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Introducing the Concept of the Experience-Based Capital of Physical Exercise (ECPE)

By Ari Kunnari, Kaarina Määttä & Satu Uusiautti
University of Lapland

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Keywords : *capital, cultural capital, experience-based capital of physical exercise, experiences, physical education.*

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Introducing the Concept of the Experience-Based Capital of Physical Exercise (ECPE)

Ari Kunnari [α], Kaarina Määttä [σ] & Satu Uusiautti [ρ]

Abstract - In his theory about capital types, Bourdieu divided capital into cultural capital, economic capital, and social capital. One of the forms of cultural capital is the embodied state that manifests itself as internalized cultural skills, abilities and aptitudes, and is strongly connected to an individual person's habitus. The purpose of this article is to study experiences of physical exercise. Can these experiences be regarded as capital? The article aims at introducing a theoretical framework for experiences of physical exercise that we call the experience-based capital of physical exercise (ECPE). This capital type is considered a part of cultural capital. The idea is that if physical exercise is considered capital, the world of the experiences of physical exercise can be analyzed in a varied manner. The concept of ECPE gives an opportunity to do and provide physical exercise as diversely as possible by having exercise experiences as the starting point. Therefore, the concept can be used for health-promotion purposes.

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I. Introduction

Physical education is concentrated on studying the exercising body and ignored the experiential world, the human being as a holistic bodily, experiencing, and living exerciser (Talbott, 1997). In the Finnish school system, the aim of physical education is to provide such knowledge, skills, and experiences (The National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, 2004) based on which one may adopt a sporty life-style. But what are these experiences and how are they defined? What do the versatile experiences of physical exercise consist of?

In this article we introduce a theoretical model that was built based on the findings from a phenomenological study of the meanings of physical exercise and that introduces the concept of the experience-based capital of physical experience (ECPE) (see Kunnari, 2011). The research method was based on Giorgi's (1994, 1997 and Perttula's (1995, 2000) ways of implementing phenomenological research. The purpose of the original study was to find out what kinds of experiences PE-teachers gain from their work. The original study on which this article grounds on was carried out was a two-phase, qualitative studied conducted among 15 PE-teacher students at the Faculty of Education, University of Lapland, Finland (see Kunnari, 2011). First, they were asked to write essays about their experiences on physical exercise. In the second phase, the same participants were interviewed. The interview method was a phenomeno-logical interview (see Fontana and Frey, 2005; Lehtomaa, 2008) and the purpose was to get deeper information about their experiences. As a conclusion, a theoretical framework that illustrates the experiential world of physical exercise as one form of cultural capital was created.

In this article, the concept of the experience-based capital of physical exercise (ECPE) will be introduced and analyzed. Furthermore, its connection with physical exercise and sport, and previous studies in the field are discussed. Bourdieu's cultural types will be reviewed which forms the basis of the concept of ECPE. Finally, the usability and offering of the concept not only for analyzing but also providing experiences of physical exercise in a more versatile manner will be evaluated.

a) Research on Physical Exercise

The body of studies of physical exercise is abundant: physical exercise and learning is studied for example from the perspectives of motor learning and control, and learning of exercising skills (Magill, 2007; Schmidt and Lee, 2005) but by developing various definitions of motor learning as well (Adams, 1971; Fitts and Posner, 1967; Gentile, 1972; Jaakkola, 2010; Schmidt, 1975; Vereijken, Whiting and Beek, 1992). Furthermore, there are studies about the connection between physical education and health (Gallahue and Ozmun, 2006; Trost, 2006). Along research on physical education, some studies are focused on pupils' experiences on physical education (Aggestedt and Tebelius, 1977; Carlson, 1995; Growes and Laws, 2000; Huisman, 2004) or on providing information that would support PE teaching (Gallahue and Donelly, 2003).

Teachers' activity greatly affects experiences of physical education (Allison, Pissanos and Sakola, 1990). Therefore, the motivational atmosphere as a part of physical exercise and physical education has gained a foothold in research (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Liukkonen, Jaakkola and Soini, 2007; Soini, 2006). Although research on pupils' experiences-and partly on teachers' experiences as well-is abundant, the entity of

Author α ρ : Faculty of Education, University of Lapland.
E-mails : Ari.Kunnari@ulapland.fi, satu@uusiautti.fi
Author σ : Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Lapland.
E-mail : Kaarina.Maatta@ulapland.fi

