PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF COMBATIVES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Introduction
In 2005, we projected combatives taxonomy with innovative definition of combatives (Reguli, 2005):

Combatives are physical exercises aimed at the physical defeat of a partner. Combatives comprise specific exercises, which prepare a participant to overcome a partner by physical contact.

The systems of combatives derived from a hierarchy of three levels, as you can see below:

- Preparatory combatives
- Combative sports
- Self-defense

In our opinion, combatives in school PE should be incorporated according to combatives taxonomy (Reguli, 2005, 2004). It means:

- Primary school, first level – focusing to preparatory combatives (with using games as the main method)
- Primary school, second level – focusing to combative sports (in meaning of martial arts)
- Secondary school – focusing to self-defense (according to law and ethical norm)

Primary school, first level
Simple combative exercises are grounded in human philogenesis. Combatives have long and shared roots with the development of mankind. They seem to be an integral part of the deepest subconscious drives of humanity even though they are often suppressed during the educational process. You can see it most clearly in small pre-school children, as combative
practices are a natural part of movement ontogenesis. The necessary precursor to walking safely is the art of falling safely. The children want to pull things they like towards them and push the things they do not like away. Any child will fight another child for their favorite toy, in the positive sense of the word. Social factors seem to play a very significant role in this. When practicing combative routines it is important that the two opponents agree in advance on certain criteria. These include non-verbal forms of communication. There might be a problem as combatives lead to close contact between the two opponents, and for some people it might be problematic, as many of us allow only the closest of relatives to touch, for example, our stomach, chest or face or to hug us. Combatives often require this kind of contact. For these and other reasons, it is important to keep in mind the psychological aspect to combatives. When practicing the routines, the participants, concentrating on the exercise and their performance, seem to lose part of their constructed self-image, which leads to the revelation of certain fundamental personal characteristics. Aggression needs to be focused and controlled, in order to be useful rather than destructive.

At the primary school, first level, we use mainly combative games as a natural and joyful method (as it is well described in Bartík, 1999).

**Primary school, second level**

Our function definition of martial arts lies in the four-dimensional characteristic of personality of a martial arts trainee, which involves biological, psychological, social and spiritual sphere. The basic functions of martial arts are bound to the individual components. Thus, they create bio-psycho-socio-spiritual stability. We differentiate the following functions:

- bodily (biosphere, complete development of the physical nature of a human being),
- psychical (psycho-sphere, psycho-hygiene, relaxation, self-fulfillment, etc.),
- social (socio-sphere, interaction, communication, social self-fulfillment),
- spiritual (noosphere, self-cognition, purity, transition beyond the perceptible world).

The martial arts should ideally lead to non-violent ways of solving problems. Exercise, especially for children and the young, needs to teach them not only the technique, but also needs to use the technique to teach them the proper relation to their social surroundings. Martial arts teaching can be wider and supplemented with multi dimensional education: as a
movement system, as a self-defense, as ethical system etc (Vít, 2005).

The martial arts serves as a helpful example of Nietzschean concept of self-overcoming, and thinking about the martial arts through the lens of self-overcoming illuminates important aspects of the methodology and ethos of martial arts training and practice (Monahan, 2007).

Walters (1997) states that karate promotes physical fitness, and also helps students learn to relax and calm their bodies, develop strong mind/body connections, and enhance mental calmness. Karate students also show increased self-esteem, attain goals, and develop an understanding of self.

Bartík (2006) studied 11-12 years old pupils and influence of combatives. He used CPQ-test by Porter and Cattel. Combatives support constructive aggression, self-confident and self-conquest. Pupils were more open, relaxed and hearty.

