

RESEARCH OF THE EFFECT OF AN ADAPTED ELEMENT FOR SWIMMING EXERCISES FOR BABIES

Preliminary communication

Boryana Tumanova and Bilyana Rangelova

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sports Department, Sofia, Bulgaria

Abstract

Physical activity is a factor affecting mainly the teenage generation. Swimming, as a rewarding physical activity, represent an effective and emotional means of solving tasks related to the process of development, maturation, recovery and re-adaptation after various diseases in babies. In the present research we will attempt to examine the rate of success of babies who study the process of "dunking the head in the water and holding the breath". Toward that goal, we will be using adapted, as per the particularities of this age group, exercises for the learning of this process. The objects of the research are two groups – an experimental and a control one, each constituent of 10 babies between 12 and 14 months old, whose parents wanted their children to swim. The condition which had to be met was for their babies to had never swum before. The results allow us to assert that, in relation to the training of babies to swim, the tried element of accustoming with water environment is easier to be learned through the presented adapted exercises.

Keywords: *physical activity, educational process, pedagogic experiment, adapted swimming exercises, pedagogical observation, babies*

INTRODUCTION

Water activities are useful for the development of the musculo-skeletal system and the physiology of the baby, for the overall balance of the body's functions and for the good mood. The training and education of the young child requires the use of specific methods, means and organization of work tailored to the individual characteristics of each. The mission of the sport educator is to select the most convenient means, methods and forms of training for his/her students, which are in accordance with the particularity of the relevant activity. For the optimization and more effective implementation of the educational process in reference to the swimming training of babies, the selection of individual, accessible exercises and different procedures should comply with the features of this age group.

From biological point of view, the physical activity stabilizes and builds up the baby's organism. The pursuit of physical exercises is of great importance for the adaptation of the babies for life. The exercises in water significantly contribute for a recreational impact on the organism of the little child, as they recover and train it, psychically relieve it, build it up and improve its health and habits. Through swimming, the thermoregulation is being ameliorated and the resistance to disease factors is increased. Strength and endurance are exercised instinctive, rhythmic, coordinated motions in water as well as breath holding are common for babies in their first weeks. However, after the 6th month these reflexes disappear.

Aside from being a powerful stimulus for the physical development of the child, swimming has been used throughout all the ages of evolvement of humanity as an educational, healing and sanitary indispensability. We find data reporting the ability of babies to swim alone under water in historical chronicles dating back to the 18th century. The joint swimming of the mother and her baby is a daily ritual in many tribes and nationalities, living in adequate weather conditions. Swimming for newborns and sucklings appeared for the first time in the USA; it has been studied and practiced earnestly in medicine and pedagogy since the 1940's. Today it is exclusively popular in Europe (Ognyanova & Marcheva (Огнянова & Марчева, 2012). The positive effect of swimming on the behavior and the processes of psychological, as well as the possibilities for correction of different early childhood deviations, is significantly higher than in other age brackets. The most significant sources of the problem can be found in the works of the researchers: Firsov (Фирсов, 1978;

Vacus (Бакюс, 2009; Ahr, 1993; Ahrendt, 1997; Nino, Stanchev & Bobev (Ниньо, Станчев, & Бобев, 1985).

The mission of the sport educator is to select the most convenient means, methods and forms of training for his/her students, which are in accordance with the particularity of the relevant sport activity. The selection of individual, accessible exercises and different procedures, consistent with the features of the age group is essential.

Our hypothesis is based on the theory that children's inborn abilities, emanating of their intrauterine development in the amniotic fluid, are strengthened and refined during the swimming sessions (Vacus (Бакюс), 2009). In the present research we will attempt to examine the rate of success of babies who study the process of "dunking the head in the water and holding the breath". For that goal, we will be using adapted, as per the particularities of this age group, exercises for the learning of this process. The trying of these exercises in practice will redound to the optimization and the more effective run of the swimming educational process of babies.

Tasks:

1. To reveal the possibilities of application of adapted exercises for "dunking the head in the water and holding the breath" as a factor for an effective learning of the basis of the swimming technique – accustoming with water environment.
2. Conduction of pedagogic experiment with application of the suggested adapted exercises.
3. An establishment of influence of the applied methodology on the temps of acquirement of the basis of the swimming technique – accustoming with water environment.

METHODS

Stage – pedagogic forming experiment with the applying of adapted exercises as a mean of acquiring the rudiments of the swimming technique – accustoming with water environment.

The objects of the research are two groups – an experimental and a control one, each constituent of 10 babies between 12 and 14 months old, whose parents wanted their children to swim. The condition which had to be met was for their babies to had never swum before.

Each exercise was conducted with the aid of an instructor and is divided in 3 parts: the first is a game combined with songs, the second part includes exercises for accustoming with water environment

Table 1. Number of exercises for the experimental and control group

Group	Number off educational weeks	Number off exercises per week	Total number of exercises
Experimental	5	2	10
Control	5	2	10

and the third one is again a game but with toys.

An equal number of exercises were carried through with both groups, with duration of 25 minutes and equal conditions indicated in Table 1.

With the children of the experimental group (E), it was worked according to a method, including the suggested and adapted by us exercises:

- The baby is laid on one of his/her side, so that one of his/her ears could be submerged. During preliminary observations of this exercise we came to the conclusion that when the aforementioned is happening the baby is holding his/her breath and it is quite unlikely that he/she will respire any water when the head is submerged. The exercise must be repeated for both sides of the body (left and right).

- Submersion of the head of the baby, as one of the ears is first, followed by the entire head. The exercise is performed smoothly and gradually as the time under water is increased but it shouldn't surpass 2-3 seconds. The exercise must be repeated for both sides of the body (left and right).

With the children from the control group (K) it has been worked according to the standard method which includes the following exercises:

- Watering the face of the child while keeping his/her chin above the water surface.
- Blowing a toy on the water surface.
- Exercising in submerging the face in the water with the demonstration of an instructor.

With the pedagogical observation we followed the learning of the exercise "submerging of the head in water" through the number of exercises needed for its mastery. For the practical realization of the pedagogical observation we produced a uniform file card. In it, 5 experts – swimming coaches, used to write down the number of exercises needed for each participant in the experiment to completely learn the tried element.

RESULTS

When summarizing the data concerning the speed of acquisition of the element – accustoming with water environment the higher success rate of the (E) group (the one which worked with the adapted exercises proposed by us) is clear. The element "submerging of the head in water" is learned for a shorter period of time in

comparison to the participants in the (K) group, where two babies (1 and 8) didn't succeed in learning the exercise. Everyone from the (E) group was successful. It is visible in the chart that while in the (E) group the element is, on average, learned for 5 sessions, in the (K) group that happened for 8.

CONCLUSIONS

- The results allow us to assert that, in relation to the training of babies to swim, the tried element of accustoming with water environment is easier to be learned through the presented adapted exercises.

- It is important to underline the influence of well-selected and dosed systematic exercises.

- Certain habits should be rooted in the baby. The swimming sessions ought to be made at the same time – before eating or an hour and a half after, – for no less than 25 minutes.

- All the exercises must be pursuant with the age of the baby and to spare him/her.

- You have to be very careful not to frighten the baby or for him/her not to respire water.

- During the sessions, the baby should be guided by plain and concise instructions, no matter that he/she might not clearly understand them.

- When learning the swimming movements, the babies should acquire a straightforward visual-motor notion of them.

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Correspondence:

BoryanaTumanova
Sofia University "St. KlimentOhridski",
Sports Department,
Bul.Tsar Osfoboditel 15, Sofia, Bulgaria
E-mail: b_tumanova@yahoo.com