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experiences related to physical exercise has not been sketched or defined from the point of view of learning and subject matter. The purpose of this study is to contribute to this discussion by providing a new point of view by drawing parallels between physical exercise and the concept of capital.

b) The Concept of Capital

Initially, capital originates in classic economic science but is adopted in human sciences as well. According to O'Rand (2006), the concept of capital covers the whole course of life. Karisto and Konttinen (2004) use the concept of energy capital that includes health, ability to function, vitality, and self-image. Hyry-Honka (2008) defines the concept of health capital as a part of the entity of resources and the sum of outer and inner health (see also Kunnari, 2011). Hyry - Honka regards health capital as a part of other capital types (Bourdieu, O'Rand) leaning on O'Rand's view according to which all capital types are either directly or indirectly connected to health.

Bourdieu (1996) divided capital into three types: cultural capital, economic capital, and social capital. The total amount and composition of cultural, economic, and social capital are factors that an individual can use as his or her resources (Bourdieu, 1990).

a. Economic capital consists of an individual's financial capital, possessions and ownership (money, things, income, and wealth). It is the most concrete one of the capital types.
b. Cultural capital refers to the ownership of cultural products, a certain way of life and making choices as well as the ability to make use of and produce culture. An individual's education and capital are thus connected to cultural capital.
c. Social capital is the entity of those actual and potential resources that are connected to social relationships and the ability to mobilize people. Social capital does not have the same kind of incarnated or concretized existence than economic or cultural capital. Social capital is immaterial capital and is connected to mutual recognition and appreciation.

The concept of habitus is closely related to capitals. Bourdieu (1977) defines habitus as an internalized structure that is common to all members of the same class; the schemas of observation, concepts, and actions that form the framework for common understanding and observation. De France (1995) sees habitus as a universal description of how an individual participates and acts within the social world. All in all, habitus refers to the way of human existence and is an individual's experience-based way of action and take his or her environment. Social status has an influence on habitus, too.

Of Bourdieu's capital types, especially cultural capital is an interesting object to study. Bourdieu (1978) considers sport as a part of cultural capital and also states that it functions as a factor that separates social classes from each other. Shilling (1991), on the other hand, uses the concept of physical capital and argues that it cannot be seen just a part of cultural capital. Shilling (2004) connects the concept with situated action to *"illustrate how the relationship between social field and physical capital can result in not only a continuation of habitual action,---but in action informed by crisis and revelation--that can aid our understanding of the education of bodies"(p. 473).*

In Bourdieuan thinking, capital seems to represent, first and foremost, a quality or a characteristic. Thus, various capital types represent a human being's different characteristics. These capital types are partly inherited in the form of rearing or heritage but partly they are acquired from outside the family, too (see Roos, 1987). According to Bourdieu (1984), there are three states of cultural capital: *the embodied state, such as long-lasting characteristics of the mind and body as a part of habitus; the objectified state, such as cultural goods; and the institutionalized state which Bourdieu calls a form of objectification.*

In order to understand the concept of ECPE, it is crucial to perceive cultural capital especially from an individual's point of view: what belongs to an individual's cultural capital and how the capital is constructed. Being different from the economic and social capital, cultural capital consists of socially distinguishing tastes, knowledge, skills, and acts that are objectified to cultural products and embody as implicit practical knowledge, skills, and natures. These, on the other hand, are expressed as emotions, thinking, and action that Bourdieu calls habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Cultural capital is commonly described via education and school success. Dumais (2002) points out, however, that there is no consensus on the meaning of cultural capital. Although Bourdieu emphasizes how cultural capital is transmitted from parents to children, the purpose here is not to discuss cultural capital from to point of view of the separation between social classes (e.g. Stempel, 2005). Instead, the interest is focused on how and on what grounds ECPE could form a part of cultural capital and what ECPE consists of. Along the life-span, people collect and get knowledge, skills, tastes, and preferences in every areas of life-at home, at school and further education, in leisure activities and hobbies. Therefore, cultural capital cannot only be regarded as one's level of education.

Recent studies (e.g. Mehus, 2005; Stempel, 2005; Thrane, 2001; Wilson, 2002) have determinedly aimed at testing Bourdieu's opinion on sport functioning as cultural capital. Generally, research results support the finding. Bourdieu (1978) himself points out that the likelihood to have certain sport as a hobby depends a social class and the possibility of achieving the aesthetic and austere dispositions related to the sport as they are

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regarded as a part of that particular sport. This brings us back at the concept of habitus. According to Bourdieu (1984), differences in life-styles and participation in sports partly depend on various habituses. On the other hand, they are manifestations of various cultural and social capitals and vice versa. Light (2001) considers habitus a personal product of one's life history and social experiences. Therefore, ECPE as the manifest-tation of experiences of physical exercise could partly construct cultural capital.

