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Language facilitation and  
intercultural education  
through Dance Sport:  
Italian L2 and couple  
dancing

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## Index

Abstract.....	4
Introduction.....	5
<b>PART ONE: Neuroscientific requirements and glottodidactic-educational theories about language facilitation through dancing sensorimotor skills in multicultural and multilingual classes.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 1 – Corporeality, sensorimotor skills and empathetic interactional dynamics in learning processes.....</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Neurobiological basis of learning processes.....	9
1.1.1 The constructive nature of learning.....	10
1.1.2 The sensorimotor skills bases of social awareness .....	13
1.2 Empathy and corporeality.....	15
1.2.1 Empathy in the development of social abilities .....	16
1.2.2 Corporeality and emotions in the learning process.....	18
<b>Chapter 2 – The corporeality and intercultural education of dance.....</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 The reasons for the application of dance in intercultural educational contexts.....	22
2.2 Dance as the paradigm of the intercultural contamination in the history of european, afro-american and ispan-latin-american couple dancing.....	24
<b>Chapter 3 – Meaningful language learning: multisensory and neurological bimodality through different types of intelligences and learning styles.....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 Meaningful language learning.....	32
3.1.1 C. R. Rogers.....	32
3.1.2 D. P. Ausubel and J. D. Novak.....	34
3.2 Multisensoriality.....	36
3.2.1 Sensation and perception.....	36
3.2.2 Multisensory perception.....	38
3.2.3 Benefits of multisensory language learning.....	39
3.2.4 Unconscious learning.....	43

3.3 Types of intelligences and learning styles.....	45
3.3.1 The sensory learning style: The V.A.K. Model.....	47
3.3.2 Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligence.....	48
3.4 Neurological bimodality and directionality.....	51
3.5. Motivation.....	52
3.5.1 The motivation based on pleasure and emotional appreciation.....	55
<b>Chapter 4 – From theory to practice: the methodological framework of language learning facilitation through dancing sensorimotor skills.....</b>	<b>58</b>
4.1 The “Total Physical Response” Method.....	59
4.2 The social-mediation methodologies.....	62
4.2.1 The Ludic Glottodidactics .....	63
4.2.2 The Cooperative Learning.....	67
4.2.3 The Peer Tutoring.....	69
<b>PARTE SECONDA: Proposta didattica di facilitazione linguistica di italiano L2 e ballo di coppia.....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Capitolo 5 – Descrizione del percorso didattico di ballo e lingua italiana.....</b>	<b>73</b>
5.1 Lezione introduttiva di ballo n. 1.....	76
5.1.2 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche.....	78
5.2 Lezione di ballo n. 2.....	82
5.2.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche.....	84
5.3 Lezione di ballo n. 3.....	92
5.3.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche.....	93
5.4 Lezione di ballo n. 4.....	97
5.4.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche.....	98
5.5 Lezione di ballo n. 5.....	103
5.5.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche.....	104
5.6 Lezione di ballo n. 6.....	107
5.6.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche.....	107
5.7 Lezione di ballo n. 7.....	109
5.7.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche.....	111
5.8 Lezione di ballo n. 8.....	113
5.8.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche.....	114

Conclusioni.....	118
References.....	119
Sitography.....	128

## **Abstract**

The thesis deals with the theme of corporal dimension and sensorimotricity in the learning and educational fields, particularly in language facilitation through the use of Dance Sport, education and intercultural communication through the educational value of sport and the transcultural character of dance.

The aim of the first part of the research will be to support, through various theoretical contributions in neurosciences (Mirror Neurons, neurological bimodality and directionality, multisensoriality, emotion, empathy), glottodidactics (Meaningful Learning, Total Physical Response Method, Ludic Glottodidactics, Cooperative Learning) and education (the transculturalism of dance, intercultural contamination in the history of dance) the reasons that motivate the use of corporeality and sensorimotor skills in dancing in the mathetic processes and in the educational and intercultural fields.

The second part of the thesis will present and describe a preparatory didactic course leading to couple dancing, finalized to the acquisition of Italian L2 and to the education and intercultural communication in multilingual and multicultural classes: at the end of each dance lesson there will be some didactic activities for basic users (and some dedicated to advanced levels) in which the students will be able to find the linguistic elements that emerged during the dance lessons; the activities will be formulated following the theories and methods presented in the first part of the thesis, and will be used to analyze and consider (especially at a grammar and lexical level) the language used learning to dance, with the aim to systematize and extend their knowledge and communication skills in a more engaging and profitable way.

## **Introduction**

This thesis will examine the topic of the corporal and sensorial dimension within the field of learning and education: specifically, the language learning facilitation through the sportive act of dancing, and the intercultural education through the formative value of sport and the transcultural nature of dancing.

The aim of the first part is therefore to show, through various theoretical contributions in the neuroscientific and in the language learning fields, the reasons behind using corporeality and sensorimotor skills by means of dancing, which is designed, as shown in our educational proposal expressed in the second part of this thesis, for the acquisition of Italian as an L2 and for the education and intercultural communication in multicultural and multilingual classes.

The educational culture of the body in movement refers to an important transformation and reevaluation of the very concept of corporeality which occurred in the previous century at a multidisciplinary level, and which has now become essential in the last twenty years, thanks also to the recent studies on Mirror Neurons (Rizzolatti *et al.*, 1996), studies which have contributed to attest the indissoluble union between body and mind that Cartesian dualism had separated, and so also the unity between sensation, perception, and action, thus allowing us to interpret the corporal dimension as the creator of social awareness within the empirical processes which allow us to “embody” (Lakoff, 1999) other people’s mental and emotional states.

The body, in its expressive, communicative, and cognitive sense-motion capacity, is in fact the house of emotions and perceptions which find ever more citizenship rights within the delicate processes of acquisition, affected and determined, as they are, at a more or less conscious level by the aforementioned emotional and sense-motion mechanisms, which *de facto* affect in the same way our intercultural comprehension and communication.

Within the language learning field, we will therefore take into consideration the theoretical principles regarding the bimodality and the neurological directionality (Danesi, 1998; 1998) or the concept of multi-sensoriality (Rosenblum, 2013) and multi-sensorial learning, along with learning methodologies consistent with such prerequisites as the Ludic Glottodidactics (Caon, Rutka, 2006) or the “Total Physical Response

Method” (Asher, 1997), educational methods potentially capable of enabling a total engagement of the subject, and a meaningful learning of the language (Rogers, 1973) in accordance with the diverse intelligences and the diverse manners of learning: in particular we will refer back to the sensory manner of the “V.A.K. Model” (Bandler, Grinder, 1979) and to the Gardner’s “Theory of Multiple Intelligences” (1987).

These indications and methodologies, justified and supported both by the scientific and the teaching-educational fields, shall therefore be stated in the second part of the thesis by operative proposals directed to the linguistic facilitation of Italian as L2, with the creation of lessons preparatory to couple dancing, lessons which should allow the comprehension, interaction, and use of the language in order to easily execute steps and exercises, next to which there will also be Italian language lessons for levels A1/A2 (valid examples for more advanced levels will also be supplied), which will contain activities that should develop not only receptive abilities but also writing ones, and ones enhancing language arrangement in a more formal context and of metacognitive reflection.

The language activities described will also focus on an intercultural in-depth analysis from the perspective of communicative competence development, which, by definition, stores both the linguistic and the cultural dimension, and will also aim, in general, at the move of socio-linguistic abilities, developed within the dancing and language lessons, from a recreational-sportive context to a more specifically didactic-educational one.

## **PART ONE: Neuroscientific requirements and glottodidactic-educational theories about language learning facilitation through dancing sensorimotor skills in multicultural and multilingual classes**

This first part of the thesis will introduce the neuroscientific requirements and language teaching theories validating the involvement and the use of corporal dimension in the mathetic process. The purpose is to clarify and highlight the principles and the cognitive mechanisms underlying the teaching/ learning of a foreign language through a holistic approach that will be significant in a multicultural and multilingual context, those most in need of specific strategies that will facilitate the acquisition process while fostering the understanding and the intercultural communication.

Subsequently it will be explained why dance (and especially Dance Sport<sup>1</sup>) presents many potentialities in facilitating meaningful learning of a foreign language and in contributing to the development of social abilities that can be transferred and applied in different heterogeneous contexts (not only in a sociolinguistic proficiency, but also in a cultural belonging).

According to these objectives the theories and the glottodidactic methods will be presented through a social-constructivist and a humanistic-emotional approach, using principles like sensorimotricity, bimodality and neurological directionality, together with the role that emotions assume in the mathetic dynamics; we will also consider different learning styles and some specific intellectual abilities that are often influenced by the provenance of the subjects.

In the first chapter will be constantly provide and describe some examples and well defined references of the application of these above mentioned principles and methods applied in the world of dance.

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<sup>1</sup> Sport recognized by C.O.N.I. part of the Italian Dance Sport Federation (F.I.D.S).

## **Chapter 1 – Corporeality, sensorimotor skills and empathetic interactional dynamics in learning processes**

The neurobiological function, according to the most recent neuroscientific developments, evaluates the physical perception as an essential part of the learning process from the point of view of a sociocultural and emotional experience, because

“[...] the mind is not just about the movement of a thought to the biological tissues, but it must also be correlated with a whole organism that is in possession of a brain and of a body, both integrated with a physical and social environment [...]”  
(Damasio, 1994: 252).

Alongside these facts, we have moved on

“dall’idea che l’individuo sia un ricettore passivo di informazioni captate dal mondo esterno attraverso i sensi, per avvicinarsi all’idea che la cognizione è un processo costruttivo e selettivo, che implica la verifica di ipotesi cognitive influenzata dalla precedente conoscenza, dalle passate esperienze, dagli scopi correnti e dagli stati emozionali e motivazionali”<sup>2</sup> (Gomez Paloma, 2009: 18).

The recovered organismic conception and the discovery of the basis of sensorimotor skills, i.e. of the empirical human cognition across the mirror neurons’ mechanism (Rizzolatti *et al.*, 1996), leads us to reconsider the educational methods and learning mechanisms by availing ourselves of tools such as the sportive act of dancing, which is able to activate empathic mechanisms and abilities based on relationships, all of which are transferable and applicable to the didactic-educational sphere of linguistic facilitation and of intercultural communication and education.

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<sup>2</sup> “from the idea that the individual is a passive receptor of information which is captured from the external world through the senses, to the idea that cognition is a constructive and selective process, which implies the evaluation of cognitive hypotheses, evaluation influenced by prior knowledge, by past experiences, by current goals, and by emotional and motivational states” (my translation).

## 1.1 Neurobiological basis of learning processes

E. R. Kandel<sup>3</sup> outlined the chemical mechanisms essential for learning and memory in a periwinkle (*Aplysia californica*) both at the cellular and bio molecular level: thanks to his research, today we can highlight in a better way the biological learning basis prerogative of a living being up to its most simple structures.

