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## CORPOREAL ASPECTS OF LEARNING: ADVANCING INCLUSION THROUGH EMBODIED EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

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**Abstract:** Physical activity is an important tool for integration and inclusion that leads to respect for diversity because the need to move is also fundamental in the person with disabilities as it expresses their physical, emotional, mental, and social potential that emerges in the dimension in which the subject is in tune with himself, the family, the community and the world in general. Motor activities represent a privileged meeting point of diversity, which is thus included without distinction using the abilities of each one. The heterogeneity of students with special educational needs requires the implementation of a variety of responses that, by combining good didactic/educational planning with innovative pedagogical devices, are able to carry out individualized and personalized interventions by enhancing the resources of the school community. The present work, focusing on corporeality as a cognitive device, opens a reflection on the way in which to operationalize the educational process by initiating and implementing new personalized teaching protocols.

**Keywords:** Academic achievement; Physical education; Pedagogy; Special pedagogy.

### Introduction

School is one of the main places to measure a community's ability to create an environment that welcomes differences. Inclusion is not a passive adaptation of the student to a defined model, but it is a process in which one relates to others, exchanges ideas, learns new knowledge, thus becoming a moment of individual and collective growth (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006). An inclusive school is, therefore, a school in which everyone's differences and everyone's identity are respected, whose goal is to bring out students' abilities, guiding them towards academic success, placing the person at the center of every educational action, taking into account the singularity and complexity of the individual, his or her identity, of their aspirations and weaknesses, in the various stages of development and formation (Ministerial Decree no. 254/12).

Inclusiveness, therefore, does not only concern pupils with disabilities, but all those who have specific educational needs: the goal must be to create a non-marginalizing school, where the well-being of pupils is the primary

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condition, which derives from teaching strategies and teaching methods that allow the sharing of knowledge, full accessibility, in which social justice and educational equity prevail (Wilkins, & Nietfeld, 2004).

The current guidelines in the pedagogical and didactic field, in fact, affirm the dignity of diversity, enhancing it as a resource for the entire class group, capable, through the enhancement of the potential of each one, to become an inclusive class.

An inclusive school is a school that thinks and designs with everyone in mind, starting from the modification of the context and not acting only on the subject, but finding specific strategies, suitable for the disability, useful for the community. Starting from this idea, school physical education represents the ideal space in which to experience oneself starting from what a person is able to give or do. It is how pupils can create their identity, develop their autonomy, improve cognitive processes and strengthen interpersonal and social relationships (Qvortrup, & Qvortrup, 2018).

Physical activity is an important tool for integration and inclusion that leads to respect for diversity because the need to move is also fundamental in the person with disabilities as it expresses one's physical, emotional, mental and social potential that emerges in the dimension in which the subject is in tune with himself, the family, the community and the world in general. Physical activity represents a privileged meeting point of diversities that are thus included without distinction using the abilities of each one (WHO, 2015).

In the school context, it is necessary to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to participation in motor and recreational activities with other children (UN, 2006). The educational nature of physical activity makes clear the need for it to be conducted in a way that respects the diversity of individuals, both in order to allow the widest participation and in respect of the peculiarities and specific educational needs of each one. If it is really connoted in educational terms and not oriented towards achieving results at any cost, through the body and movement it is possible to promote the expression of the person in a pleasant and welcoming context, support the individual in the acquisition of personal autonomy and contribute to the development of self-awareness and self-esteem. Person-centred physical education can promote the processes of inclusion and cohesion of the individual in society, both for able-bodied people and for those with disabilities, since it allows everyone to explore deep traits of the self in interaction with the particularities and difficulties of the other and to undertake further significant experiences, such as interpersonal communication, cooperation, respect for rules, solidarity, fairness, justice, increased motivation, encountering frustration and overcoming it. Physical education should therefore no longer be understood only as education of body movement, but as education of the subject through movement, in order to intervene also as a facilitator of school learning in subjects with special educational needs (Juvonen, Lessard, Rastogi, Schacter, & Smith, 2019).

