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## **The Involvement of Combat Sports in School Physical Education in Hungary**

*The launch of the Hungarian National Core Curriculum (NCC) in 1998 resulted in combat sports and self-defence becoming a part of the cultural domain 'Physical Education and Sport'. This article focuses on the historical preliminaries and highlights the process of introducing combat sports into education. Moreover, it addresses issues relating to considerable pedagogic possibilities and alternatives behind school martial arts education while emphasizing the possible difficulties as well. An additional aim is to serve an example for foreign authors of teaching physical education in Hungary. Furthermore, the authors intend to acknowledge the work and scientific achievements of Dr. Ferenc Galla – the associate professor and chairman of the Combat Sports Department of the former Hungarian College of Physical Education (TF) [1].*

The roots of combat sports appearing in the physical education lessons date back to the 1960's. Thanks to the sacrificing work of the outstanding figure of Hungarian judo, Dr. Ferenc Galla, combat sports have been included in the physical education lessons since the launch of the Hungarian National Core Curriculum in 1998.

Galla was working at the Department of Combat Sports of the former Hungarian College of Physical Education (TF), where he mostly taught judo, wrestling and self-defence. From the early 60's he attempted to highlight the importance of judo at the school through publishing articles, interviews and judo-focused reports. He argued for the values of judo and the necessity of applying this sport in physical education lessons through the channel of Hungarian Radio Shows as well.

### **Experimental Judo Model in Paks**

The first most crucial event in the process of involving combat sports in physical education lessons took place in 1985. The Department of Combat Sports and the Department of Physical Education Theory and Pedagogy of the Hungarian College of Physical Education undertook the elaboration, professional supervision and control of an experimental judo program in Bezerédj István Elementary School of Paks.

The program woven into physical education lessons started for the first and fifth graders in a phasing-out system, in the frame of a syllabus of additional material with regulated number of additional lessons. (Dr. Rókusfalvi Pál's letter to Csoma Sándor, the director of the Hungarian Institute of Pedagogy 30 April 1985).

Dr. Ferenc Galla worked out the syllabus whereas judo coach and physical education teacher, Miklós Vági was responsible for education in practice. The experimental program launched in the school year of 1985/86 as a result of an extensive social collaboration. The innovation was supported by Dr. László Török (headmaster of Bezerédj school), the whole school staff, TF, the Hungarian Institute of Pedagogy as well as the Institute of Pedagogy of Tolna County (Rókusfalvy 1988).

For the first graders 27 lessons a school-year, whilst for the fifth graders 32 lessons were determined. However, judo was introduced finally only in grade 5 (for 36 children) as an additional material. Additional judo education was applied in grades 3 and 4 in the following years. Among higher graders only those students were selected to become members of the judo classes who were considered 'promising' by the coaches on the basis of their work, attitude and talent. This principle did not mean that those pupils who became specified in languages in the higher grades were deprived of practising judo, since they had the possibility to take part in afternoon trainings as club members.

The number of physical education lessons increased to every day level from grade 5. Although the number of judo lessons remained unchanged (only one lesson a week) the physical education teacher being a judo coach as well could incorporate some judo-specific elements in the other four lessons in order to provide basics for the forthcoming stages of judo education.

The introduction stage in the lower grades concerning judo lessons involved one occasion a week and aimed at getting a picture of pupils being more interested and talented in judo. If these students were about to participate in afternoon judo courses, they had the chance to do so. The coaches held two trainings almost every afternoon with over 30 participants, which meant the number of children choosing judo appeared to be at least 120. This data might be considered remarkable since the group of children arrived from Bezerédj primary school exclusively –even though it was more possible to happen in those days. One is to face that nowadays it is very difficult to achieve one sport to be represented by over 100 athletes from one school. Although at that time the number of sport options was low compared to the huge number of children.

The essential goal of the program involved not only physically, but mentally and morally healthy young people who are able to cope with family life, work, public life while taking responsibility for the future of our nation in today's economic and historic situation.

