

Original Article

Coach and/or Educator?

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Abstract:

Today's society with its increasingly frantic and depersonalizing rhythms, delegates to sport much more than an educational function it has always had for the growth of human well-being. In the past, playing in the yard was the first approach to sport. Today smaller and smaller children are faced with sport even at a competitive level. The sporting context therefore widens and becomes even more comprehensive than it always has been. It becomes the space in which to experience diversity, it becomes an exchange place and knowledge even of the universe of disability. A place to go beyond the limit and seek the depth of the gaze together. For this reason those who lead this path, those who find themselves in the role of godmother or godfather of growth must participate in a dynamic development that cannot start if not from listening and from being open to possibility. An increasingly role that has become a hybrid between coach and educator.

Key words: disability – sport – listening – education – trainer – athlete - diversity

Introduction

The objective of the article is to reflect on the sports context as an educational and training agency, which must include within it a figure prepared to approach the individual in an open and total listening manner, in order to guide him in his personal and specific path of growth, supporting it in finding all its resources and putting it in relation with its own and others' diversity. Then when this figure finds himself interacting in a group context in which people with disabilities are present, even more will have to appeal to specific competences in the pedagogical field. The coach will not only be a coach, the educator will not only be an educator

Material & methods

The body is educated through movement. Through movement begins one of the main paths of knowledge of oneself, one's body and its surroundings. This means understanding how to take charge of the discovery and experience of one's own motor skills, learning to manage and modulate it. In this phase the emotions and tensions that face each other, play an important role, leading the student to acquire a body independence that translates into the willingness of the body to do what's desired. The constant work in this direction constitutes the possibility of improving one's own attention span.

Results

With this fundamental assumption it's clear that the coach should not limit his gaze to the "material" component of the body or movement dynamics (Raiola, 2017, 2014, 2013). Listening to those in front of us must be global and the approach complex. Facing the knowledge of a person through a global approach and listening is the primary competence of the educator, trained in university courses and with a substantial experiential base behind his back. However this role cannot even be that of the educator, tout court, since many specific competences are called into question. When working with children or adults, who have a disability, the observation and consideration of all the components of the human being, from the body to the mind, passing through the emotions and the spiritual mystery that is inside in each of us, constitute the essential starting point (Gaetano, 2016, 2012). Therefore, better that our coach is supported by an education professional (D'Elia, 2019, Viscione et al., 2019, D'Isanto, 2016, Tiziana et al., 2018)). Nevertheless he too, in turn, to get the best realization of the above, will have to be more interested at the pupil than in applied physiology and technique, developing skills. operational linked to the sciences of education, which will have repercussions on the whole training, thus corresponding to the concept of the transversality of education through movement (Raiola, 2015ab), with the consequent active involvement of its pupils (Aiello et al., 2018). It follows that the guide figure in this process of self-knowledge and learning, or rather in this process of growth and self-development, is a hybrid that must keep the door of deep listening constantly open. In this way, learning will be carried out that has a favorable influence on development, taking into consideration the potential of the subjects, constantly

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stimulating them, but never exceeding those (D'Isanto et al., 2019) Contrarily, the comparison of the subject with a learning situation beyond his own functional possibilities, presents risks that could lead to an experience of repeated frustration that affects the psychic function. However, it's true that in overcoming frustration there is one of the most important growth dynamics: in the perception of one's own limit is a part of the motivation to overcome it. Motivation is primary engine of human action. So this hybrid of coach/educator must set an example of openness in the approach to those in front, to stimulate imitation so the person on the path does the same. Continuing the reasoning, we add that attention should be given not only on the pupil, but rather to keep the gaze on the pupil inserted in the experiential context, since if we can already speak of evolutionary dynamics within ourselves, the same dynamic takes place expanding it self and we take note of it only if we broaden our gaze to a wider universe, only if we break the framework of the limit to the person and immerse ourselves in the universe that considers the context, too. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is precisely that physical and psychic, emotional and exchange space, in which children learn in relation to peers through stimuli that context proposes.