Practicing regular physical activity is of fundamental importance in order to adopt a correct lifestyle, especially during developmental age. School physical education, in particular, offers an essential contribution to the learning and development of motor skills and the promotion of physically active lifestyles. Physical education, in fact, brings numerous positive effects on the growth and psychophysical development of the person, promoting a qualitatively better lifestyle from childhood to adulthood. Physical education, especially in the primary school period, is the first structured setting for the child in which he has the opportunity to carry out motor experiences, of a qualitative and quantitative nature, which allow him to be fully involved not only on the physical-motor level but also on a cognitive, emotional and social level. It is clear, therefore, that in addition to ensuring harmonious

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physical and psychological growth, motor education promotes school learning processes and the achievement of logical-operational skills, improving the degree of socialization and enriching the emotional participation of students (Clark, Dyson, & Millward, 2018). At school, motor activities proposed in a playful form become didactic and educational tools as they are able to stimulate metacognitive, expressive-communicative, psychic and physiological mechanisms. In this sense, school motor education must be oriented towards the development and improvement of sensory-perceptual skills, basic motor patterns and postural patterns, motor skills and abilities, in order to create a broad and satisfactory motor background.

Hypokinesia and motor illiteracy, in fact, have strong negative repercussions on growth, maturation and physical and cognitive development critically compromising the adequate developmental process of children. Through motor activities, in fact, an unavoidable contribution is proposed to the development of motor skills in developmental age, necessary prerequisites for acquiring physically active lifestyles and for participation in sports disciplines (Braga, Mattos, & Cabral, 2021).

In the face of all these considerations, it is therefore evident that the objectives of motor education involve the biological and psychological development and growth path of the youngest, allowing them to develop physical, relational, and cognitive skills necessary to feel good about themselves and others. Physical education is, in this sense, a discipline that has as its intrinsic value the ability to develop all the functions of the areas of the learners' personality: intellectual, social, affective-emotional, organic, and motor, which are all in close relationship and interdependence with each other. Through physical education, in fact, it is possible to transmit to learners a whole series of knowledge and skills that can be transferred to other life contexts (life skills). Practicing physical activity at school allows you to learn about and internalize concepts such as respect for the rules of the game, fair play and body awareness (Ainscow, 2020). In addition, physical education helps to improve discipline, learn teamwork, and test one's decision-making skills (Ballard, 2018). In order for these theoretical concepts to be achievable in daily teaching practice, it is essential that physical education in schools is driven by a strong pedagogical intentionality, in order to design new and inclusive didactics, animated by a deep critical reflection implemented through proposals that stimulate culture and provide alternative languages to communicate and to provoke emotions.

### **1. The body and movement as a means of learning**

The body and its kinesthetic manifestations play a fundamental role in the evolutionary and formative process, they contribute to the growth and global maturation of the subject by promoting the awareness of the value of the body and the conquest of autonomy, the construction of personal identity and the acquisition of skills. The educational choices of the Primary School, therefore, must necessarily consider the value of the body and movement as a means of formative action (Zembylas, 2019). In fact, motor activities have an educational value that concerns both the training process and the results, but above all the way in which the students process the latter. Therefore, the positive connotation attributed to motor activities must be referred to the educational contexts in which they are carried out. This highlights a pedagogical vision that does not consider educational motor activities regardless, but according to the approach with which they are proposed to the younger generations, conveying extremely different contents in relation to the way in which they are proposed and practiced. Therefore, education through the body and movement cannot be linked to didactic strategies related only to doing but must

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also and above all be realized in a condition linked to the deeper meaning of being an acting person in the environment (Garrett, & MacGill, 2021).

It is for this reason that physical education is at the center of a profound pedagogical debate in which educational practices are inserted that must inevitably consider the complexity generated by these fields of experience, which must be approached with a scientific method, since educating is always a subjective, personal experience, not absolute or merely transmissive. It is precisely this transformative experience that allows us to educate through the body in movement with awareness, intentionality, motivation and competence. Physical education thus becomes respect for diversity and individual learning rhythms through bodily action, in an effort to find an educational action that is lived in the unity of a circular and meaningful relationship between cognition and physicality (Naraian, 2021). Physical education is therefore an essential element for integrated growth. It follows that, through a conscious pedagogical orientation aimed at proposing significant motor experiences and the acquisition of new skills, it is necessary to promote an adequate motor planning that correlates with a coherent pedagogical intentionality, in order to adequately define motor action and to attribute a fair value to it. Therefore, education through the body and movement cannot be linked to didactic strategies related only to the practice of sport but must also and above all be realized in a condition connected to the deepest meaning of one's being in relationship with the surrounding world (Naraian, 2020).

