

Experimental project for pedagogical growth through motor activity

CLORINDA SORRENTINO 

Pegaso Telematic University, Naples, Italy

ABSTRACT

The discovery of the body is one of the fundamental elements in the development of any individual, especially in the first years of life. Educating for movement through physical activity is a fundamental factor for the pedagogical development of the child. In this regard, the research work presents an experimental project that through motor activity has the aim of improving and stimulating some social and motor skills and competences essential for the pedagogical training of the child.

Keywords: Experimental pedagogy; Pedagogical growth; Motor activity.

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 **Corresponding author.** Pegaso Telematic University, Naples, Italy.

E-mail: clorinda.sorrentino@unipaegaso.it

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INTRODUCTION

"You can know more about a child in an hour of play than in an hour of conversation" (Platone).

In the first years of life, the child expresses himself and his emotions through play and movement. It is therefore essential within schools to promote significant motor experiences for the development of children.

Precisely in this phase they become aware of their own body, using it from birth as an instrument of self-knowledge in the world; in fact, moving is the first learning factor: discovering, playing, running is a source of well-being and psycho-physical balance. The body must therefore be considered as the fruit of relations with the world. It is not only a tool, but it is that place through which all facts, languages happen and develop. The body is the interior that opens, reveals and reveals itself. It is in the relationship with others through it that subjectivity is experienced. Every movement it makes is a signal that must be interpreted; the body also has its own languages and can express itself in different ways, through the verbal, non-verbal, mimic, visual, symbolic channel. Curt Sachs states in his text that all higher creatures express their feelings and emotions through movements and gestures. Indeed, only man is able to regulate and coordinate emotional impulses, since he is the only one with a rhythmic consciousness.

The same National Indications place attention on the centrality of the body and movement in the child's development process.

The kindergarten offers motor activities through psychomotor pathways.

These paths take the form of exercises progressively connected to each other, where the goal is not the impeccable achievement and execution of technical gestures, but the acquisition of "mental-logical processes through motor experience". Psychomotor activities must put the child in a position to think, elaborate, experiment with the different possible solutions. In this perspective, the relationship that the child experiences with his body becomes fundamental.

Psychomotor activities involve the Basic Motor Schemes, as well as the first global expressions of dynamic movement, including the most common actions we use every day, for example: walking, running, jumping, throwing, climbing, rolling, and which are the basis of more complex gestures, therefore also of sporting ones.

An educational path can be a valid tool to promote the well-being and growth of children. The school in its "educational environment" wants to contribute to their growth, promoting their integral well-being, enhancing the wealth of each person, ensuring a welcoming atmosphere where every situation and every person in its diversity, becomes a great resource and opportunity for growth for all.

EXPERIMENTAL PROJECT

The project initially worked on the knowledge of the body, then moved on to the acquisition of the basic motor patterns and ended with games that summarized what had been done, thus enhancing socialization, memorization, coordination and respect for the rules.

General objectives

The project aims to: - create a favourable climate to develop attention and concentration, - develop listening skills, - encourage autonomy, - arouse curiosity and pleasure in discovering different motor patterns or group games, - encourage socialization among children.

Learning objectives

Specifically, the child:

- Can move in space,
- Can control his body,
- Can perform motor patterns,
- understands and carries out the indications provided to him,
- Can relate to others,
- Respect the rules.

Fields of experience

In drafting the project, the following fields of experience were taken into account:

- The body in motion
- Knowledge of the world.

With reference to the first field of experience, the goals we examined were:

- The child fully lives his own body, perceives its communicative and expressive potential.
- Recognizes the signals and rhythms of your body,
- He enjoys movement and experiences postural and motor patterns, applies them in individual and group games, even with the use of small tools and is able to adapt them to environmental situations within the school.
- Check the execution of the gesture, evaluate the risk, interact with others in movement games.
- Recognizes your body, its different parts and represents the body still and moving.

The goals relating to the second field of experience are:

- The child groups and orders objects and materials according to different criteria, identifies some properties, compares and evaluates quantities.
- Look carefully at his body
- Identify the positions of objects and people in space, using terms such as forward / behind, above / below, right / left, etc .; correctly follows a path based on verbal indications.

Context

The project is implemented with a five-year section of kindergarten, consisting of 16 children, including 9 boys and 7 girls. Inside the section there is a foreign boy and a girl with autism (H).

