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qims.ch - A comprehensive and easy-to-use tool for reviewing the quality of physical education

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Abstract
In recent years, quality development and assurance in the education system, and thus in physical education, have become central issues. The Swiss Federal Institute of Sport developed a complete tool that can be used by the Swiss education system for quality reviews of physical education at all learning levels. The tool has four constituent parts. The first is a cyclical scheme which outlines the main steps that are necessary for undertaking an effective quality analysing and improvement process, followed by a model that helps to identify the key criteria that can influence quality and hence reduces the complexity of physical education. The third constituent part is a specific system which is used to examine quality by attaching a set of indicators to the criteria that facilitate recognition and measurement through the use of appropriate tools. The last part consists of a collection of applicable feedback and measurement tools which can be used by schools for more general lessons as well as for physical education. Using this product, the Swiss Federal Institute of Sport defined a number of criteria and competencies that can be used to discuss *performance*, *content*, and *opportunity to learn* standards for physical education in Switzerland.

Key words: physical education, quality, Switzerland, standards, implementation

1 Introduction

Quality development and assurance in the education system, and thus in physical education, has become a central issue in recent years. This topic has become prominent due to broader perspectives on quality in educational policy on the one hand and intra-disciplinary problems in physical education on the other.

Broader perspectives in educational policy

Based on the essential conformity of curriculum guidelines with the learning goals of teachers and students, education policy-makers were persistently convinced that providing framework conditions and human and structural resources would automatically lead to good student results. As Spiess (2001) explains, school inspectors, administration and members of the supervisory board used to visit schools

and classrooms only to take action whenever excessive variations from standards were observed. Since the beginning of the 1990s, however, a new perspective on quality was adopted on the basis of TQM (total quality management), first starting in industrial enterprises and then spreading to service enterprises and educational institutions (Landwehr & Steiner, 2003). Input factors were no longer the only focus since the process and output of instructions were also considered, especially with regard to the effectiveness of the education system (Oelkers & Reusser, 2008). Although the conditions for education have continued to worsen due to insufficient investment and despite social problems that affect daily school activities and overwhelming administrative tasks that keep teaching staff from performing their main task, Tillmann (2002) mentions that students should nevertheless increasingly produce improved results. With regard to the new perspective on quality, this can only be achieved if the output and outcome of the education system are analysed and, based on the findings, appropriate measures are taken in the optimising process of input and quality. This broader view is accompanied by sweeping change, namely the reorganisation of the education system in Switzerland. Its goals can only be achieved if the individual schools develop and implement measures that are suitably adapted to their context in the interest of school development (Kurz, 2004). This change is illustrated by Spiess (2001) who mentions that the thorough reorganisation and change of system is denoted by catchwords such as charter schools, pilot schools or semi-independent schools.

Intra-disciplinary problems

According to Egger (2002a), few other areas of society are as strongly affected by such sweeping change as sports. On a daily basis, children, young people and adults are confronted with trends that greatly influence not only their attitude toward sports, but also their behaviour during sports. The accelerated change in physical education curricula makes it very difficult to both describe and evaluate this change. Physical education courses are grappling with issues of centralised content, with the education goals of the subject and especially with the intended role that physical education should play in society. Egger (2002a) believes that the fact that critical self-evaluation and external evaluation do not play a strong role in the traditional Swiss school and education system further complicates the situation. As a result, there is barely any physical education data available to policy makers who assess the value of sports as a school subject. Thus, it comes as no surprise that there is greater demand for more cost-effective options with fewer lessons or courses taught by fitness trainers rather than teachers. Physical education must take a stand and clarify its important to education, health and society and communicate it to the outside world in order to strengthen its position.

