

# Instructional Approaches in Physical Fitness Course: in Case of Higher Education

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## Abstract.

*Physical fitness, as a specific field in higher education which require special approaches, in addition to educational methods, in the instructional process. The goal of this review is to point out the importance and role of pedagogical methods and sports training approaches in instruction of physical fitness. The practice approach is considered the most important as most tasks are completed through practice, while the living words approach and demonstration approach are used more during the early learning. In addition, approaches from sports training (standard repetition training approaches, modified exercise approaches) also play an important role. Original longitudinal research offers greater opportunities to discover new scientific laws, which is recommended for future researchers on this topic.*

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## 1. Introduction

One of the basic challenges in physical fitness class in higher education is the understanding of the curriculum. The distribution and concretization of program tasks in the instructing fitness for instructors is complex and even difficult when the requirements of modern instructional

practice are taken into account. In physical fitness program of higher education, there are activities and approaches that enable the complex nature of personality as well as their relative transformations. It is certain that general attitudes and physical development are shaped in higher educational institutes and throughout life through various

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influences. It is quite justified to ask the question: Does organized and programmed fitness exercise affect fitness development and to what extent? Considering that the programs of fitness classes in undergraduate program of Ethiopian higher educational institutes were based on the attitude that a larger amount of movement information is obtained from a number of various physical activities, students are not able to master them, and due to the insufficient amount of repetition, it does not have a major effect on physical fitness development. The current satisfaction of students and efficiency of physical fitness classes in higher educational institutes of throughout the globe, particularly, in Ethiopia is not at the required level (Jovanović, 2013; Demissie G., W., 2023a; Demissie, G. W., 2023b).

The quality of physical fitness instruction in higher education, based on the available data, is such that it not only does not sufficiently express the desire for comprehensive physical exercise, but it lacks adequate intensity and clearly better organization. The lack of gymnasium, fitness equipment, and lack of motivation of students to fitness activities (Demissie, 2023, b).

A large number of tasks in the curriculum cannot be realized even by the planned

annual work programs in higher education for objective reasons. Organized physical exercise has a positive effect on the heterogeneous group of students, in order to transform it in the desired sense and scope (Jovanović, 2013; Višnjić, 2006). Certainly the most important factor in the physical fitness instructional process in higher educational of all diversified abilities and characteristics are movement abilities. Recent scientific research shows that physical exercise is an effective tool that has a positive effect on the development of movement skills of students (Aksović, Bjelica, Jovanović, Zelenović, Onofrio, 2021). However, Jovanović (2013) points out the lack of exercise, especially in sensitive periods of development, when physical exercise is decisive in the formation of motor abilities.

The negative effects of insufficient weekly hours can only be alleviated by adequate planning and implementation of each fitness class, improvement of material and other conditions for the implementation of planned contents and permanent training of instructors with mandatory monitoring of their work and evaluation of student achievements in motor skills transformation and technical achievements. Zrnzević (2007) also points out that fitness classes are not

efficient enough, i.e. they have little impact on motor skills<sup>1</sup>. The primary purpose of this review of current literature is to show the importance and role of instructional approaches and approaches taken from sports training in the instructional process of physical fitness.

## **2. Theoretical framework of the problem**

### **Teaching approaches and practical experience**

Learning different movement techniques and elements from various sports in the instructional setting of physical fitness are closely related to education, so it can be said that the education of students does not go without education. Learning in the instructing physical fitness is a change of the individual life by exercise and the environment, and caused by the needs of the individual who is changing. Given that the fitness class education lasts about 50 minutes, then we have enough reason to deal with teaching structures and norms whose application may result in the lesson being better formally shaped and technically correct, and more importantly that the essential effects of that class on the diversified status of students be greater ” (Milenković , Simić M.,2009).Questions

about the most effective ways of learning in physical fitness classes that raise the success of learning to a higher level, can be seen in instructional approaches and consistent application of instructional principles.

