Giornale Italiano di Educazione alla Salute, Sport e Didattica Inclusiva / Italian Journal of Health Education, Sports and Inclusive Didactics - Anno 6 n. 1- ISSN 2532-3296 ISBN 978-88-6022-436-1 - gennaio - marzo 2022 - CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 IT- https://doi.org/10.32043/gsd.v6i1.566

# THE ENHANCEMENT OF CORPOREALITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES

# LA VALORIZZAZIONE DELLA CORPOREITÀ NEI PROCESSI DI INSEGNAMENTO E APPRENDIMENTO

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## Abstract

The article focuses on the enhancement of a multi-disciplinary approach to the development of a person's corporeality, a dimension that has only recently been rediscovered, which must be outlined in an educational key both for the results achieved and for the ways in which these are achieved both in group and individual level.

The recognition of this autonomous dimension in the contents and in the learning objectives leads to consider the body a strategic element of the relationships and experiences realized at school and to identify the motor activity as a training environment that manages to address all the members who are an integral part of a given experience, motivating one's professional and personal identity.

This work aims to evaluate the ability of an experimental didactic-training proposal, focused on a laboratory on corporeality in the discipline of athletics, as an important educational resource for the discipline of Motor and Sports Education which, in addition to traditional teaching, based on physical exercise and sports practice, can be a pedagogical science and develop its full potential towards students and their growth path (Di Maglie, 2021).

### Abstract

L'articolo focalizza l'attenzione sulla valorizzazione di un approccio multi disciplinare allo sviluppo della corporeità della persona, dimensione riscoperta solo recentemente, la quale va delineata in chiave educativa sia per i risultati raggiunti che per le modalità con cui questi ultimi vengono realizzati sia a livello di gruppo che individuale.

Il riconoscimento di tale dimensione autonoma nei contenuti e negli obiettivi di apprendimento, porta a considerare il corpo un elemento strategico delle relazioni ed esperienze realizzate a scuola e ad identificare l'attività motoria come un ambiente formativo che riesce a rivolgersi a tutti i membri che

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sono parte integrante di una determinata esperienza motivando la propria identità professionale e personale.

Il presente lavoro si pone come obiettivo quello di valutare la capacità di una proposta didattico-formativa sperimentale, incentrata su un laboratorio sulla corporeità nella disciplina dell'atletica leggera, quale importante risorsa educativa per la disciplina dell'Educazione Motoria e Sportiva che, oltre alla didattica di tipo tradizionale, basata sull'esercizio fisico e sulla pratica sportiva, può porsi come una scienza pedagogica e sviluppare il suo pieno potenziale verso gli studenti e il loro percorso di crescita (Di Maglie, 2021).

**Keywords**:

Educational value, laboratory, corporeality

Valore educativo, laboratorio, corporeità

## Introduction

In the scientific field it is now common to consider the body as the component through which to explore the world, enter into relationships with others, build skills and knowledge.

The involvement of corporeality to stimulate the formative growth of the subject, both individually and in relationships with others, is therefore a circumstance not to be underestimated.

Numerous studies and reflections have led to the birth of a new paradigm, the Embodied Cognition, which has demonstrated and underlined the close relationship between the body, movement, cognitive functions and learning (Pouw, van Gog 2014). Body and movement in fact represent the fundamental nucleus in the evolutionary and formative process of an individual since they contribute to the growth of the subject in all its wholeness, favoring the achievement of important goals such as the attainment of autonomy, the acquisition of skills, the construction of identity of the subject that conditions learning. The body is considered the medium of learning; it represents, together with all its manifestations, the core of the educational experience, from a recognizable and shareable form to didactics and teaching outcomes (Sibilio, 2017)

The body and corporeality constitute a space for individual but also social construction, giving rise to opportunities for educability thanks to the forms and contents it assumes during the processes of cultural and educational communication. These help promote certain forms of learning and knowledge development. Thus the body turns out to be a medium for learning not only for sensations, thoughts and emotions but also favors certain characteristics of perception, knowledge and affectivity.

