



Practice-oriented training for students in the fitness industry

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Abstract

Objective of the study was to validate the model of practice-oriented training for students in the context of group fitness instructor training courses, and to empirically demonstrate its efficacy in the field of pedagogy.

Methods and structure of the study. To accomplish the objective, we employed the following techniques: a review of scholarly and methodological publications, software, simulation, surveys, ranking, and expert evaluation. The pedagogical investigation was conducted at the Institute of Physical Culture and Sports (IPC&S) of the Herzen State Pedagogical University. It involved 485 students in their fourth year of undergraduate and graduate studies, as well as participants in advanced training courses in fitness.

Results and conclusions. The article outlines the rationale for the implementation of practice-oriented training for students enrolled in instructor training programs for group fitness classes in higher education institutions. This approach is crucial for developing the theoretical, methodological, and practical skills of undergraduate and graduate students, as well as for conducting fitness classes in a student fitness club as part of extracurricular activities, with the support of student self-governance.

Based on the feedback from students, the objectives and goals of the training programs were established, the most popular fitness programs were identified, and their content was adjusted. The hierarchy of factors that determine the necessity for developing practice-oriented training for students in instructor training programs for group fitness classes was determined.

Fitness programs were developed and approved for students to choose from. The fourth-year students and postgraduate students were educated through the advanced training course «Instructor of group fitness programs» (72 hours).

Keywords: *training courses, model, fitness programs, students, efficiency.*

Introduction. The Strategy for the Development of Physical Culture and Sports in the Russian Federation until 2030 sets a target for increasing the number of children and youth systematically involved in physical culture and sports to 90% by 2030, which predetermines the growth of the personnel in the field of physical culture and sports. Thus, the number of full-time employees should reach 649 thousand. In this regard, the need for professionally competent specialists who are proficient in innovative technologies, competitive, ready for continuous self-education, creativity, striving to improve their qualifications in various areas of professional activity, is becoming especially urgent.

This creates a challenge for the higher education system, the answer to which can be the development of variable models of professional training and retrain-

ing of specialists in physical culture, sports and fitness. In accordance with this, it is necessary to expand the range of additional education programs and advanced training courses.

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versity. It involved 485 students in their fourth year of undergraduate and graduate studies, as well as participants in advanced training courses in fitness.

Results of the study and discussion. Research conducted in recent years by domestic scientists in the field of training fitness specialists shows that a huge number of students and university graduates are entering the fitness industry. This is due to the prestige of the fitness instructor profession and its demand. However, as experts note, the level of training of graduates is not high enough; it should be more modern and closer to practice [1, 2, 4]. In this regard, new academic disciplines and entire modules on fitness have appeared in the training of students. New areas of training in the master's degree program have been opened at the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport: "Fitness Management in Physical Education", "Fitness Technologies in Physical Culture", and advanced training courses in children's fitness have been held for many years. In 2024, a student fitness club was created, operating on a self-government basis, which not only gives students the opportunity to engage in fitness, but also provides them with conditions for undergoing pedagogical practice, as well as, within the framework of various fitness club events (participation in seminars, master classes, professional skills competitions), the opportunity to improve their methodological level and gain pedagogical experience [3]. However, for the effective work of students of the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport in the fitness club, expanding the list of fitness services and attracting students from other faculties of the university to classes, additional in-depth knowledge is required, which they can acquire in courses, as part of additional education. Thus, at the institute, students receive more theoretical knowledge on fitness (especially for graduate students), but practical classes are not enough, which they noted in the questionnaire re-

sponses. The analysis of the conducted questionnaire of students of the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport indicates the relevance and demand for training courses for instructors of group fitness programs and the development of a practice-oriented training model (Table 1)

In accordance with new socio-cultural demands and current trends in the fitness industry, a survey was conducted among students of the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport on the demand for various fitness programs. Students were offered a list of 12 fitness programs recommended by teachers, from which they could choose only five to study and put them in order of priority. The students put the program «Group Fitness Program Instructor» in first place. The program (72 hours) was developed and approved, 28 students were trained in it over three months (Table 2).

