

DANCE FOR Wheelchair Users AS A THERAPEUTIC METHOD

DANCE FOR CHAIRMAN AS A THERAPEUTIC METHOD

Mateus Vasconcelos⁶

Summary

Dance has been used as a therapeutic means for people with physical disabilities since 1940, it is important to highlight that this dance promotes actions that involve the construction of movement, gesture, through body expression, rescuing emotional memories and the discovery of new bodily possibilities in a wheelchair, involving dance reflection and thinking for a more inclusive dance, being considered an artistic-therapeutic resource, helping the physical, emotional and social well-being of people in wheelchairs. To this end, a longitudinal study was carried out to analyze global coordination, hand-eye coordination, body schema and emotion stimulation in the characteristics of the same sample elements over a period of time. The objective of this study is to analyze dance for wheelchair users as a therapeutic form, focusing on people who have cerebral palsy, exposing the benefits provided by dance that help with therapeutic possibilities, transforming the disability in its entirety into bodily experiments, whose result can be shared, showing a new way of working with dance for wheelchair users and its new physical possibilities. As a result of this process, the research subjects had a great improvement in their psychomotricity, enabling wheelchair dancers to discover new bodily discoveries and verbalize their emotions, creating and recreating different forms of expression of their body language, improving their social relationships, respecting their differences. and understanding their limits and overcoming, valuing their potential.

Key words: Art. Inclusion. Therapy. Wheelchair users.

1. Introduction

Dance is one of the ways for wheelchair users to reconnect with their universe and accept themselves, overcoming their limits and breaking paradigms, stimulating very expressive bodily actions that involve the construction of thoughts, associations of ideas to produce their own movement, having a connotation affective, emotional, important for the therapeutic and artistic process. We opted for longitudinal research, considering that it is essential to delve deeper into therapeutic methodologies and techniques through dance, so that teachers who have wheelchair-bound students can develop a therapeutic and at the same time technical bodily process. This interest in seeking methodologies that can add to wheelchair users emerged in 2016, when the dance company was created: Dancing on Wheels, where studies, methodologies, exercises and dance shows aimed at

⁶ Graduated in Degree in Pedagogy and Visual Arts / UNIMES. Postgraduate in Art Therapy/FALC. Postgraduate in Special and Inclusive Education and Institutional and Clinical Neuropsychopedagogy/FACIBA.

inclusion of another bodily perspective: contemporary dance and its investigative process, through therapeutic movements.

Through studies with Cia Dançado sobre roda, for five years, it was realized that dance is one of the ways that wheelchair users can reconnect with their universe and their self-acceptance, overcoming their limits and breaking paradigms, having very expressive body actions which involve the construction of thoughts, associations of ideas, producing their own movement, having an affective and emotional connotation.

According to Barros (1991), since 1940, dance has also been used as a therapeutic means for patients undergoing rehabilitation. Therefore, and transposing the therapeutic aspect, dance's main function is to provide a path to rehabilitation through an unconventional means, analyzing the successes and errors of innovative practices, writing and inventing possibilities. Perhaps it is necessary to bring together anthropological, cultural and artistic knowledge and reinvent this mode of therapeutic rehabilitation, in which the appreciation of creativity transforms the paths of disability into experiences, whose meanings and emotions can be shared through dance. This look at dancing with wheelchairs and the therapeutic form consists of providing a subjective dimension in which, through body movement, the subject talks about himself, his social reality, his anxieties and questions, always seeking to challenge himself and thus improving your self-confidence and improving your physical and emotional health, "there are no disabled people, there are different people. We may all need special education" (SÉRGIO, 2001, p. 135).

Thus, the objective of this article was to analyze dance methodologies aimed at wheelchair users as a therapeutic form, providing a new perspective, and bringing a systematization of dance for wheelchair users. Since every work that has a bodily process, the person acquires a therapeutic dimension to the extent that the body is taken as consciousness and direct reference to our deepest existence. To carry out the research, he used photographic records and a portfolio of the body process and presentations over five years of studies and the existence of Cia Dançado sobre roda.

In the final considerations, positive results are presented during this five-year process of studies, emphasizing a great improvement in psychomotricity, allowing wheelchair dancers new bodily discoveries and a verbalization of their emotions, creating and recreating different forms of manifestations of their body language, improving their social relationships, respecting their differences and understanding their limits and overcoming, valuing their potential. In addition to showing a new form of communication, boosting self-esteem, and even providing students with trips

international presentations and individual studies, bringing their own creation of choreographic processes and their autonomy.

