

Embodied Education and Teacher Professional Development: Rethinking the Body in Educational Practice

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Abstract: This Article explores the paradigm of Embodied Education as an innovative and transformative Pedagogical perspective for the professional development of teachers. Based on an epistemological approach that recognizes the body as a primary site of knowledge and relationship, the paper analyzes the theoretical and practical implications of integrating corporeality into training processes. The main conceptual references are outlined, with particular attention to the dialogue between Pedagogy, Neuroscience, Phenomenology, and Cognitive Sciences, and methodological proposals and best practices for renewing training devices are presented. The Article also discusses the potential of the embodied approach in promoting reflective, relational, and ethical competencies, highlighting the need for a systemic shift in the currently used educational and evaluative models. The conclusions emphasize how Embodied Education can provide a pedagogically grounded and culturally sustainable response to the challenges of contemporary education, restoring centrality to the body as an integral dimension of teaching professionalism.

Keywords: Teacher Professional Development; Learning; Pedagogy.



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1. Introduction

In today's educational and professional training landscape, teachers are required to operate within increasingly complex, heterogeneous, and ever-changing systems (Mathewson Mitchell, & Reid, 2017). Cultural, social, and technological transformations over recent decades have profoundly redefined not only the student profile but also that of the teacher, who can no longer be limited to the vertical and frontal transmission of knowledge. Instead, the teacher must become a facilitator of learning processes, a promoter of meaningful relationships, and a builder of inclusive, dynamic, and responsive educational environments (Georgiou, &

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Ioannou, 2019). Within this framework, the professional training of teachers, both initial and ongoing, takes on a strategic and central role.

However, despite numerous reforms and national and international initiatives aimed at improving the quality of teacher education, little attention is paid to a crucial dimension of the teacher's professional identity: the body. Western pedagogy, influenced by a long dualistic tradition of Cartesian origin, has historically separated mind and body, relegating the latter to a secondary or merely instrumental role in relation to cognitive processes. In educational settings, this has resulted in the dominance of theoretical, linguistic, and symbolic approaches, at the expense of practices that recognize the body as an epistemic, affective, and relational resource (Chang et al., 2024).

In recent years, however, there has been a growing interest in the embodied approach, which is based on the assumption that the mind cannot be understood separately from the body, but is deeply rooted in the individual's sensory, motor, and emotional experiences. The paradigm of Embodied Cognition, which has gained prominence in neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy, provides the foundation for a reinterpretation of learning as a situated and embodied phenomenon, in which the body actively participates in the construction of meaning. This perspective has also begun to penetrate educational sciences, generating a body of practices and reflections known as Embodied Education (Thorburn, & Stolz, 2017).

Embodied Education thus presents itself as an innovative and transformative paradigm, one that restores the body's centrality in educational processes. It promotes a form of learning that integrates body, emotion, cognition, and context through experiential, somatic, relational, and reflective methodologies. The adoption of this approach in teacher education emerges as an urgent response to several critical issues in the contemporary educational system: the growing bureaucratization of teaching, the risk of emotional burnout, the challenges of managing complex and multicultural classrooms, and the gap between theory and practice (Leigh, 2016).

Indeed, the everyday practice of teaching involves a constant bodily and relational engagement that cannot be ignored: classroom management, use of voice, posture, physical proximity, eye contact, empathic listening, and emotion regulation are all embodied dimensions that decisively affect the quality of educational action. Yet these aspects are often overlooked or considered "natural," and thus left to individual improvisation. Instead, they must become an explicit object of training, exploration, and reflection so that teachers can develop bodily awareness and somatic competence that enrich their professionalism (Weddle, & Hollan, 2010).

From this perspective, Embodied Education is not simply a set of techniques but rather a pedagogical posture, an attitude of openness to experience, a way of being-in-relation that involves presence, attention, and responsibility. It invites the teacher to know themselves through the body, to question their way of inhabiting the educational space, of building meaningful relationships with students, of managing conflict and emotion, of embodying values and educational intentions (Kinsella, & Loftus, 2022; Smears, 2009). In this sense, the embodied approach also contributes to the development of a teacher's professional identity by fostering processes of self-reflection and personal transformation.