The lessons are weekly (every Thursday) and lasting two hours (from 10:00 to 12:00).

The meetings are divided into four moments:

- Preparation and reception in the gym (appeal to which each child responds with a movement of his choice): 20 minutes,
- Presentation of the activity: 10 minutes,
- Procedure: 60 minutes,
- Conclusion (verbalization by drawing or orally and return to class): 30 minutes.

Times have no absolute value but may vary according to circumstances. The space in which the activities take place is the kindergarten gym, located on the second floor of the building and shared with the primary school, being part of the same school complex.

Gym materials used:

- Search,
- Cinesini,
- Carpets,
- Obstacles of various heights,
- Balloons,
- Skittles,
- Plastic tube (tunnel).

Other materials:

- Double sided Scotch tape,
- Sheets of paper and placards,
- Card with images of animals,
- Sponges.

First meeting

The children, arrived at the gym, and finished the reception phase, prepare for the first activity: the expert offers them the song "head, shoulders, knees and feet" 4 in order to assess the level of the section on knowledge of the body. At first the expert shows the children the movements to be performed, then, having become familiar with the parts of the body involved in the song, the pupils are invited to carry out the exercises independently.

In a second step, the expert proposes a consolidation game. The children are arranged in two rows, after being divided into teams. Opposite, on the opposite side of the gym, there are two placards depicting a human torso, while the remaining parts of the body, equipped with adhesive, are contained in a basket at the foot of the placard. Through a relay, the children will have to reach the poster, look for the part of the body required by the expert and attach it in the right position.

Back in the classroom, to conclude the meeting, the children create a drawing of their body and record the activity carried out.

Remarks

The proposed activity recalls the following target of competence of the "National Indications" relating to the field of experience the body and movement: "knows the different parts of the body and represents the body in stasis and in movement".

Critical issues

Not all children showed full awareness of the different parts of the body; some presented difficulties in discriminating between right and left, especially the girl H; the foreign child showed uncertainties in naming the parts of the body.

Second meeting

From the knowledge of the body we move on to the first and simple basic motor patterns: walking and running. The expert proposes two rhythms of clapping: when the expert claps his hands slowly, children must walk, when he claps faster, children must run. The expert prepares a path in which the children will alternate walking and running according to the lines drawn on the floor with scotch tape. The lines will be of three types: continuous, dashed and curved.

1. Solid line: children walk forward,
2. Dotted line: children run forward,
3. Double continuous curved line: children walk within the spaces,
4. Double dotted curved line: children run within the spaces,
5. Red continuous line: children walk backwards.

The route is repeated three times, starting from the fourth time the expert introduces small obstacles to avoid: three on the solid line and one on the dotted line.

The activity is aimed at making children orientate in space, discriminating running from walking and promoting memorization.

Remarks

The children were able to adapt the movement to the beat performed by the expert and, in most cases, they followed the course correctly.

Critical issues

Three children had greater difficulty memorizing the sequences and the little girl H followed the path without obstacles to avoid emotional overload.

Third meeting

The previous lesson was preparatory to today's activity. The expert puts 16 cards on the floor corresponding to the number of children in the section, depicting the animals that jump, crawl and crawl: kangaroo, frog, rabbit, snake, caterpillar, dog, cat, lion. The cards are upside down. The children move freely in the space and, at the whistle of the expert, collect one of the cards and imitate the animal depicted. At the next whistle, the children place the card on the ground and start moving freely. The activity is repeated 3 times.

Later, the children are arranged in a row along the wall of the gym. The expert shows one card at a time and invites the children to collectively reach the opposite wall of the gym by reproducing the movement of the animal. The activity is repeated with all the cards.

The day ends with the graphic representation of the experience.

Observations

The children were particularly involved given the presence of the animals and almost all of them managed to reproduce the movements easily.

Critical issues

Some children have shown small difficulties in imitating crawling animals. During the first activity, the little girl H found it difficult to carry out the proposed exercise due to a cognitive overload due to the excessive inputs provided. The difficulty presented was burdened by the confusion in the gym.

Fourth meeting

Once you have tackled the motor patterns of crawling, crawling, jumping, walking and running, an activity is proposed that encompasses them all. The expert proposes to the section the game "Queen Reginella": the children are arranged in a row at the bottom of the gym and must chorally recite the following nursery rhyme turning to the expert (Regina):

"Queen queen, how many steps do I have to take to get to your castle, with the faith and the ring, with the tip of the knife?".