2 Theoretical foundation

People with physical disabilities, for many years, were confined to being part of an excluded layer of society. The architectural barriers found, basically in most places, and the appreciation of limitations have placed the physically disabled in the inactive layer of society, which contributes to the isolation of this population in the social context.

Data from the 2018 Demographic Census released by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) showed that Brazil has 12,748,663 people with some type of disability, (6.7% of the total population). According to Decree 7,612/2011 (BRASIL, 2011), people with disabilities are those who have “long-term impairments of a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory nature, which, in interaction with various barriers, can obstruct their full and effective participation in society on equal terms and conditions with other people” Therefore, the types of disabilities can be: hearing, physical, visual, intellectual and multiple.

Based on the 1976 Manual for Classifying the Consequences of Diseases of the World Health Organization (WHO), it becomes pertinent to understand the concepts of disability, disability and disadvantage (*handicap*).

According to the medical model of disease, it is considered to exist whenever something abnormal occurs in the individual, whether at birth (congenital) or later (acquired), due to a sequence of causal circumstances (etiology) that cause changes in the structure or functioning of the body (pathology).

Cerebral Palsy was defined at the World Congress on Cerebral Palsy, carried out in Berlin in 1967. According to Bobath, cerebral palsy is the result of an injury or poor development of the brain, of a non-progressive nature, that exists since childhood.

The term Cerebral Palsy (CP) is used to refer to the result of a brain injury that causes difficulty, inability or lack of control of certain movements of the body and muscles, that is, their inefficiency. People affected by Cerebral Palsy have a disturbance in the control of body movements and postures and, as a consequence of a lesion in one or more brain areas, which control and coordinate muscle tone, reflexes and action (SHERRILL, *et. al*,1986).

2.1 Neurological aspects

According to Ferreira (1998), wheelchair dancing goes beyond a vocabulary of steps and techniques, existing in other dance modalities, as it presupposes a certain specificity in carrying out the movement that must be observed. One of the consequences of this specificity is motor impairment that causes differentiated body movements.

In dance, the objective of the techniques is to perform certain movements, and their purpose is to acquire skills such as turning, balancing, mastering a wheelchair, among others. In this sense, we have a body linked to information, often linked to a wheelchair, so understand that some dance movements may act differently than it would be to act on another body that has other types of limitations. "Information" dances, whatever its nature, requires different ways of organizing the understanding of the movement.

The dance movements performed by people with physical disabilities are initially based on the information contained in their neuromotor system, taking into account the damage caused by the injury, which is related to its location. The consequences include loss of motor skills and loss of sensitivity. In the case of a person with spinal cord injury, movement is impaired, considering that the *feedback* Kinesthetic is a relevant aspect, as it may not include information about strength, muscle length and positions of the body's joints, which are important for executing the movement.

The motor act can only follow its correct course if such a system of afferent synthesis exists. A constant supply of afferent information is essential for the correct execution of the last component of every voluntary movement: checking its course and correcting any errors that may have been made. This verification of the course of an action and the correction of eventual errors are made with the help of constant comparison between the action as it is performed and the original intention (LURIA, 1981, p.217)

Thus, the motor act depends on afferent pathways, such as vision, hearing, kinesthetics, and when there is no possibility of active movement, it is possible to work with passive movement, that is, with the help of another person and allow sensory inputs through the remaining pathways leading to the perception of the experience of the movement performed.

2.2 Therapeutic dance perspective

In Psychology and Psychotherapy, the approach that emphasizes the dimension of bodily expressiveness in the therapeutic process is body psychotherapy, whose main representatives are Wilhelm Reich and Alexander Lowen. This approach is based on the assumption that conflicts

Emotional emotions, undiluted, enter the body's muscles and form a kind of knot that prevents the expression of pleasure, of the joy of living, and when the body's spontaneous movements are blocked by these tensions, it becomes devitalized and stiffens. , in a way that also obstructs the mind, as there is a relationship of seminal mutuality between body and mind (LOWEN, 1982). Therefore, dancing for wheelchair users as a therapeutic form often makes it easier for the individual to find their potential, their thoughts and emotions, taking into account their structuring and development of movement, which is organized with time, space, with themselves and with others. the external world.

Furthermore, for Bertazzo (1998), the body is a book of records, which speaks, expresses itself, cries, smiles and feels pain, with pain being a reflection of a spasm of defense, a call for reorganization, a call to consciousness body.

