

Kinesiology of Free Time

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Abstract

Contemporary living conditions impose the need for optimum responses. Hence, the purpose of Kinesiology as a science should be to serve the society, nation and civilisation. The issue of free time and its contents is one of the central issues set before a modern man. The prospect of its design can be found in education as the main precondition for creating a habit of active use of free time. Kinesiological activities, applied across all areas of applied kinesiology, are those of primary importance for free time. Having in mind the prospects of free time implies taking into account the demographic indicators according to which one may anticipate and secure the necessary material conditions for work, simultaneously considering a balanced development. Due to the long tradition of education of kinesiologists, as well as preschool and primary school teachers at the faculties of kinesiology and teacher education institutions, respectively, staff requirements can successfully respond to all future needs of this profession. Minimum number of compulsory physical education lessons has become a limiting factor, especially since time is an essential factor in the success of the transformation process, in the process of motor learning and creating exercise habits as essential educational tasks for the formation of the culture of free time. Creating conditions for the recognition of the kinesiology of free time also opens the path to kinesiological prevention.

Key words: education; exercise; free time; kinesiology; physical education.

Introduction

During the 20th century, the industrialization has gradually turned into hyper-industrialization with the purpose to satisfy an insatiable urge for collecting values or rather power, and has thus brought forth the question of free time, the time whose purpose needs to be the restoration of humanity to man. This issue has become even more current because of the transition to hyper-informatization which has become the central feature of the 21st century (Prskalo, 2005). Dumazedier (1967) highlights

that the central functions of free time are relaxation, entertainment and leisure. It seems that at the time of general globalization, society has abandoned an important civilizational legacy, i.e. the ratio of “8:8:8”, which allocates the same number of hours to free time as to working time. This may have resulted from the fact that the countries which have never accepted this civilizational legacy have entered the production race and at the same time, the divergence of trade union organizations has failed, especially in transition countries, to stop the threatening wave of exploitation of man who has, instead of “cannon fodder” in war times, become the “cannon fodder” for insatiable greed. Specifically, people with lower educational level are exposed to higher demands at their workplace than those with higher educational level (Mišigoj-Duraković, Heimer, Matković, Ružić & Prskalo, 2000), and since their employment opportunities are also lower, all attempts to insist on the rights and working standard inevitably become questionable. Naturally, even free time requires certain preparation. Leburčić and Relja (1999) see the free time of the young as a social phenomenon while the contents and form of spending free time have become important measures of effectiveness of education in general. Previšić (2000) emphasizes the connection between extracurricular and out-of-school activities and the culture of free time. Since both deal with the free time of pupils, they are the first step into free time and they have a very important role in people’s lives, creating a lifelong habit of appropriate use of free time. This educational objective frequently overcomes the importance of, for instance, exercise itself during extracurricular activities which undoubtedly has a developmental function, because creating a habit for exercise during free time ensures a minimum of movement for the entire life. The present state of affairs, and the chances of its change in view of the current trends are minimum, shows that in many areas there is a gradual decrease of physical movement in general, which has become a negative civilizational legacy that reflects both on people’s lives and health (Findak, 1992). Fatigue is associated with psychological consequences (Bültmann, Kant, Kasl, Beurskens & Van den Brandt, 2002). Free time of children and young people is increasingly being used for activities that require almost no physical effort. The percentage of the young people who spend their time in any physical activity is too small (Horgan, 2005), which is a reflection of the state of the entire population (Mišigoj-Duraković, Heimer, Gredelj & Heimer, 2005). Social obligation of educational systems is to prepare the young and the youngest for the life in the contemporary world, especially under complex conditions. Hence, schools and preschool institutions are faced with a high degree of responsibility, which is increasing daily, and the tasks resulting from this responsibility are constantly becoming more complex. Therefore, kinesiology must be ready to respond to new challenges and adapt to the present conditions and needs. Encouraging the creation of the habit of exercise and movement, especially during the time unburdened with obligations thus invoking pleasant emotions towards exercise, and in view of the characteristics of modern civilization, has, from the kinesiological point of view, become a priority of educational

