

## Sessions Dynamics Dossier

Article

# A Rationale for Teacher Change from a Bodyfulness Paradigm: An Experience in Higher Education

### 1. Introduction

This document describes in detail the dynamics of the 12 sessions of the program. The program consisted of three phases of 4 sessions each. Each session lasted two hours. Each session followed the same structure:

- Check-in (10'): participants entered into the space and were asked about their attitude and expectations regarding the session.
- Warm-up (20'): preparing the body for the work using different proposals based on body anatomy and physiology.
- Theme-development (40'): deeper exploration of feelings, thoughts, and movement patterns of the participants.
- Closure (20'): supportive closure to provide a sense of release and satisfaction.
- Reflective practice (30'): individual reflection and verbal group sharing of feelings, ideas and thoughts regarding the previous movement experience.

The following are the details for warm-up and theme-development of each session.

### 2. First Phase

Sessions 1-4: Intrapersonal level, developing sensory-motor and kinesthetic potential in close relation to one's own body.

*Session1: Generating confidence in oneself and the group*

Warm-up: The warm-up is made in a circle so all the participants can see the others. First exercises are carried out in the place. After a while, participants are invited to move into the space following the indications of the facilitator. Breathing exercises to calm down and take awareness of the own body. Mobilization of the different muscles and joints paying attention to each structure.

Again, in the circle, we made the "Signature in movement": each participant presents itself in front of the others with a simple and easy movement saying the name at the same time. The others repeat name and movement. Two or three rounds can be done with slow modifications introducing some emotional component, for instance, trying to express the feeling at this moment. When the rest of the group imitate the movement, we can introduce amplification or exaggeration of the movements.

Theme-development: During this session this is a natural continuation of the warm-up because the objective is to generate confidence. A group of different exercises that pretend to make people contact and relate each other and create a secure and playful atmosphere were introduced: playing with a ball in the space, encourage participants to make groups following some quick indications (eye color, foot and

hand sizes, height, ...). All these exercises are carried out without talking. Finally, some cooperative games were introduced (changing participants in the groups and groups' sizes): to create a statue and maintain it for 5 seconds. All the participants should contribute to this statue in the group and the creativity and new ways to use the body and postures are encouraged. Some rounds are organized introducing modifications: slight physical contact among participants; some parts of the body in touch with the floor, ...

A guided relaxation is proposed to return to the calm at the end of the session. Participants laid on the floor with close eyes. This relaxation is carried out at the end of all the sessions before the reflective practice.

### *Session 2. Knowing one's own body*

**Warm-up:** Similar warm-up to the first session so participants know some of the proposals. The focus here is to help participants to be awareness of the different muscle-skeletal structures, differentiate anatomic structures and the joint range of movements. Specified movements of rotation, shaking and stretching different structures are proposed. Music with easy rhythms can help to make playful this part, but at the same time silence help to the concentration and attention to the one's own body. Breathing patterns are explored with attention to the difficulties that can be appeared. Tension zones are explored and recognized during this warm-up. In connection with tension zones, the concept of limit might appear for the first time, so the proposals try to help participants to recognize the own limits in movement, the acceptance of those and the discovery that there are other zones with less limits or with more range of movement. Furthermore, this idea was introduced: how can you move when there is a limit, either internal or external?

**Theme-development:** the previous question is developed here with proposals that incorporate internal and external limits, that is, the facilitator suggest to initiate free movements imagining that there is some damaged joints or parts with movement difficulties. Then, the limits appear from the external, for instance, limiting the space in the room with some materials, or avoiding the contact with others during the movement. Some others exercises were made in pairs, trying to continue to look for creative movements but again with some restrictions or limits, for instance, maintaining some physical contact with the partner (a hand or an elbow) playing to adapt to the situation and look for new ways to improvise in movement.

