Learning implies doing: Bodily experiences as a basis for conceptualisation

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The ability to interact with the environment is a crucial factor when considering child’s growth to an active role in the world. The cornerstone of interaction is the constant development of concepts. Conceptualisation process, in turn, is firmly relating to child’s bodily experiences.

The paradigm of embodied cognition has gained a lot of popularity among scholars during the last two decades. Embodied cognition provides a conceptual basis for understanding the primacy of corporeality in cognition. However, even if embodiment has been acknowledged a highly appropriate approach across disciplines, its application in education is rather vague. Clear exceptions to this claim are some of the so-called alternative pedagogies, such as Freinet, Montessori and Steiner (Waldorf) pedagogies. Many of their principles resonate with embodied cognition much stronger than the more recently developed educational practices.

In the current study we challenge the practical educators and educationalists to expose current educational trends to the paradigm of embodied cognition. We argue that the application of embodied cognition to education implies the providing of bodily experiences and other material interaction with real, existing objects.

The theoretical focus of this study is in the relationship between the human being and technology. Especially in childhood the development of abilities relates to our conceptions about the roles of the human being and technology in any everyday task. In the proposed approach tasks are supposed to be analysed in the level that reveals the qualitative differences between the applications of different technologies. For instance reading and writing processes change fundamentally when switching from pen and paper to computerised options. Our aim is to analyse these differences in order to support the choice of appropriate technology for each educational objective.

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