



Childhood and its relationship with tennis as a sport

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role of childhood and its relationship with tennis. It reflects on the importance of feelings, and links this stage of development with action and production in childhood. It also discusses sport and its role in infancy. Sport is considered a multifunctional activity that impacts on different aspects in human and social life, which have been analysed from different points of view, and have always belonged to the cultural environment. Then, with the passing of time, the scientific environment became involved and provided criteria for analysis.

Key words: development, psychomotricity, motor skills

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INTRODUCTION

Childhood is a stage within human development where possibilities of incorporating different learnings, habits, skills, beliefs, traditions, values and behaviours will enable children to start their own journeys.

Childhood has not always been a limitation of existential recognition, there was a historic time when this historic conception cropped up.

"Anthropological studies carried out in different societies have shown the complexity and variety of the relations between growth process and development and the socially delimited stages of life. This way we can state that age limits are not natural, they are the product of classification processes through which each social group sets divisions of the social world, creating groups like childhood, adolescence, adulthood and others" (Bordieu, 1983).

As Fortes (1938), the anthropologist pointed out, it is not the biological maturity, but the relations that the individual builds in a domestic group and in the society as a whole, that mark and express- through what is called "rituals of transition" - the changes within the life cycle.

Besides, a look towards eastern history shows that our own ideas about childhood, (considered as a period of hope, innocence, malleability) are not more than three or four hundred years old, and they cropped up in relation to the bourgeois nuclear family and the modern school system (Aries, 1981), along a conflictive process which left other forms of socialization aside. This makes us see that the different ways of considering and living the experience of childhood are related to the plurality of cultural ideas that human groups have created, and also to the social class inequalities that societies go through.

This look at how the concept of infancy and childhood were created gives us the opportunity to have a richer and more timely outlook. Timely because we have the opportunity to "deal the cards" again.

Infancy is in front of us, as if it were a great "mirror", which returns positive and negative images of our own childhood.

We must be ready to offer our best without neglecting anything on the way. Childhood deserves an adulthood to take care of it.

Spakowsky (2005) provides a more relevant outlook: "In order to reflect on the sense and meaning of the concept of infancy or infancies in the educational environment, it is necessary to

start a path along reflection and ask ourselves: What is a boy/girl?, what is infancy? or what are infancies? (p. 66).

We cannot answer these questions without referring to specifications like: What do we understand by social representation? We will start with this definition: Social representation is the process and the product of a mental activity by which an individual or a group reconstruct the reality and give it a specific meaning. In this sense, the social representation of infancy consists of the opinion, belief, information, vision of the child, each of us transfers and transports to all educational situations we go through. These opinions and beliefs are not just our ideas, they are also our experiences and the filter of the perception.

FEELINGS AND LINKS

It is evident that adults experience different feelings when in front of a child. Emotions like astonishment, concern, enjoyment, curiosity, prejudice, impotence, mistreatment, anger, complacency, uncertainty and other "conditions" make adults think constantly "why" children act with that challenging freshness and with that spontaneous and attractive attitude.

At the same time, we, as adults, have the great opportunity of observing what kind of "link" has been built with them.

Different child specific professional disciplines have tried to understand what and how growth, evolution and development occur.

Psychomotricity is one of these. In spite of the few professionals, the little time spent and the lack of knowledge about their targets, observations and solutions have been provided for certain difficulties that make children uncomfortable and suffer in the environment where they live. The actions of children that psychomotricity is involved with, are related to the body and its different manifestations.

Psychomotricity considers behaviour from a structure which is integrated in three areas, emotional, intellectual and motor. Psychomotricity states that in all behaviours, the subject (the child in this case) expresses himself by means of the constant interrelation of the three areas stated above. This way, he gets away from the classic, and (unfortunately) still in force, dualism of "the mind on one side and the body on another side".