systems. Sociology has established the notion of free time from its standpoint, and the pedagogy of free time within pedagogy as the fundamental science has also managed to respond to the demands of the contemporary world (Previšić, 2000), hence, it is now the task of kinesiology to materialize kinesiology of free time (Prskalo, 2013), address this issue in the context of a child, and modify it to meet the needs of the present and especially the future. Thus, in the theoretical sense, there is a need for establishing a branch of kinesiology, named Kinesiology of Free Time, similarly to Pedagogy of Free Time which was developed within the field of pedagogy, and in the empirical sense there is a need for research pertaining to free time and its dynamics (Prskalo, 2013). Such a discipline, due to research of free time, its dynamics and educational component, would exceed the framework of kinesiological recreation with which it is closely connected, as well as with the field of kinesiological education.

Contemporary Living Conditions and Activities within the Field of Physical Education

Living in the contemporary society is accompanied by new discoveries associated with the overall progress. Humanity benefits from most achievements, i.e. the standard of living is raised, better healthcare and diet are provided, communication is improved, and the like. Kinesiology as a science has also witnessed an expansion in all its applied fields. However, the totality of the way of life, which we cannot choose, has both positive and negative effects. Significant changes can be observed primarily pertaining to health, and unfortunately the age level at which these changes occur is significantly decreasing, which has been attributed to the radically changed living conditions. This demands additional attention from all the participants of educational process and special care on the part of the entire educational system. Modern conditions present a challenge to the contemporary and future educational system. Living conditions, especially in urban areas, despite the fact that the difference between urban and rural areas in terms of living conditions is becoming less pronounced, require adjustment of the programmes, and above all the selection of appropriate content. The concentration of the population in big cities is, even from a demographic point of view, an unfavourable circumstance when it comes to a balanced development, and imposes upon the majority of Croatian citizens poor conditions both from an environmental and kinesiological point of view (Prskalo & Babin, 2008). Resulting from the reduction of movement, sedentary lifestyle and improper diet have been detected as the main cause of morbidity and mortality in the contemporary world, and, according to the data provided by the Croatian Institute of Public Health (2009), diseases of the heart and blood vessels, at 49.6%, were number one cause of death in 2009. Fast lifestyle accompanied with reduced movement cannot result in a harmonious increase in weight but usually causes an increase in the fat tissue (Prskalo, 2007). A number of research studies have confirmed that exercise is efficient in the reduction of obesity and prevention of chronic diseases (Bouchard & Després, 1995; Mišigoj-Duraković, Duraković, Ružić, Findak &

Delija, 2003), Flynn, McNeil, Maloff, Mutsingwa, Wu, Ford & Tough, 2006). "Free time is certainly seen as the area where, with an optimal strain on a child, the amount of movement can be increased thus affecting the totality of human traits and health as the main objective of any humanistically oriented educational process" (Prskalo, 2005, pp. 336-337). Kinesiological activities can favourably impact a number of educational variables, especially emphasizing the importance of kinesiologicalists and teachers. It is clear that a teacher is the first person whom the child meets when starting school. Therefore, teachers' attitudes towards physical exercise will certainly affect the attitudes of children (Findak, 1992). Teachers need to be the ones who will encourage or preserve children's positive attitudes since children have already developed a certain amount of spontaneous motion activities (games) when they start school (Prskalo, 1991), and they should also encourage a positive attitude towards movement that is manifested through game. Nevertheless, in order for the teachers' educational activities to make sense, it is necessary to determine the preferences in educational values that we want to develop in children. Although the differences between values and anti-values are clear, contrasting views can lead to educational anarchy.

The total amount of work in education, which is insufficient and does not ensure optimum transformation effects, may be a cause of concern even though education is fairly comprehensive and should have the greatest responsibility for the overall preparation of children for contemporary conditions of living but also, above all, in terms of education for the protection of their overall health.

