

Pedagogical culture and Motor Activity

GIUSEPPE MADONNA¹, PATRIZIA BELFIORE²

^{1,2}University of Naples "Parthenope", ITALY

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to underline the extent to which Motor Activity is connected to Education and how much, especially regarding young practitioners, teachers and trainers need to develop a Pedagogical Culture.

This need arises from the observation, underlined by numerous authors, that it is desirable to reinterpret educational contexts and above all it is necessary to adopt more transdisciplinary, plural, multi-perspective approaches to face the modern challenges of educational action. It is therefore essential for the educator to have an approach and a culture that contemplate different fields, because this type of intervention method can prove to be much more coherent in relation to the complexity of modern society. Starting from the assumption that the approach in the educational field focuses more and more on practices, which integrate and complete the philosophical aspects of education, Motor Activity can become a winning card in the hands of educators, provided that the values conveyed through the teaching of sports practice are framed in a context of promotion and enhancement of the human person as a whole, and not only in the mere aspect of physical performance.

This type of approach is among the main topics of study of Sport Pedagogy, which is having an ever greater development in educational contexts precisely because of its applicability and simplicity of dissemination. At the center of the educational project is the care of the human person, through motor education: this is not a mere technical sport aspect, but a real educational system.

Key words: Sports Pedagogy, Corporeity, Motor Activity, Values

Introduction

In the field of educational research, the need for an approach focusing on practice, as well as on the purely philosophical aspects of the subject, is becoming increasingly evident. Moreover, the use of "conventional" models to be applied to educational systems appears to be a solution that befits, with more and more difficulties, a society that is increasingly multicultural, and which, on the other hand, requires a multidisciplinary educational approach.

From the point of view of redesigning educational contexts, but above all in order to reinterpret them, a possible significant approach is to observe educational phenomena and issues from a plural, transdisciplinary and multi-prospective perspective (Lo Presti, 2009), trying to interpret the complexity of educational issues.

Hence, the relationship between the various disciplines becomes a priority in the modern pedagogical process; all scientific fields can contribute to the educational process, and the transdisciplinary approach can turn out to be the most consistent one, given the changes in contemporary society.

In such a perspective, Motor Activity can play an important role; if properly applied, it can be a privileged vehicle for many positive values and can prevent situations of discomfort.

In fact, if we consider the person as a reality that concentrates in itself numerous aspects and characteristics such as awareness, integration, the ability to elaborate, to know, to plan and to experience emotions, it is clear that even the didactic-motor tool must be used to support cognitive functions before physical ones. The fundamental objective of the educator is to use movement and motor activity to pursue training objectives that are broad, not attributable to sports technique alone.

Corporeity

In an educational context, Motor Activity can be a means of cohesion and inclusion in the community, responding mainly to the socio-educational need of the educational institution for the construction of a real community experience, rich in values and principles and oriented to the marginalization of the degenerative aspects of agonism; therefore, it can be an activity which is not aimed at winning at all costs, nor at the search for a record or a performance.

If correctly conveyed, in fact, Motor and Sports Activities can represent a real training ground for autonomy that helps the children become protagonists of their skills, to use their potentialities and to confront themselves with the awareness of their limits and qualities.

By affirming the principle of equal opportunities in sports activities, the motor-sports experience assumes a highly inclusive character, capable of breaking down socio-economic barriers so as to build a space of rights, in which everyone brings his or her own human heritage.

From this point of view schools represent a formative environment capable of shaping culture through all its disciplinary fields, including sports, creating an educational dialogue between biological identity and social context in every experience, since "...man is subjected to the dialectical game between nature and history, between his skills as a biological human being and as a product of culture." (Bruner, 1998).

Sport must be perceived as a cultural laboratory, a place in which to identify the signs of history, to decode the customs and habits of a people, because much of human history must be written in the light of general cultural influences, as well as the influences of people, practices and the armoury of the culture to which they belong. Obviously, in a complex culture, among all these factors, a place of particular importance must be given to educational institutions (Gardner, 2001).