The expert replies by assigning to the children a certain number of steps, associated with an animal (those illustrated in the cards of the previous lesson). The game ends when all the children reach the Queen.

We opted for a game without winners, to maintain a peaceful and positive atmosphere within the group.

Subsequently, the expert prepares a 5-step path that the children will carry out individually:

1. Slalom race between the pins (without dropping them),
2. Jump in circles (alternating feet together and feet open),
3. Crawl under the tunnel,
4. Crawling under obstacles,
5. Walking in balance on a line.

Remarks

The game "Regina Reginella" has been revisited so that all the children arrived at the same time as the Queen without decreeing a winner. The course, on the other hand, was used as an assessment of all the engine patterns addressed.

Critical issues

During the journey, some children dropped the pins, while others had difficulty jumping in the circles and were unable to coordinate. Little girl H played the first path acting as a model for others. This strategy responds to a dual purpose: to enhance its abilities and avoid annoying waiting.

Fifth meeting

On the fifth day, the expert proposes activities related to the basic motor scheme of throwing and grasping. At first the pupils perform exercises independently with the use of light balls: one-handed and two-handed bounces and bounces, from different heights and in various directions.

Later, the children are arranged in a circle and have to call a partner of their choice to throw the ball at. Finally, after being divided into teams, the section is arranged in two rows. Each team is given a ball that the children will have to pass, one behind the other, based on the indications given by the expert:

1. The children are standing and must pass the ball over their heads;
2. The children are standing and must pass the ball under their legs;
3. The children are standing and must pass the ball to the side;
4. The children are seated and must pass the ball over their heads;
5. The children are seated and must pass the ball to the side.

Remarks

To involve the girl H more, the expert decided to position her as the leader.

Critical issues

Unlike the other days, the children were less involved in the proposed activities. In addition, some children have shown difficulty grabbing the ball.

Sixth meeting

On this day, an activity is proposed to enhance eye-manual capacity and the motor pattern of throwing. The expert presents the symbolic game "flying baits" to the section. Children must pretend to be fishermen and throw their bait (sponge) into the ponds. In the first phase the circles are placed near the children, while subsequently they are moved away to increase the difficulty.

In the second phase, the children are asked to throw the coloured sponges into their respective circles (the blue sponge in the blue circle, and so on).

An oral verbalization follows.

Observations

All children carried out the activities correctly, showing enthusiasm and participation.

Critical issues

The girl H participated in the games but had slight difficulties in associating the coloured sponge with the respective circle.

Seventh meeting

After paying attention to the basic motor patterns, the subsequent activities focus on group games to encourage socialization, integration and all aspects related to it.

The section is divided into two teams that are arranged in a row facing each other. The expert assigns each pair of opponents a colour and a ball. The children will have to memorize the assigned colour and when they are appointed by the expert they will have to exchange the ball by rolling it. Next, the rules of the second activity are explained: "hand grenades". The goal of the game is to block the ball thrown by the opposing team. If the ball falls the point the opposing team gains it.

Remarks

The activities are designed to strengthen eye-manual ability, motor coordination and memorization. The pupils were involved and the girl H actively participated in all the proposed activities.

Critical issues

In the first activity, the children were confused in remembering the colour assigned by the expert, an aspect probably dictated by euphoria; in the second activity, some children had difficulty calibrating the throwing force and grasping the ball.

Eighth meeting

The day's activity starts with the game "when the cat is not there, the mice crawl".

Initially the expert chooses a child called to play the role of the cat whose job is to catch the mice that come out of the den (the companions).

The game involves the presence inside the gym of an area (made up of mats) called the "den" in which the mice hide.

At the expert's way, the mice begin to crawl freely, while the cat sleeps in the corner. When the cat wakes up and says "miao", all the mice hide, while he tries to catch them.

The mice that are caught turn into cats.

The activity ends with the drawing and its verbalization.

Observations

The children responded positively to the activity. The analog mediator and the change of role made the game even more engaging for the section. Little girl H had fun playing with her own companions.

Critical issues

It was difficult for some children to accept the change of role during the game.

Ninth meeting

The penultimate meeting focuses on the realization of an authentic task in order to demonstrate the mastery of the children compared to what was tackled in previous meetings.

