

KINESIOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHERS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIAIVAN PRSKALO¹ - MARKO BADRIĆ¹ - GORAN SPORIŠ² - ELIDA RUŽIĆ³¹ Faculty of Teacher Education
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Croatia**ABSTRACT**

The aim of the paper was to compare the syllabuses and the number of kinesiology courses on the curricula of teacher education programmes for primary and early childhood and preschool education teachers in the Republic of Croatia. Systematic observation of the curricula included six universities in the Republic of Croatia, i.e. their constituents whose main scope is the education of primary and early childhood and preschool education teachers. Examination of the curricula yielded data on the type of study programme that is implemented, the number of lessons for the obligatory kinesiology courses on the curriculum for the 2012/2013 academic year, the number of ECTS credits and the number of semesters in which the courses are taught. A comparative analysis was applied to establish possible differences in the syllabuses and the number of kinesiology courses in the teacher education curricula for primary and early childhood and preschool education teachers in the Republic of Croatia. The obtained results show that kinesiology courses on the curricula of higher education institutions that educate primary education teachers are relatively homogeneous and that there are minimal differences in the total annual number of hours. Comparing the results for early childhood and preschool education teachers, it is evident that the differences are relatively significant, and that neither of the curricula have the same number of hours. Three faculties have university undergraduate studies, while at the other three faculties education is conducted at a professional level, and because of this, there are also significant differences in the number of kinesiology courses. Based on the obtained results it can be concluded that the adaptation of the curriculum in accordance with the Bologna process has affected the quantitative and qualitative changes in the number of available courses which are preparing students for teaching in the physical and health educational field.

Keywords: Teaching Methodology of Physical Education, Kinesiology, teachers, preschool teacher

INTRODUCTION

The perspective of kinesiological education is integrated into the perspective of our society as well as our civilisation and it has a significant influence on the individual, society, and civilisation. Therefore, it is not surprising that one of the basic issues in the field is the matter of the status and perspective of development in kinesiological education (Prskalo and Babin, 2008). The living conditions imposed on the people in the 21st century require the accommodation of the educational institutions as much as the accommodation of the institutions which train the educators. The implementation of the standardized programme and the increase in the educators' level of expertise have raised children's activity in Physical Education classes (Prskalo and Babin, 2008). The change in the role of the teacher and curricula require key changes in such a teacher's education (Hardman, 2005). The modern teacher needs to understand the developmental characteristics of the population he or she teaches, the changes in the society which have an important role in the young people's ways of life and various ways in which they spend their leisure time, the pedagogical approaches which enable the teacher to work successfully with various pupil populations and the modern didactical approach which guarantees interesting and effective teaching (Kovač et al., 2008). High-quality education of the personnel trained to teach at all levels of kinesiological education is the only solution to the problems which burden the modern educational systems and it does not refer to whether those systems need to respond to the sedentary living conditions, the occurrence of screen addiction, or increase in the modern illnesses caused by the lack of physical activity; it deals with the issue of efficient answer. The efficient answer is not possible to come by without enabling educational experts at all levels to work in the field of physical and health education. This field is of utmost importance to the harmonious development of the anthropological features of children and youth (Prskalo and Babin, 2008). School and preschool teachers are the first persons a child encounters in the organised work in the field of physical and health education. They carry, organize and lead the educational process. High-quality work aimed at theoretical and practical knowledge of kinesiology as the substratum science as well as its applied discipline – teaching methodology of physical education – makes up the core of these teachers' education. This is achieved through the application of the appropriate methods and the organization of work by affirming the link between the educational requirements and levels of pupils' abilities. The subject Physical Education contributes to the education of teachers in this field. It provides students with the necessary motor and theoretical information and transforms their distinctive traits and abilities (Prskalo et al., 2007). At preschool age Physical Education class is taught by a preschool teacher, while a primary school teacher teaches it to pupils aged 6-10. They are able to establish a functional relationship between the educational fields as well as intensify, rationalize, and humanize the educational process. The importance and responsibility of those experts is even more obvious when one considers the fact that traits which hold a greater genotype and lesser acquired share of variance may undergo optimal transformation at a younger age (Findak et al., 2002). The aim of this paper is to compare the contents of the syllabi of courses which focus on kinesiology in higher education of teachers and to see how much they are represented in curricula at the faculties of preschool and primary teacher education in the Republic of Croatia.

