

SPORTS ANIMATION AS A MEANS OF INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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Abstract

In recent decades, in the scientific space, more and more people talk and work in connection with the so-called hypodynamia, which is motor activity insufficient for people's good health. Attempts to counteract this phenomenon are implemented at different levels and in different areas, including and in education. This article examines the opinion and attitude of students preparing to work as special educators, to the benefits for themselves as educators and to the motor activity of the children with whom they will work in the future, as well as to the possibilities in the application of acquired sports-animation competence, as a result of training in the discipline "Sports animation in an educational environment". The respondents of the research are 23 students from the fourth year of the Faculty of Education at Trakia University - Stara Zagora. The method of pedagogical research survey was used. The results show high levels of positivism towards the importance of acquiring sports-animation competence and its application in and outside the professional-pedagogical activity.

Keywords: sports animation, special educational needs, pedagogues

The problem under consideration is related to the presence of widespread hypodynamia in public life in recent decades, including and in children, researched and scientifically proven by specialists in the field. This is provoked by many factors, one of which is the modern technological achievements of mankind. The computer and the modern phone fell into the hands of children and largely replaced their play activities in their free time. Advances in vehicles have made it possible for children to get around in cars and electric scooters, neglecting walking and cycling. Urbanization and the increased number of means of transport have turned free play areas in residential areas into parking lots.

All of this took away much of the movement essential to human life, limiting physical work to a minimum. Hypodynamia means reduced motor activity, insufficient to maintain good health. It is well known that active motor activity is one of the most powerful means of increasing the resistance forces, increasing the physical and mental capacities of the body and thus protecting against diseases. A number of specialists rightly call hypodynamia a "disease of modern civilization", because diseases characteristic of the past mainly for the elderly are now more and more common in adulthood, in youth and even in childhood.

The concern of the State on this serious problem is obvious and this is evident from the increased number of activities and hours related to motor activity in school education. However, the normatively planned weekly volume of movement in preschool and school age does not fully cover the standards accepted and indicated in a number of documents at the world, European and national level. The existence of humanity in the age of technology with a desire for sustainable development and European integration leads to the need to apply new strategies in all spheres of life, including educational and sports-pedagogical ones. In this regard and in the spirit of the competence approach, the factors responsible for increasing the quality of higher pedagogical education are called upon to respond to modern

challenges by forming professional-pedagogical competencies adequate to the needs of society. The qualification of pedagogical personnel is of great importance for the effectiveness of both the learning process and the forms of extracurricular work in physical education (Ivanov, Tomova, 2010).

The article introduces the idea of sports animation and sports-animation pedagogical competence as an opportunities to counteract the existing hypodynamia. Sports animation is a set of sports and sports-entertainment services that purposefully satisfy the needs of consumers. Sports animation uses the means of physical education, but goes beyond the traditional forms of education, breaking the types of sports and motor activities laid down in the curricula. The sports-animation competence of the pedagogue is a professional-pedagogical competence for properly planning, organizing, conducting and leading activities with a sports-animation focus in the children's free time during weekdays and weekends and vacation periods.

In this regard, in 2017, the elective course "Sports animation in an educational environment" was introduced in the pedagogical specialties of Trakia University. Initially, the specified discipline was applied as a priority in the specialties "Preschool and primary school pedagogy", "Primary school pedagogy with a foreign language" and "Social pedagogy". In the academic year 2022/23, for the first time, training was also held for students from the "Special pedagogy" specialty, in which future pedagogues are prepared to work with children and students with "special educational needs and in particular those with communication difficulties; work on overcoming communication disorders and applying alternative approaches for community integration" (<http://uni-sz.bg/truni4/обучение/бакалавър/#SpP>).

The purpose of this research is to study the attitudes of students from the "Special pedagogy" major regarding their opinion on the benefits of training and

the purpose of its implementation – acquisition of professional-pedagogical competence for the implementation of sports-animation activity, as well as their significance regarding the applicability of the acquired competence in and beyond the future their pedagogical practice.

