

DEVELOPING VOICE AND MOVEMENT THROUGH DANCE, THEATRE AND SINGING

The experience in Palermo developed by CESIE



AUTHORS

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WHERE DID THE WORKSHOP TAKE PLACE AND WHEN

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PARTICIPANTS

The group who took part in the Training sessions (from March to May 2022) was composed of 11 participants. Most of those who subscribed for the Piloting continued their learning path during the training course. The group was recruited through a call sent on CESIE's mass mail.

The group was entirely composed by teachers and adult educators of different school grades.

Participants were only women between 25 and 50 years old who had none or little experience in movement and voice exploration. Nevertheless, they showed a high level of participation and motivation to learn and deepen the topics of the training course. A relevant aspect that brought an enrichment to the learning experience was the intercultural context, since the group was composed of women from different cultural backgrounds.



OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the IO1 Piloting sessions were as follows: providing participants with basic knowledge about voice and body parameters supported by the main theoretical background provided by the project partners IN TOUCH and The Grotowski Institute.

Contributing in raising awareness about their use of voice and body in their daily and professional lives

The main methods used during the VOICE Piloting and Training Course

CREATIVE THINKING

The Creative Thinking approach, promoted by Edward De Bono, breaks common ideas about the concept of Creativity, helping us to reflect about Creativity as a "human skill, not a matter of individual talent" (De Bono,2006) .

Creative thinking consists in the capacity to find solutions, to solve challenges; in every aspect of our life; not only when performing an artistic job. Using De Bono terminology, it is the capacity to think laterally. Everybody can find ways to cope with difficulties in everyday life, coming up with personal ideas to solve challenges. Therefore, everybody has a creative potential!

When you master your creative thinking ability it is incredibly powerful. In the current socio-economic climate, it is important that we have the capacity to solve problems and keep one step ahead. Creative Thinking is a steppingstone to the generation of new ideas and to problem solving.

They are the two most basic methods of solving problems: Critical Thinking is a matter of thinking clearly and rationally. Creative Thinking usually consists of coming up with new and original ideas. To be an effective thinker, we need to apply both kinds of thinking. Nevertheless, during our formal education most of us have all been taught how to apply Critical Thinking, while very few of us have ever been taught how to apply Creative Thinking.

LEARNING IN THE ARTS AND THROUGH THE ARTS

According to us, Art is a tool for the learner to achieve a transformative path, both at personal level and in a group dimension. In this sense, our projects often encourage the participants to deepen in learning process through art that will lead to the creation of artistic products.

According to Marian Lopez-Fernandez Cao (2008), any immersion in artistic creation has the potential to achieve competences linked to the management of feelings, doubts, decision making, individual work, as well as collaboration: the role of Art is to contribute in looking for an authentic and immediate way to express, contacting their own personal resources and sharing them with the others to create something new in a collaborative way.

In more simple words, art can be a tool to improve self-awareness and develop emotional and relational skills as well as technical skills.

DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPY

Movement is a language, our first language. Nonverbal and movement communication begins in utero and continues throughout the lifespan. Dance/movement therapy works movement and nonverbal language as well as verbal language in the therapeutic process and highlights the interconnection between Mind, body, and spirit.

The therapeutic process goes through movement as a way of communication and expression.

Due to the specificity of the project, Dance Movement Therapy was the main method addressed during the piloting and the training course, adapting the proposal of movement exploration to participants who didn't have much experience with movement.

Our experience

Below, we report specific topics that were raised during the work because they were relevant for participants and were addressed through our methodologies:

Healthy voice > healthy communication

One of the most common issues raised by participants was about the healthy problems related to the voice after many years of working as educators: to be listened by students, an educator tends to speak very loud stressing a lot the vocal system. As an answer to this common issue, we involved participants through a body awareness work focusing especially on breath exercises. Through breathing they learned how to use more properly their voice. The biggest lesson learned was the connection between the aspect of using their voice properly and in a more health way and the improvement of communication with their trainees and students: the more they become aware of their body and breath, the more their vocal system is less stressed and the more their voice becomes more effective in terms of communication aspects because when the voice is more free to express, it can reach the attention of people in a more powerful way.