Starting from these assumptions, the school must, therefore, become the ideal setting in which to build a didactic of motor activities that looks at the educational conception of the body and movement understood as a factor of promotion not only of the aspects of self-construction but also as an educational exercise for the acquisition of healthy lifestyles that allow to improve the well-being and health of the individual. In this sense, it becomes necessary to integrate both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of physical activity into teaching practice, in order to allow a global take charge of the psycho-physical health of the subject (Hortigüela-Alcalá, Barba-Martín, González-Calvo, & Hernando-Garijo, 2021).

Physical education must, therefore, necessarily become essential to the formation of young people. In fact, it contributes to their growth both in structural terms and in relation to the formation of the self that concerns the body, its potential and its limits, its position in physical space, its perception in relation to others, its image. Physical education also plays a crucial role in directing motivation to improve one's individual skills and self-determination in achieving psycho-physical well-being. Therefore, it not only has the educational value that contributes to the development of motor skills, abilities and competences, but also and above all the value of all those activities that, through movement, contribute to the structuring of identity and awareness of the potential of one's own body. Physical education is, therefore, given the value weight of the positive exaltation of the opportunities to gain experience, to enter into relationships and communicate with others, to express oneself with different languages, and to act as a link in learning contexts for the realization of interdisciplinary teaching. In this sense, all school disciplines can become part of a unique and extraordinary educational path in which movement represents the privileged means of acting towards a conceived, new, and integrated teaching through which learning can be experienced thanks to movement (João, 2019).

The physical education conceived and experimented in this way puts into practice a didactic that becomes a tool for the metacognitive development of the body and mind, in a framework in which the subjects can recognize themselves in body and movement. The education of the body and movement is therefore aimed at a training

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process capable of allowing learners to achieve an ever-greater awareness of their body in movement to obtain that intrinsic pleasure and the achievement of cultural, social and expressive factors that identify the value aspect of motor activities. It follows that the educational process represents the tool through which the individual gives shape to his or her personal identity, integrating all those knowledge, skills and competencies that allow him or her to live and mature an increasingly complete self-awareness (Hutzler, Meier, Reuker, & Zitomer, 2019). In this perspective, the deepest meaning of educating is expressed in the ability to generate a relational fabric that leads each person to knowledge of oneself and the world, revealing one's attitudes and skills.

### **2. Physical Activity and Embodied Learning**

Physical education is involved in the process of full inclusion and is seen as a strategy to improve the educational development of young people. Establishing an educational continuum between the process of acquiring school skills and the activities that take place after school and in the family plays a fundamental role in the realization of a common and shared educational pact. Physical Education is able to build a cooperative learning environment and develop virtuous peer learning processes. Several studies (Barber, 2018; Muñoz-Llerena, Pedrero, Flores-Aguilar, & López-Meneses, 2021; Tarantino, Makopoulou, & Neville, 2022; Thorjussen, & Sisjord, 2020) have shown that participation in the practice of physical education induces pupils to:

1. achieve better learning outcomes;
2. promote greater self-regulation and general well-being;
3. have a more positive attitude towards school;
4. cultivate greater ambitions regarding one's own growth and learning.

In a perspective of inclusive physical education, it is of fundamental importance to implement a methodological orientation aimed at organizing the learning process with mixed teams, including pupils with and without disabilities.

By exploiting a model of psychoeducational intervention that integrates the educational aspect with the psychological and relational one, through motor activities, it is possible to create the ideal conditions for the person with disabilities to benefit from a learning context intended as the growth and structuring of their personality and for the search for the greatest possible degree of autonomy. This means, first of all, valuing the diversity of the student, which is to be considered a resource and an asset. In this sense, collaboration and teamwork are essential for everyone's growth. The deep and indissoluble relationships that bind corporeality to the formation of one's individual and social identity and to learning, support a new holistic vision of motor skills that cannot be reduced exclusively to a mere result of strictly biological processes, but must be considered an expression of intelligence, affectivity, and conscious selfdetermination. In a dynamic exchange with social behaviors and communication systems, cognitive processes related to learning can all be considered cognitive mechanisms based on motor skills (Reina, Hutzler, Iniguez-Santiago, & Moreno-Murcia, (2019).

