

# Úvod do kreativního pohybu, tance a divadla v kontextu inkluze

## Introduction to creative movement, dance and theater in inclusive context

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### **Abstrakt:**

*Tanec je znám jako fenomén objevující se v rozmanitých formách, různých významech a způsobech aplikace. Je součástí života, části regionální a místní kultury, je vlastní talentovaným umělcům a může stejně tak obohatit život mnoha jedinců s postižením. Motivována osobní zkušeností v praxi, s učením a prozkoumáváním, ráda bych představila několik teoretických, ale stejně tak i praktických pohledů na tuto oblast. Skrze nedávnou výměnu a spolupráci s učiteli a badateli „v inkluzivním tanci“ z jiných kontinentů (Brazílie, Kanada, Čína) jsem mohla rozšířit svůj pohled díky prožité praxi a kritické úvahy ohledně cílů a benefitů kreativního pohybu a taneční modalit.*

*Zahrneme-li využití tance a kreativního pohybu do aplikované/inkluzivní tělesné výchovy, je vhodné zabývat se aspekty kreativity, významem postižení a také důležitostí pohybu pro motorický a osobní rozvoj. Počínaje těmito body, tento příspěvek se bude ztotožňovat s těmi faktory, které jsou předpokladem k podpoře osobního rozvoje a kvality života – obzvlášť pro osoby s postižením. Teoretický úvod nastíní několik praktických příkladů (fotografie, videa a samotné praktické provedení).*

**Abstract:**

*Dance is known as a phenomenon with manifold appearances, different significances and ways of application. It is part of life, part of regional and local culture, part of gifted artists and can as well as enriches the life of many individuals with disabilities. Motivated by personal experience in practicing, teaching and investigating I would like to present some theoretical as well as practical perspectives of this field. Through recent exchange and cooperation with teachers and researchers in inclusive dance from other continents (Brazil, Canada, China) I could enlarge my view on lived practice and critical reflections about goals and benefits of creative movement and dancing modalities.*

*When including the use of dance and creative movement in adapted/inclusive physical education it seems appropriate to address the aspects of creativity, the significance of disability and as well the importance of movement in its role for motor and personal development. Starting from these issues this contribution will identify those factors that are supposed to promote personal development and quality of life – especially for persons with a disability. The introductory theoretical framework will set the scene for some practical examples (photos, videos, and eventually active try out).*

**Klíčová slova:** *inkluzie, kreativní tanec/pohyb, taneční pedagogika, kreativita, postižení, osobní rozvoj.*

**Key words:** *Inclusion, Creative Dance/Movement, Dance Pedagogy, Creativity, Disability, Personal Development.*

## DANCE AND CREATIVE MOVEMENT

Dance and creative movement can be an endless source for supporting the artistic, educational, and/or therapeutic working process. Its elements include movement – structured by form, time, space and their dynamic variations – and they can inhibit intrinsic learning, self-reflection and self-expression. In order to justify the use of these means in adapted physical activities the aspect of creativity helps to explain the effects. The pioneers of “creative and/or expressive dance” provide examples how dancing may be seen as an important art form as well as a pedagogical and therapeutic tool.

*Creativity* can be assigned for being the engine of interaction. According to Milani-Comparetti (1998) creativity is seen as the third dimension of the open spiral of proposal – counter-proposal. He suggests that the roots are already dispositional as an autonomous initiative of the fetal human individual.<sup>1</sup> His approach of *dialogue* might be applied in a medical-therapeutic as well as in a pedagogical-educational context and it prefers the idea that the competence for *suggesting* as a creative intention of the child has to be put in the centre of all considerations of a *health medicine* (Milani-Comparetti, 1998, p. 43). He leans up against traditional therapeutic and pedagogical methods, which favour a stimulus – response attitude. He trusts in the belief that a child/individual is able to learn / to develop if he/she wants to do it him/herself.

