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**Olympic Value Education in Schools and Sports clubs:  
a bi-national curriculum development project between the Netherlands and  
North Rhine-Westphalia**

**Abstract**

For various reasons, “values” have once again become an essential part of PE curricula and extra-curricular youth sport activities. In many countries, values in PE and sports have been connected with Olympic ideals, either as an official part of the PE curriculum and/or as a moral objective to be achieved in young people’s games and sports. This paper presents a cross-border project between the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany) in which a group of experts representing schools and sport associations worked on material that can be used in the further education of schoolteachers and by coaches in sports clubs. The document points out what is regarded as essential information for teaching Olympic Education at schools and in sports clubs.

**Introduction**

When the schedule of physical education teacher training courses in pedagogy and education is compared across the border, Olympic education is a subject completely missing in the Dutch PE teacher training curriculum – similarly in most of the PE teacher training courses in Germany. In less than 10% of all German universities, such as Augsburg, Cologne, Essen and Mainz, where PE teacher training is planned, are courses in Olympic education offered to the students as an optional part of their PE teacher training. However, in 2002, when five different German cities bid in the NOC elections to become the German candidate host city for the 2012 Olympics, the topic of Olympic education was recognised and became the focus

of the submitted bid for the city of Düsseldorf. The “White Book of Olympic Education” (Düsseldorf Rhein-Ruhr 2012 GmbH, 2002) spelled out an educational, cultural and social programme for a “decade of Olympic education” in schools and sports clubs. A further step in promoting Olympic education in the Netherlands and Germany was raised in the EU-Year 2004, with the “Education through Sport” campaign (cf. Janssens et.al., 2004, Tokarski & Petry, 2006). Both campaigns focused on the topic of Olympic education and its values and virtues in sports and physical activities.

The background of our German-Dutch cross-border project in Olympic education is closely linked with both of these 2002 and 2004 activities. The second Dutch-German Symposium for PE, co-organized by the Willibald Gebhardt Research Institute (WGI, Essen, Germany) in 2003, focused on the topic of Olympic education designed in the ‘White Book’. This symposium on Olympic education was very successful and brought together the departments of Olympic education in the Dutch and German National Olympic Committees. As one outcome of the meeting, our research institute (WGI) started the cross-border project on Olympic education in the autumn of 2004 with the support of the EUREGIO Rhein Waal, which is a cross-border region in the north of Germany and the Netherlands, the European Academy of Sports (EAdS), based at Velen (North Rhine-Westphalia), and also the support of our Ministry of Sports in North Rhine-Westphalia (MSWKS), the PE department of the State Curriculum Institute (LfS), the State Sport Federation of North Rhine-Westphalia (LSB NRW) and the Dutch PE Teacher organization (KVLO).

### *Purpose of the project*

Each partner and supporter of the project participated with a delegate in this project. Team members of the working groups have been along with the two authors of this article, Bert Boetes (KVLO), Rolf Geßmann (German Sport University Cologne) and Roland Grabs (LSB

NRW). Important objectives of the projects were proposed by the working group and discussed, modified and finally agreed by a steering group. Both groups are represented by German and Dutch scientists, teachers and representatives of the institutions who sponsor and support the project. Major targets of the projects are:

- To convey knowledge about the Olympic movement in general (criteria of ancient and modern times, phases of development in modern times, ceremonies, symbols, technical development, boycotts, “cold war politics”, etc.) and national items in particular (participation, hosting games, national sport profiles, outstanding athletes, cross-cultural contests in the Games, etc.). In addition, information should be given about the IOC Charter and the ambiguous assessments of the appearance of the Olympic Games in public life.
- To convey the educational purpose of the IOC Charter, and to highlight the development and structure of different international and national teaching approaches to Olympic education, together with a representative collection of writings, including examples of methods of instruction.
- Finally, to document for both teaching in schools, and coaching in sports clubs, a complete practical teaching guide for each setting (schools and clubs) which provides a range of sample lessons or units of teaching and coaching up to a whole course of teaching/coaching at schools/sports clubs, including a variety of “Olympic events” (e.g. contests, ceremonies, Olympic weeks/week-ends etc.), both in a single school subject (PE) and interdisciplinary (in at least two subjects) as well as in single sports and as a special triathlon or pentathlon involving a variety of physical activities (sports clubs).