In the human synapses occurs a neurophysiologic process that is both active and dynamic. This process involves a permanent transformation of the neural network that produces physical changes at the brain level: the so called neuroplasticity (Konorsky, 1948) is the ability to create a large number of synaptic connections and specific neural groups due to learning experience.

This means that the cerebral functions reorganize themselves in a flexible way: namely, the organism is able to modify his own behavior according to his needs (Kandel, 1998: 457-469).

The processing of the information, coming from the outside through nervous stimuli, occurs in the minimal part of the neuron's tissue. The dendrites, that are the body's cell extension, capture the incoming information (the nervous stimuli), in order to send them to the neuron that elaborates and carries them through a single extension, called axon. The message that, in other words, is the nervous impulse in form of electrochemical stimulation, does not arrive directly through the dendrites of the axon's terminations to other neurons, but thanks to specific junctions, the synapses (Fabbro, 1994).

Even if the mechanism of brain learning is not clear, the complex structure of the human brain is described as a huge neural network where it is clear that reinforcement and weakening (in other words the synaptic link mutation that happens after the nervous stimulation) lead to an information memorization (Khanna, 1990).

This is basic, because

“memoria ed apprendimento sono da considerarsi due facce della stessa medaglia.

Da un lato l'apprendimento non potrebbe condurre a risultati stabili senza la

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<sup>3</sup> For further information: Kandel *et. al.*, 2000.

memoria, dall'altro la memoria non avrebbe di che nutrirsi senza l'apprendimento”<sup>4</sup>  
(Boncinelli, 2000, in Daloiso, 2009: 57).

If learning, meant as a result of all our actions, causes a permanent modification of our behavior, the ensemble of our experiences plays

“un ruolo essenziale nel processo di maturazione dei sistemi sensoriali fondamentali del nostro cervello [...] le nostre esperienze possono influenzare in modo significativo le connessioni neuronali e l'organizzazione delle attività del nostro cervello”<sup>5</sup> (Siegel D. J., 2001: 13-15).

Furthermore we must say that the strength of the synapse may change through all the existence, as a result of all the organism's experience; it follows that the design of the brain circuits keeps changing. These circuits are not only receptive in respect to the results of the first experience, but they are also adaptable and alterable by continuous experiences (Damasio, 1994: 169).

In fact, the connection's schemes between neurons are not pre-determined, that is to say, it's not a result of an ontogenetic maturation. On the contrary, they are the result of a dynamic process of a continuous learning derived from the experience that forms the design of the circuits (Damasio, 1994: 253).

### **1.1.1 The constructive nature of learning**

The synaptic connections are then created through a continuous stimulation of the neural activity; Jensen (1994, in Ginnis, 2002: 14) asserts that it is thanks to these activities that we can become more intelligent, since these neural links allow us to understand and solve any kind of problem.

According to Vettorel, (2007: 15)

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<sup>4</sup> “memory and learning are considered two sides of the same coin. On one hand, the process of learning may not lead to stable results without memory, on the other memory would starve without learning” (my translation).

<sup>5</sup> “a fundamental role in the maturation process in our brain's sensory systems [...] our experiences can influence in a significant way the neural connections and the organization of our brain's activities” (my translation).

“il potenziale biologico delle connessioni va supportato e sviluppato nel contatto con l’ambiente di apprendimento, al fine di consolidare le connessioni esistenti e crearne di nuove, sia in termini di nuovi apprendimenti che di risistemazione di connessioni esistenti conseguentemente a nuove informazioni in entrata”<sup>6</sup>.

Dodman (2005: 6), adds that “l’intelligenza umana è un processo di *inter ligere e ligare*, cioè di raccolta fra elementi, i quali permettono la creazione di connessioni, in primo luogo fra elementi noti e nuovi”<sup>7</sup>.

The already memorized information is made of our life experiences that are originated by the ensemble of our already acquired knowledge; these are the only resources that we have to understand, and then learn the newness (Dodman, 2005:6).

Therefore, if learning means that we must integrate the new elements in the preexisting structures, it means also that we will reorganize our knowledge (Mason, 2006: 32).

From a language learning facilitation point of view it is necessary to support the inferential processes and the recovery of previous knowledge appraising the latter so that “si possano attivare i circuiti neuronali 'permanenti', agevolando così la successiva risistemazione delle conoscenze alla luce dei nuovi apprendimenti”<sup>8</sup> (Caon, 2008: 63-64).

The analogies with the constructivist perspective of learning are then clear for the purpose of our subject that intends the acquisition of knowledge meant not only as a simple, passive accumulation of information juxtaposed in a linear way, but also as a circular and recursive process (Pichiassi, 2009: 11). This process comes along with the construction of different meanings, through continuous integrations, enrichments, revisions, changes and then reorganizations made by the learner, who intentionally and personally elaborates and transforms the incoming information in a unique and original way.

In the language teaching field, if we want to encourage the education of foreign students, it is essential to focus on their previous experiences, and it is also essential for

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<sup>6</sup> “the biological potential of the connections must be supported and developed through the contact with the learning surrounding, in order to reinforce the existing connections and to create new ones, in terms of new learning and reinforcement of existing connections consequently to new incoming information” (my translation).

<sup>7</sup> “the human intelligence is a process of *inter ligere* and *ligare*, which means a gathering of information that allows the creation of connections, first of all between old and new elements” (my translation).

<sup>8</sup> “we can find the 'permanent' neural circuits, easing then the following re-arrangement of the new knowledge in the light of a new learning” (my translation).

the teacher to find the strategies that allow the student to connect those previous experiences with the language that he is about to learn. Forms of glottodidactic mediation, such as the use of couple dancing in a recreational/sport tone, allow to find an easier way to discover some points of natural connection between the knowledge already present in the linguistic-cultural background of the students, together with their life-experiences (as for example, known music, dancing, sports). In this way they will be helped in the construction of an autonomous and personal learning system that will stimulate them in order to satisfy their needs, or to find sense and motivation directly from their personal desires and passions.

This process will also be supported by the possibility of using non-verbal codes, such as body language, along with the musical code. Both are less abstract than verbal language, and they both represent experiential and tangible contexts from which a teacher will be able to build step by step a new knowledge, in a more efficient and immediate way.

But we must also consider that the world's knowledge, in other words the "encyclopedia" (Balboni, 2006), is not of a universal nature, but it's different for everyone, and culturally characterized. This means that what the teacher could consider as something known, or universally valid for everyone, might not be so, and this can often happen for an immigrant student. This situation can happen because these students could have a cultural background that could be quite distant from the traditions of the welcoming country, or they could even strongly disagree towards some habits of the new learning context.

Apart from this, we must also add that the same language that dance transmits through non-verbal communication introduces multiple differentiations between different cultures. This is then the outcome of all the different meanings based on the "underlying philosophy" (Balboni, 2007) that the same culture expresses through the choreutics.

This involves the fact that the teacher must be aware of these events through continuous references and explanations, in order to avoid the creation of intercultural misunderstanding and disagreements.

### 1.1.2 The sensorimotor skills bases of social awareness

During the studying of the learning process it is necessary to do not ignore the role of corporeality, beginning with its interaction with the environment: a neuron is not an epistemic subject, but can be found inside a brain that is indissolubly linked to a body, thanks to which it has an access to the external world (Gallese, 2007: 199).

The latest studies in neuroscience have brought the scientific community to revalue the sensory motor system as an essential part of the learning process. This happened especially thanks to the discovery of the “Mirror Neurons” (Rizzolatti et al., 1996)<sup>9</sup> that brought a revolution in the understanding of the link between perception and action.

This discovery proved that the brain areas assigned to movement can also perceive and know. It is clear then that the motor system programs and controls our movements, but also intervenes in a set of learning processes usually known as proper of the sensory integration (Rizzolatti, Sinigaglia, 2006).

Mirror Neurons are a class of neurons initially discovered in the premotor F5 area of the monkey. These are also in the human being, specifically in the 44 area of Brodmann (area of Broca) and in the inferior parietal cortex. They put together the properties of perceptive nature (not only visual, but also tactile and auditive) ( Kohler *et al.*, 2002) to the ones of motor nature.

It is important to highlight that

“per decenni ha dominato l'idea che le aree motorie della corteccia cerebrale sarebbero destinate a compiti meramente esecutivi, privi di alcuna effettiva valenza percettiva e, meno che mai, cognitiva”<sup>10</sup> (Rizzolatti, Sinigaglia, 2006: 2).

So this discovery allowed clarifying some important neurophysiological mechanisms that were at the core of numerous aspects of social awareness. This awareness was not based on the mere manipulation of symbols and concepts that were arbitrary and abstract, but on the sensorimotor system (Barsalou, 1999).

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<sup>9</sup> For further information: Gallese *et al.*, 1996; Rizzolatti, Craighero, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> “for decades, the idea that the motor areas of the brain cortex were designated to some mere executive duties, was dominant, without any perceptive value” (my translation).

We are then moving towards a mind model where the functional levels considered superior (understanding, interpretation, reason, planning and, of course, language) are not separated, but communicative, and they depend on the *stratum* known as inferior, like the sensorimotor processes.

Years ago, most of the neurobiologists and psychologist would have allocated the comprehension of others actions, and most of all, of intentions in a reasoning process not different from the one used to solve a logical problem, in some sort of elaborating information tool placed in the brain, transmitted by the senses and compared to all the experiences earlier stored within the memory (Rizzolatti, Fogassi, Gallese, 2006: 54).

The mirror system has then shown the pre-reflective and sensorimotor nature of social awareness, because when we witness an action done by someone similar to us, our brain activates the same mechanisms as if we were doing it ourselves.

Gallese (2003) defines this internal, non-reflexive stimulation an “embodied simulation” of the corporal and mental state of others. An experience ingrained in our neural motor structures, and “innards-motor” structures that allow us to enter in an “intentional affinity” with other people.

Consequently, these considerations bring more awareness about the fact that the acquisition of knowledge doesn't happen in a social *vacuum* (von Foerster, 1984). It is, instead, strictly linked to the processes of mirroring and imitation, not only in the cognitive development (Meltzoff, Moore, 1977). Then, it shows us how entrenched and deep is “il legame che ci unisce agli altri, ovvero quanto bizzarro sia concepire un io senza un noi”<sup>11</sup> (Rizzolatti, Sinigaglia, 2006: 2). It also confirms different elements of a social-constructivist teaching, in which the active and experience-dependending co-construction “non vive più una dimensione isolata, ma viene incarnata nella fisiologia del soggetto”<sup>12</sup> (Giacconi, 2008: 12).

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<sup>11</sup> “the bond that unites us with the others, that means how bizarre would be the concept of me without the others” (my translation).

<sup>12</sup> “lives no more in an isolated dimension, but is embodied in the subject's physiology” (my translation).

