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Harmonisation of Physical Education within Europe

**The logic of the competence: A process to
harmonize the professional activity in the
European Physical Education**

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Introduction

Since the 1970 – 1980, the logic of the competence with the diversity of notions associated to it – standard occupation, knowledge, know-how, kinds of activities inherent in jobs, individual aptitudes to mobilise within the real work, articulation training and employment, new management of the companies, etc. – transform the school, academic and professional trainings and the professional qualifications. After remaining the main transformations that this logic implies (I) we will study their applications to school Physical Education and to the training of its teachers in Europe (II). Then, according to the transversal character of this logic we will point out the necessity to bind partnerships between educative institutions, sport organisations and public authorities within a large network of education through sport in order to develop the PE and sport professional activity (III).

I. The logic of the competence in Europe

Since the 1970 -1980 a logic of the competence is developing within the areas of sociology, law, economy, management of work. This logic focuses on the capacity of the persons in work situation to draw up behaviour schemes adjusted to the particularity of the situations. How, during twenty years this logic imposes itself up to constitute the major tool to think the work organisation and the school, academic and professional trainings? Here we remain some elements favouring the understanding of this logic.

1) An old debate

The logic of the competence is only the recent reflect of an already old debate on work and its organisation. Since the end of the XIXth century the philosophers and sociologists of work – particularly Emile Durkheim – insisted on the tension set up for the modern man between the generality of his aptitudes and the specialisation of their usages. This tension was an occasion of controversies concerning the man in work situation. Is the development of general capacities in hand or to insist on their adaptation to concrete situations. During the XXth century this tension produced three successive logics of work organisations.

2) The logic of the professions

Until the 1970 – 1980 it is the model of professions that structures the work organisation. The profession is considered as a set of knowledge, know-how, knacks, that are acquired during a more or less long training period. Within the considered profession the recognition of the professional qualification is mainly given by the peers and the disciples with the effect to imply a strong anchoring of professions on particular and often closed professional communities.

3) A new context of work

But during the 1970 – 1980, generally in Europe, the world of work will meet important overthrows. If we can not here evoke the reasons, the consequences were notably the development of mass unemployment and the appearing of a discourse on the necessity to modernise the companies and the machineries of states in order to face the new challenges bound with the globalization of economy.

4) Two new priorities

Within this context, two new priorities were appearing structuring the work organisation. The first is a political and social one that aim to reduce the unemployment and the social fracture. The other concerns the companies fixing the competition and profitability exigencies that the old work models

didn't allow to obtain. The new company discourse inspired from United States and Japan or Sweden is organised around themes like: lean production, zero defect, quality circles, downsizing, re-engineering, benchmarking, etc.

Otherwise the states are looking for influence on the work situation. In Europe, the study centres on qualification, the employment agencies – for example in France the Cereq, the study centre for employment, the national agency for work – are mobilised in order to develop policies that aim to reduce the unemployment and to help the companies to manage the employment.

5) The logic of work posts

It is in this context of economical and social crisis that the model of professions gives place to a logic organised by the work posts more precisely their classification. According to this logic the characteristics of a work to do are defined from a work post that is clearly identified by a concrete area where the worker has to realise one or several more or less complex tasks. The peers do not confer the professional qualification. The latter is defined by the work content to do completed by a training validated by a diploma. Employment and training are the occasion to tasks classification in order to fix collective benchmarks within the company, but also able to favour the employee transfer from a company to another, or even from a profession to another. In other words, when the profession is closed within a professional community, the system of tasks classification opens a larger horizon both to individuals and companies.

6) The logic of the competence

This movement from profession logic to tasks classification logic facilitates the appearing of the logic of the competence presented during the 80' as a new almost model to the company's management. With the notion of competence the literature generally remains the necessity where the man in work situation is to face the event, the unforeseen and to respond to it with initiatives mobilising the competences themselves unforeseeable. More precisely, from the ergonomics point of view the competence corresponds to what the operator needs to face his/her task and realises without new learning. It is the knowledge and know-how, the typical behaviour, the standard procedures, the agglomerated reasoning, in fact all that is acquired by training and learning and is indispensable to the work realisation. The sociologist of work completes this definition with the analysis of power relations facilitating or not the recognition of these know-how in action within the work activity. Some add also a know-be dimension that raises a number of questions.