Practices aimed at education should make both the size of the body and the movement their own, making them fundamental innate aspects of learning. Therefore "learning through action and conscious experience of the body corresponds to the most natural side of training and is the action itself, understood as a process, relationship, expression of subjectivity, which must be used as a fundamental means of training itself" (Lo Presti, 2016, p.57)

The didactics of movement and the body must not be reduced to useful practices only for educating the body, but must be considered real teaching paths that use the body, action,

movement as a fundamental means of experience and consequently learning, regardless of the content of the teaching itself.

All these concepts make the idea of the effectiveness of body education even stronger and highlight the importance of experimenting with concrete practices and instructional-educational tools focused precisely on body experience, in order to have effective learning and training strategies.

## 1. The educational role of the body

The human being, his development and his formation as a person is represented by the body and its biological dimension and culture, characterized by all that allows him to organize reality. The latter is the product of the transactional processes between the subject and the environment that are mediated by the corporeality that constitutes the idea on which knowledge is developed. In this case, reality is not something external but is founded through "the encounter between bodies-subjects, which acting within environments composed of objects, relationships, emotions, symbols, meanings build a shared knowledge and a vision of reality "(Collacchioni, 2016, p. 98). Corporeity plays a fundamental role since the construction and internalization of reality takes place in the relationships that the individual implements through his body, within a specific social and cultural context. It is precisely in the corporeality that the exchange of signals, behaviors and expressions useful for the construction processes of reality could take place (de Mennato, 2007).

Already with Piaget and the studies on the cognitive development of the child we see that individuals, from the first years of life, acquire elements from the context in which they live through the body and movement. In fact, a first representation of reality arrives in the mind of individuals thanks to the constant interaction they have with the physical environment, every simple object becomes object-perceived since the movement allows to experience it and to include it within an interpretative system of the environment. Therefore, the experience is created and coordinated through a sort of existence transmitted by a body in motion in the environment. Movement is therefore what allows the individual to carry out any type of action, concrete or cognitive practice and for this reason it represents the necessary condition for organizing knowledge. The learning process and the development of knowledge are structured through the combination of the elements that make up the brain and which give rise to a continuous exchange between the rational and emotional, corporeal and cognitive dimensions, which are inserted in a specific social and cultural context and which are guided by the sensitive and emotional experience of corporeality.

The body is what allows individuals to perform actions and to be in the world. But before being placd in an environment, in a culture, in a certain context and in certain relationships, the individual is self-situated in himself, in his biological body dimension, within his inextinguishable body. Through a body that acts in the environment, both physical and as a socio-affective and cultural context, he represents the necessary condition that allows the individual to learn, to know and to be formed.

It is in the movement that the basic processes that allow the construction of knowledge reside, or rather in the innate faculty of the body to act and interact within a given environment. "Through movement / exploration, a continuous process of selection of sensitive information takes place which is translated and included from the outside / environment to the inside / mind, as significant parts of a repertoire of objects that as a whole configures a representation of reality ”(Lo Presti, 2016, pp. 57-58), which is an organization for interpreting the world.

Thanks to socio-bodily interactions, individuals shape their cognitive potential and take from the surrounding social environment all that is needed for the development of their emotions, sensations and stimuli.

Thought itself must be understood as a process that allows beings to create the permanent characteristics of their condition and identity. It is precisely in active social relationships mediated by corporeality and movement within socio-cultural contexts that what allows the acquisition of the ability to use thought is located. The concreteness of corporeality, the protagonist of social relationships, represents for the individual the main fulcrum useful for the acquisition of all his social and cognitive skills also because it generates those models of expectation and action on which the use of language is built. and the management of the relationship itself.