Dance for wheelchair users brings recognition to their full movement potential, learning to move from within the body, prioritizing their own rhythm, without forcing or causing tension. Through physiotherapeutic and psychotherapeutic techniques, it becomes an auxiliary therapeutic resource in rehabilitation, as it aims to improve physical qualities (body layout, balance, rhythm, motor coordination, spatial organization and flexibility).

The contributions of dance for wheelchair users include ways of researching the therapeutic process through expressive movement, concerning physically disabled people affected by the world and capable of affecting through writing that accompanies bodies like a dance. Reich (1995) already stated that the living organism has its own ways of expressing movement, which often simply cannot be put into words. In this way, dance can be thought of as an expansive potential for manifestations of emotions and affirmations of singularities.

For Bruno Latour (2008), having a body means having the availability to be affected and affect. The effects of the choreographic practices of dance-research occur in provisional territories that open fissures in the crystallization and rigidity of the ways of experiencing research. Dancing is immersing yourself in the infixity of ways of experiencing research as an aesthetic, ethical and political experimental practice. When dancing-research, bodies acquire different materialities and consistencies in the relationships they establish with the world, and therefore, they are not reflections of a previous personality. Borders, places, dates, spaces and times are given new meanings in the discontinuities of events, in the rhythms of the creation of dance for wheelchair users and research.

3 Methodology

The methodology was based on Rudolf Laban's scheme (1978), from the perspective of body psychotherapy, and on studies with dancers from Cia Dançado sobre Rodas, from the city of Taubaté-SP. Rudolf Laban's methodology presents a practice based on reality of those who dance, in which there is no standardization of movements and the greatest focus is on the potential for creation of individuals, who are recognized as subjects of the dance learning process. Laban, with his theory of movement, shows that anyone can dance and create their own movement, showing the individuality of each dancer, not being restricted to just one technical form of dance. Body Psychotherapy uses the core of body expression as the basis of the processes, having the common objective of seeking to be the free expression of affections and feelings, a way of enabling energy to flow throughout the body, reestablishing the flow and bringing a feeling of vivacity, pleasure, contact, self-perception and self-regulation.

The dancers participated in dance classes twice a week lasting 50 minutes, in the city of Taubaté/ SP. The classes were developed as follows: Initial warm-up (wrist work, trunk twisting, shoulder and head rotation, back work, using the classical ballet barre), mobility techniques (boosting, turning, going up, down, prancing partially), movement study process (use of floor, contemporary dance technique, exploration of the chair and its tools, process of creating movements through commands and scripts), choreographic process (creation together with the teacher, creation of scripts, contact and improvisation technique), final relaxation (releasing muscles and stretching) and creative process (the student works on their body energy, thoughts and emotions, taking into account their body structure and working on their expressive movements, breathing and body perceptions). The songs were only instrumental as a therapeutic process, providing the student with a moment of relaxation and not having bodily influence, through the lyrics.

Cia Dançado sobre roda's weekly schedule is two hours, with artistic performances in different cities, states and countries. As the study process is continuous, the results and evaluation of the study is a process, making progress and increasingly exploring the dancers' abilities, whilst providing a reflection on the way of perceiving dance.

4 Methodological procedures

The research, characterized as longitudinal, included the participation of 6 (six) dancers, women, aged between 13 and 39, who work as dancers in a Dance Company for wheelchair users.

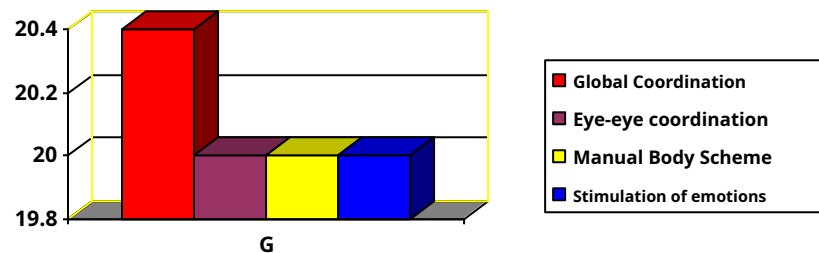
Data collection was carried out through observation of classes lasting around 50 minutes, and notes were made by the teacher of the somatopsychodynamic technical part, in addition to photographic records and filming perceiving the body evolution of each dancer. The process itself has been developed since 2016. All information is copyrighted, and authorized by all dancers and guardians.

