

ANALYSIS OF TRAINING NEEDS FOR TEACHERS TO IMPROVE TEACHING ACTIVITIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE PROVINCE OF NAPLES (ITALY)

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Abstract

These study fields are the most important motor and sport training areas of university curricula for primary school will-be teachers. The research as a whole has shown training needs in motor and sport teaching areas that significantly diversify graduated and just certificated teachers, highlighting the discrepancy between the value given by the teaching programmes and ministerial guideline to some study fields and the negative judgment expressed by just certificated teachers. Finally, it comes out a clear educational need of certificated teachers that requires further and deepen research.

Key words: *teachers, preparation, primary school*

Introduction

In Italy the teaching training has taken up different characteristics according to the different historical ages, which were enriched by political ideologies and philosophical principles. Starting from the magister tradition, head of a school or a workshop of art, and from the development of the "individual approach" imbued with Christian typical medieval values, the importance of a future teachers' training path made up of specific phases has been established over the centuries. Before 1700, in Italy, "a body of teaching" (knowledge of the discipline), customs and morality were required to open a new school, but the first real training course for teachers was established in Milan in 1786 and it lasted only one month. The following year the course was transformed into a three months regular path, with only one method in the choice of the books and the elementary teachers. At the beginning of the XIX century the law of 4 September, 1802 and the introduction of the Instructions for primary schools of 15 February, 1812 obliged the will-be 20 years old teachers to participate in the following courses: 3 months training qualification course for teaching in lower elementary schools and 6 months course for teaching in upper primary schools. Teachers were required to have a good pronunciation, physical and mental health, a deft intellect in understanding, knowledge of religion and a method based on patience and diligence.

The Casati Law no. 3725 of 13 November 1859, issued during the period of the Unification of Italy, standardized teachers' preparation. 18 "normal" schools were established (art. no. 357), nine for men and nine for girls, with a course of three years (art. no. 359) and a didactic training (art. no. 360). After two years, "Normalist" students could make the examinations for the license of the lower course and only after three years the license for the upper one. An entrance examination was requested to enter into the normal school after the end of the elementary school (art. no. 364), at the age of 16 years for men and 15 for women, together with a certificate of "sound and robust constitution".

Furthermore, graduates of the "normal" school had also to show a certificate of good character (issued by the municipality) to teach. Men were allowed to teach at the age of 18 years, women at the age of 17 and they were elected by the municipality for 3 years (Article no. 328). The programmes for the so called "normal schools" to prepare teachers were issued by R.D. (Royal Decree) no 1942 of 10 October, 1867, and they allow the provinces and municipalities to establish Italian male and female "schools for teachers". The rule helped, together with the Casati law, to define an unified and organic structure of the Italian school, introducing the gym teaching.

The first strictly male courses were established in 1833 in Turin, in 1861 in Genoa and in 1864 in Naples. In 1867, only 34 years after the birth of the first course in Turin, a two months female course was established in the same city. Only female students who held the diploma of elementary teacher could attend this course.

In 1923, the Gentile Reform caused a further reform of the "normal school" that became the Italian "Istituto Magistrale". It also defined the aims and programmes of the new study course that enabled students to teach in primary schools. This course lasted 7 years: four years lower course and three years upper course (art. no. 53). The Gentile Reform, exalting the strength and fine appearance of the teacher, imposed strict criteria for the selection of the teachers who were required the same physical and moral characteristics as for the military profession. The idea to build up teachers through the rigorous application of cultural standards and to give philosophy a central role in the general education of the spirit fostered a moral and ethical pedagogy aimed to the education of "people to be morally worthy" before than to be teachers.

By the Law no. 899 of 1940, the "Teachers' Training Schools" previously divided into lower and upper, were unified, but they did not allow students holding the diploma to have access to university. Only 30 years later, with the Law no. 910 of 11 December 1969, graduates of the "Teachers' Training Schools" were allowed to attend one-year additional course after the 4 years secondary education school in order to get the possibility to access to the University. In 1982, by the D.P.R. of the 1st October 1982, the Italian programmes of gym teaching in the "Teachers' Training Schools" were adjusted and teachers were given programme instructions to regulate the courses of motor activities for the training of the future primary school teachers. For the first time an ambitious programme of teacher training appeared in the motor field, which tried to improve the quality of gym education in the primary school. According to this programme future teachers, who attended the "Teachers' Training School" from the age of 13 to 17, were asked to play for 4 years school gym activities and build up theoretical elements for 2 hours a week. In 1985, only 3 years after the introduction of the new training path for teachers, the Law n° 104 changed the guidelines on the educational motor activities in Italy that had to be performed by children from the age of 6 to 10 in primary school. The programmes of 1985, still in force in Italy, show some contradictions between the activities that children must play in the school and the real qualification of the teachers. Indeed, in the face of this change of objectives and methodologies in the motor field in the