The first dimension of identity of the single individual is generated in the bodily experience of care, contact and relationship that he has with his parents and it is precisely on the basis of this relationship that the structure of knowledge that will guide the learning and training. The quality of this structure depends on the quality of the individual's bodily experience of relationship, the result of his or her social, emotional and cultural experience: "the socio-bodily relationship appears to be the essential, primary and precious" nourishment "of which every being human needs to learn and to become "what is" (Ibidem, p. 61).

The body and movement represent the basis for defining the behavioral context of meaningful life, thanks also to shared action patterns mediated above all by corporeality; every relationship between the individual and the environment provides for the mediation of the body and it is thanks to this that social relations, thought, an identity, but most of all the ability to learn, originate. Therefore the process of knowledge is mainly based on the experience of corporeality, from which both reality and a version of the self originate. From all this arise all those processes of knowledge thanks to which individuals manage their experience and their ways of learning.

It is therefore necessary to eliminate, as regards to education, all those concepts that see the body and movement only as expressions of a bio-mechanical nature inherent in human beings, on the contrary, promote interpretations that consider the body and corporeality as fundamental support. for knowledge and learning, exploration of oneself and relationships with others, as the emotional sphere and the pleasure of socializing are involved (Bellantonio, 2014). All this refers to the possibility of hypothesizing training programs that, by putting the body at the center of the didactic action, they can integrate and implement traditional educational paths, which still today often suffer from the two fold vision that clearly separates the body from the mind, developing new practices that are coherent with ideas, knowledge and contemporary forms of knowledge.

## 2. Laboratory experiences on corporeality in motor and sports education

Recent theories in the educational field have highlighted the need for teachers to acquire a new concept of teaching methodology, so much so that there has been a transformation of school policy and a re-evaluation of the educational approach and motor activities. One of the methodological proposals present within the school context is laboratory activity, a modality that has specific methods and tools, the alternative of the traditional face to face lesson and allows the teaching-learning processes to take place within a dynamic environment and creative.

The student's body in the relationship it has with a specific learning environment, in this case the class, in which it is stimulated by the teacher, represents the concrete action of knowledge.

In the field of education, the tool capable of representing the reciprocity between theory and practice is the laboratory, an activity that allows the transferability of knowledge by using the body as a learning medium (Sibilio, 2002), through which to acquire those knowledge and skills which otherwise would remain inaccessible, but also as a real communication channel, able to convey emotions and feelings (Peluso Cassese, 2017).

The experimental approach involves the evaluation of a laboratory on corporeality in the school setting, in terms of effectiveness in the didactic-pedagogical development of students in physical and sports education. The assessment is oriented to the ability to increase the level of school well-being perceived by students and to their perception of the usefulness of the laboratory activity as an important and innovative element in support of the classical teaching methodologies of the school context through sports practice carried out in an activity. workshop focused on athletics.

- Methodological structure

It is essential to state that the experimental planning was based on the participation and thanks to the skills of the motor and sports education teacher of the "specimen" class subject to experimentation.

The academic discipline in which the laboratory on corporeality has been included is motor and sports education; the empirical research methodology object of the laboratory concerns athletics.

The sample group is made up of students of the third school year of a second grade educational institution: 11 Males (M) - 8 Females (F) - Average age 15.8

Duration: 2 months- 2 weekly meetings of 1 hour each- Total 16 meetings (16 hours)

Maximum limit of hours of absence for the student to be considered a valid element in the experimental project: 2 hours.

- Evaluation tool

The tool used for the Assessment was a short multiple choice questionnaire administered in an "anonymous" form. The prepared test provided that answer A always corresponded to a high level of evaluation, which was decreasing to a low level with answer D. In order to avoid a "no-answer" by the students, the number of questions was reduced.