The term instructional approach represents "scientifically verified ways and procedures of work of instructors and students in the instructional process, which provide optimal conditions for rational and efficient instruction, full realization of instructor or expert didactic creativity, maximum manifestation of the student's or participant's individual-collective activity and complete development of the student's personality (Nikola, Bojan, Ljubinko, Ljubica, & Milan, 2023). They tries to explain the same concept as: "The system of procedures, i.e. ways and means by which individuals are taught knowledge, habits and skills, and by which individuals determine these" The final explanation of the term approach is a planned procedure in the study of facts or most often as a way of presenting the teaching content.

More precisely, they are the basic way in which the goal of instruction and many tasks of the instruction process are realized. However, in the classroom, information, instructions and messages must be constantly exchanged between instructors and students

interaction, which tells us that instructional approaches in the modern approach can be understood as a process of exchanging messages and information in practical class. In any case, instructional approaches will determine the course of the teaching process as well as the realization of certain contents of physical fitness classes. Didactics, as a science of education, has created several instructional approaches that are used in general education subjects in any educational setting. A detailed description of instructional approaches will be presented in the following of the review section.

### **2.1. Instructional approaches in physical fitness**

With the development of physical fitness program, instructional approaches also developed. Bearing in mind that through the instructional process of physical fitness can only influence the proper growth and development of students, their motor and functional abilities, the choice of effective approaches is a real problem. Instructional approaches derive from Instructional practice because each instructor is constantly researching and supplementing them with various innovations. Which Instructional approach the instructor will use depends on the specific tasks in the class, on the character and specifics of the instructional contents, on

the level of abilities and preparation of the students, movement abilities and external conditions. Experience from practice shows us that all approaches are interconnected, often complementary and often used interchangeably. In the instruction of physical fitness, approaches taken from general didactics are mainly used, but since physical fitness as an educational area has its own specifics, therefore there is a need for special approaches in educational work with higher education under graduate students. It is up to the instructor to decide which approaches to apply, which gives him the opportunity to constantly research and innovate in the approaches he applies.

Scholars of the fields points to the following instructional or teaching approaches in the instruction of physical fitness and related activities. The approach of verbal communication or the approach of "living words", Demonstration or illustrative approach, Approach of practical exercise, combined approach play as an approach, and Approach of imitation and dramatization ( Kragujević, 1987, Cited in, Nikola, Bojan, Ljubinko, Ljubica, &, Milan, Z., 2021).

Milenković and Simić (2009) distinguish the following approaches in instruction or teaching physical fitness and related

activities Living word approach (oral presentation, verbal communication), Presentation and observation approach, and Practical exercise approach. In the following section that follows in this review, each approach will be presented in brief.

### **Living word approach - verbal communication**

Because selecting the appropriate words at the appropriate moment can have a very stimulating effect on students' motivation and work, the live words approach is significant and applicable to all forms of instruction. It should always be emphasized that physical fitness classes are a process that is started, regulated as an opinion exchange and as communication that has specific effects on students, rather than just mechanical movement and movement of the body and parts of the human body in a certain space. That "verbal communication" is involved. The instructor's live word is invaluable when learners are asked these three questions, which are essential for any physical movement: Physical movement: What is physical movement? What is it for? How is it used? (Lander, Barnett, Brown, & Telford, A., 2015; Buehl, 2001; Johnson, Johnson, 1999).

In physical fitness instruction, words have a formative, regulating and stimulating role, which is why this approach is applied through description, explanation, analysis and conversation. The description is applied in the early stages, before starting to learn an item. When students have to create an accurate image of a certain movement, it is also the first step for students to become familiar with the content and how to perform a certain action. Explanation is the main form of this approach used in the first stages of training, especially during the demonstration of certain elements. The explanations accompanying the interpretation must be clear, easy to understand, accurate, precise, and appropriate to the age and physiological abilities of the students. Technical terms must be used in a way that students can understand for all of this to have a positive impact (Abels and Bridges. 2010; AAHPERD, 2012).