The scientific literature on the topic highlights how embodied training practices, such as Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, & McBride, 2020), movement-based pedagogy (Del Barrio, & Arús, 2024), focusing (Benton, & Benton, 2008), mindfulness (Doyle Fosco et al., 2023), somatic practices (Eddy,

2009), educational dance (Anjos, & Ferraro, 2018), and sensory pedagogy (Gutiérrez-Ujaque, & Degen, 2024), can significantly support the development of more aware, empathetic, creative, and resilient teachers. These practices enable work on crucial aspects such as stress management, emotional regulation, non-verbal communication, deep listening, and the construction of an authentic pedagogical presence.

Moreover, the embodied approach proves particularly effective in inclusive and intercultural educational contexts, as it values non-verbal languages and expressive modes that are accessible even to individuals with linguistic or cognitive difficulties. It fosters an education grounded in the encounter between diverse bodies and stories, in the welcoming of the other in their totality, and in mutual recognition through embodied relationships. In this way, it contributes to building learning environments that are more human, equitable, and democratic (Siljamäki, & Anttila, 2021).

In light of these considerations, this contribution aims to explore the significance and implications of Embodied Education in the professional training of teachers, with particular attention to university-level initial training and to in-service professional development programs. Through a theoretical analysis and a review of training practices inspired by the embodied approach, it intends to highlight the transformative potential of this paradigm and to propose concrete ways of integrating it into the training curricula of educators.

Ultimately, the paper supports the thesis that integrating Embodied Education into teacher training programs represents a necessary and promising direction for responding to contemporary educational challenges, promoting a school environment that values the bodily and relational dimensions of teaching, and forming educators capable of acting with presence, sensitivity, and awareness. Only by recognizing the body as a site of knowledge, experience, and transformation can we truly renew teacher education in an integrated and sustainable way.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundations of Embodied Education are rooted in a multidisciplinary convergence that spans cognitive science, philosophy of mind, neuroscience, psychology, phenomenology, and educational theory (Kiefer, & Trumpp, 2012). This convergence challenges traditional models of cognition, which have long privileged abstract, symbolic, and computational representations of knowledge, often detached from the lived experience of the body. In contrast, the embodied paradigm posits that cognition is fundamentally grounded in the sensorimotor capacities of the human body, and that perception, action, emotion, and thought are inextricably intertwined (Nathan, 2021). Such a paradigm has profound implications for educational practice and, more specifically, for the professional training of teachers.

2.1 *From Cartesian Dualism to Embodied Cognition*

Historically, Western thought has been dominated by Cartesian dualism, which posits a radical separation between mind and body, privileging the rational, disembodied subject as the locus of knowledge and agency. This epistemological framework influenced not only scientific thought but also educational institutions, which came to value abstract reasoning over experiential learning, verbal expression over bodily engagement, and mental discipline over emotional or physical awareness. Within this tradition, the body was often perceived as a mere vessel or

obstacle to intellectual development, rather than a site of learning and transformation in its own right (Cafaro, & Roberts, 2021).

The rise of Embodied Cognition since the late 20th century marks a significant shift in this landscape. Rooted in the work of scholars such as Varela, Rosch, and Thompson (Varela et al., 2017), and supported by research in neuroscience (Aziz-Zadeh, & Damasio, 2008; Gallese, & Lakoff, 2005), embodied cognition asserts that the mind emerges from the dynamic interaction between brain, body, and environment. Cognitive processes are not merely computational or symbolic but are enacted through bodily movement, perception, affect, and situated action. Language, memory, attention, and decision-making are shaped by bodily experiences and are mediated through our sensory and motor systems.

One of the key insights of this paradigm is the notion of “sensorimotor grounding”, the idea that abstract concepts and reasoning are built upon, and continuously shaped by, bodily experience. For example, spatial metaphors (“close to an idea,” “grasping a concept”) are not arbitrary but arise from sensorimotor interactions with the world. This has been empirically supported by studies in neurophenomenology and mirror neuron theory, which suggest that our understanding of others and ourselves is fundamentally embodied and relational.

2.2 Phenomenological Contributions to Embodied Learning

The philosophical groundwork for embodied education owes much to phenomenology, particularly the work of Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty, & Smith, 1993), who argued that the body is not a passive object but the primary medium through which we engage with the world. For Merleau-Ponty, perception is not a detached reception of stimuli, but a lived, embodied activity that gives rise to meaning. The body is “a knowing body” (*le corps propre*), which orients itself in the world through intentional action. This notion challenges the view of learning as a purely cognitive acquisition and reframes it as an embodied becoming, a process of forming the self in relation to the world through corporeal interaction.