### *Session 3. Exploring the kinesphere, levels and space*

**Warm-up:** Beginning with the breathing the exploration aims to understand condensation / expansion in different parts of the body and levels. From the breathing and the own rhythm, this condensation/expansion is transferred to different parts of the body: hands, feet, arms, shoulders and finally all the body. Concept of kinesphere is explained and explore: how can I reach the limit of my kinesphere? How is my kinesphere in relation to that of others?

**Theme-development:** The movement is initiated from the own kinesphere exploring the space around and the different levels (high, medium, low). In pairs, we discover the relationship between the own kinesphere and the partner's kinesphere. During this session, observation of the differences among the participants are important regarding kinesphere, levels and space. So, there is time for free movement in the space playing with these concepts, then stop and observing others, then continue the movement to a different place in the room.

### *Session 4. Exploring the contact and physical support*

**Warm-up:** After a warm-up of the different structures as in the previous sessions, attention is focused now on the axis and verticality. Feeling the contact of the

feet on the floor, the area on which the weight of the body rests, transfer the weight to the toes, to the heel, side by side. After that, an exercise of self-contact identifying the own bones along the body. Finally, an exploration in pairs of different qualities of touch in bones, muscles and skin. Connecting this exploration with the concepts of support, emotional regulation and communication related with.

**Theme-development:** Explanation of the concept of muscular chain and recognized the own's predominant muscular chain. Recognizing the differences among the participants by observing different tipologies. Finally, free movement exploration in pairs playing with the different muscular chains, and with offering support or not with the companion. What does support means for me? Where can I find support when I need? These are questions for further reflection.

### 3. Second Phase

Sessions 5-8: Opening consciousness about how previous learning echoes affect and lead to improved inter-personal skills

#### *Session 5: Cycle of perception & answer*

**Warm-up:** After the usual mobilization of different anatomical structures an exploration is made through the different senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. There are multiple options to work on this: playing with colors, shadow and light areas for the sight; recognizing sounds from a number of sources, playing attention to the near and far sounds (including sounds of the own body), smell a variety of aromas, taste slowly a fruit, and touch textures. During these proposals, one sense is stimulated and activated, trying to minimize or override as much as possible the other senses.

**Theme-development:** improvisation about perception (increasing awareness of the different senses) and answering versus reaction. First, individually; then in pairs working with the idea of creating a stimulus and answering to it in movement.

#### *Session 6. Tonic states and emotion expression*

**Warm-up:** Breathing and joint mobilization. Body-scan paying attention to tension zones and visualization of the breathing going to those areas. Exploration in pairs differences between skin, muscles and bones in connection with different ways of touching and recognizing the different structures. Explanation of different tonic states in muscles (hypertonic, hypotonic, neutral) both individually and in pairs. Try to move the partner off axis with different tonic states and from different positions (standing, seated, on all fours). To observe the importance of the center of gravity and the quality of the supports to maintain one's own axis.

**Theme-development:** Free improvisation with tonic states in relation to the emotional state. Recreate different relational situations with students in the classroom and observe the response of our tonic states and the existing emotions. For further reflection: how to modulate the emotional response from the awareness of one's own tonic state? how to differentiate between an adaptive response and an instinctive reaction? how to improve the quality of our presence in the classroom?

#### *Session 7. Information processing*

**Warm-up:** After a body-scan guided, free warm-up based on the exercises learned during previous sessions. Listen to the own needs and move the body accordingly. Sign in movement in circle: each participant makes a movement that represents him/her and the rest repeat it. Make this proposal two or three rounds looking for ways to express the own personality and send a message through movement.

**Theme-development:** Choose a communicative situation that challenged the participant. Visualize it and remember as many details as possible: words used, facial

and body gestures, tone and intensity of voice... Perform a role-play in pairs, acting out the situation and then analyzing it in terms of what has been learned so far (tonic states, support, axis, kinesphere, ...). Finally, look for an alternative way to solve the situation.