### **Presentation and observational approach - demonstration**

This approach plays an important role in processing new material when students need to visually visualize the exercise that they will need to reproduce later. For students to learn a certain exercise, it is not enough to just describe it and ask them to do it, but also to show it or demonstrate it. In the

professional literature, this approach is also known as the evidential approach. In physical instructional process, it is mainly expressed in the form of direct presentation by the instructor himself, which tell us that in addition to the first stage between the student and the exercise is carried out orally speaking, visual communication is the most present. It is used in the initial stages of training for certain movements or physical exercises. It includes the following forms: slideshows, presentations and illustrations in physical fitness lessons. Demonstration is the basic approach in the process of forming a new element. However, we must distinguish between presentation and demonstration and illustration in which there is also visual communication (Doortje, 2022; Lander, Barnett, Brown, & Telford, 2015; Joy, 2020).

Demonstrating is for real setting viewing, for them, the observation of movement activities takes place in real conditions (sports fields, gyms, stadiums, competitions). This means that when we want to show students a phenomenon, we must put them in a position to see it realistically. If it is not possible to demonstrate a certain phenomenon, then for most of the content of the physical fitness program, instead of demonstrating, we will use demonstration (Doortje, 2022; Joy, 2020; Milenković, & Simić, 2009).

Demonstration is the instructor's attempt to present certain fitness related movements as technically correct as possible, but within the conditions of a physical fitness lesson. Therefore, instructors can successfully demonstrate certain types of movement that help students better understand and grasp the technique of a physical element or movement. It can be said that presentation is the basic didactic approach of physical fitness class. The presentation of physical fitness lessons can be done in two ways: directly and indirectly (Lander, Barnett, Brown, & Telford, A., 2015; Milenković, & Simić, 2009).

As a didactic term, illustration is very close to representation. The illustration should not be understood in its original sense and should not be considered as a use of any artistic contribution. The illustration is related to a detail from this set but for some reason it is less visible, even invisible, and it is very important. The relationship between representation and illustration can be presented in terms of the relationship between the general and the particular. It is associated with indirect presentation because it is the only way to deal with a separate and isolated part of the exercise (Doortje, 2022; Lander, Barnett, Brown, & Telford, A., 2015; Milenković, & Simić, 2009).

### **Practical exercise approach**

Practical training approach is based on actual exercises to form motor skills, habits and abilities. The goal of training is to help students master motor skills, abilities, and habits as quickly as possible after many repetitions. This approach connects theory and practice, in which students acquire the necessary practical and theoretical knowledge, skills and habits in the field of physical fitness, as well as directly coaching students Exercises and independent sports activities follow, which of course increases mobility, skill, level, Students' functional and technical athletic performance. The instructor must plan, organize and implement these approaches with his or her direct control over the work. The student's practical activity is determined by a number of approaches created by observing them from the point of view of whether certain movements that have been dealt with are fully or partially performed and practiced. No, or whether there is a combination of the first and second movements. In this sense, we distinguish: synthetic, analytical and combined approaches (Lander, Barnett, Brown, & Telford, A., 2015; Muhammad, Alfian, & Masri, 2023.).

### **Integrated approach**

The integrated approach of practice exercises allows you to practice the entire exercise, as it is demonstrated and as ideas are generated. From a very early age, this approach allows the child to perform all motor tasks in his own way, without interrupting the logical sequence of individual stages. Students at this age often observe all phenomena and their analytical thinking skills are still quite modest. Educational content for this age group is simpler, allowing for faster overall absorption. This approach is considered the main approach and is often applied in the final stages of training the application of motor skills, skills and habits. In the initial stages of training, it is applied only if the motor task is simple and can be fully trained or if it cannot be reasonably divided into parts. At younger student ages, applying this approach may encounter certain difficulties, which can be overcome by performing the exercises in easier conditions of obstacles, dimensional resistance or by removing some details that hinder the student's progress, while doing the exercise (Milenković, & Simić, 2009). This approaches appears in two variants: “copying or supporting what is expressed as a whole” and “transition from practice from a simple form of a whole to increasingly complex forms complex without

touching the essence of the whole. "(Lander, Barnett, Brown,& Telford, A., 2015).

