

ANALYTICAL PRESENTATION OF THE 2020 NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM IN HUNGARY

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*Received 2022 October 08; Revised 2022 November 21; Accepted 2022 December 05;
Available online 2023 March 10; Available print 2023 March 30.*

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ABSTRACT. The Physical Education and Health Development learning area of the National Core Curriculum (NCC) 2020 and the framework curricula that form a coherent unit with it includes a set of goals and contents that meet the challenges of the 21st century. One of the prominent components of the 21st century image of man is that the individual is active, but at the same time capable of reflective deliberation. A person of action is characterized by the right attitudes related to movement, a physically active lifestyle, realistic self-acceptance, autonomy combined with social responsibility, openness to innovative initiatives and the ability to apply reliable solutions. A physically and mentally healthy person experiences the state of health and a harmonious life as a value. The abilities and skills related to movement as a basic competence, as well as the motor abilities and skills that are mobilized according to the given situation, are the basis for the individual to become an active member of society, and are characterized by safety in movement throughout life. A significant positive of NCC 2020 is that, in addition to speaking, reading, writing, text comprehension, orientation to quantitative, spatial-visual and temporal conditions, *movement* is also found among the basic competencies. There are *learning areas (subjects)* in NCC 2020, in the following system: Hungarian language and literature (literature, Hungarian language); Mathematics (mathematics); History and civic knowledge (history, civic knowledge, country and people knowledge); Ethics/faith and morality; Natural science and geography (environmental knowledge, natural science, integrated natural science, biology, chemistry, physics, geography); Foreign language (first and second foreign language); Arts (singing and music, drama and theatre, visual culture, motion picture culture and media literacy); Technology (technique and design, digital culture); *Physical education and health promotion (physical education)*; Community education (class head teacher's

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lesson). The learning area of NCC 2020 Physical Education and Health promotion follows the following structure: first, the *general principles and goals* of the learning area and the physical education subject are formulated; after that, *specific characteristics* of the teaching of the subject can be found in chapters 1-4 and 5-8 and 9-12 projected by grade; the next point contains the *main topics*, also divided into four grades. In the NCC, certain characteristics of physical education learning and teaching are also presented by education stage. The educational process takes place along *seven development areas*: movement culture development; motor abilities development; development of motor skills – learning to move; games; contests, competitions; prevention, lifestyle; healthy physical development, health promotion. These development areas are closely aligned with the main topics of the subject, as well as with the learning outcomes (general requirements) set as overall goals and related to the development areas.

Key words: *National Core Curriculum, Basic competencies, Learning areas, Physical education and health promotion*

Introduction

The political transition following the free elections in Hungary in 1990 raised the demand of reorganising the society. A new society always creates new value preferences. The 1990ies have brought not only economic, scientific-technical, social, moral, educational policy or education organisational changes, but they were also followed by the changes in the school curricula. The changes in the curricula of the 90ies widened the content of education. So the content of education has gradually broadened, gained a much wider interpretation, so today it does not mean only the syllabus, but comprises the "world" of values, the questions of educational policy, the transformation of behaviour, and the development of attitude, too (Hamar, 2012).

In Hungary, a new, modified version of the National Core Curriculum was introduced in 2020 (*Act LXX of 2019 on National Public Education*). The National Core Curriculum (NCC) 2020 and the framework curricula that form a coherent unit with it (*Content regulators matching the 2020 NCC*) the learning area of Physical Education and Health Development includes a target system and contents that meet the challenges of the 21st century. One of the prominent components of the 21st century image of man is that the individual is active, but at the same time capable of reflective deliberation. A person of action is characterized by the right attitudes related to movement, a physically active lifestyle, realistic self-acceptance, autonomy combined with social responsibility, openness to innovative initiatives and the ability to apply reliable solutions. A physically and mentally healthy person experiences the state of health and a harmonious life as a value (Hamar, 2022).

In NCC 2020, the Physical Education and Health Development learning area, the subject of physical education, while maintaining the traditional values of Hungarian school physical education, was supplemented with health development. This does not mean giving up the values of daily physical education, but rather we can talk about an extra pedagogical and, in some respects, health added value that can also be called Euroconform (Hamar, Czirják, Kövesdi, 2020). As Valéria Csépe (2020) defines: “Physical education is not just a gym class, but a movement that brings joy, it can include dance and a variety of physical activities. Health promotion, the creation of a healthy lifestyle, tasks that can alleviate the postural problems of elementary school children are integrated, and there is also the possibility of adapted physical education.”