Bourdieu (1978) also employs the concept of physical capital to refer a form of cultural capital that is manifested as a physical skill, power, ways of exercising, etc. Then, physical capital is an extremely bodily phenomenon and capital that can be turned into, for example, economic capital (e.g. sport may become an occupation). According to Välipakka (2005), physical capital is cultural capital and its production occurs in relation to those habits that are invested in body. By dissecting physical exercise as everyday action, it is possible consider physical capital merely as a life-long process.

Bourdieu's classification of capitals provides an explicit framework for constructing the content of ECPE whereas in O' Rand's categorization of capitals, ECPE would form a part of several capital types. Bourdieu offers an opportunity to consider ECPE as its own entity but simultaneously constructing an individual's cultural capital. The concept of ECPE means capital that is acquired through exercising experiences and that we understand as a form of the embodied state of cultural capital. It appears as ways of action and aptitudes. Therefore, ECPE is not corresponding to economic capital, nor does it produce social capital as such. Instead, habitus as one of Bourdieu's key concepts and as a human being's way of expressing cultural capital is an important concept in ECPE: Could ECPE be expressed through habitus as well?

II. The Experience-Based Capital of Physical Exercise (ECPE)

a) *The Theory*

Based on above-mentioned premises in Bourdieu's classification of capitals, experiences of physical exercise can be considered stakes that actors on the field try to gather. The geography of ECPE as a part of Bourdieu's capital types is illustrated in Figure 1. Social and capital partly determine what kinds of experiences one can possibly get (the school, distractions, parents' aptitude for sports, etc.). As the experiences of physical exercises accumulate, one develops one's own ECPE that possibly directs one's sportive hobbies or attitude toward physical exercise.