primary school, the training path of 1982 did not include the construction of specific skills, which were essential to the teaching of motor activities in compliance with the 1985 programmes. Only in 1990, the Article no. 3 of the Law no. 341 of 19 November provided for the establishment of a specific degree course for the training of primary school teachers and by the D.P.R. no. 471 of 31st July 1996 it has been defined the educational system of that course, opened in Italy in 1999. The new model of the university allowed teaching only to those who hold a degree in "Science of Primary School Education". It required as well the removal of the teachers' training courses which allowed all those who were 18 years old and hold a four years teachers' schools certificate to teach motor activities.

The degree course included motor and sports subjects, educational laboratories, trainings and apprenticeships. Since 2003, when the first graduates completed their studies, in Italian schools teachers having different qualifications are present: those who got an university degree and those who just hold a high school certificate, and they express different qualification and training needs. In December 2008, the Italian Ministry of Education started an experimentation in Italian Primary Schools, directed to the strengthening of the physical, motor and sport subject during the school hours (Note by General Management for Student, N. 1201, 17 -12-2008). This experimentation planned the identifying of a contact person among all the teachers of each primary school as reference of the motor-sports activities. The Italian Ministry of Education is divided into regional districts that correspond to 19 territories called General Managements. The General Management of Campania Region includes a population of about 4.5 million people distributed among the Province of Avellino, Benevento, Caserta, Naples and Salerno. 343,395 people, whose average age is from 6 to 10, is attending the primary schools. The 50% population of the Campania Region belongs to the Province of Naples and it includes 338 primary schools, 14,889 teachers and 162,269 students (Regional School Direction (2009)).

The aim

The objective of this research was to carry out a survey on the possible relationship between the value attributed by teachers of the province of Naples who have the role of contact person to the competence fields with regard to the motor and sports activities and their different type of training (four year - high school diploma, degree in Science of Primary School Education).

Methods

The research has been included in a project to implement motor and sports activities at school organized by the Campania Region General Management of the Ministry of Education responsible for the Italian provinces of Avellino, Benevento, Caserta, Naples and Salerno and with the scientific support of The Science of Primary School Education Faculty of the University of Salerno during the school year 2008/2009. The Education Science Department of the University of Salerno, through its scientific resources in the motor-sports field and aware of the presence of primary school teachers with different professional qualifications and skills, in order to support the implementation of motor and sports activities in primary school, has organized a research programme intended to establish the following:

- a) the different training paths which have qualified the teachers of the schools from the province of Naples and designated as contact persons for motor-sports activities to teach in school;
- b) the skills required for teaching motor-sports activities in primary schools and included in the ministerial guidelines and programmes for the university teachers' training;
- c) the value attributed by teachers to different competence fields required for motor-sports activities teaching in primary school and included in the ministerial guidelines and programmes for university teachers' training;
- d) a possible relationship between the values attributed by the teachers to the different competence areas and their specific type of professional training (holders of a diploma, primary education sciences graduates, graduates holding different degrees, Kinesiology graduates).

This research was carried out in 3 phases, combining a theoretical-argumentative research, an inquiry and a comparative research:

- a) In the first phase a theoretical-argumentative research was carried out to define the areas of competence required by the teaching programmes and by the guidelines of the Italian Ministry of Education to teach motor and sports activities inside the school;
- b) In the second phase a survey was carried out on the following subjects:
 - different training courses to train all those teachers, appointed as contact person of the motor-sports activities in the schools from the province of Naples, to teach inside the school;
 - the value attributed by teachers at different competence fields required to teach motor-sports activities in the primary school and included in the ministerial guidelines and university programmes for teachers' training;

c) In the third phase a comparative research was carried out on the possible relationships between:

- the values attributed by the teachers to the different areas of competence and their specific type of educational training (holders of a diploma, science of primary school education graduates).