What qims.ch is all about

The Swiss Federal Council reacted to the lack of transparency and legitimisation issues of physical education courses as well as to the change in educational policy. The project entitled *Qualität im Sportunterricht - qims.ch* (quality in physical education) was created in order to develop a comprehensive and easy-to-use quality review of physical education on all school levels in Switzerland using appropriate tools.

qims.ch emphasises that all stakeholders are responsible for quality in schools and physical education. According to Fend (1998), the education system can be divided into three levels: regulation, schools and courses. Policy and administration are dealt with at regulation level, school administrators, employees, parents and students work

together at school level and teachers provide students with optimum opportunities for learning at course level. These levels are in many ways connected to each other and the events observed in courses are the result of the configurative interaction of structural factors on various levels (Egger, 2002a). In order to be fully effective, a quality review of physical education must involve all levels. Bearing this in mind, a consistent quality review process for physical education can help to compare differing concepts of instruction quality and reconcile them with each other. However, school development should mainly be concerned with implementing and driving quality as an organisational unit in the particular context and environment of individual schools.
For that reason, qims.ch decided to develop a quality review process that is based on the requirements and needs of physical education teachers, which functions at all the different levels of the education system and remains the same for all school grades. Moreover, it should also enable the adaptation of content and areas of focus to school grades and local circumstances. The qims.ch quality review process is composed of the Q cycle, the Q building, the toolbox and a specific review system. These tools are close to quality management processes that are commonly used in industry and now also in education.

2 The four constituent parts of qims.ch

The Q cycle – quality development as a cyclical model

The systematic improvement of quality should be guided by a cyclical model because quality development should be thought of as an unending series of successive steps that are repeated from the very beginning. Everyone should be familiar with the basic features of this ongoing process which, once begun, cannot be completed definitively (Posch & Altrichter, 1997). According to Landwehr and Steiner (2003), this process involves planning and implementing measures that result in a continuous and progressive improvement of the actual situation based on a visionary (yet concrete) definition of the major goals and values and a discerning and unbiased understanding of the current situation. The process of defining the major goals and values, analysing the current situation and planning and implementing improvement measures reveals the key steps in an effective quality development process. qims.ch embodies this quality development cycle in its *Q cycle*, which contains the following phases: *define quality, collect data, interpret data* and *implement measures*. These phases are then divided into eleven different steps.

Define quality. Before a quality review can be started, a common understanding of quality must be developed on the basis of a standard definition, as it is commonly accepted that there is no general definition of quality, but rather a subjective definition based on the interests, aims and contexts of the evaluators and the institution (Stamm, 1999). Therefore, it is only possible to talk about the various aspects of quality that are content-related, personal, relationship-based or structural in nature.

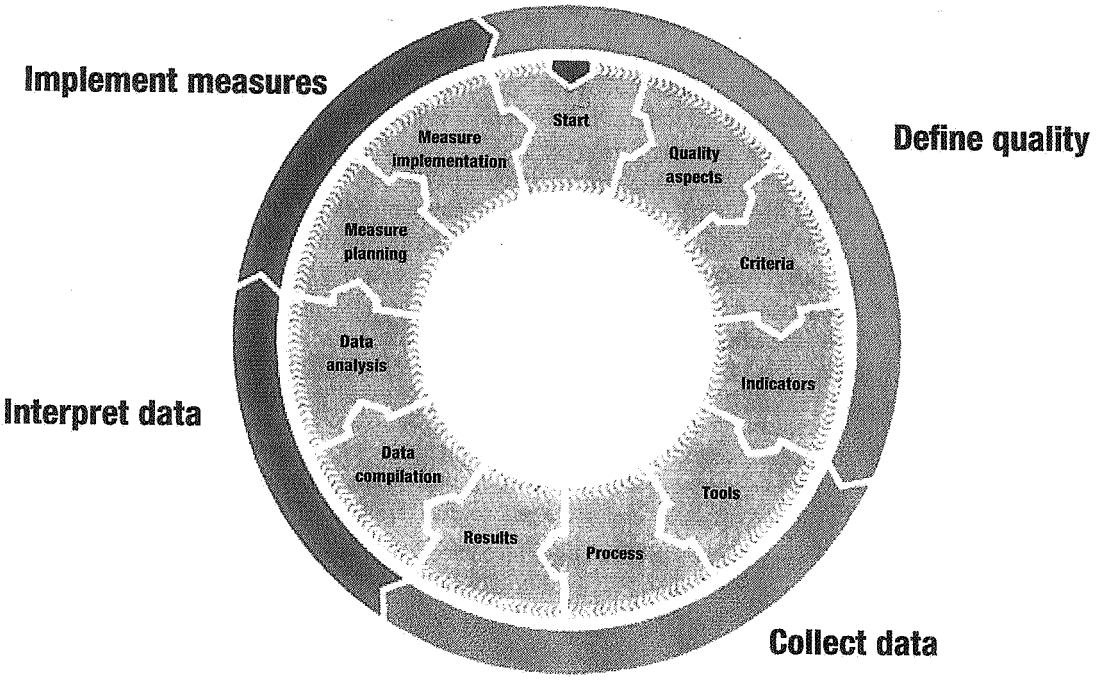

Figure 1. The quality cycle. Adapted from *„qims.ch. Manual für Experten und solche, die es werden wollen"* by the Swiss Federal Institute for Sport, 2010, p. 15.