Free Time and Kinesiological Activities

Modern conditions of life with all its positive and negative effects are a reality. Besides being a realistic external limiting factor in the development of an individual, especially child, they are at the same time both a limiting and a driving factor in the response to the hazards derived from themselves. Since lack of movement has been identified as the primary deadly risk of a modern man, movement has become the only prevention but also the only cure. On the other hand, since movement is represented in a number of kinesiological activities, and is also accompanied by applied areas of kinesiological science, i.e. education, recreation, sport and kinesitherapy, it is necessary for "the oldest form of physical education and most autonomous human activity, spontaneous and freely chosen, characterized by versatility of movement, and accompanied by a strong sense of pleasure and satisfaction" (Findak, 1995, p.13) to become and remain a driving force of other motor activities the purpose of which would be to accompany children - pupils until they have created a sort of addiction to movement arising from the strong biotic motivation for movement. The importance of the "motor game" is particularly highlighted, and in it the game is dealt with through movement with the prevailing natural forms of movement. This importance is especially emphasized because of the conditions predominant in urban areas that determine the way of life and thus significantly influence the contents of a child's play (Prskalo, 1991). Physical exercise has

been shown to significantly affect a number of anthropological characteristics (Findak, Mraković, & Prskalo, 2003). Organized exercise can be observed through applied kinesiology: education, recreation, sport and kinesitherapy. And, since kinesiology education is the most comprehensive, for it monitors children and pupils through obligatory education, it is reasonable to argue that it has the primary responsibility for the development of children as pupils as well as for the formation of the habit of daily exercise which has become the primary educational task in this field. "It is necessary, therefore, to assume that the prospect of kinesiology education is integrated into the prospects of the society and civilization, itself significantly affecting the individual, society and civilization. It is not surprising therefore that the question of the state and prospects of the development in kinesiology education is one of the fundamental issues of the profession" (Prskalo & Babin, 2008, p. 30). However, one should not ignore the agonism which is imposed through sport involvement and the goals of which are different than those of other applied areas but, owing to the attractiveness of this field, it is frequently identified with the entire kinesiological activity. Kinesiological recreation is an interesting field from this point of view and Kinesiology Teaching Methodology in Recreation studies the process of sports and recreation exercise with the aim to maintain the qualities, abilities, motor knowledge and health, and the humanization in the use of free time, on the other hand, Kinesiology Teaching Methodology in Kinesitherapy studies kinesiological transformation processes applicable in the prevention and treatment of illness, injuries and impairments (Mraković, 1997). It is obvious that different objectives in these applied fields also impose appropriate contents which also need to follow the interests of the child and the pupil.

Whichever of the applied fields is used to manifest movement activity, it is from the point of view of modern living conditions a first-class free time content for which there is no alternative (Prskalo, 2005). It is significant that pupils, according to the same source, even in primary education, show a significant preference towards kinesiological activities; however, significantly fewer students participate in extracurricular activities at schools as compared to out-of-school activities, which may be interpreted as unwillingness of schools to fully meet the needs of children (Prskalo, 2007).

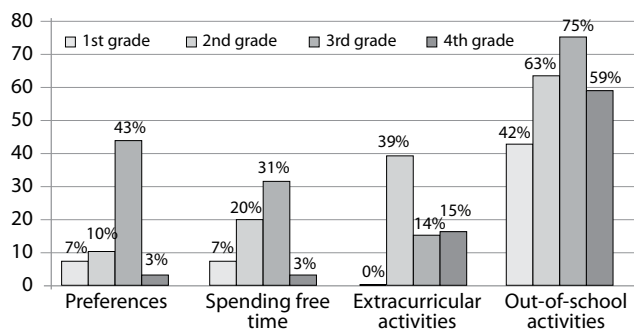


Figure 1. Attitudes towards kinesiological activities, preference for the free time activities, and participation in extracurricular and out-of-school activities in the subsamples defined according to age (Prskalo, 2007, p.326)

The child as a subject in the full sense of the word can become the creator of his/her free time. Acknowledging the connections between entertainment and culture, Taylor (2004) emphasizes physical education as an essential part of the growth and development of young people. Conscious activity of the children, pupils and young people transform them from a passive to an active role in the contemporary scientifically articulated educational process. Active participation involves awareness of all the phases of exercise and the effects of exercise. Children need to accept the risk of failure but also have a developed awareness that both success and failure are ultimately in their hands.