### *Schedule of the project*

The project schedule was structured into four stages (2004-2006):

1. A collection of written materials in Dutch and German on Olympic education at school and in sports clubs including “best practise” examples (Sept. 2004-Nov.2004).
2. Development of a module system which fits into the different school and sports club systems as well as the bi-national systems of PE teacher training. Providing a manual and a complete set of teaching materials for training PE teachers and sports coaches in Olympic education (Dec. 2004-July 2005).
3. Implementation of the teaching materials at two PE teacher conferences (one in each country) and at two sports coach conferences (one in each country). Feed back of experienced PE teachers and sports coaches who are involved in further education campaigns in their professional sectors (schools, sports clubs) (Aug. 2005-Oct. 2005).
4. Documentation of the final draft of the teaching materials in hard copy as a book (cf. Naul et. al., 2006) and as an electronic file on the webpage of the project ([www.olympischeerziehung.de](http://www.olympischeerziehung.de)) (Dec. 2005-Feb.2006).

### **Methods**

#### *External and Internal Structure of the Module System*

According to the purposes of the project to familiarize teachers and coaches with the Olympic idea, to pass basic knowledge about the international Olympic movement in the Dutch and German contexts to them, and to help them learn about and apply different approaches to Olympic education to teaching in schools and coaching in sports clubs, the working group designed a tripartite module system for the cross-border teaching of Olympic Education:

## Module 1:

Module 1 (M1) documents a range of teaching units which give a brief introduction to the history of the Olympic Games viewed from Dutch and German national perspectives and compares the two national developments in the context of international items (e.g. the beginning of the national Olympic movement, participation and boycotts, hosting the Games in 1928, 1936 and 1972; cold war politics and the so called “German question”). The criteria of ancient and modern Olympic Games from an ethical-moral background (such as fair play) are documented, as well as the IOC Charter with its paragraphs on fundamental principles about ceremonies, symbols, etc., convergences and divergences (in the context of summer and winter games; participation in and boycotts of Olympic Games) in many respects (the range of sports, national contests within the Olympics e.g. skating, cycling, hockey, etc) highlight and compare the two national heritages of the Olympic movements in the Netherlands and Germany. In addition, examples of alternative assessments of the Olympic Games (e.g. from the origins of de Coubertin to the post-modern critics of Jennings) give some insight into the different perspectives of the Olympic Games which exist today.

## Module 2:

Module 2 (M 2) covers a range of teaching units, which give a full insight into matters of Olympic education. The educational purposes of the IOC Charter (fundamental principles) are highlighted as a common cross-border pedagogical demand for Olympic education programmes. With a historical background of socio-moral reasoning in PE and the coaching of youth sports, it documents four major concepts of teaching approaches in Olympic education, with a selection of basic writings about the respective concepts for teaching Olympic education. Furthermore, information is available about the teaching of special items like fair play, mutual understanding, joy in effort, etc.

Module 3:

Module 3 (M 3) provides two sections of teaching material for Olympic education units in schools and in sports clubs. Each section includes a set of examples given as work sheets, lesson schedules, preparation outlines for lessons/sessions, including teachers' and coaches' reports on how to conduct Olympic education for a range of different "Olympic events" inside and outside schools and sports clubs.

Modules 1 and 2 may be considered as two practical text books on the Olympic movement and Olympic education, whereas module 3 is a guide for teachers and coaches with examples of how to prepare and conduct practical lessons and incentives in Olympic education.

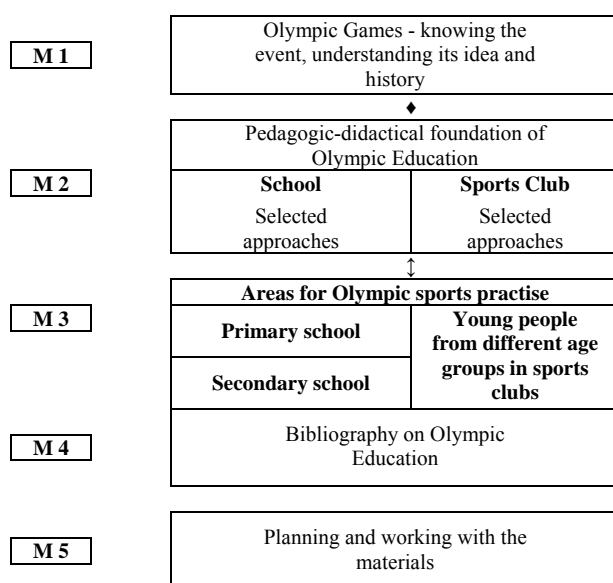


Fig. 1. External structure of the module system

Some common criteria for the internal structure of each of the three modules and each part of a module were set up. Each heading of one part of a module was directly followed by a didactic commentary which draws attention to the purpose of this part of the module and the

