

POSITIVE RESULTS OF CLINICAL EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT IN SITUATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Dominique Tavormina

Clinical Pedagogist, Bergamo, Italy

SUMMARY

Education is a complex process that involves the individual in the course of his entire life and leads to the maturation and the overall development of his personality. The educational process involves the complete growth of each and completes the infinite possibilities that every child has potential since birth.

Education also is a necessity for the human being, as only adequate environmental stimulation causes the mental processes to begin. In fact, the higher intellectual functions, such as language, thought, memory, emerge only from social and educational experiences of the child. The educational surgery creates experiences and learning that allow the person to change by improving the efficiency of synaptic connections.

Clinical pedagogy has developed in Italy in the last decades of the twentieth century with the aim of research and experimenting educational purposes suitable for different situations in order to provide each subject with appropriate development opportunities. Clinical pedagogical support is offered in the form of artistic or bodily activities and represents for the individual a positive environment that allows the development of different brain areas and the potential inherent in them. The various methods are suitable for any situation of existential discomfort, which are understood as moments of personal growth.

Key words: *education - educability - brain plasticity - clinical pedagogy*

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Taken from the Latin, the word education has a double origin: educate means to nourish, nurture; educere draw out, lead out, develop. On the one hand the care and breeding, on the other personality development.

The concept of education is, therefore, much larger than is commonly believed. Education is a complex process that involves the individual in the course of his entire life and leads him to full maturity as a person in all its potential. There is no aspect of the individual which is not strengthened during the educational process: the physical, language, affect, socialization, creativity, logic, emotion, and so on. In fact, education no longer addresses as in past centuries only the intelligence and corporeality, but the multiplicity of dimensions of personal development.

Education affects the full growth of each and completes the infinite possibilities that every child has potential since birth.

Education begins in the family, but soon extends to every area of human experience (school, sports, leisure, etc.) and also into all stages of life, not just the so-called period of development.

One must add that man needs to be educated, given that most of his behaviors and his mental processes are learned and therefore so are the effects of education in the broad sense (observation, imitation, socialization, education, etc.). The educational potential is unattainable horizons opening up for every other living being, but it is a possibility that requires a relational context (environment, external incentives, etc.).

In the fetal period, the nerve cells are multiplying at a dizzying pace, and their activities provide the nervous system. Similar activity that comes from self-stimulation in postnatal age, is caused only by the immersion of the body in stimulation by the environment. According to Vygotsky in "Thought and Language" (Vygotsky 1934) - the great Russian psychologist of the twentieth century known for his brilliant insights and his short but intense life as the Mozart of psychology - cognitive development is essentially a social process and the higher intellectual functions, such as language, thought, memory, emerge only from the social and educational experiences of the child. In the evolutionary perspective there is continuity between animal behavior and man behavior, but between man and animal, there is a qualitative leap caused by the development of higher mental processes dependent on the historical and cultural context of life.

Just think, by contract, of the devastating effects caused by emotional and sensory deprivation highlighted during the second half of the twentieth century by several studies on institutionalized children (René Spitz): delays in language and intellectual and motor development, depressive symptoms, great isolation, aggression.

According to Eric Kandel - psychiatrist who received the Nobel Prize for medicine in 2000- in "Psychiatry, psychoanalysis and the new biology of mind" (Kandel 2005), the experience of sensory deprivation in early life has profound biological consequences because it can change the structure of the

cerebral cortex. He states that "the consequences of environmental experience on brain function are not limited to the early stages of development; sensory and social stimuli continuously influence the brain and produce consequences of varying intensity and duration." Lack of stimulation in infancy inhibits the functioning of nerve cells in areas of the cortex corresponding to sometimes irreversible damage.

The educability of the human being, that is the condition that we are learning and changing, has, therefore, scientific assumptions. It is based on the infinite possibilities of our brain.

The human being is educable in that, as the great American psychologist Jerome Bruner said in "The meaning of education" (Bruner 1982), he has a "permanent brain immaturity." The human being is the only one who "learns and grows" throughout his life because his cerebral cortex is always subject to future evolutions thanks to the intervention of the environment.