## 1.2 Empathy and corporeality

It is true that the mirror neuron's mechanism allows us, through our physical skills, to construct without any kind of reasoning a field of common experience (Rizzolatti, Sinigaglia, 2006:2) that makes us act and learn as social subjects transmitting to others actions and intentions. It also looks true (always referring to specific researches made up to now) that the “motor resonance” extends to a both direct and analogical perception and to the comprehension of others emotions and moods.

Referring to this subject, Iacoboni (2008) proved that some automatic connections and information exchanges exist between the mirror neurons and the insular and limbic system, in other words between the motor areas and the emotions; highlighting also that the emotion is “embodied”, namely that it is valid in a somatic *substratum*.

Through physical experience expressed by “embodied simulation”, which establishes

“uno spazio interpersonale condiviso e intellegibile [...] che non si esaurisce nel mondo delle azioni, [ma] coinvolge [...] tutti quegli aspetti che definiscono un organismo vivente, dalla forma del suo corpo alle sue sensazioni ed emozioni”<sup>13</sup>  
(Gallese, 2003:41)

a subject can establish a direct form of comprehension of the others, definable as “empathy” (Gallese, 2006).

This concept has been highly studied and debated, most of all in the philosophical field<sup>14</sup> through all the twentieth century, in relation to the intercourse between mind and body.

According to the phenomenologist E. Stein (2002: 26-27) “l’empatia è acquisizione emotiva della realtà del sentire altrui [e] si configura come l’esperienza di un altro in quanto soggetto vivente di esperienza come me”<sup>15</sup>. M. Merleau-Ponty puts corporal experience at the center of the perceptive and empathic processes: “l’occhio non è solo

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<sup>13</sup> “an interpersonal space which is shared and intelligible [...] that doesn't end in the world of actions, [but] involves [...] all those aspects that define a living organism, from the shape of its body to its sensations and emotions” (my translation).

<sup>14</sup> Among the philosophers we remember Nietzsche F.W., Freud S., Husserl E., Stein E., Merleau-Ponty M.

<sup>15</sup> “empathy is the emotional acquisition of the reality of others feelings [and] it configures itself as the experience of another person as a living subject that lives my own experience” (my translation).

occhio. Vedere è più che soltanto vedere. Vedere è anche sentire, vedere è già pensare”<sup>16</sup> (1945: 59). The modality of an empathic experience of the other is then an experience of perceptive and corporal nature:

“la comunicazione e la comprensione dei gesti è resa possibile dalla reciprocità delle mie intenzioni e dei gesti altrui, dei miei gesti e delle intenzioni leggibili nella condotta altrui. Tutto avviene come se l’intenzione dell’altro abitasse il mio corpo o come se le mie intenzioni abitassero il suo”<sup>17</sup> (1945: 25).

### 1.2.1 Empathy in the development of social abilities

C. R. Rogers in a psychological environment, according to a humanistic approach, defines the empathic mechanism as:

“sentire il mondo personale dell’altro come se fosse il nostro senza mai perdere la qualità del *come se*...sentire l’ira, la paura, il turbamento del cliente come se fossero nostri, senza però aggiungervi la nostra ira, la nostra paura, il nostro turbamento”<sup>18</sup> (1971: 221).

This implies the capacity to do not let ourselves emotionally succumb to the other's emotional mood, managing at the same time to experience an emotional comprehension that goes beyond any precondition. If it is true that our social relationships are determined by the corporal capacity to “resound” with others (Rizzolatti, Sinigaglia, 2006) this innate quality of sensorimotor origin, which means the shared neural basis present in our genetic makeup, it is then consequently crucial for the development of well-aware forms of social intelligence, like inter subjectivity (to experience the other as someone different from oneself) or empathy (to feel the other as oneself).

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<sup>16</sup> “the eye is not just an eye. Seeing is more than just watching. Seeing is also feeling. Seeing is thinking” (my translation).

<sup>17</sup> “the communication and understanding of gestures is possible thanks to the reciprocity between my intentions and gestures of others, between my gestures and the understandable intentions observed in the others behavior. Everything happens as if the others intentions lived in my body, or as if my intentions lived in his” (my translation).

<sup>18</sup> feeling the other's personal world as our own, without losing the point of view of the “what if....” feel the anger, fear, and sorrow of the client as our own feelings, without adding our own anger, fear and sorrow” (my translation).

Possessing and effectively using social abilities, which means a series of behaviors controlled and motivated that allow effective relationships with the others and a good integration in the environment (Comoglio, Cardoso, 1996), supports a cooperative way of learning that shows many advantages when compared with some competitive or individualistic learning contexts, in a motivational, productive, and psychological way. (Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, 1996: 19).

According to a teaching approach based on the active construction of knowledge by all the subjects, where social relationships are the core and environment of the didactic procedure (Dolci, 2006), to encourage some empathic relationships means to use this “emotional resound” that goes further than any personal or cultural difference. And that is also crucial in the learning process because it allows to activate the cognitive side of the student together with his emotional one. This is a fundamental part in the rational process, because it establishes the basis from where the cognitive processes begin.

Dance, through the empathic use of corporeality in a meta kinetic transmission of feelings (Garaudy, 1999) allows to establish a non-verbal, direct, dialogue that is potentially richer and more authentic compared with the one determined by verbal language, and supports an easier identification of the other in oneself.

Gallese (2010: 250) defines dance an “antichissima forma di espressione mimetica e costruttrice d’identità collettiva (gli altri si muovono allo stesso modo e allo stesso ritmo e quindi sono simili a me)”<sup>19</sup>. At the same time it allows to recognize oneself in the inter-corporeality and in the inter subjectivity, and it preserves others reality thanks to the simulate mechanism of the “as if”, where personal and cultural differences can be found outside a stereotyping and evaluative judgment.

The empathic experience can then be trained and enhanced through the use of dance, in order to develop simultaneously an emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996) which is functional in the learning process of more social abilities; dance activities can be applied in multilingual and multicultural contexts of cooperative learning that need cooperation, respect and support between equal subjects.

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<sup>19</sup> “ancient form of mimetic and constructive expression of collective identity (the others move in the same way and at the same rhythm as me, then, they are like me)” (my translation).

### 1.3 Corporeality and emotions in the learning process

The development of empathic mechanisms that include the acknowledgment of emotions, the ability to acquire others perspective and the emotional environment, are crucial in any learning sociocultural context since the intellectual faculty of human beings allows to learn through life experience, and to take decisions in order to survive.

It is

“il frutto dell’attività integrata di emozioni e processi cognitivi e le ricerche in campo neurobiologico e psicologico confermano oggi che l’attività della mente nel cervello è possibile grazie all’organizzazione di aree neurali interagenti che favoriscono l’integrazione dei processi cognitivi ed emotivi nel modo più funzionale possibile all’interazione del Sé con il mondo”<sup>20</sup> (Cardona, 2010: 27).

The word “emotion” etymologically means “to move from”: which evokes the idea of acting, of a movement that starts from the body and goes outwards as a moving flow, that travels, generated and developed in a “from-to” course.

Goleman (1996: 12), defining emotions, affirms that “all the emotions are, essentially, impulses to act; in other words, emotions are action plans that the evolution gave us to handle in real time all the emergencies of life”.

The “Enciclopedia di Psicologia” (Psychology Encyclopedia) by Galimberti (1999: 358) reports, at the voice “Emotion” this definition:

“reazione affettiva intensa con insorgenza acuta e di breve durata determinata da uno stimolo ambientale. La sua comparsa provoca una modifica a livello somatico, vegetativo e psichico”<sup>21</sup>.

Also for the neuroscientist Damasio (2000, in Gomez Paloma, 2004: 33) emotions are “a set of changes of the body state...They use the body as their theater”.

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<sup>20</sup> “the outcome of integrate activities of both emotions and cognitive processes. The researchers in neurobiological and psychological fields confirm nowadays that the mind's activity in the brain is possible thanks to the organization of neural interactive areas, which favor the integration of cognitive and emotional processes in the most functional way for interaction of oneself with the world” (my translation).

<sup>21</sup> “an affective reaction with an acute and short-duration insurgence determined by an environmental stimulus. The appearance of an emotion brings essentially a variation at the somatic, vegetative and psychic level” (my translation).

The body then, appears as the location of emotions, definable as processes with a strong biological base, which means a “movement”, a reaction shown essentially at a somatic level (for example crying or laughing).

According to Damasio (1995) it's on a corporal base that is possible, as a result, to live the emotional experience, to have feelings, to think, to have self-consciousness: he rewrites the Cartesian thought “I think, therefore I am” in “I feel, therefore I am”.

The dichotomous and predominant vision of intellect over emotion goes back to the cultural tradition of Cartesio<sup>22</sup> that distinguished the *Res cogitans* (the mind) from the *Res extensa* (the body), which communicate only through the pineal gland.

Cartesio assigned to corporeality a mere mechanistic function but, assuming that emotions could be found in the soul (that is the mind), he affirmed that it is necessary for this last one to free itself from the “passions of the soul” in order to avoid dangerous and deviant distractions.

Damasio refuses cartesian dualism and reevaluates corporal dimension as an integrative part of the mental function. He attributes to corporeality a fundamental role in the organization of human's emotional universe, which is functional for the determination of the individual's rational behavior. According to the analysis of many clinical cases that he examined “[...] a reduction of emotions can be an equally significant feature of an irrational behavior” (1994: 96).

He then concluded that emotions can be “mixed” with rationality and are also fundamental for perception and learning, affirming in this way the “Somatic Marker” Theory. This theory explains that our decision-making operations are only in appearance reasoned and rational, since they are strongly influenced by emotional somatic responses, which are automatic and mostly unconscious.

The so called “somatic markers” concern our past corporal experiences, in other words our physical sensations felt as a recall for emotions and feelings with positive or negative connotations, they can then be positive or negative depending if they act as an “incentive indicator” or an “alarm”.

It's then desirable that also in education, where logical formal aspects dominated over the emotional ones, to recuperate the emotional dimension as a primary and essential aspect of learning, connecting the cognitive processes to positive somatic markers “che

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<sup>22</sup> For further information: Descartes, 2012.

rendono il Sé disponibile [...] a ricevere qualsiasi tipo di insegnamento in un determinato contesto socio-educativo”<sup>23</sup> (Cardona, 2010: 38).

This leads to favour all the situations where emotional factors don't represent an obstacle for learning, but on the contrary, they improve it through “supportable” cognitive challenges, that can bring a stress reduction with an increase of the serotonin level in the blood (Vettorel, 2006: 109), this naturally happens when dancing; it increases physical and psychological wealth, but also the student's self-esteem, through dancing exercises associated to language, he will receive a positive reinforcement that will profitably affect the learning and memorization.

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<sup>23</sup> “which can make the self free [...] to receive any kind of teaching in a precise social-educative context” (my translation).