Based on this consideration, the didactic approach developed in the field of physical education, especially in the context of primary school, represents an excellent inclusive framework for the overall growth of pupils with and without disabilities. In addition, peers represent a resource with significant potential to facilitate the process of real inclusion of the pupil with disabilities both in the community and in the school. A series of actions, both direct and indirect, are needed to help create an inclusive climate within the classroom in which the acceptance of diversity as a value is taught, in whatever form it manifests itself (Giese, & Ruin, 2018).



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Moreover, disability is a condition that inevitably involves the family. Parents are the bearers of a knowledge that is crucial for the design of a teaching that is truly inclusive; For this reason, it is necessary to look at the educational relationship from a systemic perspective. Disability is not an individual condition, but the result of the relationship between the individual and the context. For the success of an inclusion journey, it is essential to recognize that all parties have a decisive weight.

The 2012 National Guidelines confirm this vision of physical education that "promotes self-knowledge and one's potential in a constant relationship with the environment, others and objects. [...] therefore, it is an opportunity to promote cognitive, social, cultural, and emotional experiences [...], it promotes the value and respect for agreed and shared rules and ethical values that are the basis of civil coexistence [...]. Participating in sports and motor activities means sharing group experiences with other people, promoting the inclusion of pupils with different forms of diversity, and enhancing cooperation [...] through the motor dimension, the pupil is facilitated in the expression of communicative instances and discomforts of various kinds that are not always able to communicate with verbal language" (MIUR, 2012).

Physical education has, therefore, an essential value in the inclusive design process because it is the most favorable environment not only to explore and try experiences related to bodily and motor action, but above all because it allows the entire existential field of the pupil to be involved, creating strong links with all dimensions of the personality, acting as a trait d'union between school and family environment. The executive aspect of motor action is integrated with value, semantic and relational aspects and motor behavior becomes an expression of one's "being".

The educational value of physical education, in terms of contribution to the formation and development of the person, has been strongly supported by the European Council, which has repeatedly underlined in its documents the need to associate physical activity with education programs. It is precisely this educational nature of motor and sporting activity that makes it necessary for it to be conducted respecting the diversity that exists between individuals, to allow the widest participation in respect of the peculiarities and specific educational needs of each one, as it constitutes an important opportunity for growth for each subject, regardless of his or her personal and social conditions. but above all it allows to realize social inclusion.

In the 2021-2022 school year, 316 thousand pupils with disabilities attended Italian schools (+5% compared to the previous school year), the result of greater attention to diagnosing and certifying the condition of disability among young people, the increase in the demand for assistance from families and the growing sensitivity of the ordinary education system towards the issue of school inclusion (ISTAT, 2022). This shows how physical activity, particularly in the school environment, plays a very important role in welcoming the diversity and inclusion of disabled children, without negative effects on peers without disabilities and with positive effects for the growth of both. Physical and sporting practice, in fact, allows everyone to express themselves, fulfill their potential and enhance themselves by instilling confidence in all people, in whatever condition they find themselves, pushing them to get involved.

Living, working, and sitting next to each other do not always correspond to the activation of inclusive learning environments that foster meaningful learning experiences together with others, with the sharing of work objectives and strategies which is why Physical Education and Sports Education has an indispensable value in the school curriculum. It represents, in fact, the most favorable environment for exploring and experimenting with

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experiences that can be traced back to corporeality and motor action and allows all pupils to be involved at the same time (Gaintza, & Castro, 2020).

Creating inclusive teaching through physical activity means calibrating the proposals in relation to the observed data and the potential of the disabled person, through strategies such as deconstructing and breaking down complex tasks into simpler ones, so that the whole group is allowed to participate in the teaching-learning process (Opstoel, Chapelle, Prins, De Meester, Haerens, van Tartwijk, & De Martelaer, 2020).