The biological and psycho-educational approaches are more closely related.

Thanks to neuronal plasticity, that is the possibility of continuous renewal of the nervous system, some social, cognitive and behavioral functions which have not fully evolved or have been damaged can be rehabilitated with the formation of alternative ways to replace those that have been weakened. Educational surgery creates experiences and learning that allows the person to change it by editing the effectiveness of synaptic connections.

As all mental disorders reflect specific alterations in the neuronal and synaptic function, so any educational intervention takes effect by acting on brain function and inducing the expression of new patterns of behavior (through the modification of gene expression).

Over the centuries, pedagogy, the science that analyzes the facts and educational processes, has responded to education and training needs which are always new, developing theories and methods applicable in the concrete practice of every day. Also known as scientific education, it gathers the most varied cultural requirements and then proposes appropriate reflections and answers which are always present.

In the last decades of the twentieth century the pedagogy clinic was developed in Italy with the intent of investigating and experimenting educational purposes in different situations in order to provide each subject with appropriate development opportunities.

The term "clinical" means the care of the person in difficulty, the planning of specific and innovative aid interventions, at the individual and group level.

The basic principle is strongly related to *ex-ducere*: the clinical pedagogy develops all the skills and potentialities which are "dormant" in the individual through educational techniques (for example artistic, musical, motor, creative, etc.) and experiences designed to facilitate expression and maturation of inner energies

which were previously "caged". The clinical educationalist helps the subject "to be born" in its unrepeatable uniqueness, having as its goal the training of man itself and not a specific model.

The proposed clinical pedagogical support in the form of artistic or bodily activities is offered to the individual as a positive environment that allows the development of different brain areas and the potential inherent in them. The various methods are suitable for any situation in a life of hardship, where the deployment of the personality has not been harmonious and stimulations received from the environment were partial and not very balanced. Clinical education methods and techniques for clinical education are seen as moments of personal growth, aiming at developing all the skills and competencies needed to face life with determination and effectiveness and adopt successful strategies in the subject's own family, emotional, social, and occupational reality.

Some examples

The use of artistic methodologies (for example the Inter-Art, Gestalt-Dance, the Pedagogical Music) helps to release the creative forces present in each person and to discover their own inner riches. The clinical educator, as a conductor, guides the subjects to the explicitation of their creative urges and abilities. Creativity is a reality that enriches the individual giving them awareness of their potential and enabling them to feel worthy of esteem. These methods also seek a basis of motivational commitment and help the subjects to become aware of their hidden artistic possibilities.

The methods of reclaiming the body (the Inductive Training and Discover Project) offer the possibility to live an intense awareness of self and of structuring a real mental image of their body, which is essential for the full acceptance of self.

Psycho-corporeal educational methods, inspired by the French school of psychomotor functionality led by Jean Le Boulch, act primarily on energy-affective psychomotor function on which depends the emotional balance of the person. Tonic control and the educational activity on the energy function promote emotional balance, control impulsive reactions and aggression. Education through movement is indispensable to promote a balance between the bodily person and the mental, emotional and rational person, to the extent that it calls for the balanced control of the two hemispheres. It also helps to overcome clumsiness and gestures which are inhibited and improve the ability to relate.

To conclude, the purpose of the clinical educational process is to form a rich, independent and complete personality. Attention is directed to the entirety of the subject and not to the specific sectoral and inner turmoil. Clinical pedagogy does not cure the disease, but develops all the skills and capabilities necessary for

the balanced growth of the person and the smooth unfolding of his personality. The course helps the individual to gain self-esteem, improved security and self-awareness, and to gain new skills in overcoming the problems, while acquiring harmony and inner strength and confidence in life.

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Correspondence:

Dr. Dominique Tavormina
Clinical Pedagogist – Bergamo
Via Chiesa san Grisogono, 20, 24068 Seriate (Bergamo), Italy
E-mail: dominiqueta@libero.it