selected text document given to read and to study. To compare, for example, the meaning and intention of the ancient Olympic Games, with the idea which Pierre de Coubertin had in mind when he and his friends established the modern type of Olympic games, a commentary was given like this:

The function of this module is to show the differences between the ancient and modern Olympic games on the basis of typical features of the games relating to aims, programme and implementation. This applies especially to the various pedagogical and ethico-moral principles that were so important to Coubertin when he revived the Olympic games under the conditions pertaining at the end of the 19th century.

Figure 2: Didactic commentary

After a selected text at least one assignment was given in a “grey box” with advice on how to carry it out correctly.

Find continuities and discontinuities between the years and try to explain them. Information from modules 1/2.1 and 2.2 may help.

Fig. 3: Internal Structure of the Module System

In summary: M 1 lays a selected historical foundation of the Olympic movement, focussing and comparing the two national histories of Germany and the Netherlands. M 2 is the pedagogical and educational foundation of the purpose and approaches to Olympic education, focussing on the educational aims and teaching value of Olympic education both in schools and within sports clubs. Some Dutch sources, such as sports club activities, were translated into German because of the lack of similar work packages. M 3 is a comprehensive guide of teaching materials to prepare and conduct lessons, events, and incentives including work sheets. In order to give more insight into the structure of a module we will go through M 2 and show examples from each part of this module.

## **Module 2: Olympic education**

The module on Olympic education is subdivided into four parts:

2.1: Olympic education: Pro and Contra

2.2: Historical background of Olympic education in the Netherlands and Germany

2.3: Concepts of Olympic education

2.4: Approaches to Olympic education in sports clubs

### Module 2.1: Olympic education: Pro and contra

The starting-point of our second module was the question: What importance do the Olympic games have for Olympic education?

When, in 1992, the city of Berlin bid to host the Olympic Games 2000, public opinion was split about the sense and non-sense of the Olympic Games. And there are still a lot of people who have in mind the Coca-Cola Games in Atlanta 1996 and think of doping, commerce, corruption and media when talking about Olympic Games (cf. Timmers & de Knop, 2000; Willimczik, 2002). When we consider these aspects it is understandable that quite a few teachers, coaches, head teachers and education politicians are sceptical about the term “Olympic” and do not want to have anything like Olympic education in their schools and sports clubs. But, as is shown in Module 1, the term “Olympic education” neither refers to training for participation in Olympic games nor to knowledge about the Olympics. The fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter are basically aimed at personal, and especially social and moral values, which are strived for within the framework of an Olympic education. Obviously, there is a certain tension between the Olympic idea (the fundamental principles) and the reality of the Olympic Games. This ambivalence is seen by Dutch people (cf. Timmers & de Knop, 2000) as well as by German teachers of physical education (cf. Willimczik, 2002). The Dutch study that was implemented on behalf of the NOC\*NSF, surveyed 3,500 people of ages 15-65. The questions they were asked included giving their opinion of the five most important reasons why athletes take part in the Olympic games.

“Money” and “Improvement of the athlete’s image” were found in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place. “Giving a good example” and “a sound mind in a healthy body” were estimated respectively as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> motivation (cf. Timmers & de Knop, 2000). A similar ambivalence between the fundamental principles and the reality of the games is seen by German teachers of physical education. Their answers to the question about the aims of Olympic education were “value education”, “fair play”, “communication between peoples”, “respect” and “competition”. Apart from these positive answers, about 60% of these teachers referred to the gigantism of the Olympic Games and their distance from the Olympic ideals (cf. Willimczik, 2000).