In educational terms, this means that learning is always situated, affective, and intersubjective. The classroom is not a neutral space, but a relational and spatial field where bodies communicate, influence, and co-regulate each other through posture, gesture, proximity, rhythm, and emotion. The teacher is not a mere transmitter of content but an embodied presence whose mood, tone, and attitude shape the learning environment. As Sheets-Johnstone (Sheets-Johnstone, 1999) reminds us, movement is not simply an output of cognition, but a generative force of knowledge itself.

2.3 Emotional Embodiment and the Affective Dimension

Another crucial aspect of the embodied approach is its attention to affect and emotion as central to cognition and learning. Traditional pedagogies have often marginalized emotion, treating it as a distraction or obstacle to rational thought. However, contemporary research in affective neuroscience (Damasio, 2003; Panksepp, 1998), and somatic psychology demonstrates that emotion is not only integral to decision-making, memory formation, and attention but also deeply embodied. Emotions manifest physically, in heart rate, breath, muscle tension, posture, and are co-regulated through relational dynamics.

In the context of teacher education, this has significant implications. Teachers are constantly engaged in emotional labor: managing their own emotions, responding to the emotional states of students, and navigating complex interpersonal situations. An embodied perspective invites teacher training programs

to integrate emotional literacy, body awareness, and self-regulation skills as foundational competencies. Through practices such as mindfulness, body scanning, movement exploration, or expressive arts, future teachers can develop the capacity to notice, name, and transform emotional states in themselves and others. This contributes not only to teacher well-being but also to classroom climate and student engagement.

2.4 Situated and Enactive Learning

The embodied perspective also resonates with theories of situated learning and enactivism, which emphasize that knowledge is not a static commodity to be transmitted but an activity that emerges in context, through participation and co-construction. According to Lave and Wenger (Lave, & Wenger, 1991), learning is a process of becoming through “legitimate peripheral participation” in communities of practice. Similarly, the enactivist approach (Weber, 2015) views cognition as enacted through lived experience, in a continuous loop between organism and environment.

In teacher education, this suggests that learning to teach cannot be reduced to acquiring abstract principles or technical competencies. Rather, it is a relational, iterative, embodied process that unfolds over time and through experience. Practicum placements, peer collaboration, reflective journaling, and classroom simulations become crucial spaces where teacher identity is negotiated and embodied knowledge is developed. The role of the body in these contexts, how one stands, listens, gestures, maintains presence, is not secondary but central to the performance of teaching.

2.5 Somatic Pedagogy and Embodied Educational Practices

Emerging from the theoretical insights above, the field of somatic pedagogy offers a concrete set of practices that operationalize embodied education. The term “soma,” from the Greek *σῶμα*, refers to the body as it is subjectively lived, rather than the anatomical body as an object of study. Somatic approaches invite individuals to cultivate a deep, internal awareness of bodily sensation and to use this awareness as a guide for learning, communication, and ethical action (Witteman, 2020).

In teacher education, somatic pedagogies can take many forms: body mapping, authentic movement, dance, theater, breath work, contact improvisation, and sensory walks. These practices are not merely add-ons or “soft skills,” but tools for cultivating presence, attunement, and pedagogical tact. They help future teachers to become aware of their habitual patterns, to recognize stress signals, to embody confidence and openness, and to establish meaningful, ethical connections with students. They also support the development of a reflective and responsive pedagogy, one that values the felt sense of the classroom as much as its cognitive content.

Notably, scholars such as Cohen (Cohen, 2009), Fels (Fels, 2009), and Kupperts (Kupperts, 2017) have emphasized the role of the arts, particularly performance and participatory arts, as vital modes of embodied inquiry. These modes challenge the hierarchy of disciplines and offer alternative epistemologies grounded in affect, embodiment, and collective meaning-making.

2.6 Embodied Professional Identity in Teaching

A final key theme in the theoretical framework is the relationship between embodiment and professional identity. Becoming a teacher is not only a cognitive

or procedural process, but also a deeply personal and embodied transformation. It involves developing a sense of authority, voice, and ethical responsibility that is lived through the body. As Britzman (Britzman, 2007) argues, teacher identity is always in flux, marked by tensions between personal history, institutional norms, and pedagogical aspirations.