The structure of the NCC 2020 Physical Education and Health Development learning area

There are *learning areas (subjects)* in NCC 2020, in the following system: Hungarian language and literature (literature, Hungarian language); Mathematics (mathematics); History and civic knowledge (history, civic knowledge, country and people knowledge); Ethics/faith and morality; Natural science and geography (environmental knowledge, natural science, integrated natural science, biology, chemistry, physics, geography); Foreign language (first and second foreign language); Arts (singing and music, drama and theatre, visual culture, motion picture culture and media literacy); Technology (technique and design, digital culture); *Physical education and health promotion (physical education)*; Community education (class head teacher’s lesson).

The infrastructural conditions for the learning and teaching of physical education in the educational institutions participating in public education are quite broad, so it is difficult to define uniform minimums that are valid and achievable for all schools in the development of the content to be mastered. The creation of unity mostly affects the area of student personality development, which appears in the NCC at the level of comprehensive achievement goals and achievement goals belonging to development areas. The means of implementing the educational process are the topics indicated in the NCC and the framework curriculum. The topics are made up of development tasks that include broader content and appear as optimal at the level of the requirements. The physical educators can use these components to create the content elements of their local curriculum in accordance with the local conditions – using the opportunity to choose (Hamar, 2020).

The learning area of NCC 2020 Physical Education and Health Development follows the following structure:

- First, the *general principles and goals* of the learning area and the physical education subject are formulated.

- After that, *specific characteristics* of the teaching of the subject can be found in chapters 1-4, 5-8 and 9-12 projected by grade.

- The next point contains the *main topics*, also divided into four grades. As an example, let's look at primary school grades 5-8 the main topics of his year: 1. Conditional and marching exercises – prevention, relaxation. 2. Tasks typical of track and field. 3. Tasks typical of gymnastics. 4. Sports games (depending on the material and personal conditions of the school, a choice of two sports games). 5. Physical education and folk games. 6. Self-defence and martial arts. 7. Forms of movement in an alternative environment. 8. Swimming (depending on conditions). 9. Adapted Physical Education.

- Finally, the *learning outcomes*, the learning outcomes set as overall goals and related to the development areas (general requirements) are recorded in the core curriculum.

Comprehensive goals, areas of development

The abilities and skills related to movement as a basic competence, as well as the motor abilities and skills that are mobilized according to the given situation, are the basis for the individual to become an active member of society, and are characterized by safety in movement throughout life. A significant positive of NCC 2020 is that, in addition to speaking, reading, writing, text comprehension, orientation to quantitative, spatial-visual and temporal conditions, *movement* is also found among the basic competencies.

The complexity formulated as a basic principle of NCC is reflected in the connections between physical education and general competences. The subject mainly contributes to the realization of the aspirations set out in the general competences and educational goals through the development of personal and social competence. Competencies related to somatic health, social-emotional well-being, safety, and human relations are given an important role. School development also covers good time management, constructive cooperation, and the development of physical well-being and motor performance.

Physical education is connected to other subjects through inter-subject integrations and cross-curricular pedagogical solutions. The most obvious cross-curricular connection between physical education and the *Arts* learning area is particularly pronounced in the subject of *singing and music*. Singing and music play a fundamental role in the teaching of dance forms of physical education (dance, rhythmic gymnastics, aerobics), mainly through the development of rhythmic ability. Dance can function not only in its interdisciplinary appearance,

but also as a common “language” across subject boundaries. The dances also play a cultural mediating role, as the student gets to know the diverse cultural traditions of our country and the customs of European nations through folk dance.

In the NCC, certain characteristics of physical education learning and teaching are presented by education stage. The educational process takes place along *seven development areas*: movement culture development; motor abilities development; development of motor skills – learning to move; games; contests, competitions; prevention, lifestyle; healthy physical development, health promotion. These development areas are closely aligned with the main topics of the subject, as well as with the learning outcomes (general requirements) set as overall goals and related to the development areas.