Data collection. The second phase of the quality cycle is referred to as data collection which includes tool selection, the concrete approach and results. For large-scale data collection, it is a good idea to prepare an evaluation plan that includes the process, tasks, expenditures and results of all participants. It is important to separate the tasks clearly in the plan.

Interpret data. In order to avoid being overwhelmed by the abundance of the raw data collected, it is a good idea to summarise and consolidate the data at the beginning of the third phase.

Implement measures. Planning and implementing measures is the result of data analysis. These measures should directly lead to improved quality which is in line with the concept of quality that was defined in the first phase.

The Q building - locating and structuring quality criteria

qims.ch is committed to a practical quality review and distinguishes between the context-based input, process and output/outcome components of quality building. Due to the differentiation into these three components, it is possible to contextualise and systematise the complexity of the quality discussion in the scholastic context. Aspects are distinguished within the three components, which allows for an improved locating and structuring of quality criteria. The context demonstrates that each individual school is embedded in a larger structure and that the local environment, the development of social and educational requirements, the change in vocational structure, youth culture, etc. have a direct or indirect impact on the school.

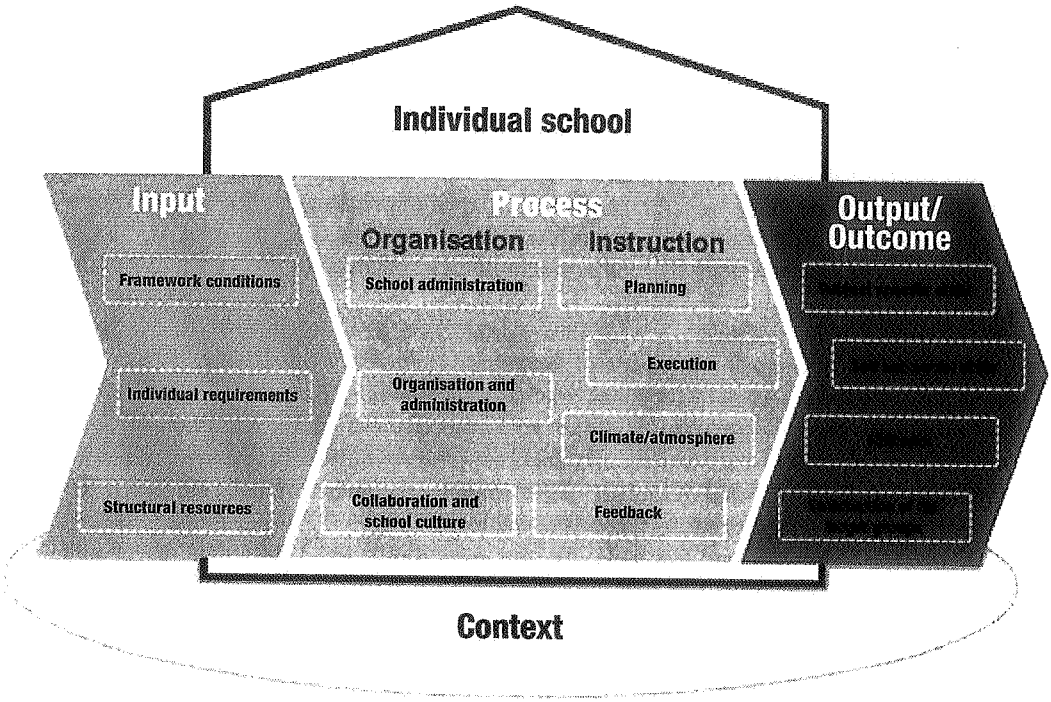

Figure 2. The quality building. Adapted from "*qims.ch. Manual für Experten und solche, die es werden wollen*," by the Swiss Federal Institute for Sport, 2010, p. 15. Copyright 2010 by the Swiss Federal Institute for Sport.

