DISABILITY, EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION: CORPOREALITY AS A PAIDEIA
DISABILITÀ, EMPOWERMENT E INCLUSIONE: LA CORPOREITÀ COME PAIDEIA

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Abstract
The contribution highlights the Biodanza SRT System as an innovative Embodied Centered didactic-educational strategy which, in a pedagogical, cognitive and social key, is able to promote personal empowerment and pro-social behaviors in people (with or without disabilities). Corporeity is understood as paideia or education for well-being and social inclusion. A pedagogical process which, through educational interventions, contributes to the enhancement of diversity as a resource, bringing benefits to the overall well-being of the person and to the promotion of an inclusive culture.

Il contributo evidenzia il Sistema Biodanza SRT come strategia didattico-educativa innovativa Embodied Centred che, in chiave pedagogica, cognitiva e sociale, è in grado promuovere nelle persone (con o senza disabilità) empowerment personale e comportamenti pro-sociali. La corporeità viene intesa come paideia ovvero l’educazione al benessere ed all’inclusione sociale. Un processo pedagogico che, mediante interventi educativi, contribuisce alla valorizzazione della diversità come risorsa apportando benefici al benessere globale della persona ed alla promozione di una cultura inclusiva.

Key-words Corporeity, Inclusion; Disability; Empowerment, Biodanza SRT
Parole Chiave: Corporeità, Inclusione; Disability; Empowerment, Biodanza SRT

1. Corporeality in the Embodied Perspective as a medium in the development of personal Identity and an Inclusive culture

All human experiences are necessarily mediated by the body. This mediation, through a process of awareness of its motor-cognitive-emotional potential, promotes self-awareness and the perception of their individuality and identity (Rosa, Ascione, Di Palma, 2020). "The first discovery that the child makes is the body and so also the first still indeterminate sensation of our bodily existence produced by the sensitivity of the internal organs is the cenestesi, fundamental and pretetic feeling of being” (D’Alessio, Minchillo, 2010). "Before the mental awareness of having a body the child is a body (...) in search of the experience of a body self-capable of giving meaning to the world" (Gamelli, 2002).

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Corporeality is not only about the initial time of the first explorations of the child, but about an entire life. We are educated by learning from others, from nature, from life with or without disability or "diversity", and the bodily reality is not only the first reality that every human being phenomenologically encounters, but is precisely that reality that defines, reveals, represents. It allows us to act, to communicate, to change reality. One can no longer think only of having a body, but above all of being a body (Balduzzi, 2002), which, day after day is built, not only in relation to one’s own experience but also in relation to other bodies and the environment in which one lives. The Body is a mediator of knowledge (Moliterni, 2013) and is also a language totally integrated in the process of maturation of personal autonomy contributing to the process of integral formation of the person. The Body in Movement turns out to be a real motor laboratory, educational, cognitive, functional and relational in which every person "lives himself, relationships and life". Body and corporeity are fundamental means for the development of identity, of the understanding of what happens and surrounds us, of knowledge and skills, of communication and intimate relationship with ourselves and with everything outside us, being "a bridge" towards each other and the world (Ascione, Di Palma, Rosa, 2019) allowing changes in their lifestyle improving the quality of personal and socio-relational life. There is no cognitive experience without the mediation of corporeality and the implication of the experience of bodily-emotional experience, fundamental elements both to know the sense of identity, and to favor a perspective of observation of self, others and the environment, also playing a fundamental transversal role that can be combined with other fields of experience (self and other, images, sounds, colors, speeches and words, and knowledge of the world). In the pedagogical-didactic context the construction of embodied theory (Varela, Thompson, Rosch 1991) thanks to the research of embodied cognition (embodied cognition) has contributed to the full recognition of the importance of the body in the mechanisms of knowledge (understood as an active process deeply rooted in the body of the individual and his biology) highlighting scientifically that cognitive processes are strongly rooted in the body (sensory-motor-emotional system) and in action and also are deeply located and interconnected with the environment (intersubjectivity) in which the human being lives, acts and interacts (Varela, Thompson, Rosch, 1992). The encounter with the other, both when it takes place in direct form and when it is mediated by what the other has created, as in the case of art such as dance, painting, literature or cinema, does not decline exclusively in conceptual and abstract terms, but always has a related body and incarnate. (Welsh, 2006). "It is the body that allows us to encounter the world and empirical data show that inter-corporeity is the basis of intersubjectivity" which is based on the exercise of a fundamental mode of relationship with the world: the empathic relationship. (Welsh, 2016). Empathy therefore forms the basis of intersubjectivity without which most social relationships would not be possible "it is an indispensable condition for the preservation of mankind that, otherwise, would have led to self-destruction" (Rogers, 2007). The focus of the commonly defined paradigm Embodied Theory (embodied knowledge) is focused precisely on the role of the body in the process of constitution and development of cognition and identity (Capuccio 2006; Gallagher 2005) and the relationship with oneself, with others and the environment in which you live. The dialogue between neuroscience and psycho-pedagogical sciences in recent years has increasingly focused on the role of the body and corporeality in the process of constitution and development of cognition and identity. The body as a device of action to experience the world is indispensable for the development of human potentialities, be they physical, motor, nonverbal, prossemic, emotional, affective communicative, In this way, social relations and corporeality assume a transversal importance not only for the structuring of knowledge but also become a valuable access key in the acquisition of inclusive, ethical and pro-social behaviors. Through living and inhabiting, corporeity is promoted: personal empowerment, problem solving, sharing, participation, inclusion, self-determination, rediscovery of oneself and one’s own life plan. Corporeality becomes a tool by which to build one’s own identity and increase one’s skills to act in
the world. "Recovering the sense of identity, the ability to empathize, to be protagonists of one’s life in respect of the value and dignity of others thus become primary objectives and key elements on which to focus an educational intervention" (Rosa and De Vita, 2018). Corporeity involves physical-motor, cognitive, emotional-emotional, psychosocial, behavioral, relational and cultural factors responding to the promotion and maintenance of people’s health according to a perspective bio-psycho-social contributing to the development of policies in favor of communities (Rosa, De Vita, 2019) in the perspective of an inclusive culture and society. In the perspective of inclusive teaching, differences are not only welcomed, but also stimulated, valued, used in daily activities to work together and grow as individuals and as a group (AA.VV., Erickson, 2015). Inclusion must start from the special normality, that is, from the need to feel like everyone else and from the need to be considered with respect to one’s own typicality. Starting from this dimension, education to corporeality, favoring the development of psychosocial skills of the personal, social, interpersonal, cognitive and affective area of each individual, represents the "elective space" in which to experience oneself by becoming, at the same time, the "privileged means" through which to develop and consolidate in people identity, self-efficacy (Bandura, 2000) self-esteem, personal autonomy, Ecological relationships ensuring personal gratification and full inclusion in social contexts.