## **Chapter 2 – The corporeality and intercultural education of dance**

Having established the firm mutual reliance between language learning and intercultural pedagogy, joined together by the educational overdimension uniting them (Caon, 2008), in the structure of our language learning proposal, we further the theory that the use of corporeality, through the expressive movement of dance, fosters a social-constructivist and humanistic-emotional learning in multilingual and multicultural classes.

This use puts the students at the core of the acquisition process, and it becomes an efficient education mean, as well as a valid instrument of learning and of intercultural communication because of the so called “muscular empathy” that establishes itself between dancers, which is essential for a faster and deeper comprehension of different identities and cultures.

Indeed, the corporal dimension of the subject turns out to be the go-between element (Sabatano, 2012) in our relationship with the environment and with other people, and also the tool which facilitates the process not only of language learning, but also of intercultural comprehension and communication: the “questioning physicality” (Touadi, 2003), that manifests itself in the ordinary act of dancing, allows us to look at the reciprocal differences so as to discover the other not only as “other than me”, but also as “other of me” (Cicchese, 1999).

The very transcultural aspect of dancing, as a phenomenon present in all cultures and at the same time varyingly characterised from culture to culture, can be seen, within the study of the history of dancing, as a perfect educational paradigm of that which is known as intercultural contamination.

## 2.1 The reasons for the application of dance in intercultural educational contexts

The reasons for the application of dance for intercultural educational aims, can be found in the two primary factors that characterize it, corporeality and collective dimension that allows a global involvement of the student by putting him in a more conducive condition for learning (Callegari, 1998: 29).

According to Piaget's theory, only self-corporal experience can activate learning processes (Piaget, 1964); while, from the Vigotskij's perspective it's the community in its sociocultural dynamics that must be understood as the fundamental context for learning (Pontecorvo, 1989).

Garaudy (1999: 12) says that the word dance, which comes from the Sanskrit root "tan" means tension. A tension meant as a vital boost in order to experience and express with the maximum intensity, the human relationship with nature, society and the divine force. Dance itself embodies this tension that arises from the primary basic need of each individual to express himself, to relate with himself and with the environment. According to Psychomotricity

“il bisogno di esprimersi e di raccontarsi all'altro è uno dei bisogni primari dell'essere umano; la sua soddisfazione è fonte di gioia e benessere, espansione di energia e presupposto alla produzione di stili di vita sani”<sup>24</sup> (Le Boulch, Melica, in Casolo, Melica, 2005: 61).

The body is then the first medium that humans have to naturally express themselves (Mauss: 392) and movement the most elementary expression of emotional energy used by both humans and animals (Martin, 1991).

Curt Sachs thinks dance is the mother of all arts (1966: 21) because it “lives” equally in time and space. It totally involves the human being through its body, mind and soul, in its need and desire to dance.

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<sup>24</sup> “the needs to express themselves and tell stories each other, are some of the primary needs of human beings. Their satisfaction is a source of joy and well-being, a source of energy expansion for the production of healthy lifestyles” (my translation).

Also for Mauss dancing totality involves “ritmi e simboli [che] non impegnano le facoltà estetiche ed immaginative, dell’uomo, ma anche tutto il suo corpo e tutta la sua anima, a un tempo”<sup>25</sup> (1965: 320).

Dance has always been part of social life and rituals of various cultures which, developing their own choral forms, have created their own dancing phenomenon “concept” (Boas, 1944). This phenomenon is related to the society rules that met specific historical and cultural reasons (Raggi, 1982).

Through various creative and artistic forms, every culture has developed its own identity in an identity-otherness dialogue, that allowed each one to be distinguished. Maybe it is for this reason that at a first sight it would seem difficult to re-think of art as an element of intercultural dialogue, since we commonly conceive it as an element of fundamental distinction and identity (Fabiatti, 2004).

In fact, in every culture, like in every dance, there are multiple possible identities which are not separated by defined boundaries (Abdallah, 1990); furthermore, according to what we see today, the current dance movements are the culmination of a melting pot of reciprocal influences. It's the result of an intercultural hybridization process due to a contamination between genders more or less deep and desired, and depends on the historical and cultural situation which has arisen.

It's interesting to notice that Audinet (2001: 65) observes how the word “metissage” recurs frequently when we talk about theater, cinema or dance, where it appears as a value, bearer of new resources.

Dance is then a cross-cultural phenomenon that can be a good paradigm when it is used for intercultural education, because in the study of its evolution and characteristics, we can see both the elements that make it a *universalia*. Dance uses the body, a common root matrix of sensorimotor skills, through which we try to fill a universal type of expressive-communicative need.

The body is also seen as a privileged medium for learning other cultures: but not for the notional purpose or as a spectacular dimension that does not allow the access in its cultural substance (Perniola, 2004: 67-81). But as a new way to “touch” the Other and

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<sup>25</sup> “rhythms and symbols [that] do not only commit the aesthetic and imaginative faculties of the human being, but also his whole body and soul, all at the same time” (my translation).

to be touched by the Other, looking for an experience of mutual transformation (Colombo, 2001:18), since

“è interculturale soltanto ciò che è il risultato di un ibridazione di modelli cognitivi, di linguaggi, di sperimentazioni artistiche, dove non si possa più essere uguali a prima e uguali a se stessi”<sup>26</sup> (Demetrio, Favaro 2002: 22 ).

## **2.2 Dance as the paradigm of intercultural contamination in the history of european, afro-american and ispan-latin-american couple dancing**

Couple dancing may be observed and analysed, from an intercultural perspective, as that dancing phenomenon which has been most affected by the crossing of peoples and cultures, given its nature of a collective-worldly phenomenon as well as one of artistic and cultural expression: in this sense, social aspects and political transformations have established its development and assertion right up to our day.

The paradigm of intercultural contamination may therefore be embodied and shown by couple dancing: in the second part of the thesis we will suggest activities in the study of the history and formation of dances, activities aimed at the investigation of pedagogic-intercultural aspects.

As a follow-up, we will now sketch out the path undertaken by cotillions, which, having managed to cross the boundaries within which they had first developed, eventually reached out to an ever-growing public, thus becoming everyman's property.

By reading this brief history, it will become quite clear how reductive it is to try and codify or stereotype these dances by believing them to originate from only certain parts of the world or by considering only some of their exemplifying characteristics, with statements such as “tango is Argentine and it has a passionate character” (whereas we know well that the origins of tango are in fact multiple, and that it means to represent several moods and not merely the passion of love).

To show and highlight the underlying crossovers which favoured their evolution is certainly the most correct way, together with live practice, of helping students to question their own cultural stereotypes and prejudices, ideally by valuing the

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<sup>26</sup> “intercultural can only be the result of an hybridization of cognitive models, languages and artistic experimentation, where the same body can no longer be the same as before” (my translation).

contributions of those students who belong to the cultural tradition which originated those same dances.

Dancing teacher and author of the book “La storia dei balli : dal valzer al rocknroll, dal tango ai ritmi latino-americani” (Simona Griggio) maintains dancing is not merely fun and entertainment, nor just technical-artistic expression, but on the contrary, it should be thought of more directly as

“il veicolo per conoscere altre culture, come guida verso il tam-tam primordiale di linguaggi ormai perduti nel nostro Caos metropolitano, occasione per recuperare la comunicativa del movimento e l’ espressività del nostro corpo”<sup>27</sup> (Griggio, 1995: 5).

*The history of the most famous European, Afroamerican and Hispanic-latino-american couple dances*

- *Waltz*: it is a dance on a ternary rhythm executed with a vault in pair, arisen at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, and traditionally associated with the German area due to its origins: the word “waltz”, in fact, comes from the German “waltzen”, i.e. “turn”. Not everyone knows, however, that its actual origins are not so well-defined, seeing as the Germans have it derive from the Allemande (western Germany) and, simultaneously, from the Dreher (Bavaria) and the Landler (Austria). Whereas the French have it come from the Occitan Vault. All of this makes it rather difficult to find a definitive answer to the question of its direct origin, and also results in the fact that the very question is of no consequence, if we consider both traditions (German and French) as essential contributions to the birth of this dance.

As the contemporary writer Rémi Hess has maintained (1993: 9), as author of a historical and social analysis of this dance from its origins to the present day, it would be more correct to consider waltz a product of European culture over and above any national claim, because it was born from the fusion of elements of different provenience, which, throughout the centuries, had undergone continuous transformations. Indeed, if we consider waltz in its essential structure as a closed couple

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<sup>27</sup> “the vehicle to learn about other cultures, as a guide towards the primordial tam-tam of languages lost in the metropolitan Chaos of our time, as an occasion to retrieve the communicative skills of movement and the expressiveness of our bodies” (my translation).

dance in vaults on a ternary timing, notwithstanding the geographical areas and the historical periods within which it asserted itself through various forms and names, we may consistently hold that its presence in Europe dates back to as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century;

- *Mazurka*: it is a dance which is said to have originated in a region in northern Poland (close to Warsaw) around the first years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: in fact, “mazurka” means “of the Mezovia”. And yet, like waltz, this dance is on vaults on ternary timing, but with a much more moderate rhythm and much more terse movements, accentuated by the heel tap which accompanies the closure of each choreographic sequence. For about two centuries this dance was relegated to an almost underground status, danced only by the low-middle classes of society. Notwithstanding its humble origins, from Poland it was then introduced in Russia and Hungary and its subsequent spread in Europe, starting in Germany, is largely due to Polish immigrants and political refugees, as well as to the works of great composers such as Chopin, Kaikovskij, Szimanovskij;

- *Polka*: it is a partner dance in vaults coming from western Bohemia (current Czech Republic). Even if characterised by a rapid rhythm in 2/4 with the accentuation of the first bar in each measure, it alternates, as does waltz, turns to the right and to the left. It is possible that the birth of polka is connected to the evolution of one of the many folk dances belonging to the bohemian musical tradition: from which of these dances polka actually developed remains a mystery; nonetheless, according to a theory embraced by historians (even if probably attributable to the innocent tones of fairytales), polka was invented by a Czech peasant girl of Kostelec. What seems most likely is that the peasant girl did not invent polka out of nothing; rather, she interpreted in a somewhat original fashion some steps, which belonged to the cultural tradition of her country. From an even broader point of view, the characteristic movements of polka are identifiable with ancient Italian and French steps, such as the “scambiata” or the “pas de bourrée” (both consisting in an interchanging of feet);

- *The fox-trot*: this is a dance of north-American roots which is said to owe its origin to the actor Harry Fox, who created it for a show at the New York Theatre. However, it seems more appropriate to say that, from the cultural point of view, the fox-trot owes its origin to a free interpretation of ragtime and jazz music: born in the black communities of the United States’ southern lands as an elaboration of both African and,

in part, European elements, both music genres were inspired by the work songs of slaves, by spirituals and by western popular music. In 1915, this dance arrived in England, where teachers carried out a sort of reeducation, removing the too exuberant figures and including canonical figures, many of which were drawn by the slow waltz;