At first, the expert told the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" in a revisited way, paying attention to the journey the protagonist takes to get to her grandmother. The children are told that Little Red Riding Hood, during his journey through the woods, will have to cross a river, climb over trunks, pass through bushes, run away from mice, jump on boulders, etc.

In a second moment, the section is divided into groups of four children who will have to collaborate to carry out their path in the woods. The expert puts some tools at their disposal and lets them discuss.

In this way, children develop creativity, recall their previous knowledge and cooperate with each other.

The pupils agree on four different paths in four stages.

The lesson ends with a drawing and its verbalization.

Observations

All the children participated with interest and curiosity in the proposed activity.

Critical issues

A group of children showed difficulties in reaching the realization of a path (which would all agree).

Tenth meeting

To conclude the course, the expert decides to carry out the activity in the school garden, taking advantage of the beautiful day. Before meeting the children, 20 objects (10 for each team) are hidden in the garden. Pupils are taken outside where the expert explains the activity: the section is divided into two groups and each team is given a box containing ten different objects to look for.

The goal of the game is to find the same objects in the box.

The activity ends with a snack.

Observations

The activity stimulated the children both from the point of view of socialization and of memorization.

Critical issues

During the hunt for hidden objects, some children found objects of the opposing team and rather than leaving them where they were, he brought them into the opposing box (wanting to take credit).

EVALUATIONS AND CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

Table 1. Ex-Ante evaluation.

Subject	Orientation	Body control	Execution of the gesture (motor patterns)	Participation	Relationship with others	Respect for the rules
1 F	2	1	1	1	2	1
2 F	1	1	1	2	2	2
3 M	2	2	1	3	1	1
4 M	2	3	2	3	3	3
5 M	2	2	1	2	2	2
6 M	2	1	1	2	1	1
7 F	3	3	3	3	2	2
8 M	2	2	2	2	2	2
9 F	1	1	2	2	2	2
10 M	2	2	2	2	1	1
11 F (H)	1	1	2	2	1	2
12 M	2	2	2	3	2	2
13 M	1	1	1	2	1	1
14 F	2	2	2	2	2	2
15 F	2	2	2	1	1	1
16 M	2	2	3	2	2	2

Legend: 1 = Little (the child performs the activity superficially, showing gaps and difficulties). 2 = Enough (the child performs the activity fairly correctly). 3 = A lot (the child performs the activity correctly, showing himself involved and motivated).

In general, at the end of the 10 days there was an improvement both from a motor and a social point of view. The proposed activities were an opportunity for fun, but certainly also for personal and social growth.

A few children, who initially showed shortcomings and difficulties in coordinating movements and orientation, at the end of the project achieved greater mastery in movement. The same applies to the social sphere in which the improvements have been evident.

In the individual paths proposed, the children had the opportunity to get involved in the first person, clashing with their own limits and difficulties, but not for this by becoming demoralized. Surely, looking at the partner,

imitating him, allowed a better execution of the proposed exercises. Not only that, the games that provided for the formation of couples were of great importance because they were preparatory to group activities.

Table 2. Ex-Post evaluation.

Subject	Orientation	Body control	Execution of the gesture (motor patterns)	Participation	Relationship with others	Respect for the rules
1 F	2	2	2	2	2	1
2 F	2	2	2	2	2	2
3 M	2	3	2	3	2	2
4 M	2	3	2	3	3	3
5 M	2	3	2	2	2	2
6 M	2	2	2	2	2	2
7 F	3	3	3	3	3	3
8 M	3	3	3	2	2	2
9 F	1	1	2	2	2	2
10 M	2	2	2	2	2	2
11 F (H)	1	2	2	2	2	2
12 M	2	2	2	3	3	3
13 M	2	2	2	2	1	1
14 F	3	3	3	3	3	3
15 F	2	2	2	2	2	2
16 M	2	2	3	2	3	3

Legend: 1 = Little (the child performs the activity superficially, showing gaps and difficulties). 2 = Enough (the child performs the activity fairly correctly). 3 = A lot (the child performs the activity correctly, showing himself involved and motivated).

By comparing the two evaluation tables it can be seen that many children have achieved better results, while only a small minority remained at the initial level.

In particular, the little girl H scored higher in the final evaluation both from the point of view of body control and from the relational point of view. The fact that the expert, in some activities, chose the little girl H as an imitation model for others, played an important role. This made the girl feel particularly involved and motivated.

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