

EDUCATIONAL JUDO AND TRAINING SKILLS

JUDO EDUCATIVO E COMPETENZE FORMATIVE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how the noble discipline of Judo possesses strong educational values that can be spent in different contexts of life, being above all a very valuable tool for social inclusion; therefore, this passage investigates a possible application of the aforementioned discipline in its educational capacity within the educational institution and all the possible contributions that this martial art can offer, demonstrating the fact that the practice of Judo favors positive repercussions not only on the level of motor-sport activity or of the theoretical knowledge required in the various disciplines characterizing the school curriculum but also and above all as regards transversal life skills from an inclusive perspective.

Lo scopo del presente studio è quello di dimostrare come la nobile disciplina del Judo possiede delle forti valenze educative spendibili in diversi contesti della vita, trattandosi soprattutto di un validissimo strumento per l'inclusione sociale; pertanto, il presente brano indaga un'eventuale applicazione della suddetta disciplina nella sua veste educativa all'interno dell'Istituzione scolastica e di tutti i possibili contributi che quest'arte marziale possa offrire, a dimostrazione del fatto che la pratica del Judo favorisca ricadute positive non solo sul piano dell'attività motorio-sportiva o delle conoscenze teoriche richieste nelle diverse discipline caratterizzanti il curriculum scolastico ma anche e soprattutto per quanto riguarda abilità trasversali di vita in ottica inclusiva.

Key-words

Educational Judo, Transversal Learning, Inclusion

Judo educativo, Apprendimenti Trasversali, Inclusione

Introduction

Judo is a Japanese martial art that was born around the end of the nineteenth century and is based on the principle of flexibility contained in the word *ju* (Fabrizio, 1977). The term *judo* is, in fact, translated with the expression "way of compliance", as this discipline preaches the principle of flexibility, non-opposition to the strength of the opponent and its transformation into its own advantage. In front of a stronger opponent you would easily have the worst if, to his superior energy, he opposed resistance. Instead of resisting, it is better to indulge his own strength to absorb its momentum and make it lose balance once the thrust is exhausted. On the basis of this theoretical basis, judo cannot simply be considered a type of sports fight or a technique of self-defense, but takes on deeper meanings and values, which involve an exercise in mental and physical education (Antonelli & Salvini, 1978). The diffusion of Judo is mainly due to Professor Jigoro Kano who introduced the discipline in Europe when, in 1936, he went to Paris to plead for the entry of Judo among the sports practiced at the Olympics. On that date, Jigoro Kano had already glimpsed the great educational opportunity of his method that excluded every aspect of violence from the practice of this discipline; unfortunately, during the return journey, Jigoro Kano died and his project suffered a sudden halt also because of the war events linked to World War II that made the spread of judo in the world even more postponed (Terrell, 2004).

Immediately after the war, there was an evident development of the discipline all over the world, even if in some nations there was already a good knowledge of it: so gyms and schools were born and all kinds of championships were organized, until 1964 when, At the Tokyo Olympics, Judo finally became part of the Olympic sports (Allison, 2005). As a result of this event judo is transformed and becomes a competition where the result becomes fundamental for the affirmation of the master and athletes, where the victory becomes prevarication over the opponent, putting in the background, or even eliminating him from teaching, the educational aspect of the discipline that was and is the basis of the extraordinary diffusion of Judo all over the world (Mandell, 1989). Fortunately, many teachers have been able to mediate between the competitive will of their students and what are the educational purposes that the discipline imposes. It is in this direction that this contribution opts for an exquisitely educational interpretation of the discipline in the knowledge that judo can and must intervene, in a significant way, in the educational process of young people, teaching them behaviors, ability to control and respect others. Before venturing into the understanding of the main values of educational Judo, it is appropriate to dwell briefly on some aspects and essential elements of this practice. The place where the practice of judo is called *Dojo* and is almost always a sober place, sometimes even too, where the fundamental tool is the *tatami*: a carpet four centimeters high and at least sixty square meters large. The young students are educated to have in regard to the *tatami*, and consequently the teacher, a relationship of great respect: in fact, before going up, they ask permission and so "enter" into a "space of rules", limits but also the possibility of expression and role (Bourdieu, 1995). The assumption of the role makes it possible to understand the rule and therefore the context in which it applies. This basic approach also makes it clear to young athletes but also to parents who observe the performance of their children from *tatami* board, how much the prejudice of believing judo a discipline centered on the prevalence of the body on the mind is wrong. They, however, very soon realize that they are in an educational-motor and sports setting centered, mainly, on the awareness of the body-mind relationship through a training-oriented activity. It is evident, however, that this passage is made explicit only through the encounter with an effective teacher who deeply shares its approach. The first educational path, often, is carried out by parents who, faced with the

