

Review: Józef Węglarz, [*Physical Education in Stories. Between Theory and Practice*], Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls”, Kraków 2021

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Book review

The reviewed book is included in the reading list showing the problems of school physical education and looking for their effective solution.

The preparation of such a study consists, as Maciej Demel (1973, p. 7) wrote, ‘in critically attacking the present, overcoming outdated and harmful traditions, undermining authorities, (...) constant anxiety and searching, simultaneous penetration of the current state, its origins and prospects.’

The author has prepared the book in a slightly different formula. He presented his anxiety about the future of physical education in stories, which gives the work originality. Józef Węglarz can be counted among the few authors who subjectively, with a bit of sarcasm and humor, reveal the weaknesses of physical education. At the same time, using many years of experience, the author suggests how to solve a given problem.

What is surprising is the structure of the book, which ‘does not force the reader to follow the content in a fixed order because each story is a separate thought unit. The issues raised can therefore be treated in any way, depending on the needs and interests, or simple curiosity’ (p. 12).

The stories have been prepared on the basis of own (author’s) thoughts, experiences, observations, feelings, reflections, as well as retrospectives. According to the author, ‘their value would be small if the achievements of other people were constantly used. Therefore, the ideas of other authors, even those with the highest ennoblement, were used in a balanced way, and only when a problem was raised or its justification was sought’ (p. 12).

The book, apart from the introduction and conclusion, consists of two main parts, which contain from a few to a dozen or so stories on various



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topics. Noteworthy are the provocative and intriguing titles of the stories. This proves the author's very good writing skills.

In both parts, the stories are preceded by a theoretical message referring to the content of the stories.

The first part consists of eight stories that somehow evoke the basic assumptions of the theory of physical education and the views of theoreticians on various issues of physical education. The author adopted the right concept, because theory is an integral part of practical physical education and gives 'fundamental knowledge about the mission, essence, goals, procedures, conditions of physical education for educated subjects, and also establishes teaching duties in a constantly changing reality' (p. 51).

The second part includes fifteen stories showing imperfections in the practice of school physical education. The author draws attention to the most important problems related primarily to physical education lessons and the work of teachers, among whom 'so far there are too few seekers and innovators' (p. 54).

The content of the stories proposed by the author is

a manifestation of his concern for the future of physical education, because the lesson is both the foundation of the child's comprehensive development and prepares him for lifelong participation in physical culture. In turn, the teacher as its creator is responsible for the content of the lesson. It should be emphasized that the preparation of an original lesson requires not only creativity from the teacher, but also the right attitude, which should be a role model for students.

The end of the book is a kind of recapitulation of the author's thoughts on the past, present and future of school physical education. The author claims that 'we should expect a different, new, rational view in the sciences of physical education, and when it appears – try to confide in it, because science holds great hope for positive changes for the present and for the future' (p. 108).

Physical Education in Stories. Between Theory and Practice, I recommend especially to physical education teachers and students preparing to practice this profession, as a very interesting read that can be a source of thoughts and reflections about the state of physical education.