Therefore, the coach/educator must constantly evaluate the degree of difficulty to be proposed and situation too, taking into account the functional and cognitive development of the subject, his motivations and his possibilities, but he must also stimulate the desire to overcome oneself. At the same time though, attention should be paid to the experiential context in which the person is inserted, especially when it comes to children. In the practice of a team sport (but we are convinced that also happens in individual sports) and in the learning process of the latter, it is evident how the principles of Vygotsky's theory are realized with respect to the ZPD, which is not limited at the school context and it's traceable in the dynamics of sports routes, where even more so for what we have written above, knowledge does not exist independently of who learns and is built through Cooperative Learning, in which each member of the group is a co-builder and has a specific role, everyone is mutual teacher of the other. In the ZPD the whole experiential context produces growth and dynamics of positive development: the educator is a guide who masters mediation skills and deep listening to ensure that everyone is able to bring out the best. Therefore, the instructor/educator will have to play two important intervention roles:

- psycho-affective: as a role of reassurance, stimulation, regulation, to favor comparison with the problem posed; be condescending, but also inflexible depending on the situation;
- operational: involving the necessary professional competence that allows to analyze the causes of a possible failure to be able to provide help to the subject. This doesn't mean finding the pre-packaged "good solution", but helping him to orient himself in his effort and in his perceptive attention linked to his personal situation. Just in this way, education through movement accompanies the person in evolution in the conquest of the unity and coherence of his life.

Therefore, from this point of view we can be affirmed that the "educational sport" has nothing to do with certain stadium attitudes, but highlights a work done within a group, as happens in the games of rules (so Piaget called it) in which it's the group elaborating the operation rules, building them up and understanding, as the need arises.

At this point the trainer, the educator, becomes a mediator who has the objective of ensuring that the training / game develops in the best way. That's allowing the subject to perform not only spectacular roles, as is often seen made in gyms, but will ensure, little by little, all situations, all functional roles for growth, are accepted, with the aim that whole team amalgamates and the work done acquires the right effectiveness. To achieve this, we must commit ourselves to increase the knowledge of sports operators, competent trainers and instructors, adequately trained to avoid the risk of exercising wrong roles or choices that damage growth or create further psychological problems for critical subjects.

Therefore, to carry out sports training that is adequate to everyone's possibilities, it is necessary to identify the competent people who deal, without hesitation, with young people with different problems, investing their time and will in their own preparation and implementation of the programs. However, this highlights educators/coaches must constantly train a lot: it also means that pupils themselves must be a source of growth and further learning for them. Physical and sports activity is an important and necessary opportunity for training and development for disabled and non-disabled people, adults or children. Through training, play and movement, we learn to explore the surrounding world, to relate diversity to each other to become creators of our growth. Physical activity can constitute, at any level, an essential food for the growth and development of the person as a whole.

Thelen and Smith argue that all our primary knowledge was formed through close interplay between perceiving and act on in particular contexts. It may seem paradoxical that humans has long realized ultra-fast, portable computers billions of operations per second performing, that know how to play and win chess games, but, if not properly educated, they are completely incapable of crossing a crowded room without slamming against the obstacles present in it. Yet in 1996 Garri Kasparov (b. Baku, 13th april 1963), considered one of the best chess player in the world, faced a series of competitions vs a computer called "Deep Blue". At the start of the first meeting Deep Blue made a move that confused Kasparov, who became nervous and began to think that the machine was smarter than he, so much so that he lost the game. Then he discovered that Deep Blue's move was the result of a programming error. This prove us that how much the creativity and openness to the unexpected, the ability to go beyond and break the frames, listening and even grasping apparently invisible

details, are the elements who permit us to move forward on our journey without ever losing, not even during a defeat or failure.