#### *Session 8. Motion factors (efforts)*

Warm-up: Guided exercises for stretching and activating the different anatomical structures. Some stretching exercises using the space and with support of 2/4 or 4/4 rhythmic music. Explanation and exploration of Laban effort taxonomy (space, time, weight and flow). Laban Movement Analysis, based on the work of Rudolf Laban, is a primary means of movement observation, assessment, and analysis used by dance movement therapists. It describes qualitative aspects of movement, inter-relationships among them, and other nonverbal behavior, allowing a conscious reflection on the meaning of movement.

Theme-development: Creating a free sequence and explore it using different combinations of motion factors. This exercise can be performed by first creating a sequence of only 3 linked movements that are performed daily (for example, passing the hand through the hair, crossing the arms, ... Each participant with its own movements) and then looking for a sequence with movements that are different from the usual ones. Observe which movement factors and which combinations are more natural to the person and which are more costly to perform.

### **4. Third Phase**

Sessions 9-12: Integrated previous learning, developing movement observation and evaluation skills.

#### *Session 9. Actions (incompleted efforts)*

Warm-up: Free warm-up with mobilization and activation of joints and muscles. Reviewing the efforts (motion factors) through guided exercises. Exploring in pairs the actions. Actions are combinations of three motion factors which results in eight actions that offer qualities of resistance or indulgence in the movement: floating, dabbing, wringing, thrusting, pressing, flicking, slashing, and gliding. The exploration is made in pairs, sitting on the floor, executing the actions on the back of the partner and changing turns. During this exercise the voice is also added to help participants to understand better how we use these actions in our daily behavior.

Theme-development: Creating a free choreography with motion factors and actions chosen. Observe and analyze in pairs the motion factors and actions used.

#### *Session 10. Connecting with the unconscious*

Warm-up: Breathing exercises and guided activation of different anatomical structures. Working in pairs, one leading the movement, the other one observes and follow it as it was a mirror. Change of roles. Repeat this exercise by walking. Watching another person walk as if it was on your feet and becoming aware of the own way of walking. Mirroring exercises with all the participants, introducing new movement qualities and connecting them with emotional expression.

Theme-development: Brief introduction to Authentic Movement. Practice it in pairs: one is a mover and the other is a witness. The mover closes its eyes and connect with its body's impulses letting the body moves without thinking, leading or judging the movement. The mover is encouraged to pay attention to thoughts, emotions, images and memories that may emerge and allow these experiences to move the body in any way that feels right. The witness observes the mover with a receptive interest

and presence. He/she tracks the movements of the mover without judging or interpretation paying attention to the personal inner experiences that may also emerge. After that, there is a transition and a time for interchanging.

#### *Session 11. Relating with others*

Warm-up: Free warm-up based on the exercises of the previous sessions. Working in pairs, one moves as he or she needs. The partner after observing the movement and from listening offers (always in movement) what he/she believes may be necessary. Change roles.

Theme-development: Working in threes with the weight, support and kinesi-  
thetic empathy. Leaving the weight to the floor, taking confidence in the peers who help in the fall. Trying to modulate the own movement to give support the others without losing the own axis. Looking for an equilibrium in the answering to the others through the own movement.

Choose a real relational situation in the classroom in which there was a disproportionate response from someone and represent it with a role play in movement looking for alternative ways to offer an assertive and more adaptive and positive response.

#### *Session 12. Integration (modulation of behaviors)*

Warm-up: Free individual warm-up. Working in pairs through mirroring. In this case, the proposal is to amplify and modulate the proposals given to the partner so this can help him/her to become more aware of the own movements and perhaps introduce some new.

Theme-development: Working in pairs, one executes a free improvisation in space introducing the new concepts learned during the training, using the different possibilities of the movement qualities, use of space and levels, according with the current emotional state. Change roles. After interchanging in pairs open this experience to the other companions, integrating new information and enriching the own improvisation with other proposals. It is encouraged to pay special attention to a free and spontaneous movement, which responds to one's own need in movement and at the same time is opened to new information, and reflect how this can be transferred to the academic context.