CHILDHOOD ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES

To walk, run, jump, take a position to pay attention, and to try to stay still, to move an object, to take a posture in order to make certain movements, to express oneself with gestures (not just your face), to coordinate hand or feet movements, to take objects in the air, at a certain height, to write, to move about in big or small spaces, to choose and develop segments of the body to the right of left, to kick a ball, to measure time to realize how fast or slow they do something, the rhythm when walking, reading, dancing, speaking, the fluency or tension in his gestures, in his copybook, and other actions make us think of the relationship between previous experiences of the child and the learnings he must incorporate in relation to his body, and family, social, school and sport demands he will have to face.

These actions are not genetic expressions. They are produced and learned, they are the "fruit of experiences lived" and the stimuli received during the different stages of upbringing.

PRODUCTION

Movement, praxias, gestures, posture, laterality of use, expression, general dynamic coordination, visual-motor coordination, temporal and space organization, object management and manipulation, tonic structure and rhythm, (first non verbal mother- baby communication), language, the gaze, the tension- distension regulation for the different parts of the body, the capacity to wait, the capacity to listen and the capacity to take the floor and communicate with the others.

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS RELATED TO SPORT AND ITS ROLE IN CHILDHOOD

To define what sport is and which are the features that enable its structural characterization, is a task that has been undertaken by several authors, and from different perspectives and areas of knowledge: physiology, biomechanics, education, history, sociology, anthropology.

In relation to childhood and how it interacts with sport practice, it is important to develop five concepts: motor development, motor learning, motor skills, motor behaviour and sport initiation.

– Motor development: Is a process that implies a relationship between the maturity of the child and the stimulus received from the natural and cultural environment. The first component, depends on internal factors, this implies changes in the function which is expressed in the different organs and systems, preparing to meet the function for which they are determined, and the second, depends on external factors that will allow the integration of different learning experiences that will help the child to incorporate significant body experiences.

– Motor learning: The concern for the mechanically effective movement gives a secondary place to the expression of the

movement and motor learning acquirement, most of the time, the form of a mechanization that transforms the body into an outsider for the very person. This alienation is particularly serious since it separates the person from the body, the logical consequence of dual thinking. To state, a priori, that man is a duality, this philosophy which has pervaded our life and our educational system, has come, in fact, to a body- intellect duality. Motor learning enacts the child's capacity to record a situation, interpret it, analyse options and provide a motor response as efficiently as possible. This response is supported by the subject with all their previous experiences and the interior mechanism and mental representation. Motor realization evokes a collection of feelings and experiences that make it possible to think and modify actions in order to progress. Motor learning is a constant transformation and change process that provides the child with plasticity and corporal ease.

– Motor skill: Is capacity acquired by means of learning to produce pre- established results with maximum efficiency and minimum energy expenditure. Motor skills are closely related to coordination capacities which, together with conditional capacities, make up motor capacities.

– Motor behaviour: Is the manifestation of the person from his motor possibilities using the articulation of three aspects of human behaviour areas, as a support: the emotional, intellectual and motor aspects. This articulation fosters the idea that individuals express themselves from a functional globality in all behaviours.

– Sport initiation: Is a process in which contact with sport begins. Those actions that promote slow learning and consider the child's previous experiences, their maturity, age and way of learning begin. Children learn to manipulate general and specific objects, they learn some rules and start trying movements that apply to each practice. Sport initiation is not to be considered as the beginning of a specific practice with all the technical, tactical and physical resources. On the contrary, it must start from the bodily structure of the child, and progressively, include and understand general aspects. Sport initiation provides the child the possibilities to learn some sport characteristics without realizing. It is the preparation for a later stage in which sport will be integrated according to his age, in a more relevant way.

CONCLUSION

These concepts here developed contribute with something very important which must not be neglected in sport practice with kids. "*Sport environments demand great responsibility and commitment, both from the point of view of pedagogical resources and the education of the teachers. To move forward with these proposals should make us think how important teaching actions with and towards children are, and how they impact on their full individual development.*"

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