

Roland Naul, *Olympic Education*, MEYER&MEYER SPORT, Oxford 2008, pp. 189, tables 15, figures 19, ISBN: 978-1-84126-254-3

The Olympic market is a big cake and no wonder many parties want to have a bite of it. This observation can be made about different books published on the Olympic ideals, history and marketing. Most of these books have highly commercial profiles, but there is at least one area which is not so much concerned yet with financial profits: Olympic pedagogy. This relatively new branch of pedagogy may soon become a powerful tool of education both in and outside school. Olympic education is one of the objectives of Olympic Movement but for many decades it has been limited (and left up) to the educational authorities of countries hosting the Olympic Games. In this context Roland Naul's *Olympic Education* is a publishing breakthrough. Written in English this book can potentially reach a plethora of readers all over the world.

At first glance I thought it was one of practice books for students to help them understand the Olympic ideals, but I was wrong. The book turned out to be a guidebook for teachers willing to learn more on how to approach the problem of teaching Olympic education. The first chapter of the book discusses the difference between the Olympic Games and Olympic Education. For those familiar with Olympic Education it is obvious these two notions were separated a long time ago. Actually, it was shortly after French baron Pierre de Coubertin had promoted his vision of educating the French youth through sport, especially Olympic sports, that the revived Olympic Games went their own way becoming a commercial but also political commodity. The book provides a necessary clarification of these issues for those less familiar with Olympic Pedagogy. The second chapter concentrates on the history of Olympic Education; however, Naul begins his analysis by proceeding straight to Thomas Arnold's Rugby School. What about Coubertin's trips to the United States? He must have seen some good examples of sporting events and sport-based education at American universities. Why there is no mention of these potentially inspiring visits in Naul's book. Naul

then briefly discusses the Olympic history from Athens 1896 to the Second World War and from the end of the war to 1990. The selection of facts from Olympic history is brief and focuses, understandably, on the most important highlights.

The chapter on pedagogical concepts and teaching approaches related to Olympic Education is a solid, well-written and well-organized layout of Olympic pedagogy propositions. It is extremely important, especially for novice teachers, to understand how Olympic education can (should) be taught. The author confronts the "knowledge-oriented" approach with the "experience-oriented" approach and sets the "physical achievement" approach against the "life-skills" approach. Naul does not only list the possibilities, but he also proposes his own vision of an integrated didactic approach.

Finally, in the last chapter of his book Naul supports Olympic education with findings from various experimental studies. This part seems a bit of an artificial supplement to the rest of the book. One might have expected examples of Olympic education teaching resources or ready to use Olympic Education lessons. Instead, readers come across a revision of findings and data on Olympic programs. At first, the reader might hesitate whether to go into this world of figures and numbers, but on second thought... Olympic education is a relatively new branch of education which has to prove its effectiveness to the rest of the world. So maybe it is actually a good idea to have all those studies reported in one book. At least it may convince the reader that Olympic education really works. The description on the book cover reads that "the book shows why the Olympic ideas are a modern challenge not only for a new physical and sport education but also for development of essential life skills for today". And we have to agree that this publication in fact introduces and organizes the pedagogical principles and didactical fundamentals of Olympic Education.

I hope Naul's *Olympic Education* will be not only of great interest to many readers but, more importantly, it will find many followers, because education is about acting, not just reading about it.

This teacher guidebook is a reliable source of information for all those willing to adhere to the Olympic standards in teaching, no matter what they teach.

Michał Bronikowski
Department of Methodology of Physical Education
University School of Physical Education, Poznań,
Poland