METHODOLOGY

Systematic observation of the curricula of the faculties and departments which carry out preschool and primary teacher education at six universities at the Republic of Croatia was carried out. Insight into the curricula of the mentioned institutions yielded data on the type of the study which is carried out at each institution, number of hours students are obliged to attend within the kinesiology-focused courses which are part of the academic year 2012/2013 curricula, number of ECTS points, and the number of semesters over which the courses are taught. Comparative analysis was used to establish any differences between the Croatian institutions for preschool and primary school teacher education which may exist in the contents of the syllabi as well as the degree to which the courses which focus on kinesiology are represented in the curricula. The results of this analysis may be utilized for the standardization of the curricula of institutions of higher education in the Republic of Croatia which focus of preschool and primary school teacher education.

RESULTS

The data in tables 1-5 show how much the obligatory courses from the field of kinesiology are represented in the curricula of the integrated university teacher education studies at the Croatian faculties which focus on preschool and primary school teacher education.

Table 1 The number of 45-minute-long classes students are obliged to attend in the kinesiology-related courses they take as given in the curricula of the integrated graduate university teacher education programmes – Master of primary education 0+5 (300 ECTS)

Course	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Osijek	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka	Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb	Department of Teachers' and Preschool Teachers' Education, University of Zadar	Department of Preschool and Primary School Teaching, University of Pula
	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE
Physical Education	120	120	120	120	120	120
Kinesiology	60	60	60	60	60	60
Teaching Methodology of Physical Education	135	135	135	120	150	135
TOTAL NUMBER OF CLASSES	315	315	315	285	330	315

The results given in table 1 represent the number of 45-minute-long classes students are required to attend per each course they take in the field of health and physical education. The results show that the Physical Education course is taught over 120 45-minute-long classes at all teacher education study programmes, at all Croatian universities. No differences are found when the course Kinesiology is considered. The only difference between the syllabi is found in the Teaching Methodology of Physical Education course. There are differences between the six institutions studied which range from 120-150 45-minute-long classes students are obliged to attend per academic year.

Table 2 The number of 45-minute-long classes students are obliged to attend in the kinesiology-related courses they take as given in the curricula of the undergraduate university programmes and professional programmes of preschool teacher education – early and preschool education Baccalaureus, a three-year-long course (180 ECTS)

Course	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Osijek	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka	Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb	Department of Teachers' and Preschool Teachers' Education, University of Zadar – professional programme	Department of Preschool and Primary School Teaching, University of Pula – professional programme
	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE
Physical Education	120	120	120	120	0	120
Kinesiology	45	45	0	60	45	30
Teaching Methodology of Physical Education	90	120	120	150	165	135
TOTAL NUMBER OF CLASSES	255	285	240	330	210	285

Data related to the study of early and preschool education are given in table 2. The data show that the number of classes students attend at the Physical Education course is 120 at every institution studied apart from the Department of Teachers' and Preschool Teachers' Education, the University of Zadar, where this course is not taught at all. Moreover, the course Kinesiology is not offered at the University of Split, while at the other institutions the number of classes set for this course encompasses the range of 30-60 classes per year. The number of classes approved for the Teaching Methodology of Physical Education course ranges from 90-165 per year.

Table 3 presents the number of ECTS points per semester for the kinesiology-related courses as well as the number of semesters in which the given courses are taught. The numbers of ECTS points differ at almost every faculty at which primary school teachers are educated. Total number of ECTS points covers the range between 5.7% and 7.7% of the total number of ECTS points the students need to earn in order to complete their study.

Table 3 The number of ECTS points in the kinesiology-related courses as given in the curricula of the integrated graduate university teacher education programmes – Master of primary education 0+5 (300 ECTS)

Course	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Osijek		Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka		Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split		Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb		Department of Teachers' and Preschool Teachers' Education, University of Zadar		Department of Preschool and Primary School Teaching, University of Pula	
	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.
Physical Education	7	4	4	4	0	4	4	4	3	3	4	4
Kinesiology	4	1	5	1	5	1	4	1	2	1	4	1
Teaching Methodology of Physical Education	12	3	12	3	12	3	11	3	14	4	12	3
TOTAL NUMBER OF ECTS POINTS	23 ECTS		21 ECTS		17 ECTS		19 ECTS		19 ECTS		20 ECTS	

Nr. of Sem. – number of semesters in which the courses are taught

Table 4 The number of ECTS points in the kinesiology-related courses as given in the curricula of the undergraduate university programmes and professional programmes of preschool teacher education – early and preschool education Baccalaureus, a three-year-long course (180 ECTS)

Course	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Osijek		Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka		Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split		Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb		Department of Teachers' and Preschool Teachers' Education, University of Zadar – professional programme		Department of Preschool and Primary School Teaching, University of Pula – professional programme	
	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.
Physical Education	4	4	4	4	0	4	4	4	0	0	4	4
Kinesiology	4	1	4	1	0	0	5	1	4	1	2	1
Teaching Methodology of Physical Education	6	2	8	2	11	3	9	2	17	4	9	3
TOTAL NUMBER OF ECTS POINTS	14 ECTS		16 ECTS		11 ECTS		18 ECTS		21 ECTS		15 ECTS	

Nr. of Sem. – number of semesters in which the courses are taught

The results given in table 3 show that the numbers of ECTS points differ between the faculties studied. The greatest number of ECTS points is obtained in the Teaching Methodology of Physical Education course, while the shortest duration of courses (in semesters) is found in the course Kinesiology. The number of ECTS points related to the given courses ranges between 6.1% and 11.7% of the total number of ECTS points the students need to earn in order to complete their study.