Embodied education can support this identity work by making space for self-inquiry, storytelling, and expressive exploration. Through movement and somatic reflection, teachers-in-training can surface implicit beliefs, confront limiting narratives, and experiment with new ways of being. This is especially important in contexts where teachers are expected to navigate multiple and often conflicting demands: to be caring yet authoritative, reflective yet efficient, adaptable yet structured. An embodied approach does not offer a fixed identity but supports a process of becoming that is grounded in presence, relationality, and critical awareness.

3. Methodological Proposals and Best Practices

In the current context of teacher professional development, new pedagogical demands are emerging with urgency, calling into question traditional models of knowledge transmission, which often remain anchored in purely cognitive and frontal logics (O'Loughlin, 2006). Within this framework, Embodied Education presents itself as an innovative and transformative approach capable of proposing a radical reinterpretation of formative processes by recognizing the body not merely as a vehicle or support but as an epistemological, relational, and experiential locus. The methodological implications of such a perspective are both deep and multifaceted, as they require a reconsideration of the body's role in the construction of knowledge, in the dynamics of teaching and learning, and in the educational relationship itself. This is not merely a matter of introducing moments of movement or physical activity into training pathways; rather, it involves an epistemic reversal that acknowledges corporeality as a foundation of knowing and of being-in-relation (Ord, & Nuttall, 2016). Embodied practices, in this sense, should not be understood as occasional add-ons but as structuring devices that interrogate the entire didactic and organizational framework of professional training.

In light of this vision, a first methodological proposal involves the integration of tools that foster somatic awareness within the teacher training pathway. Training in bodily presence is not an accessory goal but a prerequisite for authentic educational relationships. Through practices such as body scanning, mindful breathing, silent meditation, authentic movement, or somatic journaling, it is possible to promote a profound reconnection with bodily sensations and emotions—dimensions often repressed or marginalized in formal educational contexts (Bresler, 2013). These practices, inspired by approaches such as mindfulness, focusing, or bioenergetics, have the potential to develop a fundamental competence for educators: the ability to perceive and inhabit one's body as a space of listening, discernment, and care. It is not just about learning to “feel oneself” but also about reading the bodily resonances that emerge in relational dynamics, particularly with students.

A second methodological proposal is based on the need to articulate didactic practices that encourage embodied intersubjectivity. Learning never occurs in isolation but takes shape within living relational contexts in which bodies interact, synchronize, resist, or harmonize (Jusslin et al., 2022). In this direction, it is crucial to foster activities that make the intercorporeal field of education visible and

transformable. Theater dynamics, improvisational practices, contact and distance exercises, mirroring activities, and co-movement techniques drawn from contemporary dance or contact improvisation can all serve as valuable tools for activating processes of reciprocal recognition and embodied dialogic learning. The methodological challenge here is to position the body as an active pedagogical mediator capable of generating knowledge through encounter, conflict, cooperation, and resonance.

These relational corporeal practices find further expression in the work on embodied emotions. Teaching inevitably involves managing a multiplicity of affective states: enthusiasm, frustration, anxiety, empathy, disappointment, and joy. Yet, within professional training, the emotional dimension is often neglected or treated reductively (Macintyre Latta, & Buck, 2008). The embodied approach, instead, allows for emotions to be considered not as obstacles but as meaningful bodily signals that orient the educational relationship. Practices of emotional dramatization, somatic storytelling workshops, visualization exercises, and emotional embodiment techniques inspired by the Theater of the Oppressed or body-centered psychotherapy can offer teachers concrete tools for processing their emotional experiences, recognizing the emotions of others, and managing classroom complexity in an empathetic and reflective way. These practices also support the creation of a more authentic and inclusive educational climate, in which interiority can be welcomed and transformed into a pedagogical resource (Macintyre Latta, & Buck, 2008).

Another key methodological domain concerns the restructuring of the spaces and times of training. Embodied Education invites a critical rethinking of learning environments, which are all too often rigid, hierarchical, and oriented toward control and efficiency. Instead, training spaces should support movement, freedom of expression, and the sensitive coexistence of bodies. Circular seating arrangements, the presence of tactile materials, the opportunity to sit on the floor, the use of outdoor environments, the alternation of activity and reflection periods, and the attention to sensory atmospheres (light, sound, smell) all contribute to creating an embodied context capable of sustaining integrated learning processes. The body is not formed in abstraction but within spaces that either welcome or reject it; for this reason, reimagining the architecture of education through a corporeal lens is a vital challenge for all educational institutions (Markauskaite et al., 2017).