- *Swing*: the term swing is something of a wild card, which denotes the musical genre and the dances originating in the United States (New York, Kansas City) at the end of the twenties'. The combination of these dances consists of Lindy Hop, Jive, Charleston, Rock 'n Roll, Boogie-woogie and many more. The roots of these dances are Afro-american (dancing and music were to the black people of America a way to preserve the bond with the traditions of the faraway mother Africa), born from Jazz and Blues music, on whose swing danced a whole generation of young people, who adopted Afro-american rhythm and movements as a breaking point from the old imposed dances (like polka and mazurka) of the previous generation. In their first rendition, this current of "neurasthenic" dances, known also under the genre "jitterbug" (from the slang word "jitters", neurasthenic), was danced exclusively by negro dancers. It was eventually revised by white people, who added numerous figures to it and who brought in technical changes, which complicated and weighed down its execution;

- *Tango*: it is popularly identified with Argentina, but on a closer look it is a dance (developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) which originates in the region of Rio de la Plata, between Argentina and Uruguay, and, among all dances, it is the one which is most affected by various cultural influences. Its origin was in fact an expressive medium between peoples unable to understand each other and, precisely for this reason it is often described as a dialogue, the search for communication made of imagination and improvisation. It can be sad, jolly or serious; no one style exists of it, but an infinite amount of varieties. This is why Leopold Marechal has described it "an infinite possibility" in creating steps, styles or in linking with other dances; it is the meeting place, and every meeting generates changes. The two cities which are most connected with the original tango, Buenos Aires and Montevideo, founded this meeting spot between the most diverse races. To the Spanish component, traceable to the colonization and subsequent immigration, the African and creole ones were added in due course, and in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Italian element as well. It seems that, as far as the choreographic aspect and the rhythmic structure is concerned, the Cuban habanera

strongly influenced original tango. It was practiced as early as 1870 in the suburbs of Buenos Aires and Montevideo, after it was brought to the Rio de la Plata banks by sailors who were following the Caribbean route;

- *Samba*: exhilarating, bubbly, and full of life, it is nowadays the musical theme of Brazil, the national dance par excellence, a product for export and also the soundtrack of the most famous carnival in the world. And yet, original samba was very different from how we know it today, and before adorning itself with the abovementioned titles, it was originally made up of a compound of fertility dances, which were performed in Angola. The word “samba” in fact, in bantu language, describes the wiggle of the pelvis. It arrived in South America with the Africans who were brought as slaves to work in the Brazilian sugar cane plantations. These were ancient forms of dancing with a ritual significance, performed mainly in a circle around one dancer or two partners. In the beginning it was executed in a circle: every dancer exerted frenetic body movements, especially from the waist down. The very quick rhythm, scanned by cymbals, drums, bongo drums, and rattles, did not allow the execution of choreographic figures. The steps, if there at all, were small, rapid and repetitive. The European component was present since 1500, the year in which the Portuguese conquerors arrived. The latter imposed, throughout the centuries, their religion, language, and literature: Brazilian music is influenced precisely by this ethnic mix. On its arrival in Latin America, original samba mixed with the landù, an other African-born dance, and with the maxise, known also as the Brazilian tango. Initially, samba established itself (in the rural zones and later in the city) as “the rhythm of candomblé”, a hybrid liturgy, the result of a fusion between Catholicism and African religious rites, which was born after the encounter of the various ethnics groups that, having been subjected to the forced Christianization, were coerced into hiding their beliefs in the symbols of Catholicism. It then gradually lost this religious aspect and turned into a danceable genre, widely practiced by the poorer folk. So much so that, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became a kind of banner which the Brazilian black population used to assert their own cultural identity. In this sense, one could say that samba followed the same path of blues and then jazz, the latter having been born as a form of freedom of expression by the black communities. Around 1920, samba was brought to Europe and introduced as a partner dance, both with autonomous, original figures and with representations already

present in the maxise, fittingly re-elaborated of course: naturally, the mass spread of danceable samba required a certain simplification, which was eventually introduced after the Second World War by the Europeans themselves;

- *Merengue*: even though it is nowadays the traditional dance of the Dominican Republic, the dispute on its origin is still unresolved, as many historians lead this dance back to Haiti while others back to the Dominican Republic itself. We may find traces of this dance as early as the Spanish colonization in 1500 on the island of Hispaniola (today Saint Domingo): African populations joined in time the indigenous ones, and such a crossover of races and cultural traditions gave rise to a combination of African rhythms and Spanish melodies. The slaves, who were enchained at the ankles, managed to move by transferring their body weight from one foot to the other, often following the drum's exact rhythm. Hence the typical dragging movement, which is at the heart of Merengue;

- *Rumba*: even though it is generally thought of as an expression of Cuban culture, this dance's roots are to be found in the music imported to Cuba by the African slaves who were deported there by the Spanish colonisers: it used to be a pantomimic dance of a sexual nature with various significances, from courtship to propitiatory rites, to bravery and virility challenges. The origin of rumba is therefore traceable back to a crossover between certain Spanish rhythms and other African ones. The singing, especially, has strong Andalusian influences, whereas the percussions are definitely African. With regards to the Afro-Cuban roots of rumba, the ethnomusicologist Fernando Ortiz, by describing it as a musical expression, which the Cuban people absorbed from the African negroes, as it was adapted, modified and created under the influence of African musical traditions, as well as blent in with others of different provenance (Ortiz, 2001: 13), suggests that even the Europeans partook, with the various cultural traditions thereof, in the fusion that created this dance;

- *Mambo*: considered as a musical and dancing genre, it was born in the 40s' in Cuba; what is often overlooked, however, is that it springs from a combination of Afro-caribbean rhythms and jazz. The introduction of off-beat motifs in the final part of the *danzòn* (a Cuban dance) gave birth to a danceable style, which was revived by jazz musicians. After the introduction of instruments like maracas, bong drums, drums, and guiro, the music's rhythm became more fervid, based on the typical percussions of the

Latin-american tradition and on the winds (especially the trumpet) representative of American jazz. It is well-known that most of Latin-american music hails from Cuba, but as a popular dance and music form, mambo, cha-cha-cha, and salsa were innovations coming from North America, born as a consequence of the Latin-american immigration in the United States, particularly in New York, and of the combination of various musical styles from different parts of the world, first and foremost, jazz;

- *Cha-cha-cha*: it stems from two Latin-american dances: the Puertorican “danzonette” and the Cuban “danzòn”, official dance of Cuba stemming from none other than the “contradance”, of English origin and brought to Cuba by the French settlers who fled the Haitian revolution of 1790. Very much like the mambo, musicians tested new tempos and rhythms, thereby making some changes to this dance. “Triple” mambo was born: this new version of mambo involved side steps. The scraping and shuffling of feet in these steps produced a specific sound, a sound very much like “cha cha cha”;

- *Salsa*: although salsa developed in Cuba at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is a heterogeneous musical and dancing genre, and is therefore traceable back to many Central and South American countries. Musically, it springs from “son”, a dance which spread at L’Avana, known as a slower and more gentle version of rumba. Besides son, other rhythms from Spain and South America (guaracha, bolero, merengue, cumbia) contributed to the development of this dance. The subsequent transformation took shape when salsa stretched to the whole American continent and experienced the effects of jazz and blues rhythms. This music was so miscellaneous that the music industry first labeled it “metropolitan salsa”. Nowadays, metropolitan salsa, which has since then integrated rock, rap, and even ragamuffin elements, is the most popular Latin-american partner dance in the world.

### **Chapter 3 – Meaningful Language Learning: multisensoriality and neurological bimodality through different forms of intelligence and learning approaches**

In this third chapter we will define the basic characteristics of Meaningful Learning, the objective of our language teaching, which is also aware of the significant dimension of the relationship.

We will then outline some principles, such as the use of multisensoriality and the respect for the bimodal neurological directionality, (and in general the global engagement of the subject in the learning process also at a sensorimotor level) in order to highlight how the conscious use of Dance Sport in the linguistic field, lends itself naturally to the respect and application of these principles. It promotes significant learning and intercultural relations and respects the different forms of intelligence and learning styles.

Finally we will point out how knowledge and the correct use of these theories can stimulate an intrinsic motivation to learn, based on pleasure and on the *input's* emotional evaluation.

## **2.1 Meaningful language learning**

Several researchers from different disciplinary areas are interested in the concept of Meaningful Learning, analyzing its many features under various aspects.

Its benefits are related to the input's qualities of depth, stability and duration in the memory of the learner.

In order to highlight the potential impact on language teaching, with the purpose to facilitate learning through Dance Sport, we will collect the essential contributions for our consideration, as well as some references and examples, both applicable to our teaching proposal.

### **2.1.1 C. R. Rogers**

The psychologist C. R. Rogers, within a humanistic-affective teaching, defines meaningful learning in its relational and affective dimension in these terms (1973: 8-10):

- *It is “based on the experience and it is capable of arousing the vital interests of the learner”.* Influenced by pedagogical activism and conditioned by the motto “learning by doing” by Dewey (1949), Rogers picks up the concept of a knowledge that is not passive but experiential, participatory, similar to the pedagogical theory of Maria Montessori (1986) which sees the centrality of the child through the value of freedom and creative experimentation. Dance puts in the student's hands his creative potential and allows him to develop, through body expression, a concrete knowledge to build and share with others, from which it is possible to arrive to the theories of a meta-cognitive systematization.

The teacher, in order to awaken the vital interests of the learner, must appeal to the experience of his students in the choice of materials, themes, organization and setting of their work. This must be done in order to meet as far as possible the interests, needs and curiosity of the students. In other words, each pupil should have the opportunity to talk about himself through the tasks that he must face (Anderson *et al.*, 1987). Choosing some resonant materials related to the students' experience in our context, means to

allow them to talk about their own identities through dance, or to tell their origins presenting and dancing their own ethnochoreutic forms. It also allows to freely decide which types of couple dancing he prefers, which music must accompany the choreography among the materials, authentic or not, available online, on paper or through video, radio, television and so on. The student will draw inspiration from personal or indirect experiences, so that the language content can be assimilated thanks to the "vital" cooperation between students;

- *“It involves a global participation of the subject's personality, as it engages in learning not only on the cognitive level, but also on the affective and emotional one”.*

“Global” learning concerns the cognitive, emotional, corporal and social spheres and turns out to be most definitely an all-encompassing experience. It has significant potential glottodidactic relapses and it is persistent in the memory. It is also a very complex activity, that responds to the complexity of the reality that we live nowadays, which requires an integrated multilevel involvement in order to face and solve problems and situations that are always new, using more resources and types of intelligence (emotional, corporal and interpersonal at first).