Input. The input component describes the requirements to which educational processes are subject. Framework conditions (ranging from the implementation of statutory requirements for sports facilities and physical education curricula to opportunities for promoting exercise), staff requirements (concerning the people involved in the school, such as school administrators or students) and structural resources (internal structures of the specific school, exercise promotion and teacher activity) are reviewed.

Process. The actual activity of the people involved in the school is included in the process component which consists of the organisation (organisational framework for instruction, school operations involving school administrators, distinct operations in organisation and administration, teamwork and school culture) and instruction sub-components. Instruction sub-components cover criteria for planning and providing instruction, for the environment in which instruction is given and for the feedback aspect.

Output/Outcome. The output/outcome component is composed of the subject-specific, self and social competencies, the attitudes and satisfaction of the groups concerned, such as students, teachers and parents, as well as educational policy-makers, sports associations and the educational institutions fed by the schools. While output is the recognisable result at the end of course, outcome is what remains in subsequent contexts of use (Kurz, 2002). Quality in *output*, i.e. in the *subject-specific, self and social competencies*, will be discussed in the P.E. competencies section since it must be considered to be competency-oriented rather than criteria-oriented.

Data collection

In order to collect data, qims.ch provides users with a toolbox featuring a variety of feedback and measuring tools that are suited for schools in general and physical education in particular. The tools were selected on the basis of a review of relevant literature and their user-friendliness. The objective of the tools is to obtain specific feedback from the people involved in the courses and measure and test predetermined and jointly defined quality characteristics. A total of approximately 40 different tools are available in seven tool groups that allow for a differentiated evaluation of physical education courses and their framework conditions. These seven tool groups are:

- Short feedback methods are brief forms of student feedback that try to capture a student's spontaneous impression of the course.
- The focus of interactive feedback methods is not on subjective perception, but rather on the joint development of the most objective evaluation possible.
- The criteria-based observations and documentation group include a wide range of tools, from self and external assessments to instructional support and documentation tools, such as a sports notebook.
- Standard questions are available for the questionnaires. Users can select and compile questions based on their preferences and add other questions to them.
- Interviews take advantage of direct conversation, which makes it possible to ask more specific questions when answers are unclear. Teachers learn how to conduct interviews by means of these tools.
- Controlling methods enable teachers to check input quality through sampling and document analyses.
- Grade-specific tests make it possible to assess students' competencies

The review system

In total, qims.ch proposes 95 physical education quality criteria for input, process and outcome which are described in a series of criteria catalogues in order to make them easier to use in a quality review. According to Dubs (1998) and Spiess (2001), they are differentiated as follows: quality criteria are the characteristics of regulations, schools, courses, etc. that have a decisive influence on quality. Quality indicators are descriptions of quality criteria that can be measured and are used to determine quality. The tools finally allow the measurement of the indicators. For each criterion, qims.ch names the possible indicators that allow the criterion to be recognised and measured. The indicators will then refer to the tools in the toolbox that should be used and to any existing support materials. For example, when teaching staff received subject-specific and pedagogical training for particular school grades, this will be defined as an input criterion related to professional requirements. The indicators formulated for this criterion will be that the teacher has the required degree and that the degree has been recognised by the member state of the federal state of Switzerland and validated by the school administration. Analysing documents, giving interviews and even taking random samples are all suitable tools for verifying the individual indicators.

The special case of output

P.E. competencies. In dependence on the curricula of the member states and the national P.E. manual, qims.ch worked with teachers from various Swiss educational institutes and P.E. teachers to develop the subject-specific competencies that focus particularly on the knowledge, ability and/or motivation of students. In order to understand the development of subject-specific competencies, minimum, standard and maximum levels were defined. Level A is the minimum standard and refers to the

minimum competencies that all students must have achieved by a pre-defined date in their school career. Level B represents the regular standard competencies that should generally be achieved by students in a grade and level C defines the maximum standard. The competencies established in the higher achievement level refer to what the best students should be able to achieve in each grade (Conference of Ministers of Education, 2004). Competencies are targeted and systematically developed and enhanced during the education process. According to Mehr and Ulrich (2010), competencies include knowledge, abilities and proficiencies that are meant to create certain cognitions and behavioural results and a fundamental willingness to demonstrate them.