7) The competences within the company

During the 80' the companies appropriate this logic of the competence. In order to become competitive facing the market and technologies evolutions, they are led to consider the human resources as one of the strategic variables. It is in question to have the good competences at the good place and at the useful time, the latter allows to develop the systems and methods of human resources management. One of the consequences is the appearing of the requirement to precisely

define and prospectively the expected competences as well the training and action systems developing them. For that new procedures are appearing. We regroup the professions in families, we categorize the activities of the worker, we precise the elementary competences underlying them, and we look for the manual and cognitive knowledge, the cognitive and social capacities bound with the employment.

8) A new tool

The set of this framework placed in position notably by the employment agencies provides to the companies a tool helping them to analyse their own employs and allows to the workers and to the unemployed to identify the field of possibilities supporting a personal competence evaluation. The competence model doesn't valorise the profession and employment. It valorises the employability. It is in hand for the workers or unemployed to build a portfolio of competences.

9) The competence at school

During the 80' and 90' the world of education lays hold of the competence logic that contributes to re-organise the professional trainings, the school curricula and academic programmes. This logic is implemented after four kinds of influence: the pedagogy through objectives and the behaviourist rationality, the professional teaching and the elaboration of activities and competences benchmarks, the evaluation trying to reduce the subjectivity part within the notation, the role of the experts of education sciences developing during the 90'.

10) A European logic

The logic of the competence within the companies and the schools constitutes a new putting in order and in form of the society looking more exacting for an articulation between the work and the training. We don't have in this context to discuss criticise its pertinence or to point out its limits in a sense of a rationalisation of work – shown by Habermas – or in a sense of constant supervision of the social activities – shown by Foucault -. The phenomenon has a sufficient fullness one the one hand to be particularly observed on the other to be tested within the area of sport and physical education. To be sure this strategy of definition of competences is on the trainings and qualifications agenda in Europe. On this continent, as well as in all the developed countries, the weight of the economy and a better management of work on the educational and training systems is exemplar of the recent years. It is in 2000 that the Lisbon summit defends the idea of a society of knowledge in which the access to education and training for all weighs directly on the efficiency of the economics and their performances. And in order to obtain a more competitive European economy, with a qualitative and quantitative improvement of employ and a larger social cohesion, it needs to give a larger importance at the life long learning. Then, education and training are nearly bound to the employment, economical and macro-economical policies. Two examples are showing this evolution. In the area of the professional and academic trainings pursued with the Sorbonne process (1998), developed by Bologna agreement (1999) and their continuation in Prague (2002) and Berlin (2003), tries an