objective difficulties related to the motor behaviors of their children, find it difficult to assume an attitude of detachment and distancing, so useful to psycho-developmental young physicist (Masullo, 2016). From the very first stages of activity it is essential to establish a relationship of trust with the students and at the same time of rigor and authority (Giovannini & Savoia, 2002): it is necessary to make them understand all the potential they possess (in terms of endurance, physical and mental capacity) of which they are not always aware, often due to parents sometimes anxious and overprotective. All this, of course, happens by intervening in groups but also individually through specific activities that go to continuously stimulate attention, concentration, especially the control of the environment and, of course, the situation that can be from time to time playful-motor, playful-expressive, but also technical-sports.

1. The educational Judo

Judo is strongly educational in that it is a device that is both normative, behavioral, relational and controlling. It is essentially normative in how much it places rules, it allows their understanding and adhesion but also their interpretation so much that these, when internalized, they become intentionally acted behaviors from the participants (Porro, 2001). Judo is also a relational and control device as it teaches to use predetermined patterns but also to promote actions in a "self-determined" in contexts "not determined" in respect of the comrades, of opponents and control of their own strength; This is why judo, like most martial arts, effectively teaches self-control and discipline. The respect of the rules and hierarchies related to Judo makes you learn to be responsible to others by accepting defeats, controlling yourself in victory and helping younger and inexperienced comrades. Just with regard to this last fundamental aspect, in judo the role of the uke, that is, of the one who lends himself to the companion to perform the movement or apply the technique in a correct way, constantly keeping the attention on what is happening: Through this attribution of roles, the uke makes itself generously available so that the other learns, transmitting the value of collaboration and cooperation because to learn and progress you always need the other (Mangone, 2016). Judo helps, therefore, to grow consciously not through heteronymous indications but through a deep understanding of the value of the inter-subjective relationship (between companions and teacher) and intra-subjective (between body and mind). All children, even with disabilities, can be usefully addressed to educational judo from the age of 4. It is however appropriate that up to the age of 11 practitioners, without any distinction or selection on the basis of alleged psychophysical attitudes, are initiated into the practice of judo in the belief that the educational dimension is absolutely prevalent over the technical-sports one (Gasparini & Talleu, 2010). In this sense, educational judo can be defined as an intergender discipline or an activity in which boys and girls can participate indifferently and simultaneously, in close contact with each other, learn to understand diversity and belonging to different sexes in the absence of mistrust and preconceptions. If we want to outline the above, we can therefore say that Judo pursues objectives of a formative nature that allow the subject to improve the performance of the following aspects:

- attention and concentration;
- self and environmental control;
- reasoning;
- imagination.

With regard to the first objective "attention and concentration", observing the execution of a technique (which presupposes a sequence plan of actions even very complex) requires a strong attentional ability and, Similarly, its reproduction requires a highly specialized ability to