On other hand we know that especially among male students negative effects seemed to stem from both the practice of power sports itself and from repeated contact with ‘macho’ attitudes, norms, and ideals (Endersen, Olweus, 2005). The negative effects of participation in power sports represent a societal problem of considerable dimensions which has been largely neglected up to now. Scale of various combative sports is too wide for definitive results. It seems be very important to choose martial art with strong ethical and philosophical background instead of simply hand-to-hand fighting. Reynes and Lorant (2004) analysis indicated that after two years of practice, karate training (including kumite and kata training) seemed to have neither positive nor negative effects on aggressiveness scores, while judo (focused on randori) training seemed to have a negative effect on anger scores. However, the results suggested the importance of kata or meditation in training sessions on self-control acquisition for such young boys.

The seemingly paradoxical decrease in aggression in some of researches (e.g. Law, 2004) appears not at all paradoxical when we recognize how martial arts helps participants meet their basic needs as for example set out in Choice Theory.

Other study indicates that many couples and families experience the martial arts as a positive family development experience (Lantz, 2002). Influence of combative training highly depends on the teacher.

An interesting article discusses challenging objectification of women through experimental learning (Scott, Derry, 2005). In this essay the author describes "Women in Their Bodies," a interdisciplinary seminar that integrates traditional classroom techniques and

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experiential learning sessions (such as rock climbing, martial arts, and strength training) to educate students about the ways in which bodily objectification and the social construction of femininity interfere with women's participation in sports and other activities that are beneficial for their physical and mental health.

**Secondary school**

It is undoubted right to defend oneself and it should be a duty to defend the other when he or she is under physical attack. There are many possibilities, how to overtake sexual harassment without violence, and without making bad behavior.

This application of combatives needs, above all, a very good psychological grounding. We use fighting activities, eliminating fear of contact, to raise self-confidence, to make them trust in their own abilities and believe they are able to defend themselves.

Students at secondary school are able to learn different techniques and to use it in simple model situation. As Harding’s (2004) results showed, students increased the number of different techniques they performed when reinforcement and extinction procedures were conducted during the drill condition, and that this increase in response variability generalized to the sparring condition.

Self-defense should be linked with good communication skills. Verbal as good as non-verbal self-defense is essential precondition of physical self-defense. In the society, it is most important to know, how to avoid violence parallel with ways, how to use physical contact when in danger.

In experiment, we prepared a model situation for n=19 university students (average age 21.1 years, nine girl and ten boys). Their task was to solve prepared situation, when unknown attacker attack them from the front and from behind. Attacker was well-trained martial artist with horrifying musculature. He had a mask to hide his face. He used also verbal attack and bad language to frighten defender.

Very after solving model situation (successfully or not) every person filled the questionnaire with few simple questions.

Q1 What did you think when he was attacking you?
   - How big and heavy the attacker is
   - Physical pressure
   - I was suddenly aware that I cannot or don’t know how to blow him
I was not as scared as I expected. He wasn’t too aggressive (physically). The yelling didn’t worry me.

I’m alive.

I’m stronger that I expected.

It’s very hard.

I didn’t blow him with a fist.

He was too kind.

It’s attacker 😊

Degree of his aggression. I expected something worse.

Verbal attack.

That he used bad language.

The others participants sad, that they thought nothing.

Q2 Did you feel any physiological changes?

The same as after physical effort.

Heart bit rate about 180. I was exhausted.

Sweating.

Yes, hands tremor till now.

Strong heart beating and then fatigue.

Yes, I felt it. I cannot write now.

Especially after and before attacking.

Yes, off course (8 participants)

Not. I didn’t.

**Conclusion**

In the PE we have to respect psychological determinants of didactics of combatives.

At primary school, first level:

- To let the pupils fight naturally, but according the rules
- To support intentional self-control
- Using contact with partner as a communication skill
- To know about good and bad contact
- To feel responsibility for partner
At primary school, second level:

- Combatives support constructive aggression, self-confidence
- Working with appropriate pain build self-conquest of pupils
- Working with total, physical defeating and winning
- Martial arts build bio-psycho-socio-spiritual stability

At secondary school:

- To be well-balanced both of physically and mentally
- To use and control aggression in self-defense
- To deal with fear and troubles
- To work under stress
- To use verbal self-defense together with physical control of attacker

References


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