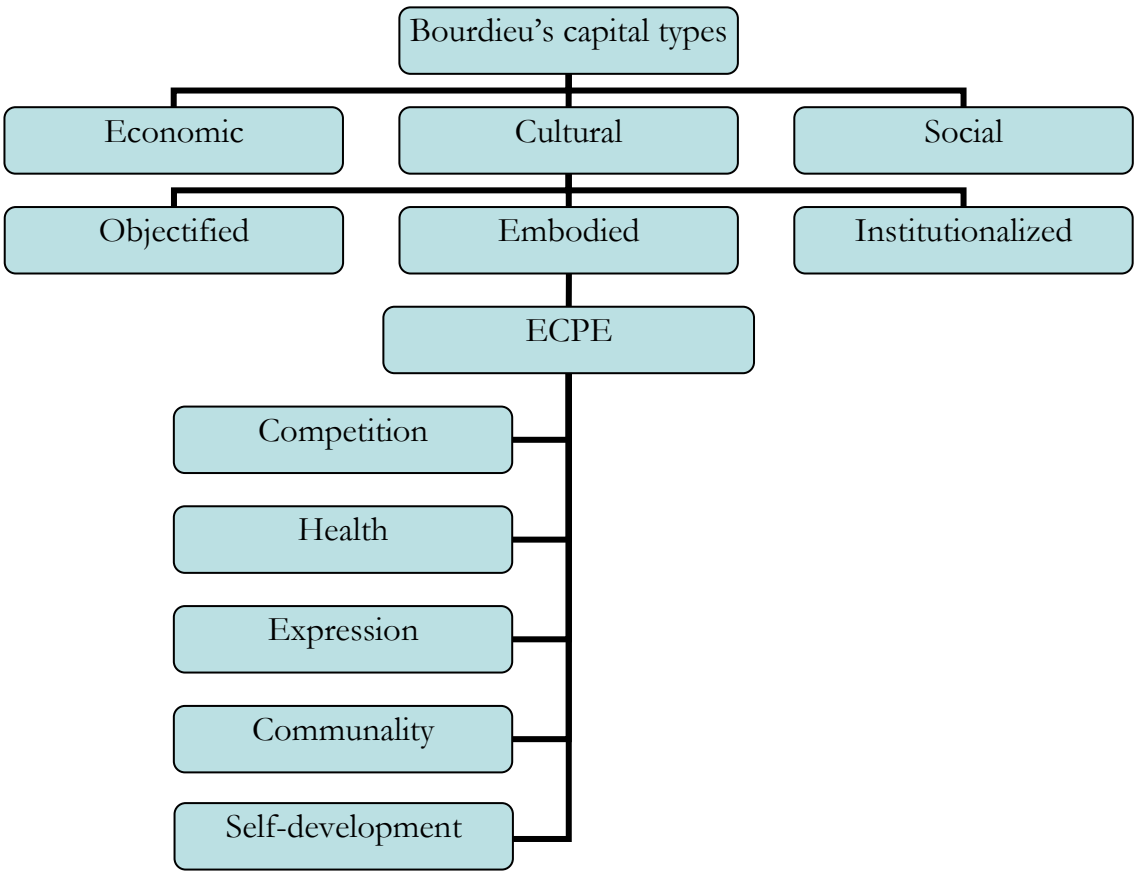


Figure 1 : ECPE as a part of cultural capital in Bourdieu's classification of capitals

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However, the nature of experiences that lay the foundation of the capital is multidimensional and therefore, the content of ECPE can differ from a person to another and thus, the theoretical starting point is that one or some of the fields of ECPE become dominant. Next, we will briefly introduce these fields of ECPE (see also Figure 1) and then discuss and compare it with other relevant categorizations.

The fields of ECPE are competition, health, expression, communality, and self-development.

1. Competition as a field of ECPE has its meaning through victory or loss. The experience may be either a victory or loss over some other or oneself and relate to the feeling of superiority or inferiority. The capital of competition may partly consist of experiences that define the status or value within a community or circle of acquaintances.
2. People do not do physical exercise just to win but also to keep up health. Health can be defined in two different ways: preventing illnesses and mobility which also includes physical shape. When experiences on physical exercise are mostly health-related experiences, the question is about the field of health in ECPE. The experience may also represent the field of health when it brings pleasure and delight (or resentment).
3. Physical exercise may also be experienced so that the body is primarily considered as the channel of expression. The experience may originate in the ways one is able to express various things through one's body or body movement. Body may be used for expressing or bringing the spectator various moods or ethical or aesthetic experiences. The experience results from the success of expressing oneself to others or how others take the expression. Recognizing and accepting one's own body movements may bring about moods that form the field of expression in ECPE.
4. The field of communality increases ECPE when the meaning of physical exercise originates in living, experiencing, and doing together. Belonging to a group, the importance of group activity and shared playing are emphasized. Furthermore, spurring others or received support and spur from others belong to this category.
5. The pure experience of physical exercise that gets its meaning as understanding and realizations increases the capital that provides people with the skills and knowledge to mental self-development. Instead of just exploring the limits of physical performance (e.g. Klemola 1995; Kunnari, 2006; 2011), this field of ECPE refers to actual capability to do; so-called soul-searching. For one cannot do conscious soul-searching without having developed proper tools for it. Therefore, this category is called the field of self-development.

The above-mentioned categorization of ECPE grounds on Klemola's (1995) physical exercise projects. Klemola divided these projects into four based on the primary purpose of physical exercise. They are physical exercise as the project of victory, health, expression, and self. Physical exercise projects do not represent strictly just one of the above-mentioned project types. What project is in question depends on its meaning for the one who does physical exercise. Klemola studied physical exercise projects so that each project appears the best in the form of some particular sport: for example, the project of victory in competitive sports, the project of health in keep-fit, the project of expression in dancing, and the project of self in budo sport.

Projects are not, however, sufficient reasoning for ECPE. A project as a word describes merely a process, doing, or experiences that an individual gathers form ECPE. The idea of ECPE is grounded on the phenomenological chance of pure experience (e.g. Husserl, 1995) and the interpretative nature of ECPE. Pure experience refers to an experience that lacks any natural attitude. In other words, the experience or the quality of the experience has not been pre-determined but the experience is "pure" in this sense. Although no one cannot know whether the experience can appear in the above-mentioned manner in practice; consequently, it merely forms a philosophical basis when considered from the phenomenological perspective. The way individuals experience physical exercise can vary regardless of the initial purpose of the physical exercise. Therefore, it is possible to categorize experiences based on the way they appear to individuals for experience may represent any field of the capital depending on what sport one does or what was the purpose of doing physical exercise. The principled difference is that in Klemola's project thinking physical exercise is understood through the project and the project, thus, functions as the pre-understanding about the meanings of physical exercise. According to Husserl's thinking, a project should, in that case, be the prevailing horizon which would be difficult to alter because experience gained from physical exercise would always be in accordance with the horizon.