concentrate and select information (Di Franco, 2011). Regarding the "control of self and environment", placing the practitioner in front of always new and unpredictable situations, Judo pushes to produce always original and diversified bodily-imaginative-motor responses. With respect to "reasoning", Judo forces to think, reflect in a timely and focused on the motor schemes put in place by the opponent: in the absence of a capacity for reasoning finalized, the practitioner loses bite in practice and training. Finally, Judo exercises a marked ability to "imagination" especially ideational-motor: creating situations always new, pushes the subject to subjective simulation or the prediction of behavior, gestures and circumstances in respect of which there is a constant demand for modification and functional readjustment of the action patterns. For these reasons, Judo is considered a typically situational sport, that is, an activity in which the ability to control oneself and the environment becomes strategic. Moreover, it allows to fully mature the control abilities of the environment especially in relation to the development of neuro-cognitive-motor skills: educational judo, in fact, investing a lot on the understanding of the situation, ends up favoring a strong self-orientation competence; in this regard, the little athlete placed in a constantly changing situation is forced to build, deconstruct and rebuild new patterns of action and movement in which the cognitive-flexibility motor is the distinguishing feature. Therefore, the activity of constant restructuring of one's own condition stimulates to produce more and more sophisticated skills of observation, understanding, reasoning, simulation and, of course, prediction of the opponent's behavior. Many international studies insist on the benefits of judo in relation to learning performance and academic performance: judo, in fact, in addition to the advantage of maintaining fitness, produces self-confidence, enhances self-esteem, improves the sense of self-worth discipline, strengthens the social skills of the subject and, finally, stimulates the care for the appearance and personal hygiene, thus improving overall educational performance. In addition to enhancing these areas of expertise, it would seem that a correct practice of the activity favors a decrease in self and hetero-destructive violent behavior, antisocial attitudes and bullying, as well as significantly decrease the use of scurrile language: in this regard, it is however necessary to reiterate that such abilities can be cultivated provided that the educational setting is correctly interpreted by the teacher-educator and that he is able to make it strongly structured and orientating.

2. Description of an educational Judo meeting

The activation of educational proposals that take into account motor activity-sport as a personal training tool for the individual and a vehicle for transversal values is a subject of great educational interest today and on which we should constantly raise public awareness of the many benefits it brings in the bio-sphere psycho-social as well as in learning processes, especially in the early age groups. Unfortunately, however, there are still many obstacles that are encountered in the implementation of the movement in activities of a didactic nature and do not concern only human resources (perhaps the easiest to act on through training interventions) but, also and above all, environmental ones. Certainly a well-planned and structured teaching will always be able to overcome any kind of barrier because its strength will lie in the great flexibility in the possible situations that may arise but, on the other hand, it is true that part of the quality of the teaching-learning process will also depend on the adequacy of the teaching place. In this regard, it will be of great importance to conclude partnerships in the event of the absence or inagibility of the plants so that the bodies holding the most appropriate facilities offer the possibility of carrying out activities even to those who do not

have them. Each session must always follow a recursive structure that can be summarized as follows:

1) Initial or opening phase, called "welcome", characterized by a beginning ritual such as permission asked the Master to climb the tatami and followed by the "opening greeting"; this step pursues the precise objective of contextualizing the experience within a specific space-time;

2) Stage of heating, understood not only in a strictly physical but also in a cognitive sense, that is, characterized by activities aimed at recalling and re-appropriating the knowledge acquired and produced previously in relation to body patterns and to segmentary and global coordinating activities, static and dynamic; this phase responds to the objectives of improving the recognition and control of the different parts of the body as well as refining the capabilities of observation and imitation of gestures and techniques;

3) Phase of exploration-expansion, which is the time for the expansion of knowledge and skills related to learning new techniques; here the goal is to consolidate specific skills of a technical and functional nature;

4) Contextualization phase, characterized by the application of the knowledge/ skills acquired within the appropriate context (or within the randori);

5) Combat phase understood as a dynamic moment and synthesis between acquired/consolidated skills and new techniques learned; however, combat is not the only moment in which to contextualize the acquired knowledge but the so-called "return" space can also be playful-recreational as long as regulated by rules and values;

The objectives related to this and the previous phase are, in addition to the learning of technical structures of complex movements, also the consolidation of the socio-relational and educational aspect of the discipline;

6) The final phase, called "detachment", which, as for the reception, consists of a ritual that is found in the "closing greeting" followed by applause and the dressing room; this phase has the purpose of marking the end of the activity and therefore encourage separation.