However, effective inclusion for students with disabilities during school physical education hours is still being developed in many European countries. Some data from the monitoring of the International Paralympic Committee (CIP, 2012/13) show that about 30% of Italian students with Special Educational Needs do not participate in motor and sports education lessons, highlighting how it is not yet recognized as functional to socialization, body knowledge and body experience, especially for people with special educational needs. This lack of participation in motor activities underlines that unfortunately even today, in educational institutions, the sports tool is not considered useful for the cognitive development of students. This is probably due to the difficulty of teachers to move away from the feeling of apprehension at the idea of including disabled students in the classroom physical education hours, not knowing how to include and motivate the whole group or, again, to evade, at times, the strictly didactic aspects in favor of educational strategies oriented towards inclusion. In the literature, it is also affirmed and discussed that seniority and age have an impact on the inclusive attitudes of the teacher. In fact, younger people, and those with fewer years of service have more inclusive attitudes than their older colleagues, although they show greater difficulties in managing the disabled (Pangrazi, & Beighle, 2019).

The meeting point of the various teachers could be the transversal skills, which lead them to focus on the identification of the student's personal aptitudes rather than on the critical issues in the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge. Physical education and sports, in particular, offers students the opportunity to communicate their being through corporeality, also becoming an expression of educational, training and learning processes. Through the body and movement, in fact, it is possible to learn and communicate. Each teacher must observe the children and read the messages that their body sends through movement, a direct and free expression of their being. The various activities that can be carried out during the physical education lesson, which amplify the relational and communicative aspects of acting (assumption of roles, exaltation of moments of aggregation and collaboration, etc.), create situations rich in predictable and unpredictable aspects that cannot and must not escape. Starting from the assumption that each student needs, indifferently, appropriate educational proposals, the teacher will have to create the conditions of acceptance and collaboration such as to allow adequate participation in the activity. Therefore, we must not be intimidated by what is different, we must not think that we do not have the tools to reduce differences but, on the contrary, we must focus on the similarities and advantages of being different, designing strategies to enhance these differences. Focus on students' motor skills and use movement to improve their skills (Tanure Alves, van Munster, Alves, & Souza, 2022).

It is in this perspective that meaningful learning is configured, that is, the way of structuring teaching and learning processes, in a way that is intentionally oriented towards the promotion in the individual of the determination to learn, through his full and total involvement with respect to cognitive, emotional-affective, and motivational processes. With a view to overcoming a purely transmissive type of teaching, it is essential to identify

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interventions that favor the activation of strategies distant from a merely performative and aesthetic/healthy approach, re-evaluating the educational aspects and the intrinsically embodied essence of motor activities.

The directives coming from the pedagogical context therefore underline the need for an embodied-centered teaching that emphasizes the role of corporeality to promote transversal skills. This requires a teaching/learning strategy based on active and constructive action that encourages exploration and the search for solutions. The creation of embodied-based learning environments, oriented towards the awareness of one's own body and the recognition of creative thinking in action and movement, can be a factor that contributes significantly not only to the improvement of motor mastery, but also to favor, through it, the development of other cognitive skills. It follows that the relevant objective of any educational action should not be represented so much by the production of learning as by the formation of integrated training profiles (Standal, & Aggerholm, 2018).

Interpreted through the eyes of teaching, the body intervenes in many processes. The willingness to relate to the other is embodied in postures and attitudes that express interest in the other, influencing the relationship. In the enactive classroom, rigidity and detachment between teacher and students are abandoned, to become a system in which the acting elements live a history of changeable interactions and reciprocal transformations, through which the entire system evolves into a process that involves the person. The relationship between teacher and student develops through two different needs in tension, the one aimed at ensuring the necessary learning and the one relating to the emotional and relational well-being of the person. Knowledge is not seen as a mere notional transmission but is understood as a process to be actively built together with respect to which it will not be possible to define a priori the objectives to be achieved precisely because they depend on the contribution made by the parties involved (Devís-Devís, Pereira-García, López-Cañada, Perez-Samaniego, & Fuentes-Miguel, 2018). It is clear that any educational and didactic project cannot ignore the consideration of didactic action as a unitary spatio-temporal dimension within which teacher and student intersect in a sort of heterotropia, driven by a need to 'meet', as teaching and learning are processes of accompaniment and continuous transformative confrontation for both. Thanks to the process of didactic en-action, cognitive, affective and relational networks are built embodied and situated, within which each actor in the game changes as he modifies the surrounding environment just as en-action transforms the system during the process. In this sense, knowledge becomes a state of the person in transformation and involves cognition-bodyenvironment in the space of action and co-emergence of the transformative system (Pot, Whitehead, & Durden-Myers, 2018).