In the survey, in which students and course participants took part, questions were asked that determined the purpose of their coming to the courses, the features of the program content, the forms of training and the terms. Their answers were compared with the answers of students who were trained in different years. As a result of the survey, it was determined that, during the considered time period, goal setting has undergone significant changes. Thus, if at the beginning of the longitudinal study (for 2021), the priority for both categories of respondents was to study the new program, then by 2024 significant changes had occurred and the goal of obtaining a document on completion of PC courses came to the leading position. This fact can be determined by the certification system of teaching staff, which provides for mandatory advanced training with a certain frequency and the provision of an appropriate supporting document. However, for students, this

Table 1. Factors determining the feasibility of developing a model of practice-oriented training for students in training courses for group fitness program instructors (n=345)

Ranking place	Factors	Rank indicator (%)
1	Insufficient level of methodological training and practical experience to carry out professional activities in the field of fitness	26,3
2	Gain practical experience in conducting fitness classes and employment opportunities	23,7
3	Obtaining a state-issued document on completion of courses (discounts on fees, different training periods)	15,7
4	Self-realization in the activities of a student fitness club (points for admission to a master's program)	12,1
5	Gaining additional fitness knowledge (to be competitive)	11,3
6	Highly specialized training in a selected area of group fitness programs (various forms of training)	10,9



Table 2. Selection of fitness programs for training students in 2024-2025

Place	Fitness programs
1	«Group Fitness Program Instructor» - an educational program for conducting modern classes in classical, dance, step and fitball aerobics
2	«Fitness correction» is a health program for individual lessons in video format for the prevention of various disorders of posture, vision, cardiovascular system and breathing, etc. (ages vary)
3	«Fitness technologies in physical education lessons of various focus and in the school day of a schoolchild» (or preschooler)
4	«Musical and dance therapy using fitballs» is a health program for women aimed at relieving stress, increasing efficiency and correcting professional burnout
5	«Modeling non-standard activities for conducting a modern physical education lesson at school» (or conducting classes with students)

CONCEPTUAL COMPONENT			
Objective			
Formation of professional knowledge, skills, abilities of students studying to be instructors of group fitness programs and acquisition of teaching experience			
Tasks:			
Improving the level of professional, pedagogical and general cultural competencies of students in the field of fitness, allowing them to work effectively according to the studied program of course training		Activating the creative potential of students and equipping them with original authorial technologies, methods and forms of conducting fitness classes	
Principles: methodical, health training and fitness			
Conceptual provisions:			
demand, innovation, mobility, creativity, reflexivity, technological capability, predictability, effectiveness			
ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT COMPONENT			
Optional format: <i>in-person, remote, mixed</i>	Course: <i>short-term (40 hours), advanced training (72 hours), professional retraining (510 hours)</i>	State-issued document: <i>certificate, certificate, diploma of retraining</i>	
CONTENT COMPONENT – training program			
«Software and methodological support»	«Theoretical training»	«Methodological and practical training»	«Distance learning»
Teaching aids, textbooks, audio and video materials	Lectures, control testing	Practical teaching material, creative tasks	Independent work (homework)
Блок «Дополнительный»			
Seminars, Master Classes, Competition «Best Instructor»	Mandatory teaching practice and conducting classes in a student fitness club	Scientific work (scientific article)	
RESULT COMPONENT			
Mastering the program material, acquiring theoretical knowledge, methodological skills and practical experience in a specific fitness program			

Figure 1. Model of practice-oriented training of students in fitness instructor training courses