Therefore, through motor activity, the child nourishes the brain with new connections, expands the baggage of his experiences and memories, colors the world of emotions and discoveries. It is a regulated context where the child can experience himself and others, strengthen his body and widen unknown horizons. Through motor action the child expands his competences, acquires important skills and develops new awareness (4). Physical or sports activity, if properly proposed and managed, spontaneously solicits the child's desire to test himself, establish his competences and explore the surrounding world. In addition to the need for movement and education of one's body, physically activity can satisfy the need for self-realization, belonging, play and adventure and living in a natural environment (5). Surprise, curiosity and joy are easily observed in child who moves his first steps and explores the world around him through movement. We find the same emotions in adults who engage in extreme sports or who derive well-being from a regularly practiced sport. We find the same emotions in people with disabilities.

From recent researches in neuroscience's field, which approaches the human being in a similar way to how "quantum physics" reads the known world, it's now certificate as the emotional component, characterizes the human being, is a fundamental and inseparable part of the learning process. The mood and sensations we feel during a specific experience, will guide this experience in a process of sedimentation of the learning or removal of the aforementioned; we will be easier to learn a specific competence if the situation in which we learn it generates positive feelings in us. Mind (technique), heart (emotions) and I add spirit, are not split: as Daniela Lucangeli says in her "Quality Pills", by Erickson, "our brain is a sort of extraordinary biochemical re-bubbling in which everything we are, our "connectome", produces energy that propagates through the peripheral nervous system to allow us every vital action". Researches in neuroscience's field tell us that no act of psychic life is devoid of the connection between mechanisms that we distinguish in cognitive and emotional, therefore, these two functions are different but are activated simultaneously: every time a child (or a person) learns, together with memory mechanisms, attention, or in any case of a specifically cognitive type, we experience emotions. So, it produces a functional current that raises the energy circuit based on emotions, because when we sleep, we produce 3 hertz, then in wake up time produce 9, but when we are excited produce 15 hrz. This means that emotions have a strong energetic circuit which autobiographical memory is traced.

Semantic memories follow the path of usual learning, instead emotions go to build the autobiographical memory that will allow the child once grown, not to remember the mistakes made, but the fear that had errors if he lived through that learning situation as a situation of uncertainty, inadequacy and disconfirmation and this negative circuit will tend to settle down and repeat itself. This is why it is important that in the learning phase anyone perceives and is confronted with their own effectiveness, but also with their own limits or defeats, through a positive attitude and always ready to accepting the error for growth purposes. Therefore, sport should not be understood only as a profession or a form of human education, but, above all, as an idea, a form of culture that refers to a wisdom of ancient knowledge that doesn't end with the simple history of its modalities of practice or in the description of its different specialties. Sport has fundamental values embodied in loyalty, merit, mutual respect, in an effort to demonstrate personal excellence always expressed for the benefit of the community and never for personal interest; these values represent the very synthesis of Greek civilization and culture and its humanistic "paideia", at the center of which is the coach and his educational function (6). Sport is the space in which, today, fortunately, the right rituals of passage that mark the growth of the human being in an extremely positive way can be found and experienced: from the preparation and taking care of one's tools and aids kit, to tackling the tests that convey growth. It's ritualizing in overcoming limits and in introspection that leads us from confrontation with the other in comparison with the depths of ourselves. The task of the coach, who therefore works in this perspective, should be to facilitate the emergence and sharing of social and human values, on the will of his athletes trying to develop the required skills in them. If this were not the case, his teaching couldn't be called "work out" (a term that always refers to an educational practice) and the coach could never be considered like an educator, having to stimulate not only the commitment and the effort to view to achieving the final result, but at the same time at the motivation and integration of community. Consequently to this structure, the pedagogical characteristic of training sport stands out, which should not be understood as a suggestion inspired by a forced pedagogical vision, as an invention that wants to see an implicit educational at any cost, but emerges powerfully as an essential part of the whole. Since the dawn of sport, in fact, the educational component was essential in its philosophy. De Coubertin said that sport victory is always fruit of the will and never of a science in the strict sense. The father of the modern Olympics confirmed this belief because he believed that both philosophers and teachers had a fundamental function in the development of sport as a social practice and as a human good. Taking a leap of many centuries ago, we learn that Filostrato had already gone much further in the concept of education deriving from sports practice. In fact, he told us that training is the pedagogical tool for transforming athletics into an educational practice for young people and for the community, and sports knowledge is not at all a knowledge inferior to other knowledge. Sport training must indeed be a science that cuts out its epistemological and methodological space between pedagogy and medicine, including its knowledge and knowledge, and elevating itself to higher science that contributes to the development of "paideia" for a better ideal of education and training Human. With works that he left us, he let us understand how the founding