Methodology

At the end of the training conducted with 23 students from the fourth year - specialty "Special pedagogy - resource teacher" in the specified discipline, a standardized written survey was conducted with four research questions: the respondents' opinion on the possibilities of applying acquired competence in practice; their attitudes towards the benefits of learning by increasing the knowledge and skills of sports culture through the topics included in the curriculum and their opinion about the usefulness of sports animation when working with children with special educational needs.

The questions asked are:

1. "Indicate your opinion regarding the possibilities for applications of the sports-animation pedagogical competence in the professional activity of a special pedagogue!";

2. "Indicate your opinion regarding the possibilities for applications of sports-animation pedagogical competence outside the professional activity of special educators!";

3. "What are your attitudes towards the benefits of studying the subject?";

4. "Do you think that the application of sports animation as a tool will contribute to increasing the motor activity of children with special educational needs?".

The rating scale used is 5-level, as follows: 1 – categorically negative/s; 2 – rather negative/s; 3 – I have no opinion; 4 – rather positive/s; 5 – categorically positive/s.

Results and Analysis

The results obtained from the study are presented in fig. 1.

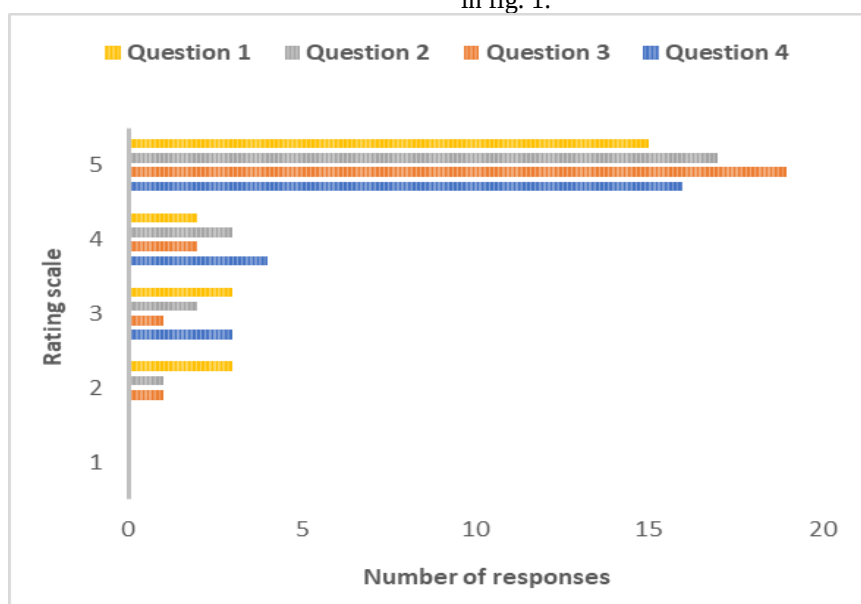


Figure 1. Results of the answers to the questions

The obtained and analyzed results clearly show high levels of positivity towards the benefits of training and the application of sports animation as a means of increasing the motor activity of children with special educational needs. The students as respondents also express their positive attitude towards the possibilities of applying the acquired sports and animation competence in and outside the professional work of special educators.

Conclusion

The educational environment plays a key role in stimulating both gaming and any other activity related to movement (Tileva, 2022). The fact that motor activity itself provokes active involvement speaks for itself. Presented in an interesting and suitable way for those involved, the sports-animation activity provokes a desire to participate. In addition to improving the condition of the motor apparatus, the movement affects the thinking abilities and builds a personal attitude towards all other participants.

The categorically expressed opinion that the applicability of the acquired sports-animation competence of the special pedagogues has high possibilities, both outside and in their future professional activity and will lead to an increase in the levels of children's motor activity, speaks of the benefit of the conducted training. Which, in turn, turns sports animation into a tool for working with children with special educational needs.

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