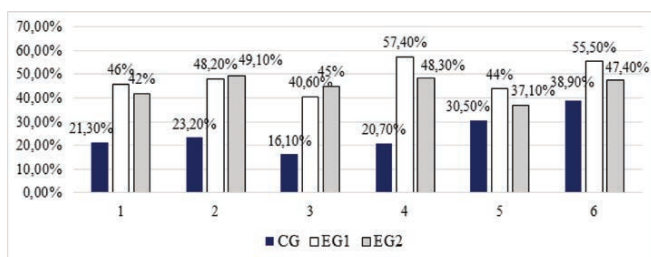
goal is defined as secondary, and “acquiring practical experience and methodological training” comes to the fore. Apparently, this is due to the opportunity to work in the fitness club of the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport, which is desirable and prestigious for many students. Of particular importance here is the formation of their professional image among student youth from different faculties of the university involved in fitness, which motivates them to gain additional knowledge that will help conduct classes at a higher level.

As a result of the survey data, it was revealed that the courses should be shorter, lectures should be given in a minimal volume, since theoretical material can be given for independent study in a distance format or as part of searching for material on given topics on the Internet, while much attention should be paid to methodological and practical training.

Based on many years of experience in conducting advanced training courses, student surveys and conducted research [3, 4], a model of practice-oriented training of students in training courses for group program instructors was developed (Fig. 1).

To test the effectiveness of the model, a pedagogical experiment was conducted over the course of three months; all participants underwent training in advanced training programs (72 hours), in which three groups of 4th-year and master’s students of the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport (14 people in each) participated.

Experimental group No. 1 (E-1) consisted of students who had completed training in the “Group Program Instructor” program, developed on the basis of the presented model, students in experimental group No. 2 (E-2) had completed training in other institutions, and the control group consisted of students who conducted classes in a student fitness club without training in courses. Before and after training, students took tests and conducted control classes, which were assessed by experts - teachers. The results of average increases in theoretical knowledge indicators are presented in figure 2.

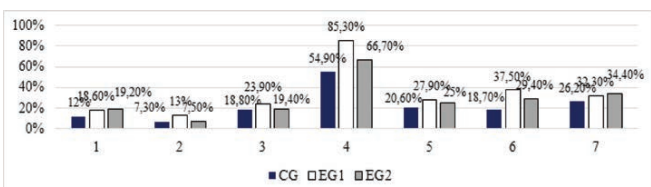


1 – Basic concepts, principles and objectives of health training and fitness;

- 2 – content of fitness programs for different contingents of trainees;
- 3 – types of health training planning;
- 4 – features of psychophysical development of different contingents of trainees;
- 5 – types of pedagogical control over the functional and physical condition of trainees;
- 6 – means and methods of correcting the condition of trainees taking into account their individual characteristics.

Figure 2. Increase in average knowledge assessment indicators, based on the results of testing students (in %)

Conducting practical classes in one of the fitness areas was carried out at the student’s choice. During the class, he must demonstrate professional skills that were assessed by experts out of 10 points before and after training. The increase in the results of professional skills indicators is presented (in %) in figure 3.



- 1- Correct demonstration of exercises;
- 2- coordination of movements with music;
- 3- implementation of methodological prompts and counting;
- 4- competent selection of exercises and their compilation into complexes;
- 5- correction of errors;
- 6- implementation of an individual approach to students;
- 7- implementation of pedagogical control over students.

Figure 3. Increase in average indicators of expert assessment of professional skills of students (%)

Comparing the three groups, it should be noted that in all indicators of theoretical knowledge and professional skills, students of the E-1 group are ahead of the E-2 and K-groups, which indicates the effectiveness of the developed model and the pedagogical practice additionally included in the training program. It can also be noted that specialized, more in-depth training is necessary for students, since the K-group showed a lower percentage of growth in all indicators, compared to the experimental groups (E-1 and E-2).

Conclusions. In conclusion, it should be noted that today there is a need to develop new models of teaching students that integrate distance and tradi-



tional technologies, mastering new platforms and various information products in training, which will allow moving to a new level of training in advanced training courses and professional training in fitness that meets the requirements of modern society.

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