

The relationship between theory and practice in physical education teacher courses. A comparative approach between INJEPS Porto-Novo (Benin) and IUFM Caen (France) students

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Abstract

Background. The problem of the link between theoretical and practical professional knowledge is a crucial issue in the formation of physical and sports education teachers (EPS), whose history reveals the growing emphasis on theoretical knowledge developed in STAPS.

Aims. There is however the problem of the meaning students’ accord to this theoretical knowledge and the use they make of it in their training.

Methods. This issue is discussed here by comparing the situation of the IUFM in Caen (France) and of the INJEPS in Porto-Novo (Benin) students.

Results. The comparative study shows in two contexts the indiscriminate manner that students perceive the relationship between physical, sports and arts activities (APSA), social practices references in EPS and their future professional practices. However, in the absence of field experience the IUFM students perceive the usefulness of theoretical knowledge to be less in professional practice unlike the INJEPS’s students, benefiting from much internship, who rely on their field experience to identify the link between theory and practical practices.

Conclusion. The training dispensed in the INJEPS, suit better the criteria of a vocational training than these courses dispensed at the IUFM, at the very moment when the first one is the emanation of the “French model” of the 1970s. We can then wonder, on one hand, about the effects of “the universitarization” of French teachers training in physical education and in consideration of the stakes in professionalization while on the other hand, on the relevance of the process of harmonization which is known at present by the offer of training in INJEPS not only with that of the STAPS in France, but also (as it is the case of most of the university structures of the countries of Africa) with the Licence-Master-Doctoral reform.

Keywords: Theoretical Knowledge, Professional Practice, Physical education and sports.