elements of the conceptual system of sport are always the coach, the athlete, the community and the various athletic disciplines practiced, bringing out sport as a universal cultural and practical it appears in apparently different forms in different historical times, but always immutable in the range of values it expresses. On this basis concepts, of condensed of sports culture, we think of the coach as a central figure of physical activity, a man of culture, well "trained" and "educated", able to bring back the whole knowledge of his art to the unified vision. Conscious and comforted by a scientific approach based on integration of interdisciplinary knowledge and never separated from wisdom and balance. From here it can be seen how the sport sends a powerful and vital message of a fully valid sport pedagogy, giving us an endless source of inspiration to follow (7). At comfort and consolidation of the above, in ancient times we find that also Plutarch (III century AD) affirmed that gymnastics (that is the athletic training art) is a form of knowledge (*sophia*), comparable to philosophy, to poetry, music, geometry and astronomy. On these cultural bases we must founding the action of educators, their knowledge and their observation, the application and care in studying, since they will must be a conscious tool of the path of growth of others, but also personal and constant. The Filostrato thought, from over 16 centuries ago, is a condensation of knowledge, a plunge into the ancient sporting world, that offers interesting and modern ideas of reflection, still very current, that touch on philosophy, psychology and above all pedagogy. In his treatise on training (original title "*Peri gymnastikes*") we learn lessons on ethics and knowledge of the ancient world, which result in a concentrator of many concepts still valid today. Sport, athletics (as it was said to mean a competitive act) was not just moving the muscles, not just strategy or technique, but it was above all the search for the "arete", that is to say of one's virtue, of one's value with the in-depth study of "*sophia*", that is, knowledge in a broad sense. So a coach could not think of let win an athlete if he had not previously had the ability to convey their virtues and knowledge to them. It was a way of interpreting the sport that has been lost over the centuries, but which we absolutely must find when we go to offer the sport to people with different skills. Before searching for the result, before seeking great performance, we must seek integration by increasing their virtues, their way of being and accepting themselves and others. Being aware of oneself helps to live better and to try to enter the society without too many traumas. In this sense, Filostrato is extremely current. For him, the coach has a fundamental role: he must be a convincing man, a well-rounded pedagogist. A technician coach who motivates in an agonistic way, but at the same time pushes the knowledge of his athletes towards other panoramas, which are those of acceptance of oneself and others, of awareness of one's state, never giving up, as well as old coaches and their athletes did not surrender. Suffice it to think that the motivation was such that some conceived death rather than defeat, but always with a fund of awareness and profound culture. A surely exasperated aspect that can no longer be accepted by the modern world, but surely, mitigating those that are the extremes of these philosophical concepts of sport, today we can say that they had a great culture, a profound preparation not only athletic, to arrive at a result not at "any cost, whatever it costs !" is an interpretation that belongs to us even today.

Conclusions

Taking inspiration from Filostrato, we all, coaches, instructors and athletes, but also parents, should look for the "*paideia*", a term in which we want to mean an ideal of education and global formation of the human being. When faced with another human being we ask ourselves who he is and in which direction he is walking, if we are coaches / educators we cannot avoid placing ourselves in the profound mood of listening. Every human being must move towards the maximum integration of body, mind (technique if we are in sports field) and spirit. In sports practices lived with awareness, the sense of the mystic and spirituality lead the human being in search of his own maximum expression for himself, but above all for others along with himself.

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