Table 5 shows that kinesiology-related courses at the graduate university early and preschool education programme level are only offered at the Faculty of Teacher Education of the University of Zagreb. The other two faculties have not included obligatory courses from the field of physical and health education into their curricula of graduate studies.

DISCUSSION

When the obtained results are compared, it can be seen that there are almost no differences in the representation of the obligatory kinesiology-related courses between the faculties which educate primary school teachers. No differences can be found between the courses Physical Education and Kinesiology, while some smaller inconsistencies exist in the number of 45-minute-long classes taught in the Teaching Methodology of Physical Education course. Rather great differences are found in the field of preschool education in which none of the syllabi carries the same number of classes. Three faculties offer undergraduate university programmes, while three offer professional programmes. Due to this difference great variations are found in the number of 45-minute-long classes over the kinesiology-related courses. The greatest number of classes taught is found at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb with as many as 330 classes of the kinesiology-related courses. The number of ECTS points assigned to the kinesiology-related courses offered in teacher education programmes is much more diverse. For example, the number of ECTS points varies between 17 and 23 in the overall range of 5.7% and 7.7%, which means that the kinesiology-related courses are represented at a very small percentage in relation to the total number of 300. Table 5 The number of 45-minute-long classes per year students are obliged to attend in the kinesiology-related courses as is recorded in

the curricula of the graduate university early and preschool education programmes – Master of early and preschool education, fifth year (120 ECTS)

Course	Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Osijek			Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka			Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb		
	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.	NUMBER OF CLASSES PER COURSE	ECTS	Nr. of Sem.
Kinesiological Transformations	/	/	/	/	/	/	45	4	1
Methodology of Programming in Physical and Health Education	/	/	/	/	/	/	30	4	1
TOTAL	/	/	/	/	/	/	75	8	2

Nr. of Sem. – number of semesters in which the courses are taught

points students need to acquire in order to complete their study. A much smaller number of points can be found in the context of preschool education programmes, in which the number of ECTS points varies between 11 and 21. An interesting fact is that the percentage of ECTS points acquired at the kinesiology-related courses is greater in the preschool teacher education programme than in the primary teacher education programme, ranging between 6.1% and 11.7%. Moreover, it should be noted that the Physical Education course carries only one ECTS point per semester, in both study programmes, while this course carries no points at all at some faculties. When one looks at how much kinesiology-related courses are represented at the graduate university programme at the three faculties, one observes that at two faculties there are no obligatory courses from the field of kinesiology, while two obligatory courses are taught over the course of two semesters at one faculty and they involve 75 45-minute-long classes and 8 ECTS points.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of this comparison, it can be concluded that the kinesiology-related courses given in the curricula of the Croatian faculties which educate teachers of primary education are rather similar and that there are minimal differences in the number of 45-minute-long classes students are required to attend per academic year. The number of ECTS points varies, so it can be concluded that this area requires additional balancing. In those studies which educate teachers of preschool education the obligatory kinesiology-related courses are differently represented. It can be concluded that there has been no reform of the curricula at the three faculties which still offer professional programmes of preschool teacher education. These programmes need to undergo reformation into undergraduate and graduate university programmes of preschool teacher education. On the basis of this research it can be concluded that the adjustment of the curricula to match the criteria of the Bologna process has brought about qualitative and quantitative changes in the degree to which the courses which enable students to work in the field of physical and health education are represented in the curricula. It may be concluded that the Bologna process has brought upon a positive and absolute and relative change in the number of classes taught in all the courses related to the field of physical and health education. The Teaching Methodology of Physical Education course is well represented in the curricula of the preschool and primary teacher education faculties with regard to the number of classes taught. Bearing in mind the richness of the contents, methodological procedures, methodological organisational forms of activity, the organisational forms of activity in the field of physical and health education, the fact that the transformation of the anthropological status of the child is imperative, and that the activities are carried out at various locations, it is crucial that the adequate answers are given by means of the preparation of the future generations of primary and preschool teachers for the successful realization of the aims and tasks in the field of kinesiology.

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