Looking at creativity from the therapeutic perspective we may refer to a definition by Bean (1994): “Creativity is the process across which an individual may express his/her original nature through his body or another media providing a deep sensation of fulfillment” (p. 15).<sup>2</sup> Another

<sup>1</sup> *Based on observations of fetal development by ultrasonic examination the results suggest that: „1) motor development is a modular process, 2) the modularity is organised in a hierarchic systemic structure, 3) genetic, epigenetic and learned mechanisms are engaged in the composition of the modular repertoire, 4) foetal movement is the result of an autonomous individual initiative and the foetus functions as a protagonist in its relation to the environment.“ (Milani-Comparetti, 1998, p.3, transl. M.D.)*

<sup>2</sup> *„Kreativität ist der Prozess innerhalb dessen ein Individuum durch seinen Körper oder ein Medium sein ureigenstes Wesen ausdrückt, was ihm ein Gefühl der Befriedigung schafft.“ Bean (1994, S. 15; transl. M.D.)*

description is valued as a problem solving competence when suggesting: „We become creative in the moment when we cannot find an appropriate solution of a problem by means which are known to us, and when at the same time it is strongly in our interest to solve this problem” (Kast, 1994, p. 24).<sup>3</sup>

The translation the expression from the Latin word “*creare*” can be “*the ability to develop something new*” or “*to give birth to something*” which implicates a duality of this creative activity. The term is often associated with *art* and unsurprisingly there is given much attention to the creative process in all the art forms.

Some female dancers in the early and middle twentieth century in Europe (Germany: Mary Wigman, Switzerland: Trudi Schoop, Austria: Rosalia Chladek) and USA (Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham) tried to establish creative/expressive dance as an art form and became forerunners for new forms of modern, post-modern or later contemporary dance styles. It was their intention to put emphasis on inner feelings which urge to be expressed through the body in an individual way. A psychological assertion is confirmed by Petzold & Orth (1991) when they talk about the creative dimension of dance which is made possible by the activation of elemental abilities of the creative human being. The kinesthetic activity of the sensory system which is predominantly responsible for expressive movement is producing within a self-induced activity and via an interactive processes (perception – impression – integration – expression – effect) a media of relation (e. g. **dance**). **The sensation, the assimilation**, and the transfer into creative movement induce the emergence of changes. These shifts may help to accept developmental events and to identify again the individual personality and his/her social interpersonal relations (Dinold, 2004).

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<sup>3</sup> „Wir werden dann kreativ, wenn wir mit den uns bekannten Mitteln und Ideen ein Problem nicht mehr lösen können und wenn uns zugleich daran liegt, dieses Problem zu lösen.“ (Kast, 1994, S. 29; transl. M. D.)

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DISABILITY

Definition and comprehension of the term *disability* depend on the scope of professional areas (school, special education, institutional support, therapy, etc.), on the perspective of the research area (law, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, medicine, politics, etc.), and/or on the implications how the individual is seen. The ongoing scientific discussion agrees upon the fact that the terms *impairment* – *disability* – *handicap* belong to different dimensions and that they have to be distinguished from the term *disease* or *illness*. With respect to the intention to promote inclusion for persons with a disability in the context of physical education and dance a kind of consciousness for sensitive terminology has to be supported (Hametner, 2006). It depends on the personal beliefs, the attitude, and on the influencing external factors if an individual considers him/herself as disabled or as accepted for being just different. As confirmed by a recent study (Zitomer & Reid, 2011) it is crucial to acknowledge differences and to celebrate diversity when teaching inclusive dance. The results identified three most important themes to be considered in order to avoid categorizing: the language, time and space and the openness to explore varied movement.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MOVEMENT

My own investigations about the promotion of personal development through dance and creative movement for individuals with and without disabilities (Dinold, 2000) identified some important contributing factors in connection with creativity and movement expression in dance. A selection of these influencing elements is:

- a) the significance of movement when used as a media of creative expression;
- b) the importance of the coherence of perception and movement;
- c) the contributing factors to the development of personal identity;
- d) the impact of structures of space and time in dance on the individual development of orientation in space and time.

