situations is approved. As if this trend becomes worldwide. In the 70-ies and the beginning of the 80-ies of former century in Bulgaria the educational system of the academician in mathematics Prof. Dr Blagovest Sendov has been proved, giving too much attention on physical education, all movement activities, and extra curriculum engagements of pupils. Tradition is stronger or educational system is conservative – this conclusion can be done as a whole after the break of the experimental system of Acad. B. Sendov.

The 70-ies are also the time when too many sports schools have been opened in Bulgaria. There has not been a regional town without its sports school. In Sofia everyone eminent sports club has had its sports school in the nearby region, so their total number in the capital has been 4. Opening of sports schools at that time we define as a part of the stage of the experimental schools but also as a governmental/political decision.

Analysing the above mentioned data we see how weak is the boundary between methodology and politic decisions and how methodology in practice sometimes depends on economical and political circumstances. Nevertheless, in Acad. B. Sendov's system are perceptible the methodology of the sense of education as a whole, the special atten-

tion to physical education, and the necessity of holistic approach in education. Holistic approach leads to interdisciplinary education. Educational space in Bulgaria shows that too many subjects and textbooks use physical education content as examples that can be given to the pupils (especially physics). The feedback “Physical education-Physics/other school subject” is seen in practice rarely – especially in secondary school when abstract thinking of pupils is developed to a great extent and examples of the kind may only help for further development of it.

Reasons we seek in 1) lack of time in the 40 or 45 minutes lasting lessons of PE and all tasks that stay in front of the teachers for this short period of time, 2) PE teachers do not feel themselves enough sure entering in the core content of other school subjects especially those connected with Mathematics, 3) PE lessons are from the little time when pupils can stay aside of active mental work and recover of it. Really it depends on PE teacher’s mastery but purposeful seeking of feedbacks with other school subjects to a great extent will be of second rate and not enough efficient. Help of physical educational content to mental development in much more occasions is in securing of the so called “active rest”. This approach has to become basis for the whole educational system.

Methodology is in the centre of doing an objective analysis of things and phenomena. It is a constructive mental knowledge reflecting the causal relations in objective reality. The above mentioned example with Blagovest Sendov’s system refers much more management than wrong methodology. In other circumstances this system was going to work well.

The century-old knowledge in physical education resulted in development of sport with all its diversity, philosophical methodology, and concrete methods. Later on is seen the opposite influence. Sport influences the content of physical education much more than locomotor activities do. Maybe presumption is that all locomotor movements are emanative basis of all sports movements. For example - The National Curriculum of Britain (the first one is from 1996) secures greater freedom for choice of teachers and pupils, giving full access to all kinds of sports in the syllabuses/programmes and steps that can assure that pupils cope well with the content and have the necessary progress. As far as it is known mountain biking and other sports of the kind find place in school programmes in USA. Other programmes emphasize on traditional sports, e.g. badminton in some Eastern countries. Another is the philosophy of designing PE programmes in Bulgaria. Teachers have freedom of choice but in the frames of three main sports or sports disciplines (gymnastics, track-and-field events, sports games), defined as obligatory, and some complementary sports where a man can find swimming, dances, bodybuilding, fitness, etc. Practice is the correction to better but undoubtedly greater freedom secures greater efficiency in education.

Speaking about philosophy, methodology and real school PE practice as well we have to have a look at *attitudes* during education. In the case we want to stop the attention to the following two moments:

1) *To the special pedagogical needs of some pupils and the adapted physical activity demanded for them.* But have we ever put our minds on the majority of pupils, evidently being able or obliged to do all motor tasks put by the teacher, correspondingly

by the PE programmes of Ministry of Education? Are there not sometimes moments of an “ordinary” pupil who feels himself/herself uneasy while he/she is fulfilling some exercises because of lacking of some abilities? Is not such a pupil in the situation of a pupil with special pedagogical needs? We show understanding to the group of APA pupils but do we realize that some other pupils need the same understanding. Expectations by the PE teacher are that the boy or girl has to do the wished exercise. But maybe the state of the pupil by one or another reason is similar to the state and presence of a pupil with special pedagogical needs in the lesson. Here PE teachers must be very careful.

2) *To the previous adjustment of teachers and all other educators including family to pupils' behaviour.* Why a child acts in one or another way, sometimes doing unwelcome things? Teachers have to start thinking from the position of children. Especially adolescents are very concrete in their thoughts. Furthermore, they see life only in black and white colours. Planning of future in long-terms lacks by them. They think themselves immortal. Something natural for them is to seek strong emotions, even to live on the border of risk, making themselves heroes. Once again we come to the teacher's mastery and experience but in another way of thinking towards pupils. Teachers have to seek pupil's necessities and help in their realization.

Methodology in physical education still needs a thorough study. Even nowadays it is much more natural to rely on the experience of the old good practices than to seek approach from up (thinking) to down (practice). Too many problems stay in front of PE scholars and wait their decision before entering into practice.

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SUMMARY**PHILOSOPHY, METHODOLOGY AND REAL PRACTICE
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*Philosophic knowledge as a background of all other sciences is boundless. In our occasion we pay attention to the always pursued tendencies for **freedom, ethics, and esthetics** in the diversity of ideas and tendencies in physical education. These tendencies depend on local cultural traditions. But all they have their methodology. Scientific findings have not only subject but methodological content as well. Different methodological content can lead to differences in the used term apparatus and the critical interpretation of given data. So, task of scientists is to develop methodological knowledge as well.*

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Practically the paper is directed to the principles of designing PE content in the national curriculum in some countries and the attitudes among subjects during education as well. It also supports the demand for greater freedom in choice with the only purpose greater efficiency in learning.