2. Self-determination and personal empowerment as a factor of inclusion in disability

The principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities include a commitment to the full and effective participation and inclusion of disabled people in society, respecting their individual autonomy and independence, including the freedom to make their own choices, safeguarding equal opportunities and accessibility (Visentin, 2016). Moreover, at the international level, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, United Nations, 2006) and, at the national level, the Law on the After Us (L. 112/2016), already anticipated by L. 6/2004, have tried to develop theoretical and operational models to counter the "denied identity" (Goussot, 2009) in favor of the emancipation of people with disabilities. However, despite these recognitions, reality for many adults with disabilities is very different being however limited in their autonomy and self-determination in the decisions inherent in their lives and to express preferences regarding aspects mainly related to their daily lives (Agran, Blanchard, Wehmeyer, 2000; Mithaug, 1998; Nirje, 1972; Ward, 1992; Wellmeyer, 1997). In the field of psycho-education based on the model of self-determination Theory (Deci, Ryan, 1985) self-determination represents the ability to choose between different options determining, through these choices, their own personal action. This capacity requires not only precise individual skills (ability to choose; decision-making ability; ability to define goals; problem solving skills; self-defense and leadership skills; self-consciousness and self-knowledge; self-management and self-regulation skills) but also a particularly person-friendly environment (Deci, Ryan, 1985). Self-determination is a multidimensional construct that refers to the person’s ability to act as a primary causal agent in his life and to make choices regarding his own actions without undue external influences or interference (Wehmeyer, 1996). Self-determination stems from the inseparable link between individual development and empowerment that in an educational key translates into "allowing the activation of one’s personal potential through the creation of a "facilitating" environment where the actors involved may be able to co-evolve together in the direction of positive development" (Ghedin, 2009). The capability approach shares the perspective of inclusion and empowerment, according to a holistic view of the human being as the paradigm bio-psycho-social and ICF (WHO, 2001) with the interpretation of disability focused on the concept of operations, and the human rights perspective enshrined in particular by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UN, 2006). The promotion of empowerment (or agency) should be understood on the one hand as strengthening the potential of people with disabilities, on
the other, as acknowledging the role of disabled people in the community. The well-being of people (with or without disabilities) consists in the possibility of carrying out life projects and who are right to choose and pursue thanks to the capabilities they carry. "An education is truly suitable for freedom only if it is such as to form free citizens, citizens who are free not because of their wealth or their birth, but because they are able to independently direct their rationality" (Nussbaum, 2007). Autonomy, relationship and (personal) competence are the three psychological needs (innate and universal) intrinsic to the concept of self-determination, whose satisfaction - on which the individual motivation also plays a fundamental role - is crucial for subjective well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination means controlling one’s own life (Wehemeyer, 1998) therefore, if one falls into the realm of disability, it is evident that self-determined action is defined as awareness, (pro)activity, choice and participation. The ability to make choices in everyday life is one of the crucial skills to enable people with disabilities (in particular, adolescents and adults with severe intellectual disabilities) to define themselves, identify and reach the goals of life they set for their future (Ward, 1996). The self-determined person acts as a causal agent with the intention of building his or her future on the basis of both his or her personal skills and the opportunities that the environment must offer for such conduct to be truly implemented. Cottini (2016). The adult with disabilities is called to self-determination and special pedagogy must respond to this right and need by developing training programs aimed at promoting the skills to assume self-determined behaviors (Cottini, 2016) that promote access to adulthood. Through individualized inclusive programmes, the person with disabilities can achieve good levels of self-determination, with a better quality of life (Wehemeyer, Scharlock, 2001; Lachapelle, Wehmeyer, Haelewysck, Courbois, Keith, Schalock, Walsh, 2005; Wehmeyer, Scwartz, 1997 independently of its intellectual functioning (Carter, Lane, Cooney, Weir, Moss, Machalicek 2013; Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, Little, Garner, Lawrence, 2007). Working in the perspective of self-determination means changing the gaze and the educational approach by building «environments in which everyone can trace freely chosen spaces of action, at least within the limits of the possibilities offered by each» (Cottini, 2016) and implementing the courage of a «reform of thought» (Morin, 2000) and of a necessary change on the levels of culture, policies and practices (Gardou, 2006).