Dance can help to put these resources and forms of intelligence in place in a synergistic way, developing each one harmonically thanks to the dialogical dimension of couple dancing;

- *It is “self-motivated”, it has “a real and profound impact, because it helps to change the behavior, the attitudes and sometimes even the personality of the subject”.* A student can “give a background” to all his inner resources only through a strong intrinsic motivation, and he can hope in a stable modification of the structure of the memory of his knowledge and skills. He will be then profoundly renewed through the experience that couple dancing can represent, marking in a positive (or negative) way the student's learning path, especially at the level of significant intercultural relations made possible by dance;

- *It is “directly evaluated by the subject, who knows if what he is learning suits his needs, if it goes in the direction of what he wants to know, if it has really filled a gap felt by him as such”.* Rogers supports, therefore, that in this type of learning there is the learner's exclusive prerogative to evaluate the effectiveness or not of the knowledge acquired. It is then a teacher's commitment to respond to logical and practical needs (to

know the rules of couple dancing, the steps, but also the techniques and styles for who is interested) in order to combine the playful game-disciplinary sports content and the specific linguistic skills (Caon, 2008: 53). He must know the lexicon that regards directions, space, basic movements, parts of the body used etc.;

- “*It fully integrates the overall picture of the experiences and interests [of the subject]*”; that is a learning process that is born, transformed, and developed from what already belongs to the world of the learner, joining the course of the person's psychology, in order to facilitate the inferential processes.

These indications are part of the potentiality of the effectiveness of our proposal that can be significant only thanks to the intentionality of teaching mediation (Caon, 2008: 54) between ballroom and language class, in this case the interdependence between language facilitator and dance teacher.

#### **2.1.2 D. P. Ausubel and J. D. Novak**

“If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to one principle, I would say this: the most important single factor that influences learning is what the learner already knows” (Ausubel, 1968: 18).

The concept of meaningful learning was developed by Ausubel and presented in 1962 with the title “A Subsumption theory of significant learning and retention”. For the psychologist this learning occurs when the learner decides to relate new informations with those that he already has; he therefore, accepts the Piaget’s idea of learning as a process of assimilation and accommodation and he refers to a type of interactionist constructivism in which the role of an active and intentional learner is crucial (Varisco, 2002:99). This learner is motivated to reprocess and store new knowledge, so that new information can be brought into relation with pre-existing concepts and can be incorporated into his cognitive structure. This will allow him to give sense and a meaning to what he personally lives.

He then compares the significant learning to the mechanical one, where basically the new information is not integrated with the one already held, but is learned in an arbitrary and largely mnemonic way. This is not going to change permanently the subject's cognitive structure.

Novak takes up Ausubel's assimilation theory and reiterates the importance of relating the new knowledge to the previous one. He also develops the concept of meaningful learning and he asserts that

“la costruzione di significato coinvolge i pensieri, i sentimenti e le azioni e questi tre aspetti vanno integrati all'interno di un nuovo apprendimento significativo e, in particolare, di una nuova costruzione della conoscenza”<sup>28</sup> (2001: 20).

The constructive integration of thoughts, feelings and actions takes place in the learner but also in his relationship with the teacher: “qualsiasi evento educativo rappresenta un'azione condivisa per cercare uno scambio di significati ed emozioni tra l'alunno e il docente”<sup>29</sup> (Novak, 2001: 26). Novak supports, therefore, that when the process of acquiring new concepts occurs, a motivational factor intervenes and it includes not only the cognitive learning, but also the emotional and psycho-motorial one (2001: 20-21). Synthesizing, the characteristics shared by the contributions set out above define significant learning as (Caon, 2005: 17):

- *Holistic*: because it involves the student's brain and body at a global level in its cognitive, emotional, relational, and sensory-motorial aspects. Dance creates this kind of all-encompassing involvement used to transfer a significant language skill as much as a meaningful learning experience;
- *Constructive*: because it integrates preexisting concepts with the new learning through the use of the non-verbal dance code, which is more immediate and effective, and the value of “expectancy grammar”, based on logical and analogical processes and on “scripts” and “frames” (Balboni, 2006: 78) related or linked to the dance educational dimension;
- *Motivating*: because it encourages the student, as a subject with corporal memory on a both individual and cultural side (D'Annunzio, Caon, Della Puppa, 2003), to be involved actively and intrinsically into the research, discovery and systematization

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<sup>28</sup> “the construction of meaning involves thoughts, feelings and actions, and these three aspects should be integrated into a new significant learning, in particular, into a new construction of knowledge” (my translation).

<sup>29</sup> “any educational event is a shared action performed in order to seek an exchange of meanings and emotions between the student and the teacher” (my translation).

of knowledge, starting from his own needs, interests and passions that can be potentially embodied in the dance in all its aspects and implications.

### **3. 2 Multisensoriality**

The multisensory perception of learning depends on our understanding of what we mean with the term “sensory perception”, which is by definition of a multimodal nature within the brain.

From a perspective of learning enhancement, and in compliance with the natural functioning of human perception and its significance for learning, we here suggest how dancing may work as a multisensory *stimulus* of great advantage to the person who is committed, with much effort, to learn a foreign language.

According to the “embodied cognition”,

“l’apprendimento multipercettivo permette di valutare come il sistema percettivo-motorio influenzi la cognizione e potenzi capacità e connettività cerebrali: il corpo modula i processi di apprendimento e aumenta le capacità attenzionali e motivazionali”<sup>30</sup> (Invitto, 2013: 36).

A Swiss team, with the project “School in motion” at Macolin<sup>31</sup>, has already made tests at school level on the bond between the learning of school subjects and movement. We will now take into consideration the neuroscientific prerequisites of multisensoriality, which justify using dancing in teaching a foreign language.

#### **3. 2. 1 Sense and perception**

Right from intrauterine life, perceptual stimuli have a fundamental role in shaping the structure and purpose of the nervous system: the neural activity can be continually modified by biochemical stimuli through sensory perception, thanks to which we know and interact dynamically with the world, by accessing the pieces of information as the first, and indispensable, phase of any type of learning.

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<sup>30</sup> “multi-perceptual learning allows us to evaluate how the perceptual-motor system can influence cognition and enhance the cerebral ability and connectivity: the body regulates the learning processes and increases attention and motivational skills” (my translation).

<sup>31</sup> See: <http://www.schulebewegt.ch/internet/Schulebewegt/it/home.html>

Psychologists<sup>32</sup> make a distinction between “sense” and “perception”, complementary in the interpretation of our surroundings. The two functions, in fact, are integrated with each other and inseparable at a neurophysiological level, meaning it would be best to speak, from the perspective of a mind-body unity, of one single sense-perceptual function. In any case, sense is a transformation at a neuronal level, which originates from the direct interaction of sensory organs with both the external and the internal environment, and which concerns the way in which these organs respond to stimuli, and how these responses are transmitted to the brain; perception, on the other hand, is the elaboration, organization, and active synthesis of this sensory data in a cognitively complex experience. We must, therefore, keep in mind that

“un apprendimento non comporta semplicemente recezioni di stimoli provenienti da apparati sensoriali della più diversa morfofisiologia [...] ma una lettura, una loro rielaborazione e la conservazione di tale elaborazione come memoria”<sup>33</sup> (Imbasciati, 2006: 37).

Sensory stimuli are captured by the appointed organs through the so-called sensory receptors (sight, touch, hearing, kinesthesia etc.), and are then re-elaborated at a cognitive level to create an internal “mental representation” storing sense and meaning; all our mental processes (imagining, thinking, memorising, learning) are thus based on our specific and unique sensory experience and on the relative, subjective representation of the world: the final product, in short, the outcome of a process, which is inevitably shaped by the entity of the sentient subject, by his or her experiences and past knowledge, as well as by all his specific features, not only biological, but also and primarily psychological and cultural ones. To this end, David Le Breton (2007: 5-8) says that,

“al pari della lingua, il corpo è un continuo fornitore di significati. Di fronte a una medesima realtà, individui dal corpo impregnato di culture e storie diverse non provano le stesse sensazioni e non decifrano gli stessi dati: ciascuno di essi è sensibile alle informazioni che riconosce e che rimandano al suo specifico sistema di riferimento. Le percezioni sensoriali e la visione del mondo di tali individui sono

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<sup>32</sup> For further reading: Wolfe J. M. *et al.*, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> “learning does not simply entail reception of stimuli from sensory apparatuses of varying morfophysiology... but a reading, a re-elaboration of such reception and then the conservation of such an elaboration as memory itself” (my translation).

tributarie dei simbolismi acquisiti. In ciò simile alla lingua, il corpo proietta un filtro sull'ambiente, incarna un sistema semiologico. La percezione non è la realtà, ma il modo di sentire la realtà.”<sup>34</sup>

### 3. 2. 2 Multisensory perception

For a long time the different sensory modalities have been considered independent of each other, because people believed that they operated separately and that the integration of processed information happened in cognitive areas considered "of high level" (Galloni, 2010). However, recent studies have suggested that, in the functioning of the mechanisms of perception, the interactions between different modes represent the norm (Shimojo, Shams, 2001).

Lawrence D. Rosenblum (2013: 65) confirms that in the past, scientists and psychologists used to compare the brain to

“un coltellino svizzero, in cui le differenti regioni erano dedicate alle diverse percezioni sensoriali, come la vista, l'udito, l'olfatto, il gusto, il tatto. Tuttavia negli ultimi trent'anni la psicologia e le neuroscienze hanno rivelato che il cervello è un organo profondamente multisensoriale, che mescola di continuo le informazioni dai diversi sensi”<sup>35</sup>.

In fact, recent studies have suggested that, in the functioning of the mechanisms of perception, the interactions between different modes represent the norm (Shimojo, Shams, 2001): in many cerebral areas, which were once considered unimodal, a combination of sensory information coming from distinct modalities takes place (Kayser *et al.*, 2007) and even when we direct our attention to monomedial communication, we recognise not only the activation of the sensory system which is

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<sup>34</sup> “like language, the body is a continuous supplier of meanings. Confronted with one same reality, individuals with bodies immersed in different cultures and historical backgrounds do not share the same perceptions nor do they decipher the same data: each is sensitive to the information he or she recognizes and which refers him or her back to his or her specific reference system. The sensory perceptions and world view of these individuals are subject to acquired symbolisms. In this respect very similar to language, the body projects a filter on the environment, it embodies a semiological system. Perception is not reality, but the way of sensing reality” (my translation).

<sup>35</sup> “a swiss-army knife, in which the different regions were dedicated to different sensory perceptions, such as sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch. However, in the last thirty years, psychology and neuroscience have revealed that the brain is a deeply multisensory organ that continuously mixes the information derived by the different senses” (my translation).

directly pressurised, but also the participation of the senses which, even if not directly involved, activate processes for the completion of the information.

Our perceptual nature is thus a continuous flow of multisensory information, because it is the multisensory reality that surrounds us, and this is true even when we have the impression that which we perceive is connected to that which we experience as a “single sense modality”. The brain, therefore, works in a multimodal way, not unimodal;

“multimodal integration has been found in many different location in the brain, and we believe that it is the norm. That is, sensory modalities like vision, touch, hearing and so on are actually integrated with each other *and* with motor control and planning” (Gallese, Lakoff, 2005: 459).