During the experimental program, the development of classes specialized in judo and of the control group (members not being specialized in judo) was observed by a longitudinal

study. In the psychological part, both groups sat for a 30-parameter-test based on seven different approach-methods, whereas during physical testing judo-specific elements were applied (Rókusfalvy 1988).

Rókusfalvy reported on the first outcomes. The experimental class' results surpassed the control group's results in the field of empathy and taking risk. Performance and success-orientation also showed stronger tendency accompanied by a lower level of avoiding failure attitude among the members of the judo group. By the end of the second year, judo athletes' – mainly boys' – stress-level became lower than the control group members', which can be regarded as remarkable data, since at the end of the first year no significant difference could be revealed between the two groups (Rókusfalvy 1988).

Following the Paks-model several towns such as Debrecen, Kaposvár, Szolnok and even the capital (Budapest) started to introduce judo education at their schools. Unfortunately any further publications on the forthcoming results of the program are not available.

### **The Influence of the Judo Model in Paks on the Possible Involvement of Combat Sports in the Curriculum**

The success of Paks experimental judo program and other combat sports (wrestling and Far-Eastern martial arts) becoming more and more popular contributed to the fact that the option of involving martial arts in the NCC arose from the mid-80's. At that time TF was requested to elaborate ideas on the NCC, thus each department made their suggestions. Dr. Ferenc Galla – the head of Department of Combat Sports – supposed it was time for his popularizing combat sports efforts to be crowned by suggesting martial arts getting involved in the NCC. The coordinator of the discussions was Dr. Endre Burka representing the National Pedagogic Institute. Dr. Ágoston Schulek, vice-rector of TF also participated in the procedure as well as Dr. József Zsolnay in whose school judo and Japanese language were parts of education (Dr. Galla Ferenc's letter to Morvay-Sey Kata 2009.04.02).

The educational material of judo outlined by Galla was supposed to be limited because curriculum-makers expressed their worries about introducing so many throws in physical education lessons. The curriculum specialists, following the European tendency, realised that the exclusively gymnastics-athletics-ballgame-specific physical education lessons needed to be extended by more varied, exciting sport activities arousing students' interest.

After the change in the system, an effective, creative, curriculum-focused work started, and since then one is to witness the national curriculum undergoing a continuous radical

transformation. The different versions of the NCC (NAT 1995, 2003, 2007, and 2012) published since 1998 – influenced by the European models – provide greater autonomy and the possibility of creative planning in public education. Framework Curricula documents – functioning as inter-regulators – based on the NCC also appeared, and in terms of the law, the revision of the NCC took place formerly every third year, at present the reconsideration happens every fifth year.

The most remarkable advantage of the new curriculum is the increase of teachers' autonomy. Nonetheless, the change in teachers' role requires a higher level of responsibility, creativity and continuous self-education. As for the domain 'Physical education and Sport' the most pleasing innovative factor seems to be the variety in content, implementing the suggestions made earlier by Hungarian experts. The physical education syllabus comprises sports and a branch of body-motion exercises that fulfil the requirements of modern times and provides opportunities to make students familiar with a wide range of movement samples. The newly invented psychomotor content – such as 'Combat exercises and games', 'Self-defence and Martial Arts', 'Prevention and Relaxation', 'Rhythmic Gymnastics', 'Outdoor and Recreational activities' – means challenge for PE practitioners and for PE teacher training as well (Rétsági 2004).