Good embodied practices also include reflective tools that place the body at the center of the learning process. Somatic journals, for example, is a particularly effective device. It enables the recording and re-elaboration, in narrative form, of bodily experiences encountered throughout the training journey. Through writing, sensations are transformed into meanings, episodes into insights, and gestures into words. The journal does not serve an evaluative function but a self-formative one: it is an intimate space in which the teacher-in-training can connect with their bodily interiority, trace the evolution of their embodied awareness, and develop a pedagogical understanding that is grounded in lived experience. When paired with guided sharing moments, embodied feedback sessions, or reflective dialogues with facilitators, the somatic journal contributes to the construction of an integrated professional self-one that holds together theory and experience, method and emotion, discourse and body (Schwarz, 2022).

From an organizational standpoint, it is essential that training institutions recognize the epistemological and pedagogical legitimacy of the embodied approach. This entails a transformation of curricular frameworks, the introduction

of modules specifically dedicated to body pedagogy, and the training of teacher educators in somatic perspectives. It is not simply a matter of adding “movement hours” to an already structured curriculum, but of rethinking the entire educational configuration according to an integrated and interdisciplinary logic. Only a systemic approach can prevent the fragmentation and marginalization of embodied practices, which might otherwise be perceived as “alternative” or supplementary experiences lacking real impact on professional development (McDonough et al., 2016).

A particularly delicate issue concerns assessment. Embodied Education deeply challenges traditional forms of evaluation based on performance, final products, and standardization. From an embodied perspective, assessment means accompanying the process, perceiving micro-transformations, giving voice to lived experiences, and valuing subjective changes. Evaluation rubrics should include indicators related to bodily awareness, presence quality, somatic listening skills, and relational sensitivity. Methods such as narrative self-assessment, participant observation, reflective portfolios, and sensory-affective mapping offer tools consistent with a body-centered pedagogy. Most importantly, however, evaluation must be reimagined as a moment of dialogue, care, and reciprocal feedback, capable of generating learning in and of itself, rather than simply certifying it (Nguyen, & Larson, 2015).

Finally, the dissemination of an embodied culture in teacher training requires a strong ethical commitment. Working with the body means entering sensitive territories shaped by vulnerability, personal history, and each individual's physical and psychological limits. Embodied practices must therefore always be situated within frameworks of safety, respect, and freedom. No bodily activity should ever be imposed or framed as a performance. Respect for personal boundaries, attention to consent, the option to abstain, and a caring approach to facilitation are all indispensable components of any good practice (Göksel, & Zug, 2019). Only under such conditions can the body become a site of learning rather than one of forced exposure.

In other words, the methodological proposals and good practices of Embodied Education represent a significant pedagogical frontier for teacher professional development. They offer a pathway for rethinking education in terms of the whole person, reconnecting mind and body, knowledge and feeling, relationship and transformation. Far from being a utopia, the embodied approach is grounded in concrete practices already successfully implemented in various international contexts, supported by a robust theoretical corpus that legitimizes its educational relevance. Its implementation requires courage, competence, and vision, but it holds the promise of cultivating educators who are more aware, present, creative, and capable of inhabiting the complexity of the present with an embodied, transformative, and generative form of knowing.

4. Discussion

The introduction of the embodied approach in teacher professional education represents both a significant challenge and an opportunity to rethink the epistemological, pedagogical, and relational foundations that define educational identity and practice (Hegna, & Ørbæk, 2024). In the field of educator training, and particularly in teacher education, the adoption of a perspective that recognizes the central role of the body as a site of knowledge, relationship, and experience entails a radical reinterpretation of traditional training models, which are still largely guided by a cognitive and disembodied paradigm. This shift involves not only a revision of teaching methodologies but also a reformulation of educational goals, assessment