No single sense is an island for our brain, always according to Rosenblum (2013: 67). The interaction between the senses, altogether with the fusion of their information content (since they do not add up trivially, but they strongly interact between each other during the processing of the perceived phenomenon) is called a "multisensory integration" (Meredith M.A., 2002), which is none other than the central nervous system's capacity of using synergistically these multiple sensory sources (Stein, Meredith, 1993), leading to a unique perception of the subjective reality.

It thus becomes clear that our psycho-physical perceptual system evolved to learn and to operate in the best possible way within a multisensory environment, enabling the dialogue between the senses.

### **3. 2. 3 Benefits of multisensory language learning**

The multisensory revolution, aside from transforming the way in which we study the brain, suggests new paths for language learning, where the interlinked use of visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic stimuli (Katai *et al.*, 2008; Staley, 2006) meets halfway with our natural inclination.

Balboni (2012) traces the main lines of the methodological structure of the founder of the Venetian school of language teaching, and quotes that

“la didattica è multisensoriale perché l'uomo, ma soprattutto il bambino e il ragazzo sono stupende macchine multisensoriali, con percorsi acquisitivi cinetici e visivi,

non solo strettamente linguistici; e la didattica è semioticamente complessa, dà i suoi migliori risultati se vengono usati insieme linguaggi visivi, musicali, ritmici, corporei ecc. insieme al linguaggio verbale”<sup>36</sup>.

The importance of the involvement of all sensory channels (kinesthetic included) in the learning process is reiterated by the same Freddi in this passage:

“nel momento in cui l’insegnamento di fa bisensoriale – come con l’audiovisivo – o anche, se possibile, multisensoriale grazie alla manipolazione – esplorazione degli oggetti e delle cose, l’esperienza di apprendimento si fa più completa e produttiva”<sup>37</sup> (1990: 130).

In particular, the deep involvement of the body at the sensor neural level in the communication-signification dynamic (Freddi, 1990: 130) is evidenced by studies that confirm the neurophysiologic basis of motor skills<sup>38</sup>, and that show the presence of motor roots in each meander of the brain.

In the propose of an oriented education based on these principles we may therefore consider all recreational and sports disciplines such as the Dancesport (as couple dance), since

“lo sport permette naturalmente l’elaborazione di percorsi di insegnamento-apprendimento che accostino ed integrino lingua e movimento, linguaggi verbali e non verbali”<sup>39</sup> (Caon, 2008: 61).

Indeed, multisensoriality appears to enhance and strengthen language learning, because:

- *it stimulates neurogenesis and neuro trophic factors springing from the brain: it has been shown that having more sensory stimuli would allow us to repair incomplete*

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<sup>36</sup> “teaching is multisensory because the human being, and especially the child and the boy are amazing multisensory machines with acquisitive courses that are both visual and kinetic, not only purely linguistic. Teaching is semiotically complex: it gives the best results when used with visual, musical, rhythmic, bodily and other languages, along with verbal one” (my translation).

<sup>37</sup> “when the teaching is done in a bi-sensory feature - As with the audiovisual - or even, if possible, in a multisensory way thanks to the manipulation - exploration of objects and things, the learning experience becomes more complete and more productive” (my translation).

<sup>38</sup> for more: Penfield W., Rasmussen T., 1950.

<sup>39</sup> “the sport naturally allows the development of the teaching-learning paths that combine and integrate language and movement, verbal and non-verbal languages” (my translation).

or lost information (Horowitz, 1969), and would activate wider neuronal networks (Lehmann, 2005) thus simplifying the recovery of information (Collerone, 2012: 29). With regards to the use of movement in the field of learning, Ofelia Jeanneret, the researcher who followed, year after year, the cognitive development of the children in the experimental school of Maculin, explains that neuroscience tell us that the activation of the frontal lobe is greater when the body is in movement, thus enhancing the speed of synaptic connections<sup>40</sup>.

Regarding intensive sensory experiences, not only do they enable the development of the S.N.C., but they also seem to facilitate the connection between neurons if these stimuli are “polysemic” and synesthetic, thus contributing to the enhancement of intellectual and cerebral capacities. With a view made for facilitating language learning, it is therefore necessary to program all the activities that allow the student to stimulate at the same time as many sensory channels as possible, in order to activate brain areas that are more functional for learning (Luise, 2000: 179).

Detailed studies on memorization carried out by Ekwall and Shaker (in Ginnis 2002: 24) reveal that people remember:

- 10% of what they read,
- 20% of what they hear,
- 30% of what they see,
- 50% of what they both hear and see,
- 70% of what they say,
- 90% of what they both say and do.

All this increases the chances of passing the information from work memory on to long-term memory: physical activities facilitate executive functions and would have a big impact on mnemonic functions, on attention, on processing rapidity, and on cognitive flexibility (Chaddock, 2012, in Collerone, 2012: 29). In fact, it appears that to have stimuli in more than one manner does not obstruct, but on the contrary, it eases the processing and the recovery of the latter (Mastroberardino *et al.*, 2008). Attention, memory, responding capacity, and cognitive flexibility are all more easily developed in a learning context which indulges the brain’s natural capacity of integrating

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<sup>40</sup> See: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_Ah\\_VyUeNM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_Ah_VyUeNM)

simultaneously several sensorimotor stimuli coming from the environment, rather than just one stimulus supporting the whole piece of information to be conveyed.

Mayer, author and creator of the “double coding” (Mayer, 2001), seems to share this same view: cognition is the result of the activity between two distinct systems, each specialised in one of the two means of communication: verbal and non-verbal (or analogic), the latter being tied to corporeality (facial mimicry, gaze, posture, gestural expressiveness, interpersonal distance, management of space and objects). The effectiveness of such a system is confirmed by the “multimedia principle”, according to which the students’ comprehension skills may be improved if the verbal explanations are associated with non-verbal representations of knowledge. Because human cognitive structure is composed by independent canals of limited capacity, teaching methods which use just one perceptual canal can easily run the risk of overloading the students’ cognitive capacity, in contrast with a multimodal representation of contents (synchronization of multiple sensory canals) (Paivio, 1986), sharing the information on both sensory canals.

To validate this thesis supporting the use of dancing as a means of learning, two American studies, lead by researchers of Washington University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of New York<sup>41</sup>, reached the very same conclusions and stated that dancing is able not only of improving our posture, motor coordination, and, more generally, physical well-being at muscular and articular levels, but also, by engaging the brain globally, of improving the attention and procedural memory, thanks to the necessary dancing steps and to the rhythm one must follow to support the music and one’s partner; they claim that, by so doing, our brain may be kept in good working order even in old age, and even counter more successfully neurodegenerative illnesses such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s disease, in contrast with other physical activities like swimming or cycling.

These scientific facts suggest we should exploit the cerebrally positive context produced by dancing, with the aim of directing teaching towards the educational goals we set ourselves, and so to obtain better results compared to different learning contexts of a more traditional nature, i.e. less interactive and usually unimodal ones;

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<sup>41</sup> See source: [http://magazine.paginemediche.it/it/365/il-punto-di-vista/neurologia/detail\\_150260\\_dance-with-me-come-il-ballo-migliora-le-abilita-del-cervello.aspx?c1=63](http://magazine.paginemediche.it/it/365/il-punto-di-vista/neurologia/detail_150260_dance-with-me-come-il-ballo-migliora-le-abilita-del-cervello.aspx?c1=63)

- *Improve the atmosphere of learning in schools* (Breihecker, 2000, in UFSP0, 2010) *and the motivation through the pleasure of the stimulus*: intense sensations link, even at a cerebral level, with emotions that settle indelibly in the memory, thus conditioning inevitably the motivation to learn, besides creating a serene and cooperative atmosphere, all of which follows also from the emission of natural antidepressant and euphoric hormones whilst dancing.

It is in this context that Caon (2010: XLIX-L) explains that in order to facilitate language learning, the activities that integrate at the same time more senses and more cognitive operations are fundamental in a process both holistic and significant. This must be done in order to create an active and motivated participation of the student thanks to the complexity of the experiential task.

It is here is that sport – and therefore, in our case Dancesport –

“permette di utilizzare contemporaneamente differenti modalità sensoriali creando quindi una naturale ridondanza di informazioni utili per l’apprendimento consapevole e l’acquisizione inconsapevole (Krashen, 1983)”<sup>42</sup> (Caon, 2008: 62).

In light of all the data which has emerged, it is indeed desirable that each student have the chance of developing and sharpen his or her perceptual capacity by training the senses, which is the true key to learning; in our case, this would happen by taking advantage of dancing and music, considering that movement simplifies and facilitates the development of perception itself (Ratey, 2008).

### **3. 2. 4 Unconscious learning**

With regards to multisensory learning, Vettorel (2006: 94) explains that

“la stimolazione multisensoriale e il materiale organizzato in modo da stimolare e far crescere intelligenze e stili diversi può agire anche a livello inconscio per migliorare l’apprendimento: mentre la nostra mente conscia si concentra su uno

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<sup>42</sup> “allows a simultaneous use of different sensory modalities and it creates a natural redundancy of information for the conscious learning and the unconscious acquisition (Krashen, 1983)” (my translation).

degli aspetti, quella non-conscia annota comunque anche la “visione periferica” e rinforza in questo modo l’apprendimento”<sup>43</sup>.

Lozanov (1978), using the suggestopedic system, a system which makes use of multisensory stimulations, claimed that, in his experiments, learning occurred at a “paraconscious” level.

More recent studies, among which we highlight those of Goleman and of Jensen, confirm that 99% of our learning happens unconsciously because experience and sensory *input* are elaborated and integrated below our level of awareness (Vettorel, 2004: 4). The term “unconscious” in physiology means the mental activity below a person’s conscious threshold: from the whole mass of data we receive both from the outside and the inside, we make an attentive selection which we consciously retain (explicit learning), whereas the rest of it is not lost, but is, on the contrary, recorded unbeknown to us and completely automatically (implicit learning).

A study made in 1962 by George Miller (1962) showed that the conscious side of human beings manages to perform only 3 to 7 operations simultaneously, while the unconscious side a great deal more. The latter can in fact run 64.000 activities at the same time: from hormonal and glandular processes to blood circulation, from heartbeat to respiration, right up to managing the whole physiology, behaviour and emotions.

From all of this, we have the formula which says that only 5% of the brain is guided by the conscious side, whereas 95% of it by the unconscious side. New studies<sup>44</sup> have shed light on how unconscious learning is connected to and determined by the more ancient areas of the brain, such as the striatum, which is implied in sensorimotor skills. From an evolutionary point of view, the striatum is the most ancient part of the basal ganglia, as it is also present in vertebrates such as reptiles and amphibians.

Such considerations suggest to us that the body, motor skills, and the unconscious are all interlinked, and that learning strongly depends on these basic and primordial areas.