The survey instrument used was an informational questionnaire made of 16 closed answer questions. The questionnaire was prepared for all the primary school teachers who had been delegated by the schools they belonged to and who had been indicated as contact persons for motor education activities inside the school. The questionnaire asked teachers to indicate the importance of certain areas of knowledge for the achievement of a good motor and sports activities teaching in primary school. The main aim of the survey instrument was to analyze, through a scale from 1 to 5, the importance given by the teacher to every motor-sports area inside 16 fields corresponding to those required by the current teaching programmes and planned by university training degree courses in primary education sciences. The numerical value of the scale was described to teachers before filling the questionnaire, indicating that the 5 numbers on the scale corresponded to:

- 1 = very low value
- 2 = low value
- 3 = medium value
- 4 = high value
- 5 = very high value

The section containing the instructions to fill the questionnaire also indicated that to avoid to answer one of the 16 questions meant not to assign any value to the corresponding field. The survey instrument was used during the conference organized jointly by the General Service Management of Campania of the Italian Ministry of Education and the The Science of Primary School Education Faculty of the University of Salerno allowing to ensure the scientific nature of investigation.

Results

Phase 1. The theoretical-argumentative analysis has highlighted that the fields of competence required to teach motor-sports activities in primary school (included in the Education Ministry Guidelines and in the university programmes) for teacher training are the following:

1. Complexity and multidimensionality of the motor-sports phenomenon
2. Epistemology of educational motor sports science

3. The skills of teachers in educational motor sports field
4. Origins and evolution of sports and motor activities in the educational field
5. Specificities and bonds of sports and motor activities in the educational field
6. The relationship between sport and school autonomy
7. Rules and information on sports and motor activities in education
8. The setting for sports and motor activities in the educational field
9. Psycho-pedagogy of the game and the sport in education
10. The biological and physiological aspects of motor and sports activities in education
11. The anatomical-functional aspects of motor and sports activities in education
12. Teaching of motor and sports activities in education
13. Special educational needs teaching in motor-sports educational field

14. The meta-cognitive and interdisciplinary role of educational-sports experience
15. The assessment in educational-sports fields
16. The educational and motor-sports teaching research

Phase 2. The survey (inquiry), conducted on primary school teachers appointed as contact person of the motor-sports activities, showed that 6.6% of teachers attended a four-year university training course graduating in Science of Primary School Education while 93.4% got a high school certificate. The sample reflects the proportions of the presence of teachers who hold a high school certificate and graduated teachers currently teaching in the Italian primary school.

Phase 3. The comparative analysis showed significant differences between the average value assigned to the different fields by high school qualified teachers and graduate teachers in science of primary school education sciences.

Table 1 Field of competence (1)

FIELD OF COMPETENCE	LSFP	DM	Diff
Complexity and multidimensionality of the motor-sports phenomenon	2,00	2,81	-0,81
Epistemology of educational motor sports science	2,50	2,59	-0,09
The skills of teachers in educational motor sports field	3,17	2,74	0,42
Origins and evolution of sports and motor activities in the educational field	2,25	2,67	-0,42
Specificities and bonds of sports and motor activities in the educational field	2,83	2,80	0,04
The relationship between sport and school autonomy	2,83	2,78	0,05
Rules and information on sports and motor activities in education	3,00	3,01	-0,01
The setting for sports and motor activities in the educational field	3,80	2,67	1,13
Psycho-pedagogy of the game and the sport in education	3,67	2,89	0,78
The biological and physiological aspects of motor and sports activities in education	3,33	2,70	0,64
The anatomical-functional aspects of motor and sports activities in education	3,67	2,83	0,84
Teaching of motor and sports activities in education	3,50	3,25	0,25
Special educational needs teaching in motor-sports educational field	3,14	2,92	0,22
The meta-cognitive and interdisciplinary role of educational-sports experience	3,17	3,08	0,08
The assessment in educational-sports fields	3,00	2,87	0,13
The educational and motor-sports teaching research	2,83	2,71	0,13
	3,11	2,83	0,27

Specifically we can see differences in mean ranging from - 0.81 to + 1.13. Significant differences are shown in the average value assigned to the following areas:

- The setting for sports activities in the educational field
- Psycho-pedagogy of the game and the sport in education
- The biological and physiological aspects of motor and sports activities in education
- The anatomical-functional aspects of motor and sports activities in education

Particularly, graduate teachers in Science of Primary School Education attributed the highest average value to the setting for sports activities in the educational field (3.80), an area which is significantly important (value 4-5) to 67 % of graduate teachers in contrast to

the value expressed by the high school qualified teachers only 25% attributed high value (4-5) in that area, while in 46% of cases were assigned a low value or low (1-2). Even in the area of biological and physiological aspects of motor and sports activities as well as in the anatomical-functional ones in education come out significant differences in the values expressed by the teachers: graduates attribute to a 50% high or very high value in the face of the only 26% high school qualified teachers who give the same judgment and attributing a low or very low value in 42% cases. Finally, the psycho-pedagogical area of the game and the sport in education, which is present both in the curriculum of graduated teachers and high school qualified teachers, recorded a high or very high score in 50% of graduates compared with 36% of high school qualified teachers.