3. Laboratories Embodied Centred in the perspective of an Inclusive Culture

Inclusion is not a need related to disability: it is an overall investment and involves a process of profound cultural change. Diversity is "all; there are no tiny lives or uppercase lives" (Gardou, 2011), it is tension towards a culture of unity in diversity. In a context of normal specialty (Ianes, 2006) and in the perspective of inclusive strategies "the differences are not only welcomed, but also stimulated, enhanced, used in daily activities to work together and grow as individuals and as a group (AA.VV., Erickson, 2015). Inclusion can be defined as the degree to which a person feels free to express himself and feels a sense of belonging to a group. Inclusion, therefore, is not only welcoming everyone (integration), but also building paths that enhance everyone. It is not just about putting everyone in, but it is necessary to organize the activity to ensure that everyone can make their contribution as an added value therefore it is not only to be among others but above all to do with others and apply for others (regardless of their different abilities (physical or mental) or social conditions. Welcoming diversity and valuing diversity requires ingenuity and is a key to success at a methodological and educational level in order to offer a valid and effective intervention to a wider audience by creating a real inclusive culture. The Focus should focus on the practical experience of living and inhabiting the corporeality understood as paideia or education to psychophysical well-being and social inclusion. Paideia (Ancient Greek: παιδεία, paidéia) means formation or education and is the term that in ancient Greece denoted the pedagogical model in force in Athens in the fifth century BC. It refers not only to
the schooling of children but also to their ethical and spiritual development in order to make them perfect and complete citizens by encouraging a high form of culture that can guide their harmonious integration into society. In this perspective, the educational proposals are structured through Laboratories *Embodied Centred* based on the value of the relationship as a resource, through a constant training oriented to the development of life skills (emotional, cognitive, social skills) and psychosocial skills to promote inclusion, the development of the Global Well-being of the person (understood in its multidimensional cognitive, emotional, physical-motor, socio-relational, spiritual) and improve the Quality of Life. The general aim is to foster a correct growth of the person through the experience of inclusion lived through the experience of corporeity. Body mediation activities become an instrument of social inclusion of responsibility and empowerment when, by introducing in socio-educational contexts eco-positive factors, it facilitates the enhancement of talents, human exchange, ecological communication, tolerance, dialogue with diversity and inclusion. Corporeality takes on the meaning of the educational and formative challenge, of personal and community growth, in the search for appropriate lifestyles and therefore of well-being and competition (from the Latin *cum currere*), that is, of moving, starting, of walking together in the same direction but each with its own unique and unrepeatable way of being and being in the world. Centre of identity and pivot of every experience, corporeity acts as a personal and interpersonal mediator capable of letting us enter creatively into relationship with ourselves, with others and with the world. The laboratory of the body is that experiential space that, by giving access to one’s own inner world, allows one to incorporate knowledge and foster useful changes to one’s personal growth and existential development. (Rosa, Madonna, 2019a). In this interpretation the proposal of the Laboratories *Embodied Centred* represents a physical, emotional, social and mental place where the student develops a work on himself through *learning by doing*. Creating embodied based learning environments means prioritizing experiential education focused on innovative educational methodologies that use the body as a medium to facilitate cognitive processes, metacognitive and increase those personal resources useful to choose, pursue, orient and realize your life plan. Bodily experience, as existential and pragmatic field of manifestation of the living in which cognition is not simply performed but shakes (*enacted*), represents an extremely interesting field of study also for its concrete effects on the educational level (Francesconi, 2011). Therefore "the work in the body and through the body, through the use of adequate strategies, would create the conditions for a teaching that does not predetermine and programs, but that anticipates and foresees the consequences of the action" (Rivoltella, 2013).