Bourdieu states that various forms of capital are people's characteristics. Given this idea, various fields of ECPE may be regarded as characteristics in which one may direct his or her sportive activities. Experiences gained from physical exercise may, however, belong to any field of ECPE regardless of the sport. Therefore, ECPE is a horizon which is interpreted based on the experiences gained from physical exercise. ECPE may direct the sport hobby or the form of exercising but it does not direct the experience had on physical exercise. Thus, ECPE (the horizon) is easier to change its form (to be interpreted differently). Someone who does some ball games at the competition level makes a good example. When doing physical exercise, he or she is

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either at a competition or training. Thus, physical exercise would have its meaning based on the fact whether he or she is able to develop or whether the game is won or lost. According to the idea of ECPE, one may have other kinds of experiences as well. It might be that the topmost experience in the game or training may be related to how the performances look like. On the other hand, one may find physical exercise an aid for a headache after reading for an exam. Then, the topmost experience would represent the health among the fields of ECPE. ECPE is not connected to some sport but it is the capital of everyone's personal experience on physical exercise.

b) Evaluating the Concept of the Experience-Based Capital of Physical Exercise

It is worth critically dissecting the concept of ECPE. ECPE is a metaphoric concept similar to social capital. Therefore, it is difficult to draw conclusions with it. It can be partly difficult to understand how the concepts of capital and the presumption of "non-existence of social classes" can be molded within the point of view of personal experiences. Yet, cultural capital is a capital of its own in relation to other capitals. One essential aspect in cultural capital is power. Could ECPE be, however, property? Traditionally, capital is the means of exchange whereas someone's property does not have to be valuable to others. According to Hjerppe's (1997) criteria, capital is, however, a reserve that can be used when necessary. Capital, when considered in this way, can decrease (be spent), and be gathered and invested in. ECPE does not meet these criteria fully when it comes to the conditions of being used when necessary or decreasing. Instead, ECPE is merely unconscious as it directs action and can possibly alter along new experiences.

Bourdieu's classification explicitly brings out the differences between social classes. It is not directly included in the concept of ECPE but merely indirectly via the concept of habitus. According to this theory, one or some fields of ECPE can become dominant. Then, ECPE is partly manifested through an individual's habitus. Bourdieu's starting point is that members of the same social class have similar habitus. This notion would mean that populations, professions, or other communities could also be analyzed within the framework of ECPE. For example, it is worth asking whether PE teacher training produces some sort of common capital of physical experience. Or do people with similar ECPE tend to become PE teachers and, if this is the case, do they share some kind of a group habitus typical of PE teachers?

It is relevant to assess the concept of ECPE in the light of research on the meanings of physical exercise. Zacheus (2009) studied the importance of different types of physical exercise perceived by Finnish adolescents (under 20-year-olds). As a result of his factor analysis, 11 entities were formed: competition, health/well-being, physicality, sociality, relaxation, fashion, masculinity, mental growth, lonely toil, parents' expectations, and economic affordability. It is interesting to compare Zacheus's categorization with the fields of ECPE. Competition is found in both of them. Health/well-being and physicality represent the field of health. The social factor resembles the field of communality. Masculinity and fashion appear similar to the field of expression. Relaxation and mental growth correspond to the idea of self-development. Although the rest three categories do not fit in the fields of ECPE, the factors are, as a rule, in line with the concept.

Koski and Tähtinen (2005) studied the meanings based on which the youth build their relationship with physical exercise. The researchers found seven dimensions: competition and target-orientation, health and physical shape, joy and play, sociality, soul-searching, growth and development, and sport-specific meanings. Lehmuskallio (2008) described the most important cultural meanings in school-age children's physical exercise habits. The ranking order was the following: (1) comfort and good mood, (2) family-centeredness and physicality, (3) extreme, (4) appetite for success, (5) and superficiality.

In the above-mentioned studies including the field of ECPE, the entities of meanings, that are the categories, are somewhat similar although they have different names and partly different contents. The similarities in these categorizations become visible when they are dissected in the form of a table (see Table 1).