Table 2 Field of competence (2)

FIELD OF COMPETENCE	LSFP	DM	LSFP	DM
Complexity and multidimensionality of the motor-sports phenomenon	16%	16%	34%	34%
Epistemology of educational motor sports science	50%	20%	17%	49%
The skills of teachers in educational motor sports field	50%	28%	33%	44%
Origins and evolution of sports and motor activities in the educational field	0%	28%	34%	50%
Specificities and bonds of sports and motor activities in the educational field	17%	31%	33%	45%
The relationship between sport and school autonomy	34%	22%	49%	39%
Rules and information on sports and motor activities in education	34%	43%	33%	36%
The setting for sports and motor activities in the educational field	67%	25%	16%	46%
Psycho-pedagogy of the game and the sport in education	50%	36%	47%	42%
The biological and physiological aspects of motor and sports activities in education	50%	26%	17%	42%
The anatomical-functional aspects of motor and sports activities in education	50%	26%	17%	42%
Teaching of motor and sports activities in education	33%	47%	34%	29%
Special educational needs teaching in motor-sports educational field	57%	35%	43%	41%
The meta-cognitive and interdisciplinary role of educational-sports experience	34%	44%	33%	31%
The assessment in educational-sports fields	34%	36%	33%	40%
The educational and motor-sports teaching research	33%	34%	34%	46%

Discussion and conclusion

The research has investigated the relationship between the value attributed to the fields of competence required to teach motor-sports activities, as indicated in the ministerial guidelines and in the university programmes for the teachers' training, and the different training paths of primary school teachers. The data show a clear difference of judgment, between graduated teachers and those who just hold a high school diploma, on the importance of some themes concerning the competences needed to teach motor and sport activities in the primary school. It comes out a clear diversity of judgment and methodological teaching which indicates a potential risk while carrying out the ministerial programmes and guidelines. It also comes out the need of a greater awareness of the educational value of knowledge and skills required to teach motor-sports activities in an effective way. Indeed, the data highlight, both in graduated and just certificated teachers taken as samples, a different representation of skills in those areas that are the basis of primary school teaching activities, according to the scientific-theoretical framework outlined in the preliminary phase of the research that defined the objectives of motor and sports activities in primary school.

Specifically, the results of the questionnaire highlight an underestimation of the fundamental study issues of motor and sport activities in primary school that are propaedeutic to teaching activities as well. Particularly, there is a low value attributed by high school qualified teachers in the following:

1. The setting for sports activities in the educational field
2. Psycho-pedagogy of the game and the sport in education
3. The biological and physiological aspects of motor and sports activities in education
4. The anatomical-functional aspects of motor and sports activities in education

These study fields are the most important motor and sport training areas of university curricula for primary school will-be teachers. The research as a whole has shown training needs in motor and sport teaching areas that significantly diversify graduated and just certificated teachers, highlighting the discrepancy between the value given by the teaching programmes and ministerial guideline to some study fields and the negative judgment expressed by just certificated teachers. Finally, it comes out a clear educational need of certificated teachers that requires further and deepen research.

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ANALIZA POTREBA TRENINGA ZA UČITELJE RADI POVEĆANJA NASTAVNIH AKTIVNOSTI U OSNOVNOJ ŠKOLI U OKRUGU NAPULJ (ITALIJA)

Sažetak

Ova područja istraživanja su najvažniji motorički i sportski trenažni prostori u sveučilišnim kurikulumima za pripremu učitelja u osnovnoj školi. Istraživanje u cjelini pokazuje trenažne potrebe u prostoru motoričkom i sportskom arealu koje značajno razlikuju diplomirane i samo certificirane učitelje, označavajući neusklađenost između vrijednosti zadane u nastavnim programima i uputstava nadležnih tijela u nekim područjima nastave kao i negativnu ocjenu izraženu od strane certificiranih učitelja. Konačno, vidi se jasna edukacijska potreba za certificiranim učiteljima što zahtijeva daljnje i dublje istraživanje.

Ključne riječi: učitelji, preprema, osnovna škola

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