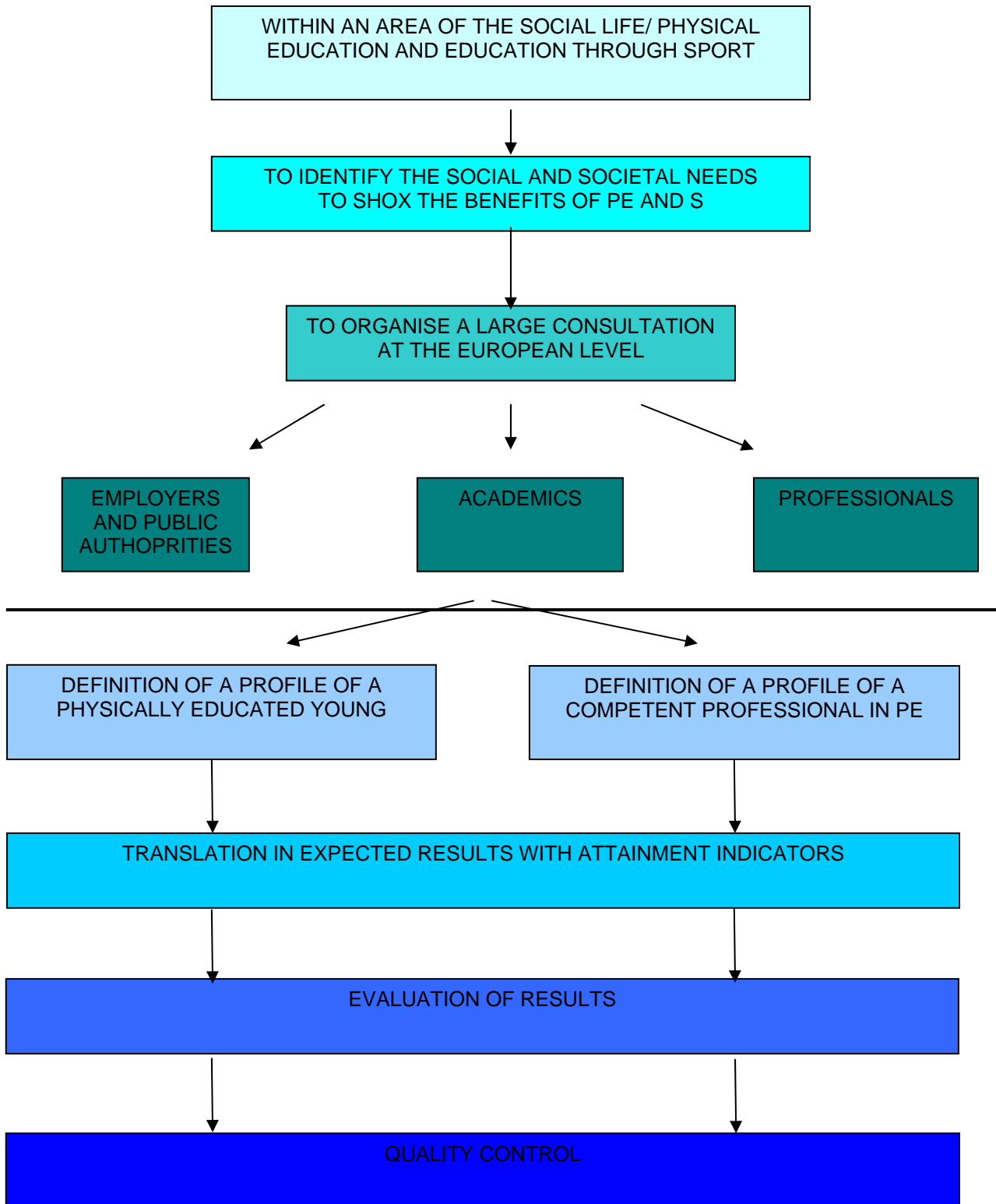
European harmonisation of the initial trainings specifying the relations between the expected results from the students and the professional competences defined by the employers. In the area of school trainings the school curricula define the expected results from the pupils in terms of learning outcomes and school competences and use benchmarks inspired by the world of the work.

II. The logic of the competence within European Physical Education

The AEHESIS project is directly inscribed within the Bologna process looking for a better bind between training and employment. How this logic of the competence is and can be adapted in the sport sciences area, particularly physical education area. After we have schematised this logic, we will give some examples of it's using in the European Physical Education and the training of its professionals.

1. A formalisation of the logic of the competence

The logic of the competence applied to Physical Education and to PETE put in coherence the following elements: the context of the European society in the area of physical education and sport, the social needs of this society in this domain at a particular moment of its development, the definition of a physically educated pupil profile and a competent professional profile, the translation of these profiles in expected competences with attainment indicators, an evaluation apparatus of the expected results, an quality control apparatus within the education and training institutions. The set of these elements was presented to UNESCO and UN in the framework of the International Year of Sport and Physical Education (Klein, 2005). In this forum context, we will only develop the definition of the expected competences from the pupils and the professionals.