Within the above mentioned elements of the physical education curriculum several questions might arise and remain open resulting in uncertainty among physical education teachers (Morvay-Sey – Rétsági 2010). One of the most confusing points in the curriculum is the usage of the collective term 'martial arts'. Observing the NCC and Framework Curricula documents one is to notice that three sports such as aikido, judo, wrestling (ground-wrestling) are cited as suggestions for martial arts and two more objectives appear in frame of 'Combative exercises, games' and 'Self-defence'. The possible objectives, sports offered in the curriculum might cause perplexity among PE teachers and even further hindered by the fact that the concepts of 'aikido' and 'self-defence' have been interwoven. In the Framework Curricula of 2003, the concept 'aikido' is mentioned in grade 6, 7 and 8, however, when it comes to particular self-defence exercises, they are summarised as 'escaping techniques'. In the introduction part of teaching material in grade 11, judo for boys and aikido for girls are listed as offered self-defensive sports, nevertheless, when it comes to particular exercises only wrestling and judo are named. As for the Curriculum of 2008, aikido is not even referred to as a type of martial arts, but identified as self-defence, self-defensive techniques. It is important to point out that all the Far-Eastern martial arts include self-defence, and some of them are based on self-defensive exercises with partners, exclusively. Even though these methods (for

instance, Defendo, Jakab-method etc.) indicate traditional combat sports and contain a mixture of martial arts techniques they define self-defence as their basic element.

Concerning the cultural domain 'Physical Education and Sport' in European curricula, a tendency towards the strengthening position of judo, wrestling and combat games is to be observed. Combat sports made up of hits, kicks (such as karate, taekwondo, kick-boxing, thai-boxing, kung-fu) do not – or partly – appear as recommended branches of sports. The reason for this probably stems from the fact that applying hits and kicks without contact and injuries requires a long learning process where the athlete is to stop or hold back one's hit some centimetres from the target person, thus, one is to possess a high level of movement-transformation techniques. Another debate arising from curricula regulations is that the NCC of 2003 offers martial arts mainly to boys, and aesthetic type of exercises, sports are welcome in case of girls. The differentiation between the sexes exclude girls from acquiring the basics of combat sports, for instance, falling practices which could serve as very useful preventive techniques in real life-like situations. Furthermore, it would be very important for girls to become familiar with basic self-defensive techniques because of sources of danger, risk, handling conflicts and possible ways of escaping. Since the NCC of 2012 there are any differentiation between girls and boys, so the opportunity to practice martial arts is given for girls too.

## **The Implementation of Combat Sports in Practice in School Physical Education**

### *The Possibilities behind the Modified Curriculum Time Allocation*

The implementation of combat sports has been supported in Hungary by the changes in curriculum time allocation with the increased number of PE lessons. Although this possibility led to several questions concerning teachers' attitude towards the involvement of martial arts in their lessons.

In accordance with the regulations valid until 2012 and school practice, teachers can calculate with 76 physical education lessons (2 a week) within 38 school weeks (very rarely exceptional number) in Hungarian public education. Therefore it is possible to focus on combat sports in 7-8 lessons a year if PE teachers share their lessons proportionally among possible main themes in the field of study 'Physical Education and Sport'. The Framework Curriculum suggests 10 lessons a school year for the topic at issue from grade 5 to grade 12. However, this number seems to be quite low for achieving ideal increase in physical

performance, even though it may lead to improvement in students' motion-culture and to make them familiar with moves they are not accustomed to.

Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education may carry some promising effects. Accordingly, the school '...organises physical education lessons with daily occurrence in frame of 5 hours per week' (Magyar Közlöny 2011.162). The modified curriculum time allocation entails the possibility of branches of sports that have been instructed in less lessons – such as combat sports – to be present in one or two physical education lessons a week. The Framework Curriculum of 2012 offers more lessons a school year for teaching martial arts (Table 1.) The necessity of change also emerged from the European tendency of terminating the earlier-mentioned old-fashioned way of gymnastics-athletics-ball-game-focused physical education lessons. Students demand interesting, experience-based lessons, new branches of sports, various kinds of movements combined with music or even getting familiar with dancing or different types of aerobics. Physical education teachers' fundamental role is to persuade students to exercise for pleasure while making them familiar with different forms of movements, thus, offering as many alternatives as possible for the pupils to be able to choose a form of motion or sport health-consciously – supposedly for a lifetime – outside school-life as well as after leaving educational scene behind. The possibility of a comprehensive physical education might also be provided by a variety of motions

Nonetheless, several questions might arise such as 'Are PE teachers able to keep up with the modernisation process? Are they able to reform physical education lessons as far as content is concerned? Are they prepared to fulfil the latest requirements? What will be implemented in practice out of the objectives the curriculum specialists imagined reforming the content of education?'