qims.ch defines a total of approximately 20 core competencies for different school grades. In fact, it provides all school grades with more than 130 subject-specific competencies that can be consulted for a review. In order to assess the level that students have achieved in a given subject-specific competency, a minimum of two test series with a test to determine level A, B and C were created for every competency, for a total of over 600 tests. All tests are available on www.qims.ch, a user-friendly interface to the database allows teachers to search, select and filter the competencies and tests on behalf of their needs.

In order to achieve the most significant possible evaluation of student competencies, the most appropriate benchmarks, forms of evaluation and reference values are used in the tests, covering the areas *Moving, expressing, dancing; Balancing, climbing, turning; Running, jumping, throwing; Playing; Outdoor sports*. While the total upper body strength test, for example, is selected from a battery of tests (Klingele & Fischer, 2007), the high jump is measured with standard height measurement tools and endurance training knowledge is tested in written form based on clearly defined criteria. The teacher evaluates the students' quality of movement when juggling three balls based on various observation guidelines and students evaluate each other's performance in games. An accurate and complete overview of student performances compared to the school grade requirements can only be achieved by means of an extensive range of choices and the comprehensive development of subject-specific competencies in general.

Self and social competencies. The self and social competencies should be considered as interdisciplinary competencies at school. The longer and more systematically self and social competencies are developed at school, the easier it is to detect their effects. Physical education courses in particular offer opportunities to observe students and their behaviour. They allow teachers to make students aware of self and social competencies and enable students to set development goals for themselves. In collaboration with a psychologist and a study group consisting of lecturers and teachers, qims.ch defined and selected facets of self and social competencies that are relevant and possible to examine in physical education. According to qims.ch, the individual facets of self and social competencies should be generally included as *interdisciplinary themes*, which means that they are seen as an underlying theme that is applied in different areas of physical education. For that purpose, qims.ch formulated a number of *interdisciplinary themes* that should be considered in subject-specific instruction.

3 qims.ch and physical education standards

As mentioned above, the output of the education system can only be improved if the available resources are optimally used. The ongoing improvement process reflected by

the broader view of the educational process and output is closely linked to the discussion about standards.
According to Oelkers and Reusser (2008), standards are definitions of content, goals or scales that should be used to influence and improve the learning processes of students. They are specifications that should be applied throughout education programmes. In order to be credible, a school development project, as demonstrated by qims.ch, must address the issues of standards and identify their related factors.

Types of standards
The American education researcher Diane Ravitch (1995) distinguishes three types of standards that should be viewed as related to each other.

Content standards. "Content standards describe what teachers are supposed to teach and students are expected to learn. They provide clear, specific descriptions of the skills and knowledge that should be taught to students," (Ravitch, 1995, p. 12).
In Switzerland, physical education content is developed on the basis of cantonal educational curricula and the Swiss federal sports education curriculum. Since the curriculum for physical education courses merely makes general proposals about content that vary widely from canton to canton, teaching materials are a common parameter for orienting potential physical education content.
qims.ch does not develop any specific content standards, but rather focuses on national education materials and cantonal curricula. This correlation is only implied in the formulated competencies, but is nevertheless central to the acceptance and understanding of qims.ch by various target and stakeholder groups.

Performance standards. "Performance standards define degrees of mastery or levels of attainment. They answer the question: 'How good is good enough?' Performance standards describe what kind of performance represents inadequate, acceptable, or outstanding accomplishment," (Ravitch, 1995, pp. 12-13).
According to Oelkers and Reusser (2008), the differentiation of performance ratings or levels is a decisive step. A realistic degree of expectation is first created by the progressive achievement of a goal and then by the competencies acquired. And only in these conditions is it possible to adaptively promote specific measures that are tailored for a heterogeneous student body. As Criblez et al. (2009) explains, these performance standards are checked by tests. In addition, the various target levels are differentiated and range from minimum and average to maximum standards. qims.ch also uses this system and developed tests with three levels for every subject-specific competency.