5 Results and discussions

The research data was obtained from the results collected through the teacher's observations, statements from students and guardians. As a way of better representation, the use of graphs, tables and charts was chosen.

To comply with the ethical precepts of the research, the students will be described by acronyms to preserve their anonymity. The first point raised was observed globally, global coordination, hand-eye coordination, body schema and stimulus of emotions (table 1).

Table 1-Process of body perception and behavior analysis.

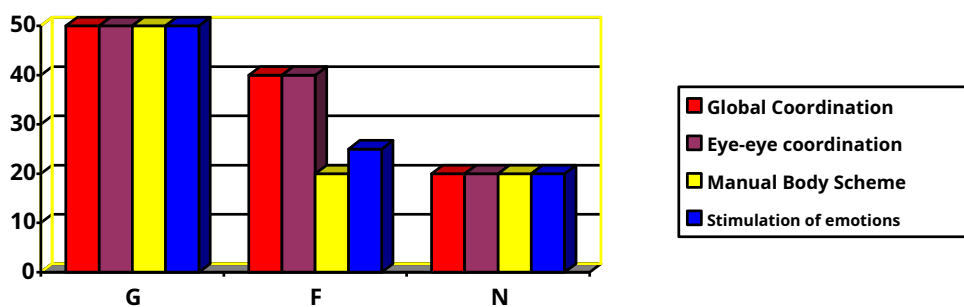


Source: Research data, 2016.

This graph shows the beginning of the bodily process, and was evaluated from 0 to 100, and the dancers had no body awareness, so the assessment was carried out on the first day of class, along with their amnesia form. In 2016, the psychological process of acceptance, of their social reality, of their anxiety and questions, was further worked on. According to Enoka (2000), Machado (2002), Powes (2002), the body

Human is made up of many particularities. It is a society of millions of cells. At the same time, saying that this body has its own identity, being a product and producer, is saying that the body makes certain movements and, at the same time, results from them.

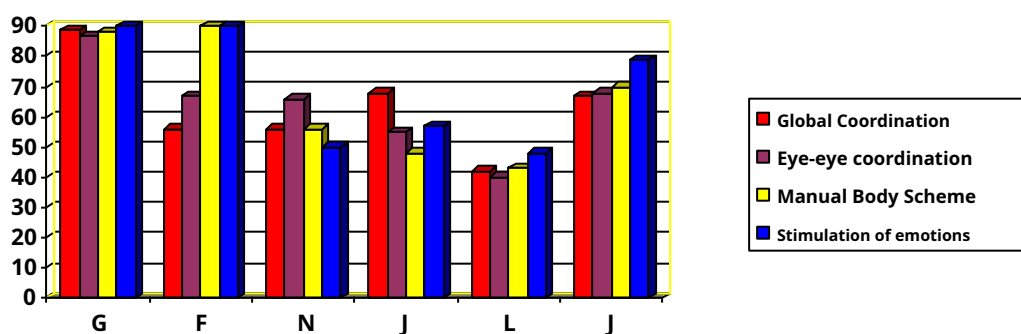
Table 2-Process of body perception and behavior analysis.



Source: 2017 survey data.

This graphic presents the psychomotor evolutionary process and its expressive movement, the dancers entered into processes of body awareness, independence to enter the rehearsal room, appropriate movements according to each diagnosis discovered. In 2017, the dancers began performing in schools, on stage and putting on shows, increasing their self-esteem and challenging them in the psychomotor aspect and mainly in their psychological preparation. This year more dancers entered, called N and F.

Table 3-Process of body perception and behavior analysis.



Source: 2019 survey data.

In this graph you can see a significant evolution, due to the body maturation of the dancers, and above all, body studies in contact and improvisation, open dialogue regarding limitations, the processes of creation together, and, it is worth mentioning that the dancers' self-esteem has increased significantly. This entire result was also successful with the family, as they participated in the process of recognizing fears and overcoming problems.

themselves, since the family was super protective of the dancer. The teacher was showing her limitations, and the importance of overcoming them. This maturation process took 2 years, 2018 and 2019.

6 Discussion

Studies in dance for wheelchair users as a therapeutic form have been growing over the last five years, but still, little is said about the issue of dance for wheelchair users and methodologies that can help teachers work in a therapeutic and technically conscious way, which according to Freire (2001), refers to the new work proposals that began to be developed with the aim of exploring and respecting different bodies within the scope of dance.