The need to equip children with important experiential backgrounds implies a remake of the *modus operandi* of the classical school. In the Italian school context, the need to recognize the relationship between learning and embodied experience has been only partially accepted, continuing to reveal a strong didactic rigidity on the part of teachers. In the 2012 Ministerial Guidelines, it is clarified that, starting from primary school, teachers are responsible for promotion so that they can instill in students the ability to give meaning to their experience (Miur, 2012). Hence the urgency of a re-evaluation of educational choices and the search for the most appropriate strategies, paying particular attention to combining different fields of experience and creating a deep interconnection between disciplines, in order to ensure wellarticulated educational paths.

In the primary school curriculum, a strategic role is assigned to direct experience, which allows children, if properly guided, to acquire knowledge in a meaningful way. Primary schools recognize this plurality of elements that create opportunities for different emotional and cognitive growth (Miur, 2012). Activities based on bodily



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and kinesthetic aspects fully respond to this educational challenge, acting as an ideal tool to implement flexible, efficient and alternative educational itineraries, complementary to traditional teaching. The school must be able to present the experience of one's own bodily experience not as an end in itself, but must teach students to be aware that their body must be educated on a par with the mind.

The acquisition of motor skills, as defined by the MIUR (2012) regarding the educational objectives at the end of each school cycle, represents a very complex field, which is enriched through the personal inclinations and attitudes of each learner, allowing the achievement of results capable of promoting the diversity of each and every one. Therefore, it is urgent to encourage the re-evaluation of educational practice through the renewal of educational paths that can rediscover in the body and movement precious tools for access to knowledge, forges of learning and human relationships, ideal contexts for expression and communication of one's inner world and structuring relational empathy.

In light of the above, it is important to highlight how programs that introduce the embodied experience in the different learning curricula, with the shared goal of promoting everyday physical experience and cognitive performance, are the most effective methodological and didactic approaches. In addition, from an inclusive perspective, it is of fundamental importance that each activity is designed to be within everyone's reach, in order to organize a learning process that includes pupils without anyone being excluded.

### **3. The role of teachers**

Teachers are considered to be those who, more than any other educator, can accompany individuals on their journey towards the development and structuring of personality, social relationships and the acquisition of healthy and active lifestyles. The role of the teacher is to plan, guide and support the involvement of pupils in experiences that are rewarding and meaningful and allow them to develop self-esteem and self-respect. They must ensure that the ways in which they interact with pupils, place motivation at the center of their teaching action, which plays a fundamental role in the process of involving children and young people in physical activities. Motivated students are eager to learn and enthusiastically participate in learning tasks. They generally have confidence in their abilities, work hard to complete a task, and show determination to pursue their goals. Motivated students appreciate challenging tasks, experiment with different learning strategies, and have the highest expectations of success (O'Connor, 2019).

Lack of motivation leads to a lower sense of perceived self-efficacy, which is a factor that affects the development of motor skills. Drawing on the research of Epstein (1989) and Ames (1992), the TARGET model can be an effective model for promoting a competency-oriented motivational climate. It uses the acronym of the English words Task, Authority, Recognition, Grouping, Evaluation and Time, to propose the most effective structural features aimed at acting on motivational processes. Specifically, in order to create a motivational climate, teachers should orient the structure of the physical education lesson by proposing varied and diversified motor tasks, encouraging the autonomy of the student, the recognition of the value and commitment demonstrated, cooperation and teamwork and the flexible management of learning time. Through its application, in fact, the teacher can promote in students the perception of a competency-oriented climate, aimed at increasing the most rewarding motor experiences in students in such a way as to be able to maintain high motivation to practice physical activities at different ages and in different contexts. For his part, the teacher will have to acquire the awareness that operating in the concrete dimension of bodily experience assigns to motor education an important role to the extent that it

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becomes an integral part of a pedagogical process that turns its gaze to the person in the most important and decisive phases of his or her physical, cognitive and person-making development. This puts the bodily dimension at the center of the didactic practice, so that corporeality and motor skills become the place of the communicative event, giving meaning and significance to the interpersonal and, consequently, educational relationship (Invernizzi et al., 2019).