Learning outcomes

For the subject of physical education, the learning outcomes set as overall goals and related to the development areas are formulated first in general, and then adapted to the individual development areas. Primary school grades 5-8 in his grade, for example, like this:

By the end of the educational phase, the student:

- his/her motor performance, which has developed in accordance with his/her age and physical abilities, is such that she is able to consciously influence her own performance and fitness level;
- with his/her versatile movement skills, she successfully learns complex forms of movement;
- knows and uses age-appropriate theoretical knowledge, technical terms and correct terminology of physical education;
- his/her self-awareness, emotional-volitional skills and abilities have been properly developed through exercise, physical education and sports;
- able to interpret the sources of accidents occurring in life and health-damaging, dangerous habits and activities.

Examples of the learning outcomes of the development areas of grades 5-8:

Movement culture development

By the end of the educational phase, the student:

- executes sequences of actions consisting of combinations of learned basic forms of movement under variable spatial, temporal and dynamic conditions at a skill level.

Motor abilities development

By the end of the educational phase, the student:

- due to the level of development of the motor's abilities, he/she is able to create harmony between the elements of his/her action sequences.

Development of motor skills – Learning to move

By the end of the educational phase, the student:

- through gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, dance and aerobic forms of movement under the guidance of a teacher, he/she develops his/her aesthetic-artistic awareness and expressiveness.

Games

By the end of the educational phase, the student:

- consciously and expediently uses technical and tactical elements in the preparatory small games of sports games.

Contests, competitions

By the end of the educational phase, the student:

- during contests and competitions, he/she is tolerant towards his/her teammates and opponents, he/she expects the same from them.

Prevention, lifestyle

By the end of the educational phase, the student:

- exercises in a planned, orderly and regular manner according to the possibilities given by his/her family background and his/her immediate environment.

Healthy physical development, health promotion

By the end of the educational phase, the student:

- is completely independent in terms of hygiene habits, and helps his/her peers when appropriate.

Learning outcome goal to be achieved by the end of the educational phase: the *student referred to adapted physical education* should get to know the tools and methods of physical education, health promotion and sport that can help him/her to restore his/her health and motor performance to the greatest extent possible.

Summary

The title Physical Education and Health Development, which will appear in the National Core Curriculum 2020, replaced the previous title Physical Education and Sports Literacy. It can be considered a content innovation that the learning area - while maintaining the traditional values of physical education in Hungarian schools - has been supplemented with health promotion. This change points out that in the teaching of the subject of physical education, in addition to the motor-related content of health development, knowledge of health science should also have a prominent role.

The basic curriculum also covers the acquisition of age-appropriate theoretical knowledge of physical education as a comprehensive outcome goal. In the process of movement learning, theoretical awareness and explanation of cause-and-effect relationships are important, which promotes mental processes. All this enables the efficient learning of increasingly complex sequences of movements adapted to changing environmental conditions.

The overall results of NCC 2020 are developed in the form of detailed results related to development areas. The seven development areas are presented in a uniform form in every educational stage. The main topics in NCC and the framework curriculum topics are the same in the case of physical education. The recommended number of lessons and the achievement targets for the development areas are linked to the core curriculum topics - broken down into two years.

The content of the framework curriculum of physical education is based on natural forms of movement, in which both location-, position-changing and manipulative movements appear. The content elements include the system of basic sports techniques and tactics from the fifth grade, while the development of broad-spectrum coordination skills continues. The differentiated development of the conditional skills is mainly done through the acquisition of movement skills and playful practice, and then the conditional training adapted to age characteristics gradually comes to the fore. Physical education and folk games are included separately in the curriculum, as well as forms of exercise that can be practiced in an alternative environment, which receive great emphasis in modern physical education teaching due to their versatile developmental effect.

Adapted physical education, which is included in the central curriculum regulations, has been given a separate topic. The low-impact and adapted physical education from the 2012 NCC was a shortcoming that generated one of the biggest educational policy and educational management problems of the last decade in the field of physical education in Hungarian schools.

In conclusion of the study, it is important to state that the success and optimal implementation of physical education depends on the adequacy of the regulatory and professional frameworks, as well as on the content and methodological activities of physical educators. The teachers enforce, apply, customize and transform the sports professional and methodological procedures they consider optimal within the defined framework and regulations (Hamar et al., 2017).

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