The 2010 Census (IBGE, 2013) shows that only 7.4% of the population has a disability aged between 0 and 14 years. There is also a low incidence of people with hearing (5.1%) and intellectual (1.4%) disabilities. Although the data indicate a high incidence of adults with physical disabilities in the Brazilian population, it is inferred that more studies should be developed involving children and adolescents in wheelchairs.

Regarding the theoretical contribution, even in the face of so much variety, it is worth highlighting the scholar Rudolf Laban, who was considered as the basis for half of the research involving dance programs. This fact is justified by the way this author refers to dance as a means to educate, based on organic movements, being scripted, thus promoting the development of each person. (LABAN, 1990).

This result is also related to the number of research that were developed in Postgraduate Programs in Education, as mentioned previously, and the theoretical support based, especially on Rudolf Laban, who dealt with education through dance and body psychotherapy . Thus, such studies are important, as they are concerned with finding ways for people with disabilities to have space, a voice for their dance and their way of expressing themselves, transforming this into something therapeutic and at the same time accessible. A way to expose their thoughts and especially the way they understand their bodies and give meaning to dance.

Other studies also corroborate these data, demonstrating how dance benefited behavior, self-esteem, mental health (SANTOS; BRAGA, 2010, SILVA; CARVALHO; NETO, 2009), motor aspects, such as balance and postural organization, and aspects cognitive and iterative (MAIA, 2012) of people with disabilities.

Final considerations

Starting from the object of study, there has been a great evolution of the dancers until the present year, they have had a significant body change, reflected in the studies in the classroom, becoming more powerful in improvisation and floor techniques and confident in carrying out the movement, providing a higher self-esteem.

There was an improvement in socialization both in the classroom and in society, providing dancers with independence when leaving the wheelchair and sitting in it, having a broader dialogue and reflection in classes about the importance of movement and its mental development, respect for this being in movement.

The methodology used was notes from observations carried out during the year 2016 to 2019, punctuating the movement of the dancers. Her psychological development was significant in this learning process, always realizing her relationship with her body awareness, and the care for the other dancer's body, providing more conscious contact and improvisation and even the process of creating movement became more reflexive.

It is notable that dancing for wheelchair users allows the physically disabled person to incorporate movements in an unconventional way, performing rolling, crawling, kneeling with better performance of the joints in the most common posture attitudes, or, even, with greater ease for the transition from one movement to the other. It is very important to execute and understand these movements, as they happen all the time consciously and unconsciously. Dance allows these movements, understood in class, to be used on other occasions, especially in daily activities.

New research and dance procedures for wheelchair users are necessary, in order to clarify the entire bodily process, with regard to dance. The body study of a person with a physical disability is infinite; The deeper we delve into it, the more we will have a field of information. This will only happen when we become aware that we cannot restrict ourselves to a physical body, but also to aspects linked to the subjectivity of this speaking body, which has its identity constructed through therapeutic bodily processes.

Including means going beyond the areas of human life: health, sport, leisure. It is a movement that is concerned with inclusive values, providing continuous development processes in the construction of this subject who feels, thinks and acts.

References

ARTETHERAPY ASSOCIATION OF RIO DE JANEIRO, Studies in Art Therapy: different perspectives on art, **AARJ notebooks**, n. 1, Rio de Janeiro-RJ: Walk Ed., 2009.

BARROS, D. D, Enable yourself rehabilitate Is the King naked? **Portal of scientific journals in health science**:v. 2, no. 43, p. 100-4, Jun-Sep 1991.

BRAGA DM *et. Al.* Benefits of dance sport for people with physical disabilities. **Rev. Neurosciences** 2002. Available at <http://www.revistaneurociencias.com.br>. Accessed on: 23 May. 2021.

FERREIRA, EL Body movement disability, the forms of discourses of/in wheelchair dance and their processes of meaning, **CBD CR**, 2005.

MIRANDA, R. **Expressive movement**. Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1979.

VALDEVITE; NM, N, STIPPLET. *et. al. Cerebral Palsy versus physiotherapy*. Associated with dancing. Available at <http://www.usp.br/siicuso/resumossiicuso4791.pdf>. Accessed on: 23 May. 2021.

VIANA, K. **The dance**. São Paulo: Siciliano, 1990

MATTOS, CA From; RAMOS, MIB (Org.). **Psychomotricity**: special education and social inclusion, 2 ed. Rio de Janeiro: Wak Ed., 2009.