In order for all this to be transferred into teaching practice and not remain just a mere theorization resulting from scientific evidence and a reference to legislative norms, it is almost essential that all those involved in the processes of primary school education, through specific training coherently related to pedagogical knowledge, are able to interpret and critically understand the educational values of physical education in order to engage in the search for meaning and in the experimentation of new teaching methods. In line with other European education systems, the legislation in force in Italy defines the continuous training of teachers as a measure to promote development, with the aim of refining the set of skills previously acquired and updating teaching, methodological and application practices, in order to promote meaningful learning and conscious and effective actions. According to this perspective, inservice training represents a sort of cultural reorganization, a real process of retraining with a view to enhancing the identity of the teacher. In the current school dimension, teachers are faced with several issues of deep current interest, such as inclusion, foreign languages and, of course, the prevention of youth distress. They will have to address many areas for which inservice training will prove to be a valuable support for the educational approach with students. Teacher training plays an important role in creating a close link with the quality of teaching transmitted to children. A teacher who knows how to get back into the game, consolidating his professional identity and increasing his knowledge, is certainly able to take up a challenge and open to new things. Teacher training in this way makes it possible to ensure that students always have new opportunities, abandoning the old training models. Children, in fact, need to be trained as people, which is why it becomes essential to deal with new teaching methods and proposals. Teachers have the opportunity, in this way, to orient and guide students to discover the world around them, to know themselves better, to consciously choose their own path, starting with their school career (Morgan, Sproule, & Kingston, 2005).

In our school system, however, this intervention strategy is not given the right importance. Until now, in fact, the cultural debate on the importance of physical education for the psychophysical well-being of children has developed mainly in the specialist and scientific field, more and more often outside the school framework. The current need to share a new system of meanings of physical activity and to bring it back to its educational and training values as extraordinary tools for building skills that can be transferred to other contexts, can and must become a symptom of the process of innovation in the current school reality. Therefore, the urgency of a pedagogical innovation in the field of school motor activities must be directed towards the development of a curriculum that will force teachers and pupils to acquire skills and a greater awareness and mastery in understanding and creating significant links of relationship between different disciplinary areas, going to have a positive impact on the didactic-educational path of the pupil himself.

## **Conclusions**

In the perspective of a good didactic practice, the applicative dimension of physical education in primary school places the body and its kinesthetic manifestations as the founding nuclei of the educational experience. Therefore, a reading of didactics from a phenomenological and neurobiological point of view shows that a didactic made up

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of participatory corporeality, which puts the mind-body relationship at the center of the learning process, which does not respond to a rigidly reproductive mechanism of a motor model, but is able to use previous experiences, modify and adapt them, is the didactic one capable of implementing an adequate planning related to a coherent pedagogical intentionality. It is according to these guidelines that it will be possible to build paths of meaning based on a methodological approach centered on the significance of bodily experience. The most recent neurophysiological theories affirm, in fact, that not only is perception the basis of movement, but that movement itself is a source of perception, experience and learning as motor activity provides the means to explore the world and learn its properties. The body and its kinesthetic manifestations play a fundamental role in the evolutionary and formative process, they contribute to the growth and global maturation of the subject by promoting the awareness of the value of the body and the conquest of autonomy, the construction of personal identity and the acquisition of skills. The educational choices of the school, therefore, must necessarily consider the value of the body and movement as a means of formative action. According to this perspective, the school is called upon to organize curricula capable of responding to the needs of children's learning and personal growth paths that respect their individual differences in relation to interests, rhythms, learning styles, attitudes, and inclinations. At the same time, its action must also be oriented towards the design of a school environment in the form of an experiential place, creating organizational conditions that can put in place the possibility of growing both on the cognitive side and on the emotional and motor side through comparison with others. The school must be able to create the best conditions for these actions to affect the didactic design and the educational relationship, in order to facilitate and promote in pupils the motivation to learn and grow.

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