4. BIODANZA SRT: Innovative Educational Strategy *Embodied Centred* in the development of identity, *empowerment* and social skills

The Biodanza SRT (Rolando Toro System) is a body mediation Pedagogy focused on a systemic approach methodology based on a *Biocentric Education* (life at the center) through which it is intended to promote and "embedded" knowledge through the languages of the body and emotions in order to facilitate the global and harmonious development of identity (Toro Araneda, 2012), personal empowerment and Inclusion. The word Biodanza is composed of the prefix "bio" (which derives from the term "bios" and means "life") and the word "dance" which in the French meaning means "integrated movement full of meaning". Semantically therefore the meaning is the *dance of life* where dance is understood as an integrated *movement full of life* (Fernández, 2012). Dance "constitutes the unity of man and his environment, of the individual and his group, of body and spirit" (Garaudy, 1985) and Rolando Toro, referring to the origins, promotes a dance conceived as a holistic reality, in which the body aspect is conjugated, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual of man. It is a system of integration and development of human potential that uses dance/movement, music and group meeting situations as methodological resources to induce integral experiences (Merlon, 2015) called...
vivencia: "the experience experienced with great intensity by an individual in the present moment (…)" (Toro Araneda, 2000), allowing people to make contact with themselves and their emotions, feel the body, develop your potentials and thus awaken your attention to yourself, others and the context, empathy, self-esteem, self-efficacy, the ability to listen and the reinforcement of a healthy identity. Biodanza SRT (Rolando Toro system) is an iado-affective-motor experiential system (Toro Araneda, 2007) that through the experience of the body, emotion and encounter restores the balance between "feeling, thinking, acting". Therefore, in Biodanza, realizing the "own dance" means integrating your own feeling with your own actions, to realize a communion between the feelings and emotions that animate us and their visible expression of our moving in the world stimulating people to reach a good level of self-esteem, personal affirmation and awareness of their abilities (self-efficacy) in order to act and find solutions (problem solving and decision making) freely implement life choices (self-determination). "Empowerment" is the result of learning experiences that lead the person to "know-how" and "know-how". By acquiring a "personal power" a better autonomy is promoted, guaranteeing also the best possibility of social participation because the person has more confidence in himself, He better develops his skills and talents by becoming the protagonist of his own growth and thus realizing his own actualizing trend: Empowerment (Rogers, 1969). Biodanza SRT is therefore a potentially fertile ground, of authentic construction, incorporation and validation of skills (Gamelli, 2009) of self-determination and empowerment. The Biodanza SRT system is based on the reality of the meeting, and on the fact that personal identity, in addition to music, is permeable to the relationship with the other. The group in Biodanza is an educational and educational resource that "is based on the belief that the active participation of each individual member of the group represents an enrichment for all others" (Ghedin, 2016) within which a real "empathic network" is built, constituting in effect an intersubjective space where there is a continuous exchange of experiences and mutual recognition that allows participants to mirror themselves, to recognize each other, to discover each other by strengthening the identity of each one and restoring awareness of their own process of transformation and change (Toro Acuna, Demelas, 2013). The function of the group in Biodanza is essential. The group is a matrix of rebirth in which each participant encounters the affective and permissive containment of his own change. The presence of the like modifies the functioning of the person at all levels, organic and existential. (Toro Araneda, 2012). In fact, from a study carried out in the field of Mental Health, in the participants of the Biodanza SRT laboratories was found a greater ability to "perceive their individuality and at the same time the similarity with others, not perceiving themselves as "different" but as part of a group" (Ghedin, 2016). The Biodanza SRT System, in the widest panorama of the human sciences, is proposed as an educational perspective that promotes the human value of each and diversity as a resource of talents by facilitating the recognition of its uniqueness in welcoming contexts in which feel totally belonging to the group/community "representing, in this sense, an inclusive reality for all those people who are in a difficult situation" (Ghedin, 2016). Through a person-centred approach, in a facilitating and non-judgmental climate (with respect and attention to Self and the other), Biodanza SRT induces people to weave "functional" interpersonal relationships and to live their lives fully and creatively. Positive vision (optimistic attitude), confidence in one’s ability (self-efficacy), active listening (effective communication), potential development (self-esteem)Empathy and emotional management are prerequisites for personal and collective growth and development (Rogers, 1980). The Biodanza SRT System represents an educational strategy Embodied Centred particularly innovative and interesting in fact in scientific literature emerges that it turns out to be:

• an important strategy to prevent emotional distress with significant variations on alexithymia (Giannelli, Giannino, Mingarelli, 2015).
a good methodology to reduce stress and improve mood, emotional intelligence, self-esteem, sense of competence, effectiveness and self-awareness, social skills (Castañeda, 2009; Villegas, Stuck, 1999; Stueck, Villegas, Terren, Toro, Mazzarella, Schroeder, 2008).

a good method that at a psychological and physical level (in children of school age) has produced effects that can be found on the improvement of emotional intelligence and self-esteem of pupils with sufficient repercussions also on life satisfaction (López, Fierro-Suero, Fernández-Ozcorta, Sáenz-López Buñuel, 2018).

From the study carried out in the field of Mental Health (Ghedin, 2016) it was found that participants have rediscovered their uniqueness they experience the joy of existing by rediscovering the pleasure linked to the body, the ability to get excited and to enter into a relationship with the other with whom during the dance a significant emotional and empathetic bond is established (Ghedin, 2016). Based on these premises, the ICF-CY mediation has been used as a conceptual ordinatory to find the results of clinical Biodanza in mental health, through the creation of a changing environment that promotes the well-being of the people involved (Ghedin, 2016). From a study focused on interventions of Biodanza SRT proposed to minors subjected to restriction regime at the IPM "Fornelli" in Bari has been highlighted a qualitative significance of the experience experienced by prisoners in all aspects estimated: cognitive-behavioral, emotional, motivational and relational and have facilitated the adoption of socially accepted behaviors that are the basis of reintegration into civil society (Rosa, Madonna, 2019a; Rosa, 2019). In an embodied key, the Biodanza System is presented as an experiential methodology in body mediation for an embodied cognition (Wilson, Golonka, 2013) and innovative educational strategy facilitating in people (with or without disabilities) self-determination, empowerment (Laverack, 2004, 2007), unconditional acceptance of diversity as a resource and an inclusive approach.

Conclusions

At the educational level, body mediation activities have many advantages. The body, being a medium, is able to develop individual skills that, improving personal empowerment, increase autonomy and self-determination that, in people with disabilities, become the cornerstone of their personal action. The expressive techniques (art, dance, theater, music, dance) act on the emotional sphere of the individual by improving the modulation and represent a valid communication mode of bridge (between the verbal and the non-verbal) towards the other and with oneself and corporeality is one of the privileged languages of the expression of identity. The encounter between disability and performing arts is a privileged space that offers not only new possibilities and new modes of expression, creative and personal freedom but also spaces for encounter, Comparison, socialization and opportunities in which you can find yourself mirroring and recognizing themselves in their and others diversity. Through inclusive programs realized through strategies based on the pedagogy of corporeality it is possible to facilitate in people with disabilities those skills that can make them able to control their lives by determining and self-defining that feeling of satisfaction that generates a state of subjective well-being. The inclusive pedagogical approach considers diversity a resource and is strongly oriented to value everyone (not only welcome) in order to create a real inclusive culture. Educating to the freedom of being and self-expression develops in people personal empowerment and forms citizens able to direct their choices and their life plan. The educational community and institutions are called to respond to this right and need by elaborating formative planning and
interventions that bring about changes, also at the cultural and political level, that can guarantee everyone the opportunity to live their lives in inclusive contexts.

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