For this reason, the educational-sports learning environment is a real cultural incubator, intended to represent an educational research laboratory in the school, capable of shaping the recreational-motor experience by developing the noblest aspects of sport and its huge potential.

Pedagogy and Motor Activity

Everything concerning the educational problems related to Motor Activity falls within the field of study of Sports Pedagogy. According to Isidori (2009), it is from the need to "... renew and update the discourse on the pedagogical implications related to motor and sport activities in contemporary society, and to provide greater scientific credibility to Pedagogy applied to the field of Sport..." that Sports Pedagogy has undergone an important development in recent years, both in terms of focus on the subject and in its practical application into the educational contexts.

Among the most meaningful contents and fields of study of the subject, the one related to the values of motor practice is of particular importance. Indeed, although common opinion believes that sports practice involves a series of essentially positive values, such as cooperation, healthy living, solidarity, socialization and self-control, and despite the fact that, in most cases, practicing sport can be a solution to limit some critical issues typical of young people (such as using drugs and falling into situations of psychological, physical and emotional distress), it is true that there are several aspects for which sports practice can turn into something totally non-educational.

According to Isidori and Fraile (2008) there are three types of values connected to Sport:

- Pure values: these are those positive values that have the potential to ensure respect for the dignity of the person, and can contribute to his or her personal development. From the point of view of motor education, they must be considered as a reference point during all stages of the educational process. These are, for example, health and well-being, peacefulness, socialization, social integration, friendship, loyalty, motor creativity, self-improvement, self-control, and active participation. Unlike other human practices, in which prolonged effort plays a significant part, it is the particular value of lucidity - whether physical or intellectual - that must characterize motor practice. Its maintenance and implementation should be promoted by educators as much as possible.
- Counter-values or disvalues: they directly result from the bipolar nature of sports values. Each of the positive values identified above corresponds to an absolutely opposite concept. This type of imbalance and dystonia is usually generated when sports practice is not framed in the right context, i.e. when the aspect of the educational intentionality for the improvement of the person is overlooked. All the aspects that we do not hope to see in sports practice are represented in the disvalues: violence, manipulation, narcissism, hedonism, consumerism, sexism, and racism.
- Mixed values: these are those neutral values that, depending on the way they are presented and developed by sports educators and trainers, can take the form of values or disvalues. For example, mixed values are victory, reward, competition, performance, health and well-being, and identification with top athletes. When victory - which is a neutral value in itself - is presented as the only goal to be achieved at all costs, it can become a disvalue, because to achieve that goal the young person could, for example, take forbidden substances. Sports performance itself can become a disvalue if the young person, in order to pursue it at all costs, does not care about his or her health, for example by undergoing training sessions unsuitable for his or her age and body. The figure of high-level athletes also embodies positive values if they are positive examples; however, it is not uncommon for famous and high-level athletes to adopt non-educational behavior and become a bad example, thus embodying a lack of value.

Conclusion

The growing importance that physical and sports education is assuming in the context of educational processes must lead to a review of traditional beliefs and approaches to physical activity. We can no longer speak only of physical education as a set of technicalities linked to the improvement of sports performance, but we must broaden the vision, by including motor activity in a broader discourse of education and pedagogical culture.

The reciprocity of traditional methodologies and approaches and those more related to motor aspects can create a virtuous educational environment in which the focus is concentrated on people and their development seen as a whole, both from a physical, cultural and cognitive point of view .

The body, therefore, is no longer just an instrument "to be trained", but becomes an instrument of knowledge and growth of self-awareness: the training course, in this approach, becomes more important than the performance itself.

In the light of this analysis, it is the educational context and the quality and appropriate training of educators that plays the most important role. In a pedagogical-educational approach to Motor Activity, it is impossible to disregard respect and care for the human person. When this aspect is neglected or not adequately valued, even the sports practice can become a tool that, in the best-case scenario, does not bring educational benefits to young people; in the worst case, it can even become very non-educational.

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