methods, and the ways in which professional identity is constructed (Lambert et al., 2024). Embodied Education, in this perspective, stands as an invitation to acknowledge that teaching and learning are profoundly embodied acts, rooted in the sensitive presence of the human being, in their perceptual, affective, and relational dynamics. From this awareness emerges the need to reconsider the figure of the teacher not merely as a transmitter of disciplinary content or a manager of cognitive processes, but as an embodied subject capable of inhabiting the educational space in an authentic, empathetic, and responsive way. In this sense, the teacher's professionalism is enriched with new dimensions: no longer limited to knowing, doing, and being, but also involving the capacity to perceive, to feel, to inhabit time and space within the educational relationship with mindful presence. The body, always present but often marginalized in pedagogical discourse, assumes new centrality in this context: it is no longer a mere support to verbal communication, but becomes a true epistemic mediator, a source of tacit, implicit, situated knowledge (Clughen, 2024). This perspective also transforms the very conception of teaching: no longer a disembodied act, but a situated practice, affectively charged, crossed by bodily and relational dynamics that profoundly influence the quality of learning. Every gesture, posture, movement, gaze, or silence of the teacher holds educational value, as it contributes to shaping the relational climate that enables or, conversely, hinders, the emergence of meaningful learning processes. In this regard, teaching becomes an embodied art that demands not only technical skill and theoretical knowledge, but also somatic awareness, deep listening, and the ability for intercorporeal attunement (Garrett, 2024). The teacher's body, just like that of the students, is constantly engaged in the educational relationship, and it is through the body that emotions are expressed, trust is built, interaction rhythms are modulated, and proximity or distance is generated. Consequently, teacher education can no longer ignore this dimension but must engage with it through experiences that foster conscious presence, embodied reflectivity, and the capacity to dwell in the here and now of the educational relationship. This requires a profound epistemological shift: the adoption of a paradigm that acknowledges knowledge as a situated phenomenon, emerging from the interaction between body, environment, and culture. It is not a matter of simply adding some physical exercises to university courses, but of rethinking the very categories through which pedagogical knowledge is constructed, assigning value to implicit knowledge, bodily intuitions, and somatic memory. In this direction, the body becomes not only an object of training but a knowing subject capable of producing meanings, insights, and understandings that escape linear rationality and are rooted in lived experience (Healey, 2025).

Such a reconceptualization of knowledge also demands a revision of assessment methods, which can no longer be limited to measuring cognitive performance, but must capture the quality of educational interaction, the authenticity of presence, and the capacity to create vital and generative learning environments. However, despite its evident potential, the implementation of the embodied approach in teacher education faces numerous resistances, cultural, institutional, and subjective. On a cultural level, a Cartesian dualism still prevails, separating mind and body, theory and practice, rationality and sensitivity. This dualism still permeates many educational institutions, which prioritize written language, argumentative logic, and standardized evaluation, while marginalizing bodily, expressive, and emotional experiences. On an institutional level, training paths are often structured according to disciplinary and bureaucratic logics that do not support the integration of embodied practices: there is a lack of adequate

spaces, flexible timing, trained facilitators, and above all, an evaluative culture capable of recognizing the formative value of embodied experience (King et al., 2025). Subjective resistances may also arise: many trainee teachers feel embarrassed or uncomfortable when engaged in activities requiring bodily exposure, emotional openness, or unfiltered self-involvement. Overcoming these resistances requires building safe, welcoming learning environments supported by a pedagogy of care and trust that acknowledges vulnerability as a constitutive dimension of the formative process (Yeh et al., 2025). In light of these considerations, it becomes clear that the embodied approach cannot be treated as a methodological option among others, nor as a sporadic addition to the curriculum, but must become a transversal educational horizon capable of profoundly transforming the very way education and professional training are conceived. In initial teacher education, this entails integrating significant embodied experiences from the early stages of training, promoting interdisciplinarity, and facilitating the integration of theory and practice, reflection and action. Theater workshops, body awareness sessions, and performative or artistic experiences can foster the development of embodied, relational, and empathetic competences, which are essential for inhabiting the educational role authentically. In continuing professional development, the embodied approach can offer valuable tools to regenerate motivation, prevent burnout, improve psycho-physical well-being, and strengthen the quality of educational relationships. In an era characterized by mental hyperactivity, affective disconnection, and digital overload, reclaiming the centrality of the body also responds to a widespread need for the rehumanization of the educational experience (Han et al., 2025).

In conclusion, Embodied Education emerges as a transformative pedagogical perspective capable of restoring centrality to experience, relationship, and embodied subjectivity. It calls for a new educational ethic based on presence, listening, and care. Training teachers through this paradigm means forming subjects capable of inhabiting uncertainty, engaging in deep relationships with others, and generating inclusive, creative, and vital educational spaces. Ultimately, it means building a school that is not only a place of instruction but a space of fully human experience, where body and mind, reason and emotion, theory and practice can finally dialogue in a harmonious and generative way.