Opportunity-to-learn standards. "Opportunity-to-learn-standards define the availability of programs, staff, and other resources that schools, districts, and states provide so that students are able to meet challenging content and performance standards," (Ravitch, 1995, p. 13).
According to Criblez et al. (2009), these standards apply to input and learning processes at school. They define the resources that should be made available in order to enable students to learn the prescribed content standards and to achieve the performance standards. In this case, resources not only refer to financial resources, but also to the competencies of the teachers (and the related quality of their training), the quality of the educational materials and instruction, and the actual learning and working conditions within a specific school (Maag Merki, 2005; Oelkers & Reusser, 2008).

Implementing qims.ch at the regulation, school and course level

qims.ch offers basic approaches to determine standards for physical education. However, it should be taken into consideration that qims.ch was developed in the interest of physical education teachers, which is why the standards were developed with a practical approach.

Regulation level. The demand for objective processes in education monitoring resulted in the fact that the practical testing processes in the field of qims.ch competencies are not suitable for data collection in the interest of education regulation.

School level. School standards make it possible to draw conclusions about whether an individual school fulfils its duties and with which infrastructure and framework conditions it does so. In an ideal case, student councils would use qims.ch as a school development tool: key physical education content and subject matter would be determined based on the quality criteria and competencies proposed by qims.ch and the existing teacher and educational requirements would be taken into consideration.

Course level. At course level, very different teaching and learning requirements for teachers and students make a difference. Depending on the standards applied in the system and in the school, teachers are confronted with a variety of teaching requirements which they must meet as best they can with their teaching abilities. With regard to performance standards, there is a wide range of tools on www.qims.ch that teachers can use. Depending on the focus and objectives of their course, teachers can adjust the benchmarks and forms of evaluation in the tests provided to their individual needs.

4 Issues of implementation

At course level quality criteria can be readily formulated, but demands are made lately at the various levels of the education system to establish indicators and standards. Regarding the *framework conditions* aspect, for example, member states are asked to ensure that sports facilities meet the current safety requirements. In terms of the *structural resources* aspect, communities are asked to perform regular maintenance of sports facilities. As for the *school administration* aspect, administration is expected to form an idea of how courses are conducted. As concerns the overall *teaching process* aspect, teachers are expected to perform competently.

To whom is the quality review in physical education primarily geared? Who can best ensure that the necessary measures will reach their goals at the various levels? Individual teachers will find criteria and competencies in the instruction process and output/outcome component through a critical examination of themselves and their instruction, but a comprehensive review is impossible in this respect. While the cantons will concentrate mainly on their responsibilities in the input component, the school administrators will concentrate on organising the process.

5 Conclusion

Regardless of the difficult implementation context, qims.ch is a complete product that can be used by the Swiss education system on all levels for quality reviews of physical education. Clearly formulated quality criteria allow for a common use of language and thus enable a purposeful discussion about quality at and between different levels. These discussions are essential steps in the process of developing high-quality

physical education courses that will be supported at all levels, from individual teachers to member states' education departments. As Egger (2002b) explains, quality cannot be delegated from above but should rather be made a common concern. This is certainly an approach that is worth pursuing.

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Sport International

Global Forum for Physical Education Pedagogy 2010 (GoFPEP 2010): Health and Physical Education Pedagogy in the 21st Century – A Statement of Consensus

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Abstract

Worldwide, physical education programs need to be rethought. As we live in an ever-changing world, the examination of new forms of pedagogy, use of technology and new methods for preparing physical education teachers need to be examined. Global Forum for Physical Education Pedagogy 2010 (GoFPEP 2010) drew together, on an invitation basis, more than 70 renowned educators, professionals, administrators, business leaders and policy makers from 30 countries, representing 64 universities, institutions and schools. The primary purpose of GoFPEP 2010 was the crafting of a global consensus statement entitled Health and Physical Education Pedagogy in the 21st Century. Major recommendations include focusing on healthy active lifestyles, promoting student centered learning, advancing knowledge, skills and dispositions required by 21st Century learners with physical literacy, promoting programs as models of social justice; re-conceptualizing assessment strategies using technology and engaging a multiplicity of stakeholders. The consensus statement calls for integrating health and physical education, promoting best practice, building partnerships, developing sensitivity to diverse conditions, gaining strategies to promote accountability and linking practice to theory.