The repetition of this scanning of phases, session after session, allows the subjects to mature the skills provided within a habitual space, strongly structured and for this reason reassuring and containing.

3. The benefits of educational Judo

Through a conscious and constant practice, judo is therefore able to bring numerous benefits:

1) In physical terms:

- allows you to burn calories, since, like any motor-sports activity, inevitably affects the speed of metabolism of the individual;

- increases muscle mass, since physical contact with the partner/ opponent is expected;

- develops perspective and improves coordination, joint mobility, flexibility and elasticity of muscles, balance and agility because the judoka must stand up trying to oppose the opponent;

2) From the point of view of emotional control and psychic harmony:

- increases self-esteem, helps to socialize and fight shyness, encouraging the individual not to be afraid of contact with others and to express himself through his body (Cvajner, 2015);

- improves concentration because you learn to think before you act and not to get carried away by emotions in the most difficult situations;

- train the spirit and moral abilities, as an essential requirement is the deep education and respect towards the teacher and the opponent and, consequently, teaches to correct aggressive attitudes, increasing the tolerance to frustration in a constructive way;

- promotes respect for the opponent, being a sport of personal defense makes it clear that you can leave aside violence and use techniques and methods that involve more the spirit and inner balance.

Conclusions

In the 20th century, for various reasons, judo was partially widespread. The most important aspect has been that of sports matches, while the theoretical basis has found difficulty in being understood (Gallino, 1993).

Without the support of these bases, moreover, the sports component itself has sometimes been misinterpreted. While professing the centrality of physical education, Judoists are often not recognized socially as having any moral value, as was the case in the early days of judo in Japan. A central topic in the sphere of Motor Sciences and Pedagogy in general is that of the re-evaluation of the body in educational action. Our society, especially in the crucial field of education, has been influenced in a decisive way by the conception of the human being as divided in its components of mind and body and it is evident how the school is, still today, deeply influenced by this vision of the individual (Tintori, 2010). Judo, on the other hand, is born in a society profoundly different from ours (Porro, 1995). Judo moves away from martial arts, characterized by the aim of obtaining effectiveness in combat, thus changing the purpose of the latter in educational purposes: if in martial arts the purpose is to achieve effectiveness in combat, the goal of judo is to be effective in the formation of the individual and, to this end, judo chooses the form of combat as a privileged experience of human being training. However, the bloody experience of the fight is softened by proposing the aspects useful for the formation. Through exercises in the discipline of attack and defense, judo aims at physical and mental education. Physical education is characterized by the purpose of obtaining a healthy and efficient body for the needs of life, and does not aim at muscle development for its own sake. Together with physical education, precisely because it is inspired by the experience of combat, it becomes intrinsic work on the skills of attention and deep concentration, Reproduced by eliminating the elements of danger of the actual duel but still seeking the same intensity. Through his teaching, judo also works on skills such as observation, imagination, discernment. In practice the student is urged to seek, in addition to their own improvement, also that of those who practice together with him: the principle that regulates judo in all its aspects, in fact, is the best use of energy to grow and progress together. In other words, when the student studies the combat aspect, he is studying the best use of energy in order to beat the opponent/ practice companion; engaging to the best of his abilities, The student sets the conditions for his partner to obtain the greatest benefits from the practice, because the latter will also be pushed to give the best of himself in facing the situation. With this collaboration, the training becomes more effective and based on this experience, the judoist is led to understand that, working together, it becomes possible to achieve higher results in any field of action. . On the basis of these considerations, it is possible to say in conclusion that educational judo is a discipline capable of maturing skills and attitudes socio-effective relationships such as to produce an extension of the baggage of behavioral and motor experiences that are used and applied in many circumstances of life. Judo is, therefore, an opportunity to make motor and sports practice an opportunity for growth and physical development, cognitive, emotional and social confrontation necessary with the rule and otherness, exercise of endurance and opposition, of encounter with success and acceptance of defeat in the knowledge that, as the Dalai Lama states «even when you lose, you must never miss the lesson».

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