The criticism of the Olympic Games and their gigantism is one aspect which is often named in relation to view to the term “Olympic”; the distance of the reality of the games from the positive Olympic ideals is another. These ideals have their own pedagogical quality which is fundamentally independent of this contradiction. Thinking of Pierre de Coubertin and his idea of Olympism we can say: The pedagogical aims were first, the games came later. To demonstrate this ambivalence and to point out the pedagogical implication of the Olympic movement after Coubertin, we chose a text written by Naul (2002) for this project, which shows the different positions.

The second part of module 2 refers to the historical background of Olympic education in Germany and the Netherlands.

### Module 2.2: Historical background of Olympic education in the Netherlands and Germany

In Germany, the first signs of Olympic education in schools can be found in the 1980s. The National Olympic Committee for Germany (NOK) started to publish booklets about Olympic education in schools in 1988 (see the last brochures 1997, 2000, 2001). Recently, Michael Krüger (2003) pointed out that there are no references in literature to Olympic education in German sport pedagogy and the sport didactics in the 1970s and 1980s. Discussions about the

inclusion and the use of Olympic education in physical education in schools, began in the 1990s. It was Ommo Grupe who first thought about a revival of the pedagogical potential of sports and thus introduced the idea of Olympic education (see below).

In module 2.3 different approaches are offered for Olympic education in Germany.

### 2.3: Concepts of Olympic education

Generally, the constitutional foundation of Olympic education is the Olympic Charter. The Charter is the world-wide central base for the pedagogic approach to Olympism. But this approach is more dominant in English-speaking regions of the world (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, USA) (Naul, 2004a) and are therefore not discussed in this paper.

A second important foundation is often taken into account when tasks and targets for Olympic education are considered: the writings of Pierre de Coubertin and his *Pedagogie sportive* (1928). This foundation is very popular in Germany. It was laid down by philosophers, pedagogues and sociologists like Lenk (1964) and Müller (1975) who interpreted the classical writings of Pierre de Coubertin. Carl Diem also promoted Olympic education by analysing and interpreting the role of the games and sport for moral values and social virtues as a means of a contribution to a balanced body and soul (cf. Diem, 1967).

Since the early 1990s, Ommo Grupe has become the most important sports pedagogue who promotes Olympic pedagogy. According to Grupe (1997, 2000, 2001) there are basically five principles of Olympic pedagogy:

1. “the principle of unity of body and soul, aimed at harmonious learning and holistic education;
2. the aim of individual self-fulfilment: “working for sporting ability” and “path to a better self”;

3. the ideal of amateurism as “training of virtue by means of worldly asceticism” with the aim of becoming immune to greed and materialism;
4. the ethical rules and principles of honesty and fairness; and
5. the task of promoting mutual respect between people and nations, with the peacemaking idea of the principles of sporting performance and competition” (cf. Naul, 2004a, p. 25).

Norbert Müller (1998) added a sixth principle:

6. “The promotion of emancipatory developments in and through sport (...) [which include] the acceptance of all different forms of physical activities and competitive sport” (p. 393).

In Germany there are four major approaches to teaching Olympic education.

- (1) The most popular approach is a “knowledge-oriented approach” conveying information about ancient and modern Olympic Games.
- (2) The second approach is practically oriented. It is called the “experimental approach” where school Olympic festivals and sports days are in the foreground.
- (3) The third approach is named the “physical striving approach”. Here the individual development through physical competition with others is seen as the most important. This approach is linked to Geßmann (2002) in whose opinion “individual sporting perfection is the basis for the individual through concentrated and systematic exercise and training” (p. 16).
- (4) The fourth approach comes from Canada and is almost unknown in Germany. In this “lifeworld-oriented approach” Olympic education is integrated with learning activities in all aspects of school curricula, including physical education (for more details see Binder, 2000).

Each approach for teaching Olympic education is linked with special Olympic principles and ideals. The lifeworld-oriented approach probably seems to be the most appropriate one for

current demands in physical education classes (Naul, 2004a). However, with a view of modern Olympic Games and modern society an integrated concept is needed which combines the educational tasks with modern manifestations in society (Naul, 2003).

Naul (2002, 2003, 2004a) developed an integrated concept. This concept is also based on the two foundations mentioned above (“Fundamental Principles” of the Olympic Charter and the "historical-pedagogical foundation" as a revival of the idea of Pierre de Coubertin), but also includes a third foundation: current lifestyles and social environment.