2. The profile of a physically educated young

When we study the PE curricula and education through extra-curricular sport programmes the recent national initiatives in Europe use the competence logic. It consists to define in concrete terms what is expected from the young after a learning school period. For this reason we use the notion of profile of competences of a physically educated young.

a) The French pupil profile

In France, the question of the competences expected from a young at the end of the compulsory school period stayed a long time a blind point not very clear for the citizens. The debate developed in France from 1999 to 2004 at the occasion of the PE curricula reform was organised around the question: what is learnt in PE after the 1000 hours in primary and secondary schools allocated and financed by the state in the framework of a compulsory training? The French tries to define the profile of a physically educated young show several utilities. Useful for the parents that have clear information at disposal on what children and young people learn in PE and sport. Useful for the professionals of PE and education through sport who can find an interest to the formalisation of expected results both in schools and sport associations. Useful for the national citizens who can accede in simple terms to the translated social needs in educational concrete choices. Useful finally to the national and European policy makers who find a concrete idea finding beyond the humanist promises the concrete elements transmitted by the educational institutions, the sport organisations and the public authorities.

b) The English outcomes

If the French process is a most suitable one in order to define a competence profile, it fails to define it in concrete terms. In return the English programme "Learn through PE and sport" developed since 2000 provides actually the ten learning outcomes most pertinent for the physically educated young profile. According to this programme a young physically educated presents the following characteristics:

- Show a strong commitment to making PE and school sport;
- Know and understand what they are trying to achieve and how to go about it;
- Have an understanding of how they do in PE and sport contributes to a healthy and active lifestyle;
- Have the confidence to get involved in PE and school and community sport;
- Have the skills to take part in PE and school sport and are in control of their movement;
- Respond effectively to a range of different competitive, creative and challenge-type activities both as individuals and as an integral part of the teams and groups;

- Are clearly thinking about what they are doing and making appropriate decisions for themselves;
- Show a desire to improve and achieve in relation to their abilities and aspirations;
- Have the stamina, suppleness and strength to keep doing; and
- Enjoy PE and school and community sport.

Each element of this profile is précised by attainment indicators easily understandable by the professionals, the young themselves, their parents, and the public authorities.

c) A European harmonisation?

If we go back to the theme of this seminar, an harmonisation of PE in Europe would suppose to co-ordinate at the continental level a definition of a profile of a physically educated young. In this perspective the European PE association (EUPEA) develops since 2003 a large consultation of the professionals about this question of profile. A thirty of national associations, representing 200 000 PE professionals were consulted. A large survey by a closed questionnaire is in process.

3. The profile of a competent professional

It is also the logic of the competence that was adopted by the AEHESIS project. Then the works of the second year retake this process in order to define the profile of a competent professional in the area of sport and notably in the area of PE.

a) A six steps model

A six steps model put in coherence the standard occupations in this area with the training leading to a professional qualification and the employment. We remain the six steps taking for example the sport instructor of local communities standard occupation in France

- To define the professional area that regroups a set of professions and standard occupations in this domain. Example: education through sport;
- To characterise the professions in this area. A profession is considered as the set of activities with specific activities particular to a work situation and corresponding to a set of concrete work situations. Example: sport instructor, sport educator;
- To define generally each occupation with a sentence beginning by a verb. Example: teach one or several to diversified publics (clubs, associations, sport schools, schools, classes, etc.) in the framework of a sport policy defined and developed by a local authority;
- To define the main activities specific to this profession. Each activity is conceived as a set of finalised tasks. Example: welcome, information, communication, organisation and planning of a physical activity sequence, preparation, realisation and evaluation of a physical activity

sequence, co-ordination of physical activities, of groups, files management, practice and demonstration of one or several activities, organisation of one activity according to the safety rules;

- For each activity to define a competence that characterises the profession in order to define a profile of professional competences. Example: to apply the safety and security rules, to use and verify the pedagogical materials, to conceive, realise and evaluate the pedagogical interventions; to know the socio-economical evolutions of the physical activities, to know the basic elements of the human movement, to know the juridical aspects of responsibility, to control the management, to take decisions, to drive a project;
- For each of this competence, to define the knowledge to acquire in order to become competent. To develop the entire curriculum process would be too long.

b) A European harmonisation?