The Prospects of Kinesiology of Free Time

Given the demographic, social, material and human resources as well as the envisaged accelerated industrial development, unfortunately, with all the negative consequences that have accompanied it in the so-called developed world (Prskalo & Babin, 2008), one should also consider the prospects of the kinesiology of free time. Modified schematic presentation of the prospects of kinesiology education (Prskalo & Babin, 2008), forms the foundations for the scheme Prospects of the kinesiology of free time (Figure 2), and it has to be emphasized that kinesiology education is an important foundation for the kinesiology of free time. It is important to ensure the necessary material conditions for work, having in mind balanced development, including the demographic development, and remembering that leaving this extremely important field to the local decisions may be particularly damaging. Long tradition of the education of kinesiologists and primary and preschool education teachers can meet the future needs for educators in the initial stages of education in this field. In addition, the system is also adjusted to the continuous lifelong education of experts in the field because without it, it would not be possible to monitor and keep up with the contemporary achievements. However, a significant limiting factor remains the number of compulsory physical education lessons, inappropriate for the applied field which, due to its comprehensiveness carries the greatest responsibility for maintaining the system of exercise including lifelong exercise of the nation, i.e. creating the culture of free time. For this reason, there is insistence on the necessary minimum number of physical education lessons recommended by the professionals, which can also be achieved by including children, pupils and university students in other organizational forms of work, but also by introducing new organizational forms of work, thus achieving a minimum of one hour of exercise a day (Prskalo & Babin, 2008). The prospects of kinesiological education may, as presented by Prskalo and Babin (2008), in the same way be projected onto the prospects of free time with its demographic, material, staff, educational, organisational, social and kinesiology education preconditions, as well as health, kinanthropological, motor, environmental, ethical and social developmental outcomes.

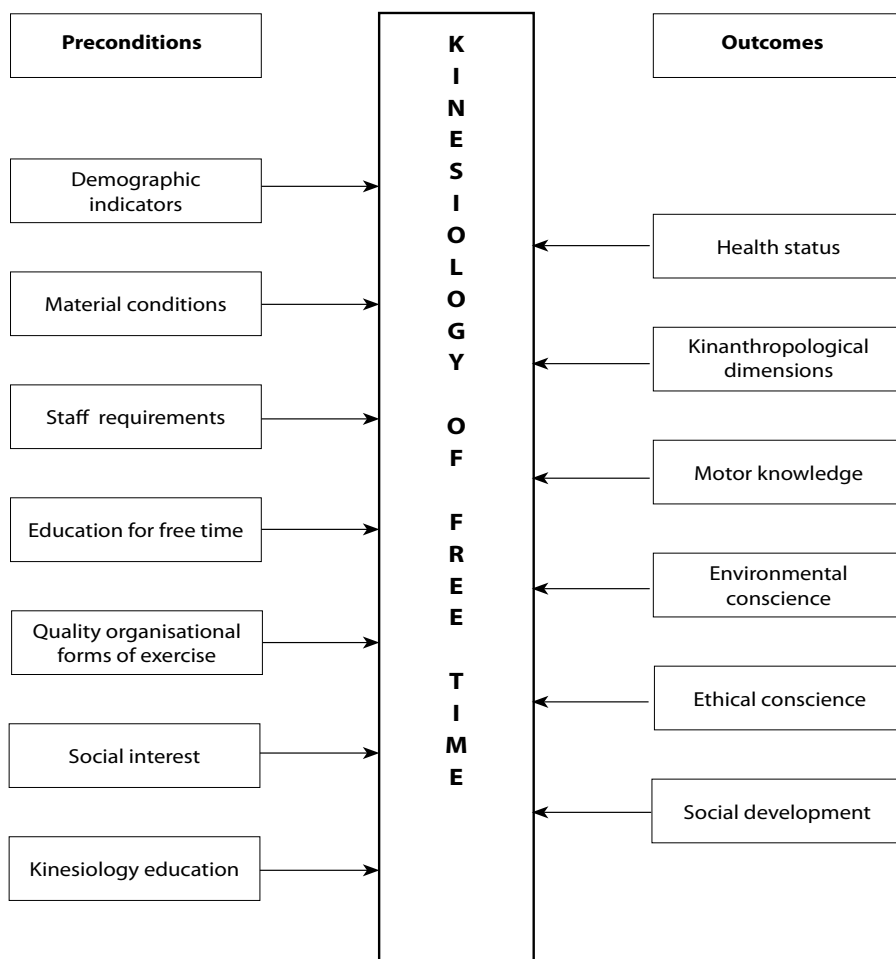


Figure 2. Prospects of the Kinesiology of free time (Adapted from Prskalo & Babin, 2008)

