
Discrimination and Inclusion of "Sports-Weak Children" in Physical Education - A Comparison between the GDR and West-Germany

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Résumé

During the period of the German division, physical education had different social, political, and educational meanings in the both parts of Germany. Nevertheless, teachers in both the GDR and in West Germany were challenged to integrate children who had a declined physical performance.

This presentation will briefly outline principles of physical education in both countries and compare the requirements formulated for participants, using the curricula and oral history interviews as sources. It will then examine if and how teachers developed strategies and ideas to help children who struggled with sports to appropriately integrate them, avoid humiliation and discrimination, and harness the potential of sport through a proper inclusion. Since Eastern Germany had comprehensive schools for children ages 6 to 16, the paper will focus on grade 1 to 10. Teacher training will be touched briefly. The presentation will take a closer look at girl's sport to examine how discrimination against the supposedly "less athletic gender" was handled in physical education in both parts of Germany.

In this comparison, the GDR represents dictatorship and the Federal Republic represents democracy. However, they share a common history. In both German states physical education was required to distance itself from National Socialist pedagogy while invoked traditions in both German states, such as the at his time innovative work of the "father of gymnastics" Friedrich Ludwig Jahn (1778 – 1852).

The basic guidelines are derived from the physical education curricula of the two German states and are analyzed in this context. Additionally, teachers training textbooks and contemporary literature from both German states, as well as Oral History Interviews, will be used.

Initial results show that the actual practice was not always consistent with political and educational guidelines, but dedicated teachers often sought and found ways to teach their students appropriately.

Mots-Clés: Physical Education, GDR, Germany, comparison, discrimination, girl's sports, inclusion

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