If we go back to the question of an European harmonisation to carry this competence logic can lead to the definition of the standards of a competent professional which can constitute the minimal expectations in order to insure the implementation of professional and academic trainings. They can also be useful for the activity of the sport volunteers. On this basis of standards, each country, each university, each teaching centre can adapt this profile according to the particular political and economical requirements.

III. The constitution of education through sport networks

We have shown that the competence logic leads to the definition of profiles – young and professionals – that can promote a European harmonisation of the school, professional and academic trainings.

a) PE and education through sport

However, in order to not stay formal these initiatives should associate not only the PE actors, but also more largely those of education through sport. If physical education is mainly devoted to the training given by the schools, education through sport concerns extra-curricular and extra school physical activities. Ever since the co-operation binding the educational institutions, the sport organisations and the public authorities is essential.

b) Local networks

At the national scale many experiences were tried in order to organise this co-operation within local networks. The local networks of physical education and education through sport assemble the local material and human resources available in order to co-ordinate a concerted offer in this domain. Within a city, in the best cases, the school, the clubs and associations, the sport office of the public authority are assembled to develop a complementary offer, to define common objectives, to pursue a set of common standards and follow co-ordinated agendas. Two recent national initiatives illustrate the modalities of local networks within the European Union.

c) English local programmes

In United Kingdom, the British plan devoted to the “High Quality of PE and sport” proposes several types of partnerships between the educational institutions, the sport organisations and the public authorities:

- Within the primary and secondary schools the definition of common learning outcomes defining the profile of a physically educated young people;
- Schools with a sport specialisation offer PE and sport options to their pupils;
- Schools networks co-ordinated by a zone responsible;
- Relationships between primary schools and secondary schools in order to facilitate the transitions in PE and sport;
- Collaborations between schools and clubs;

- School sport programmes in addition of PE;
- Talent detection programmes;
- Sport programmes devoted to underprivileged young publics;
- Training programmes for young volunteers within schools and clubs.

d) German open day school networks

In Germany, the recent innovations de « Schule in Bewegung – Offene Ganztagschulen » propose interesting ways of local arrangement in a framework of collaboration fixed by the *Länder*. Then in Nord-Rhein-Westphalen this initiative leads to the constitution of local networks associating the schools and the sport associations that constitute the two pillars of pupil and young education through sport (Naul, 2005). One of the interests of these networks is to develop a new learning culture that helps pupils to acquire an active lifestyle along the day.

e) Local and global networks

We have understood that the competence logic cannot exist without the constitution of local network or education through sport developing partnerships between educational institutions, sport organisations and public authorities taken as common target an active lifestyle of childhood and youth. In order to return to the question of a European harmonisation, do such initiatives have a character of generalisation at the European scale? Does it possible to propose some model of institutional co-operation for physical education and education through sport? We will conclude with this point.

Conclusion

In order to harmonise the professional activity within the physical education we propose to have recourse to the competence logic. Since the 80' this logic imposes on the world of schools and the companies with the aim to organise the school, professional and academic trainings. Since the Bologna agreement in 1999 and the European Council in Lisbon in 2000 the European institutions are relaying this logic for a better correspondence between the trainings and the job market.

Applied to school physical education and to PE teacher training the competence logic leads us to formalise a strategy of definition of the two competences profiles (young and teacher). At the local scale the success of this process supposes to associate within a local network the three types of institutions of education through sport: educational institutions, sport organisations and public authorities.

Does such process useful at the European scale? In a certain sense does it possible to bind together the local networks within a large European network of education through sport? The co-operation between the three types of institutions and the binding between local networks and European global network were two important challenges of the European Year of Education through Sport which evaluation finished during this summer. A European harmonisation of education through sport will depend undoubtedly from the decisions taken by the European Commission after the conclusions of this ambitious initiative.