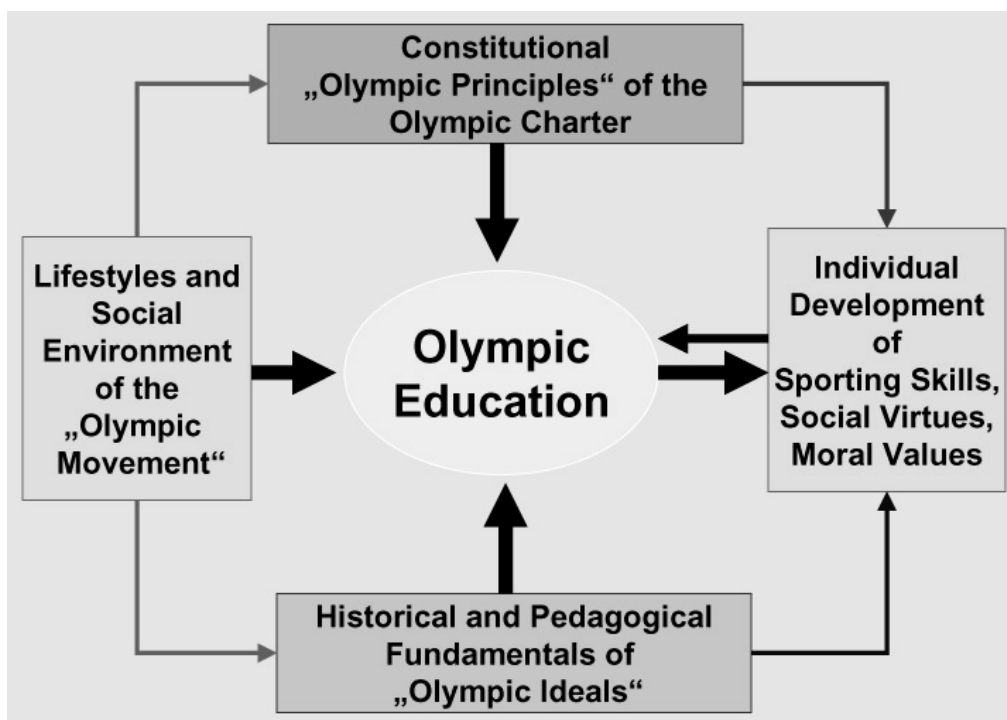


Figure .3: Integrated concept of Olympic education (Naul, 2002)

These three foundations build up the frame defining aims and targets of Olympic education. “The integrated concept of Olympic Education picks up the special educational tasks of the single teaching approaches. The main purpose of the integrated concept is: individual development of sports skills, social virtues and moral values = ‘Olympic living’ (Naul, 2004a, p. 28f.).

According to Naul (2004a) the integrated concept of Olympic education “should encourage individual physical performance by means of achieving, improving and competing and should develop positive value judgements from this” (p. 29). In sport activities young people should experience ethical principles and should get knowledge about moral aspects for an ethical and moral behaviour in sport.

For our project we decided to start with extracts from texts by Pierre de Coubertin. After the historical introduction by Grupe (1997), Naul (2004b) and Geßmann (2002), we will give an overview of the foundations and concepts of Olympic education. For additional reading there will be an appendix with texts by Binder (2004) and Müller (2004).

#### M 2.4 Approaches to Olympic education for Sports clubs

In Germany and also in the Netherlands there is no real concept of Olympic education in sports clubs yet. The only approach is done by Grabs (2004), but this will be changed during the course of the project and is ignored here. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, there are quite a number of good examples for practice (e.g. Fair Play and Respect in Soccer). They are practice-oriented examples of how to work in sports clubs and at school.

#### **Conclusion**

The cross-border project for Olympic education in the Netherlands and in Germany has been finished with the publication of a book and all modules are available in German on our website. The Dutch language version is not available at present but is being discussed. All the material is completed, but after more teaching experience on both sides of the border the texts may need some revision. At the time of writing we can say that the intention of Olympic education, published booklets and brochures including work sheets, which already exist in the Netherlands for Olympic education, are much more practice-oriented and principally suitable for sports club activities, whereas those from Germany convey a more conceptual and

theoretical base for teaching Olympic values and items in lessons at school and in teaching PE. Together, these two aspects give a useful foundation for successful training for Olympic education which links both children's physical activity levels and their experiences of values in education and sport, at school and within sports clubs.

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