Self - judgement

What we learned through the exchange with participants is about how an educator develops often a stress about wanting to be a perfect educator and not accepting to fail in front of their students and trainees.

Starting from this condition, we tried to find creative strategies on how to:

- Recognize this self-judgment, because what was raised from the group is the fact that sometimes an educator is not aware about that.

- How to accept it

- How to overcome it

We used creative thinking methods to develop possible ways of thinking and finding solution and dance therapy methods to find the tools to express this awareness through non-verbal communication and movement.

A big result is that the self-judgement attitude was transformed during the process in a motivation to learn new skills and improvement because participants felt in a safe group and space.

Trust the space and the present moment

One of the biggest challenge of an educator is about being able to be present in that very moment and space. In a first phase we did movement exercises focused on attention and concentration and what participants realized is that the mind is often distracted somewhere else and this doesn't help to be here and now but they also realized how the educative and communicative work of an educator goes a lot through being able to stay connected with here and now.

After becoming more aware of this, in a second phase we focused on movement exercises to learn how to be more aware and develop an better attention of the space we are in. working on recognizing diagonals, periphery, center and learning how to move respecting the room geometry was very useful to learn how to organize their body and being more present in the space we work in.

The experience seen from participants' point of view

Working on the main objectives listed above allowed to create a fertile ground for the second phase of the Training Course, where the topics were developed and deepened. The fact that most of participants attended both phases was a strong point to allow the development of a coherent and complete learning path.

We can affirm that the feedback from the participants was very positive. They all demonstrated an improvement of an awareness regarding their body and voice.

One of the important aspects is the active exchange that was raised between the group of peers and the trainer: since participants were all teachers and adult educators they

could share their own experience in their educational field focusing on the challenges and the positive aspects of their work and they could directly make concrete experience of the lessons learned during the training. At CESIE we were very satisfied about the learning path and the development of participants individually and at group level.

From their feedbacks, it was very useful to observe how they were putting in practice the learned lessons directly in their educational work and then reporting their experience to the group. This was something very stimulating for all the group.

Some words of participants

" I am now more aware of the way a breath and I use my body and voice"

" I wish this course was everyday of my life"

" I feel more grounded then before"

" Now I know I can improve my movement patterns"

" my way of relating with my students changed, I feel more free to express"

" I am super satisfied about the work we did but I want more"



About CESIE

CESIE is a European center of studies and initiatives based in Palermo (Italy) and established in 2001, inspired by the work and theories of sociologist Danilo Dolci (1924-1997). The organisation is divided into 6 units working in cooperation and managing activities in their specific fields: Higher Education and Research; Rights and Justice; Adult; Migration; School; Youth.

Our mission is to promote educational innovation, participation and growth while connecting research with action through the use of formal and non-formal learning methodologies. Nevertheless, CESIE is committed to promoting art and culture as a tool for education and participation, always valuing diversity. It delivers an extensive portfolio of arts-based projects in collaboration with dance, visual arts and theatre experts to develop educational programmes and initiatives at local, European and international level.

Our work is inspired by the educational heritage left by Danilo Dolci. His view was very clear: instead of teaching students some "truth" as if they were an empty box to fill in, he believed that education had to actively involve the student who already possesses knowledge.

Danilo developed the Reciprocal Maieutic Approach recalling the Socratic Maieutic. The word Maieutic comes from the Greek word μαευτικό meaning the art of giving birth, bringing to life (as the midwife does with a new-born baby). According to Socrates, the student was like a plant, born with an intrinsic knowledge, and the educator had to be like a midwife, being able to bring out the student's talent and knowledge.

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