Grade	Referenced lesson number	Lesson number for each grade
1-2.	15	7/8
3-4.	14	7-7
5-6.	38	19-19
7-8.	46	23-23
9-10.	30	15-15
11-12.	20	10-10

**Table 1.: Referenced lesson number for martial arts of the Frame Curriculum 2012.**

## A 2012-es kerettantervek ajánlott óraszámai küzdősportokra

### Summary and Suggestions

The overall purpose of this article was to explore the historical antecedents of the involvement of combat sports in school physical education, starting with the experimental program launched in Paks. The study plays an innovative role by introducing the process of involving psychomotor content in the curriculum while depicting its implementation in practice with the possible difficulties arising.

However, it is important to point out the advantages and values of the collective term 'combat sports' in the PE lessons. It is highly suggested for consideration that these fashionable, up-to-date combat sports may provide variety and an experience-based pedagogical approach in physical education lessons.

The usefulness of combative strategies in real life-like situation is further proved by the possible acquirement of falling techniques which are required, since in childhood and at an old age the occurrence of limb fractures is quite frequent.

Many have argued for the positive effects of combat sports on personality development, which the authors totally agree with. Although in order to increase the level of this advantage, a lot more authentic specialists would be needed for conveying the philosophical background of martial arts to learners.

Against the increasing levels of violence and aggression at the school widespread worldwide, Far-Eastern combat sports, martial arts – mainly budo sports – could serve as a possible effective solution and prevention of problems by being part of a complex personality development program, which is already successfully applied abroad. Several publications report on the involvement of combat sports in crime prevention, in rehabilitation of young criminals and in therapies as well. The modified versions of combat sports could be successfully applied not only in case of physically handicapped, partially sighted children but among those struggling with hyperactivity, lack of concentration, dyslexia, dysgraphia and behaviour disorders.

The authors find it very crucial to emphasise that combat sports carries a great deal of possibilities that support the involvement of combat sports in school physical education. As a conclusion, the problems arising are supposed to be handled by training physical education teachers further while including specialists in the process as well as reforming the education system of teacher training.

## Notes

[1] Today the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences (since 2000) of Semmelweis University.

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KANCSLER ISTVÁN-MORVAY-SEY KATA

KÜZDŐSPORTOK ISKOLAI TESTNEVELÉSBE TÖRTÉNŐ BEKERÜLÉSE

*Magyarországon az 1998-as Nemzeti Alaptanterv megjelenése óta a Testnevelés és sport műveltségterületen belül a küzdősportok, önvédelem témakör az iskolai testnevelés részét képezi. A tanulmány célja, hogy bemutassa a küzdősportok iskolai testnevelésen belüli megjelenésének történeti előzményeit és folyamatát Magyarországon, valamint felvázolja a közoktatásban elfoglalt helyét, szerepét. További cél, hogy rámutasson az iskolai küzdősportoktatásban rejlő pedagógiai lehetőségekre és alternatívákra, valamint bemutassa az oktatással kapcsolatosan felmerülő nehézségeket. A tanulmánnyal célunk, hogy külföldi szerzők is betekintést nyerhessenek egy témakör – a küzdősportok – oktatásának példáján a magyarországi testnevelés-tanítás gyakorlatába. A szerzők nem titkolt célja továbbá, hogy emléket állítsanak Dr. Galla Ferenc munkásságának, aki a korábbi Testnevelési Főiskola (TF) [1] docenseként és tanszék-vezetőjeként fáradhatatlanul dolgozott a küzdősportok iskolai testnevelésbe történő bekerüléséért Magyarországon.*