Referring here exclusively to the significance of movement when used as a media of creative expression a) it is important to know that movement can be perceived in different conceptual frameworks differently. According the four approaches of psychomotor concepts (Seewald, 1993), which always imply the connection between psychological sensation and motor activity, *movement* can be explained as:

a *functional procedure* → *in dance* this view starts off for improving balance, tension, dynamical effort, etc.;

a *self-activating process* → *in dance* the emphasis is laid on exploring expression internally, finding identification, improving consciousness of one's own body;

an *accomplishment of structures* → *in dance* the combination of perception and movement allows the variations of acquired movement pattern, it leads to variety and flexibility of the sensor-motor behavior;

a *media for the relation between the individual and the environment* → *in dance* there is the possibility of individual expression of impressive events, this is helpful by contributing to the human need for social relations providing a meaning of existence.

## COMPONENTS OF INCLUSIVE DANCE PEDAGOGY

Besides the element of creativity, creative movement, and the representatives of expressive dance some other useful sources are feeding inclusive dance pedagogy. As earlier mentioned, the *concept of psychomotor activities* represents a very useful approach in using self-guided movement, by respecting the importance of personal relation and the individual timing in dance. *Rhythmic movement education* is another element which aims to develop the stimulation of the senses, the development of creative abilities, and social learning. In order to create space for everybody in dance education methodical variations are applied for similar goals.

## THE CONCEPT “MITEINANDERS”

The concept of “MiteinanderS” (= together but different) developed by my colleague and me (Dinold & Zanin, 1996) declares *cultural inclusion* and *personal development* as its main goals. This approach is based on the assumption that personal development can be promoted by interaction and by initiating relevant reciprocal processes. A qualitative investigation (Dinold, 2000) had been able to approve the supportive role of this method for individuals with and without a disability of all ages, within a heterogeneous integrated group of people.

Individuals with a disability must be encouraged to discover their equal rights and cultural needs. It should be acknowledged that everybody can be involved in art and culture and should benefit of esthetic education. By providing such education this approach wants to give psycho-social support towards personal development.

The practical application of this concept can preferably be demonstrated through active experience. Personal development and inclusion are considered as the superior aims. Strong orientation is given by providing this support for personal development in the frame of social experiences. The goal perspective to support personal development aims to boost self-esteem and strengthen self-confidence; this shall be realized by documentation and description of the achieved progress (valuing process and product) in physical, psychic and social dimensions. The intended directives emphasize creativity within leisure time activity without pressure to work or perform and culminate in enhancing quality of life by respecting inclusion in the cultural, political, and public area.

As regards content, the focus is on rhythmical dancing respectively creative playful physical activities and addresses practices for body awareness and perception (sensory, spatial or time) as well as spontaneous play (theater, role play). The applied methods are learning and exercising (by oneself, with a partner, with a group), improvisation and play (with movement, expression, role, etc.) and creating/composing (themes, scenes, situations, etc.).

Results from feedbacks given by the participants of a series of practical workshops identified the following recommendations for successful experience:

- Daily life should be the connecting factor: improvisation across a given topic or a composition should start from daily-life-experience and only then will lead to experimental, extraordinary sensitivity within sensual awareness and creative vitality.
- The atmosphere of acceptance, appreciation, fun, and awareness plays an important role for the creative process. Participants reported to feel familiarity, openness and joy so that they could enjoy their deepness of experiences and felt secure in the group of individuals with and without disabilities.
- **Dancing itself!:** Dance facilitates personal approach, security, expression of feelings, and intensive self and social awareness.
- The choice of supporting material should consider the space situations, the special preconditions of the persons, and should start from a low level.
- The supporting structure should not be neglected. From our experience it turned out to be beneficial to respect planning and realization along a theme, collaboration of the instructors as a team, framing structures for the orientation of the teachers as well as of the participants, flexibility and openness for inclusion of individuals as well as respecting own ideas of all participants according to their needs and capacities.

## **PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

The concept of inclusive dance pedagogy will be demonstrated in visual examples of practical workshops and performances of the Austrian dance group “Ich bin O. K.” and other international projects.

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