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Renson I	Renson II	Eichberg	Klemola	Honkonen & Suoranta	The fields of ECPE
A Instrumental	A A British sport	A Performance	A The project of victory	A Intensive training	A Competition
physical culture, physical performance sport	*success, performance, competition*				*in relation to others and oneself, the position*
	B Swedish gymnastics	B A health tool	B The project of health	B Health speech	*B* Health
	health				*feelings, physical shape, health, diversity*
C Autotelic	C Traditional frolic			C Entertainment	
Plays, games	*Joy, being together*				
D Expressive	D A performance sport	D Bodily experience	D The project of expression		D Expression
performance dancing		*expression, experientality*			*the way it appears, is expressed*
	E German turner			E Socialization	E Communality
	education, group activity				*the group, games, shared activity, spur*
			F The project of self		F Self-development
					developing spirituality and knowledge

Table 2 : Five categorizations of the meanings of physical exercise by retelling Koski & Tähtinen (2005) and in relation to the fields of ECPE (Eichberg, 1987; Honkonen & Suoranta, 1999; Klemola, 1995; Renson, 1991; Taks, Renson, & Vanreusel, 1999)

ECPE differs in two significantly different ways from other five categorizations represented in Table 1 which presents a summary of the meanings of the offering and tradition of physical exercise. As can be seen in the table, there are plenty of similarities between the categorizations. However, the reasoning of ECPE grounds on the assumption that experience is a pure experience and intuition without the pre-determined influence of the social world of physical exercise. The starting point is that a human being could experience physical exercise without Husserl's reference to the natural attitude. The meaning of physical exercise can represent any field of ECPE and thus construct the horizon of ECPE. ECPE can itself direct one's attitude to various sports and the way one does physical exercise. A human being's social and economic capital affect what kinds of situations and sportive hobbies one can participate in. They do not, however, affect the meaning physical exercise has within the framework of ECPE.

Another significant difference originates in the research approach and research setting. Three of the studies (Koski and Tähtinen's, Zacheus's, and Lehmuskallio's study) introduced in this article were based on large data and reported with quantitative measures. In other studies, entities were formed based on predetermined sum variables. The fields of ECPE were found out by familiarizing with the meanings elicited through the phenomenological method. Thus, the meanings are brought out as the participants describe them.

Based on the previous, the idea of ECPE and its fields seem justified and even comprehensive. It is noteworthy that the fields of ECPE were created before familiarizing with the studies presented in Table 1 and other analyses.

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III. Discussion

An important purpose of this article was to introduce a theoretical model for outlining the experience of physical exercise in a versatile manner. The theory creates a way of thinking and an apparatus for analyzing the world according to a specific theoretical framework. Yet, the framework is constructed based on meanings and entities of meanings driven from the authentic data.

A diversified conceptualization of physical exercise provides an opportunity to analyze ECPE from the perspective of the supply of physical exercise. If experiences of physical exercise are considered stakes in the field along with Bourdieu's idea, the fields of the capital of physical education make a tool for providing versatile experiences through which one can acquire as wide ECPE as possible.

Although the idea of ECPE and the related concept of habitus can be a way of studying the reserve of experiences among various groups of population, age cohorts, or professions, we want to highlight how the idea of ECPE could be used in physical education. When ECPE is considered an interpretative horizon, the basis of physical education could be the fields of ECPE. The concept of the horizon helps and makes it easier to perceive ECPE as changing which makes it a functional starting point and even a practical tool for the planning of teaching and how the educational event and the relationship with the student are constructed. As ECPE may alter, the starting point for educational planning may be input/output –thinking where the goal of action is to provide experiences in a certain, predetermined field of ECPE. The practical action itself may still take place within sports education but the goals of action may be different.

Education that grounds on the idea of ECPE can be planned in three different ways. First, the starting point can be how various sports increase ECPE. Second, the planning can be focused on how to include within one sport such action and situations that enable the accumulation of all-round ECPE. Third-and this might support the best the accumulation of ECPE as pure experience-the starting point could be to think how teaching could cross the limits of sports. According to Koski and Tähtinen (2005), various forms of physical exercise, such as different sports, are filled with specific expectations based on which people define their relationship to sports. Various forms of physical exercise can be experienced in a more diversified manner if they are approached without sport-specific contents.

In this article, the philosophical starting point to ECPE lies in the possibility of pure experience. The focus is, thus, how to provide individual people with as a versatile world of experiences of physical exercise as possible. The five fields of ECPE and the entities of meanings involved are the answer. Sketches on the accumulation of PE-teachers' ECPE that are drawn so far were based on interviews. Preliminary research results appeared interesting. It seemed that the participants perceived those fields of ECPE significant that also were the most dominant in them. Furthermore, it seemed to affect the ways the PE-teachers carried out PE education and how they confronted and perceived the exercising student. Given this important notion, more studies in order to develop a suitable and practical indicator to measure ECPE is needed as it could be useful to analyzing and developing PE education.

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