5. Conclusions

The reflection developed in this contribution aimed to explore the value and relevance of the embodied approach within the professional training of teachers, highlighting its theoretical roots, methodological applications, and transformative potential in the educational field. Starting from a perspective that recognizes the body not as a mere vehicle of experience but as an epistemological and relational foundation of knowledge, Embodied Education emerges today as an innovative pedagogical paradigm capable of responding critically and generatively to the challenges of contemporary teacher education.

Throughout the analysis, the urgency to rethink traditional training models, still largely anchored to transmissive, abstract, and disembodied logics that relegate the body to a marginal or merely functional role, has become increasingly evident. Such an approach, besides being somewhat outdated, proves progressively inadequate in preparing teachers to manage the complexity of educational relationships and to promote authentic, inclusive, and transformative learning environments. Embodied Education, on the other hand, offers a vision of professional development that enhances the wholeness of being, including within

pedagogical reflection the bodily, emotional, affective, and intersubjective dimensions of human experience.

One of the central elements that has emerged is the generative potential of somatic and embodied practices in the construction of professional teaching identity. Far from being accessory or decorative activities, these practices are true formative devices capable of influencing awareness, listening, presence, self-care, and care for others. Through somatic perception exercises, mindful movement experiences, theatrical dynamics, reflective writing, and group work focused on recognizing embodied emotions, trainee teachers can develop essential skills to face the challenges of educational practice with greater effectiveness and depth.

Another crucial theme concerns the reorganization of training spaces and times. Giving centrality to the body also entails revisiting didactic organization, school architecture, evaluation methods, and relational dynamics within educational settings. Embodied training does not merely “insert the body” into the curriculum, but interrogates the entire formative framework, proposing a systemic vision in which corporeality becomes the organizing principle of the educational experience. In this sense, it connects deeply with other contemporary pedagogical frameworks, such as those linked to experiential education, situated learning, pedagogies of care, and pedagogies of presence.

The good practices explored in the methodological section demonstrated how Embodied Education can translate into concrete formative actions capable of reorienting the professional trajectories of future teachers. Integrating embodied moments into both initial and in-service training not only strengthens relational competencies but also promotes greater congruence between knowing, feeling, and acting. Moreover, the embodied approach contributes to enhancing the ethical dimension of the teaching profession by placing at the center personal integrity, authenticity, responsibility towards others, and the ability to inhabit one's educational role with awareness.

However, the systemic implementation of Embodied Education in teacher training requires a profound cultural and institutional shift. It is necessary to overcome resistances and prejudices that perceive the body as a secondary or extraneous element to formal learning. A new epistemological legitimation of corporeality must be built, grounded in scientific evidence, interdisciplinary studies, and successful practices already tested in various contexts. In this direction, greater integration between research fields, from pedagogy to psychology, neuroscience to philosophy, is desirable in order to provide a solid and coherent theoretical framework supporting embodied training.

The promotion of Embodied Education also implies a rethinking of assessment strategies. As discussed earlier, evaluation based solely on objective parameters, final products, and standardized performance risks excluding or neutralizing the deeper forms of learning, which often emerge precisely on the bodily, affective, and relational planes. An assessment aligned with the embodied approach should instead be capable of recognizing transformative processes, micro-evolutions in self-awareness, changes in relational presence, and the reflective practices developed over time.

In conclusion, the embodied perspective represents a highly relevant pedagogical challenge for teacher education in the 21st century. It does not propose an alternative or antagonistic model to existing forms of knowledge but rather an integration that seeks to restore the full humanity of training. In a time marked by uncertainty, complexity, and ongoing transformation, educating through and with the body means educating for presence, resilience, empathy, and responsibility. It

means equipping future teachers with the tools to inhabit the classroom not merely as content transmitters, but as embodied educators, capable of sensing, reflecting, and transforming.

Ultimately, this is the deepest promise of Embodied Education: to restore centrality to the body as a site of knowledge, relationship, and change. It is a promise that speaks not only to individual teachers but to the entire educational community, which is called to rethink the very foundations of pedagogical action and to build learning environments capable of welcoming and enhancing the fullness of human experience.

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