

Sport as support for school reintegration.

A case study



Marc CLOES



Anne-Aymone MARAITE



François DIJON



Department of Sport Sciences
University of Liège (Belgium)

Statement of the problem

- ◆ Sport is considered as a mean to be used in order to struggle against some of the problems that society is facing in most developed countries: lack of social cohesion, school and social disengagement, lack of social references, urban violence ...
- ◆ The role that sport had to play in social integration seems based more on traditional concepts related to the fundamental values of sport than on objective data.
- ◆ According to the context, sport can have as much negative as positive social impacts (Committee of the Regions, 1996).
- ◆ Finally, few projects are effectively implemented as "integration sport" → few research to identify the characteristics of this kind of activities.
- ◆ Vandermeulen & Cloes (2009) pointed out that "sport for insertion" was not really supported while young people with school drop out would need to be considered.
- ◆ Theeboom et al. (2008) underlined that several "social workers" are using martial arts as support to their project of insertion. Moreover, even if positive socio-psychological effect were identified, there is a lack of empirical data about the structural characteristics of the projects, the approach proposed by the educators as well as the participants characteristics.

Goals of the study

- ◆ To answer to the request of the "principal" of one martial art school working with youths rejecting school.
- ◆ To identify the teaching strategies that are used by the physical educators with youths who have dropped out the school.
- ◆ To analyze other aspects as the specific context of the practice, the evolution of the students' behaviour (not developed in this poster).

Methods

- ◆ This study respected a qualitative approach.
- ◆ Data were collected between October 2008 and March 2009 according a real triangulation process (analysis of written material, participating observation, interviews with the educators, interview and questionnaire with the youth, analysis of the teaching process) (Figure 2).
- ◆ 6 adults involved in the project.
- ◆ 85 youths (12-18 year-old, girls and boys).
- ◆ A content analysis has been processed to identify any information and classify it according to its units of sense.
- ◆ The data obtained through the various sources were organized in parallel.
- ◆ The reliability of the analysis was based on the cross checking of a part of the available data by two researchers.
- ◆ Moreover, the physical educators validated a written report summarizing the findings and their interpretation.

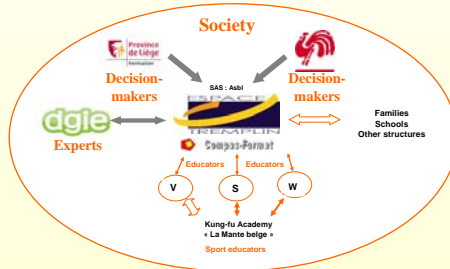


Figure 1 – Context of the study

Results and discussion

Teaching strategies

Main values

- ◆ Experience of courage, self-transcendence, team spirit and absolute respect of the rules
 - ◆ To reach this, three principles were applied:
 - ◆ Obligation to experiment
 - ◆ Completion of tasks
 - ◆ Equity of the treatment
- « With a little will, everybody can bend the legs: do it » (M1)

Discipline management

- ◆ One principle = respect of physical educators' authority
 - ◆ Any infraction was followed by an intervention, an explanation and a sanction
 - ◆ The aim was to restore personal rigor
- « I believe that youths who are coming here must be facing a wall. It's like that and not differently; one stops negotiating » (R3)
- « S23! If you continue to speak like that to adults, you'll go out! » (M1)

Modes of communication

- ◆ Communication was based on adapted verbal interaction
- ◆ Using specific terminology seemed to enhance the usefulness of language learning
- ◆ Questioning was frequent in order to check the assimilation of the aspects taught by the educators
- ◆ The latter demonstrated all the time, contributing to impress the youth and bringing respect
- ◆ Dialogue was bidirectional to underline that rigor did not mean absence of human contacts

Improvement of student's motivation

- ◆ Individualization of the requirements
 - ◆ Recognition of individual rate of progress
 - ◆ Exclusive use of positive interventions
- « Everybody sit down silently and I want to see S1 and S13 together. In this way, one has one who knows and one who is beginning. » (M1)
- « You follow S1; he is your model. It's normal that you don't know at the moment. » (M1 to S1)

- ◆ In the interviews as well as during the teaching process, it was underlined that the priority = to increase fitness and motor level of the youth in order to make them aware that they are able to achieve something.

- ◆ The status of the activity (originality of Kung-fu compared to traditional sports – new skills, new terminology...) and the expertise of the educators (who proposed impressive demonstrations) urged the youths to accept the context (another framework is acceptable).

Conclusion

- ◆ Proposing to learn one martial art is an interesting approach as it is an original context where the youth can see that they are competent and able to reach goals working with others.
- ◆ The picture offered by the teaching style demonstrated in this martial art school is the opposite of what is currently recommended in physical education.
- ◆ Rigor of the activity is self-supported contrary to what happens at school (youths signed a contract testifying that they were determined to do their best to go back to school).
- ◆ The question is to know if some normal students would not need to be educated with this kind of « directive » approach that determines clearly requirements and identified barriers.

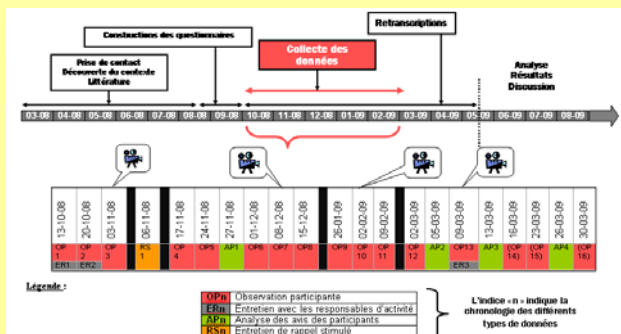


Figure 2 – Data collecting

Ask references to the first author: Marc.Cloes@ulg.ac.be