In this way, kinesiological prevention, as one of the fundamental factors of the integrative strength of kinesiology, can be achieved. Issues related to health, education, free time, declining of motor and functional abilities, environmental protection, etc. all present universal issues, and thus the more important issues that are dealt with in numerous sciences, including kinesiology (Findak & Prskalo, 2011).

Conclusion

Contemporary living conditions, which mostly cannot be changed, in a simple manner, impose optimal answers. Since science should primarily bring genuine benefits to the man, society, nation and civilization, so should kinesiology, as one of the social sciences, serve the society. On the other hand, the development of science requires its reorganization and often directs its interest in accordance with the trends in other sciences with which it has interdisciplinary ties, and sometimes kinesiology is the

science which can offer optimal answers. The question of free time is one of the central questions of the modern man, and is updated through everyday irrational conflict between the survival of “profit” and the survival of man with all its universal values. Unfortunately, this “conflict” is irrational because preservation of true values will create profit, and the negation of man also negates profits and leads to self-destruction of society. In any case, the question of free time and its contents has again become the major preoccupation of the modern man. The prospects of its design can be found in education as the major precondition for forming a habit of its active use. Kinesiological activities, employed across all areas of applied kinesiology, are activities of great importance for free time. Having in mind the prospects of free time means taking into consideration the demographic indicators, according to which one may predict the provision of necessary material conditions of work, at the same time taking into account balanced development. As a result of the long tradition of the education of kinesiologists and preschool and primary school teachers at the faculties of kinesiology and teacher education institutions, staff requirements can successfully respond to all future needs. Minimum number of compulsory physical education lessons has become an indispensable precondition for the affirmation of both kinesiology of free time and kinesiological prevention, especially since time is an essential factor in the success of the transformation process, in the process of motor learning and creating exercise habits as essential educational tasks for the formation of the culture of free time.

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Kineziologija slobodnog vremena

Sažetak

Suvremeni životni uvjeti nameću optimalne odgovore. Kineziologija kao znanost treba biti u službi društva, naroda i civilizacije. Pitanje slobodnog vremena i njegova sadržaja jedno je od središnjih pitanja koja se postavljaju pred suvremenog čovjeka. Perspektiva njegova osmišljavanja jest u edukaciji kao bitnoj pretpostavci oblikovanja navike njegova korištenja. Kineziološki je sadržaj kroz sva primijenjena područja kineziologije sadržaj od prvorazredne važnosti za slobodno vrijeme. Imati u vidu perspektivu slobodnog vremena, znači imati u vidu demografske pokazatelje i u skladu s njima predvidjeti osiguranje neophodnih materijalnih uvjeta rada vodeći brigu o ravnomjernom razvoju. Kadrovski uvjeti zahvaljujući dugoj tradiciji obrazovanja kineziologa, ali i učitelja i odgojitelja na kineziološkim i učiteljskim fakultetima, mogu odgovoriti potrebama budućnosti. Minimalna satnica obvezne tjelesne i zdravstvene kulture, a vrijeme je bitan čimbenik uspješnosti i transformacijskog procesa, procesa motoričkog učenja, ali i stvaranja navike vježbanja kao bitne odgojne zadaće za oblikovanje kulture slobodnog vremena, postaje ograničavajući čimbenik. Ostvarivanjem uvjeta za afirmaciju kineziologije slobodnog vremena, ostvaruje se i kineziološka prevencija.

Ključne riječi: *edukacija; kineziologija; kineziološka kultura; slobodno vrijeme; vježbanje.*