### **Analytical approach**

The analytical approach to practical exercise is most often applied when the motor task is practiced in parts, divided into reasonable, actionable wholes without any additional movements. It is used in complex motor tasks when the separation into parts facilitates the acquisition of a motor task, the student learns the essence of the structure of a motor task and the reception seems more concrete and easier, contributing to greater motivation and commitment to mastering a particular exercise. Therefore, the analytical approach that includes practicing the exercise in several parts must represent the overall logic (Jovanović, 2013; Milenković, & Simić, 2009). However, care should be taken to ensure that this approach is used to a limited extent, as long training on parts can lead to automation of parts, making assembly difficult they form a whole. To prevent or minimize possible disadvantages of this approach, it is recommended to use a variant of this approach, analytical-constructive. This implies that the exercise is broken down so that each learned part can be combined with the already learned part. The analytical approach itself implies that the separate parts

of the exercise or elements are eventually connected together into a whole, and this should not be confused with the synthetic approach (Lander, Barnett, Brown,& Telford, A., 2015).

### **Complex approaches**

Complex or combined approach is the use of analytical and synthetic approaches. It is used if the applied exercises cannot be simplified without disrupting the essence of coordination. The exercise is performed using a synthetic approach and only certain movements that are too difficult or certain errors are corrected by the analytical approach at the required level and allowing a relatively long-term application of the exercise (Lander, Barnett, Brown, & Telford, A., 2015).

### **2.2. Instructional approach taken from sports training**

Considering that physical fitness instruction, among other things, has the mission of developing the motor skills of students, in fact there are several approaches that have been adopted from sports training. These approaches can be categorized in to two. These are: - Standard repetitive exercise approaches and Variable exercise approaches.



Standard repetitive training methods are repeated without any significant changes in the structure and external parameters of the fitness load. This group of methods includes: standard continuous exercise approaches and standard interval exercise approaches (Matveev, & Novikov, 1976, Cited in, Nikola, Bojan, Ljubinko, Ljubica, & Milan, Z., 2021).

Varied exercise approaches are characterized by rationally directed changes in all factors acting during training. The essence of the operation of these methods is based on the fact that in some way the student's body's ability to adapt to the exercise is prevented, exposing it to new, unknown and increasingly complex situations. , which requires increased effort and increased functional capacity to perform. This group includes: variable continuous training approaches and variable interval training methods (Matveev, & Novikov, 1976, Cited in, Nikola, Bojan, Ljubinko, Ljubica, & Milan, Z., 2021).

The approaches i have listed so far can be used independently but they are also often used in combination. The most common combination has led to the emergence of the following approaches: these are:-approach of repetition of progressive exercises, approach

of standard variations of exercises, and, Approach of repetition of exercises with decreasing time period.

### 3. Conclusion

The results of this review mainly provide information about physical fitness instruction approaches and propose ways and guidelines to innovate the instructional process. In general, it can be said that in physical fitness lessons, the method of practical exercises is given priority because most tasks are performed through practice, while the remaining two approaches (living words and the method of presentation and observation) are used more in introduction section of the class. Sports training approaches taken from sports training (standard repetition training method, variable training method) also play a very important role in instructional process of physical fitness. Original research on this topic over a longer period of time will allow achieving a higher level of generalization of results and providing an opportunity to discover new scientific laws, which is recommended for researcher's future on this topic.

The scientific contribution of the obtained results lays in the possibility of practical application, helping to optimize the educational - pedagogical process in the field

of regular physical fitness, physical education and sports science lessons for higher educations. It can be concluded that it is impossible to complete the tasks in physical fitness lessons without appropriate instructional approaches, which play a very important role in the process of lesson planning, programming and evaluating lessons.

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