The assessment test is shown below

| **MARK WITH AN "X" THE SELECTED RESPONSE (MARK ONLY ONE ANSWER)** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **QUESTION** | | **ANSWER** |
| **1** | With respect to the learning of Atletics, the activities of the Laboratory on Corporeity you have carried out were: | A. very useful<br>B. useful<br>C. not very useful<br>D. useless |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | With respect to the learning of Motor and Sports Education, the activities of the Laboratory on Corporeity you have carried out were: | A. very useful<br>B. useful<br>C. not very useful<br>D. useless |
| 3 | The fact of treating arguments through an experimental activity of the Laboratory on Corporeity made the subject of Motor and Sports Education: | A. more interesting but not more difficult<br>B. more difficult but also more interesting<br>C. more difficult and less interesting<br>D. less understandable |
| 4 | In the overall, did you like the activities of the Laboratory on Corporeity you have carried out? | A. a lot<br>B. enough<br>C. a little<br>D. not at all |
| 5 | The results of the Motor and Motor Education tests carried out at the end of the activities of the Laboratory on Corporeity, were: | A. better than my expectations B. in line with my expectations C. worse than my expectations D. I didn't carry out any tests |
| 6 | The results of the Motor and Sports Education tests carried out at the end of the activities of the Laboratory on Corporeity, were: | A. better than the grade that I usually record in this subject<br>B. in line with the vote that I usually record in this subject<br>C. worse than the vote that I usually record in this subject<br>D. I didn't carry out any tests |

## 3. Evaluation test Results and Didactic-Pedagogical Considerations

At the end of the 2 months of laboratory activities, the students attended the normal lessons of Motor and Sports Education for a month, and then underwent the evaluation test of the experimental projects. However, it should be emphasized that 1 student has exceeded the limit of hours of absence and has not been subjected to the final evaluation test, so the sample being tested is reduced to 18 students.

Below is the table with the results of the assessment test, which indicate the number of

students who have chosen each possible single answer.

| QUESTION | NUMBER OF STUDENTS FOR ANSWER |
|---|---|
| 1 | A: 12 – B: 4 – C: 1 - D: 1 |
| 2 | A: 9 – B: 7 – C: 1 - D: 1 |
| 3 | A: 13 – B: 3 – C: 2 - D: 0 |
| 4 | A: 14 – B: 2 – C: 1 - D: 1 |
| 5 | A: 10 – B: 6 – C: 2 - D: 0 |
| 6 | A: 10 – B: 6 – C: 2 - D: 0 |

The results show a prevalence of responses A and B compared to the rest. Specifically: answers A (68/108) - Answers B (68/108) - Answers C (28/108) - Answers D (68/108). The results obtained in socio-relational factors both towards one's "peers" and towards teachers are appreciable thanks to the laboratory activity based on corporeality, in particular through athletics within the Motor and Sports Education program.

A general improvement in the state of well-being was found in almost all the students, testifying to how much sporting activity is able to influence the key factors of the individual, which affect the educational growth path at school, in terms of learning the discipline.

However, the result cannot be conceived as "absolute" for some elements such as the small number of the sample, the very limited duration of the experiment as and, most especially, the analysis of the student's perspective alone, which provided only an appreciation, but it does not guarantee a certainty of the real effectiveness in terms of progress of the school supply in the long term.

## Conclusion

In this scenario, we wanted to highlight the concrete potential of a sports laboratory which results were appreciable in all the key determinants of school well-being in the students of the analyzed sample. This makes it possible to put forward the proposal to consider the presence of sports activities as a constant training reality in the school system capable of affecting the social and pedagogical aspects at any level.

Laboratory and Corporeity represent a combination that could mark the training process within the school system, offering an opportunity for growth through schemes and methodological approaches different from the traditional ones. The experimental planning has assessed, from the student's point of view, that there is a concrete educational, training and didactic potential to be exploited within the school discipline linked to motor and sports sciences.

Obviously, a limit of this work is certainly the number and the lack of heterogeneity of the sample evaluated. Future research ideas, in this regard, could be precisely the increase in the size of the sample and a differentiation of the same both by level of education and by type and direction of the school context; it would also be possible to analyze the feedback in terms of didactic and formative learning of a laboratory on corporeality both at school level in disciplines other than motor and sports disciplines and in non-school relational contexts of other individuals.

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