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<sup>43</sup> “multisensory stimulation and the material organised to stimulate and increase different intelligences and styles can also act at an unconscious level to improve learning: whilst our conscious mind focuses on one of the aspects, the non-conscious mind takes note of the “peripheral vision” too, in this way reinforcing learning” (my translation).

<sup>44</sup> By a team of researches of Karolinska Institutet (Svezia) and of National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (Usa), in a research published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. See: [http://salute.agi.it/primapagina/notizie/201004121157-hpg\\_rsa1016cervello\\_regioni\\_piu\\_vecchie\\_responsabili\\_dell\\_apprendimento?noCache=742.1367105046](http://salute.agi.it/primapagina/notizie/201004121157-hpg_rsa1016cervello_regioni_piu_vecchie_responsabili_dell_apprendimento?noCache=742.1367105046)

The brain absorbs information of which it is directly conscious using a focalised attention, but it also absorbs information from that which lies behind and around its immediate central focal point, through peripheral perception. Indeed, the brain also responds to the wider sensory context in which teaching and communication occurs. The “peripheral signals” are extremely powerful (physical environment, teaching methods including the use of music and dancing creativity), even if we do not pay much attention to these details at school, as they are not immediately noticeable to didactic ends; instead, we favour all those conscious aspects of which we are aware in the process, which actually represent merely the tip of the iceberg, so to speak.

Dancing, especially, can bring about an Alpha wave state, via a positive, creative, and relaxing atmosphere, which, as has been ascertained, truly improves the cerebral activity in learning (Eiffert, 1999); besides, learning through recreational and sportive activities, which engage and entertain at the same time, takes the student’s mind off the task or problem and leads him or her into an unconscious state, which produces a stable and lasting acquisition of information, which Krashen says happens unawares thanks to the “rule of forgetting” (1983).

Ultimately, it is essential not to ignore the unconscious processes that are triggered by multisensory stimulation, by seeking to have them work and communicate with the conscious ones, given that both combine to bring about language learning: the repetition of words associated with body movements, and more generally with hands-on procedures, settles automatically in the student’s implicit memory, which will then be endorsed and systemised in more formal learning activities.

### **2.3 Types of intelligence and learning styles**

Learning depends on and is influenced by areas of individual difference, such as age, sociocultural background, motivation, cognitive and learning styles, sensory modalities and intelligence (Pozzo, Mariani, 2002).

If it is true that our experiential reality is multisensory, it is equally true that every person has a favorite channel for experiencing the world and for the learning process, that channel must be exploited for language teaching (Luise, 2000: 179).

Learning style is defined as

“la tendenza di una persona a preferire un certo modo di apprendere-studiare; riguarda la sua modalità di percepire e reagire ai compiti legati all’apprendimento, attraverso la quale mette in atto, o sceglie, i comportamenti e le strategie per apprendere”<sup>45</sup> (Cadamuro, 2004: 71).

These learning styles can contribute together to the different forms of intelligence that are simultaneously present in each student. They constitute some considerable individual differences in the learning process.

This intelligence is defined by Gardner as “a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are values of a culture” (1999: 34), developable in a greater or lesser extent, because it depends on specific variables related to experience, culture and motivation.

Bringing together the different learning styles and forms of intelligence in a class not only allows the teacher to facilitate the language learning, but it also helps to

“riconoscere le differenze individuali e tenere conto delle convinzioni e atteggiamenti della comunità di appartenenza fa sì che l’allievo si senta accolto e riconosciuto nei suoi valori; ciò smussa le resistenze e dispone favorevolmente l’alunno verso ciò che andrà a fare. Se un alunno si sente accolto per quello che è, riconosciuto nelle sue caratteristiche e convinzioni e valorizzato nei suoi punti di forza, allora è più probabile che egli sviluppi una disposizione positiva verso quanto gli verrà proposto”<sup>46</sup>(Pozzo, Mariani, 2002: 131).

In order to highlight the possible variables of the teaching process of a foreign language through Dance Sport we will consider:

- The different learning methods (styles);

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<sup>45</sup> “the tendency of a person to prefer a certain way of learning-study; regards its modalities of perceiving and reacting to the learning tasks, through which he enacts, or chooses, the most efficient behaviors and strategies in order to learn” (my translation).

<sup>46</sup> “recognize individual differences and to take care of the beliefs and attitudes of the community to which they belong. It will ensure that the student feels welcomed and recognized in his qualities; it decreases resistance and puts the student in a favorable position towards what he is going to do. If a student feels welcomed for what he really is and feels recognized in his characteristics, beliefs and is enhanced in his strengths, he will more likely develop a positive disposition to what he will face” (my translation).

- The different combinations of skills (forms of intelligence).

### 2.3.1 The sensory learning style: The V.A.K. Model

The different sensorial modalities through which we collect data from the surrounding, and that allow us to consequently activate all the cognitive processes for the memorization and learning of the information are three: visual, auditory and kinesthetic. The latter includes, in addition to movement, taste and touch senses, together with corporal and emotional sensations (Vettorel, 2007: 21).

They have also been studied by the Neuro-Linguistic Programming<sup>47</sup>, as preferential access channels to the experiential knowledge of subjective reality.

The V.A.K. Model<sup>48</sup>, which has the purpose to determine the access channel mainly used in a learning situation, subdivides the students into auditory, visual and kinesthetic. According to Mariani (2000), if we consider different sensory modalities, we can distinguish three different learning styles:

- *Auditory style*, where the student remembers and learns better through listening and taking notes, and also benefits from the use of a recorder;
- *Visual style*, where the student needs visual supports such as videos, slides, charts and posters;
- *Kinesthetic style*, where students need to learn through an active experimentation with the manipulation of objects and physical movement;

However Vettorel (2004: 1) explains that

“l’organizzazione tradizionale delle nostre classi tende a privilegiare le attività di ascolto e scrittura, favorendo così gli auditivi e i visivi, a discapito degli studenti cinestesici, la cui necessità di movimento è molto spesso penalizzata, con ricadute negative anche sull’apprendimento [...] è quindi importante assicurarsi di aver

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<sup>47</sup> The NLP is a neuroscience born in the 70s at the University of California, Santa Cruz, by Richard Bandler and Michael Grinder. for more: Bandler, Grinder, 1979.

<sup>48</sup> The original VAK concept was developed by psychologists and pedagogues, like Fernald, Keller, Orton, Gillingham, Stillman and Montessori, since 1920.

inserito nelle attività momenti dedicati sia agli studenti Visivi, che Auditivi o Cinestesici, separatamente o simultaneamente, in tutte le fasi di lavoro e in modo diversificato”<sup>49</sup>.

Surely the use of dance activities in play-sport moments, associated with the target language, stimulates to a greater extent the kinesthetic channel, which is usually neglected by the educational institution, in order to make the language learning more varied and productive through sport (Caon, 2008: 62).

But dance actually activates and prepares not only those with a kinesthetic style: it presupposes an attentive listening to the music in order to keep up with the rhythm, and there is an involvement with the partner also on a visual level expressing the thoughts through a mimic made of reciprocal actions and gestures: it is then going to affect all the three sensory channels.

In order to promote an effective learning in each student it is ultimately important that the teacher offers a balanced and varied menu of tasks and activities that can reach and develop all the individual differences (Della Puppa, 2007: 7). The teacher will also consider that such differences are of biological and cultural matrix: just think how little our Western culture recognizes and promotes a development of kinesthetic intelligence in social and scholastic environments, or how in Arab countries the use of corporeality can be a taboo, especially when a subject proposes physical activities which provide, as in our case, cooperation and even physical contact between males and females.

### **2.3.2 Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences**

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence plays within our teaching proposal a particularly important role, since it definitely contributed to undermine the validity of the traditional teaching transmissive model, according to a frontal and exclusively verbal modality.

Gardner (1987) in his “Frames of Mind” elaborated a theory of coexistence between

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<sup>49</sup> “the traditional organization of our classes tends to favor the listening and writing processes favoring the auditory and visual styles and leads to the detriment of the kinesthetic one. Those students who need to move are more penalized, with negative effects even on learning [...] it is therefore important to plan activity moments for both Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic students, involved separately or simultaneously, in all the stages of the work and in a diversified way” (my translation).

different forms of intelligence of variable predominance in our brain, called “multiple intelligence”. These are divided into eight different forms of intelligence, removing in this way the existing idea of a single intelligence measurable with a Q.I., equating the various human faculties in terms of importance and value.

The various forms of intelligence were then divided into three main categories:

- *Related to the person:* interpersonal, intrapersonal and existential (recently theorized);
- *Related to language:* linguistic and musical;
- *Related to the object:* kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, and naturalistic.

What surprised was that he added a new theoretical horizon on the relationship between the body and intelligent activities: the corporal-kinesthetic intelligence, which means “the ability to use your body in many different ways and skills, for expressive and concrete purposes” (Gardner, 1987: 227) arrives at the same level of other forms of intelligence.

[...] Una descrizione dell'uso del corpo come forma di intelligenza può sembrare a tutta prima stridente. Nella nostra tradizione culturale recente c'è stata una disgiunzione radicale fra le attività del ragionamento da un lato e le attività della parte manifestamente fisica della nostra natura, qual è compendiata dal nostro corpo, dall'altro. Questo divorzio tra il "mentale" e il "fisico" si è associato non di rado alla nozione che ciò che facciamo col nostro corpo sia un po' meno privilegiato, meno speciale, delle routine di soluzioni di problemi che eseguiamo principalmente attraverso l'uso del linguaggio, della logica o di qualche altro sistema simbolico relativamente astratto<sup>50</sup> (1987: 206).

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<sup>50</sup> “[...] a description of the use of the body as a form of intelligence may seem a bit odd. In our recent cultural tradition there has been a radical disjunction between the activities of reasoning and the activities of the clearly physical part of our nature. This gap between the "mental" and the "physical" is associated frequently with the notion that what we do with our body is a bit 'less privileged, less special, of the routines of solutions to problems that we carry out mainly through the use of language, compared with the logic or with some other relatively abstract symbolic system” (my translation).

In dealing with the corporal-kinesthetic intelligence, Gardner also analyzed the dance phenomenon, classifying it in the “mature forms of corporal expression” and dedicating to this art an entire paragraph. For the researcher it represents the highest form of use of the human body: “fra tutti gli usi del corpo umano nessuno ha raggiunto livelli superiori alla danza, o è stato sviluppato dalle diverse culture in modo più vario”<sup>51</sup> (1987: 243).

Gardner in addition reevaluates and clarifies the perspective of learning experiences based on a motion substrate. He outlines the interaction ability between different human forms of intelligence. Therefore if a subject has a strong stimulus in the corporal-kinesthetic intelligence, this last one must be used to strengthen that or those in which he is more latent, a tip that applies to our field of glottodidactic actions. When we prepare activities such as dance play-sports, this might facilitate, through corporal intelligence, the development of other different forms of intelligence such as the linguistic one. This must be done in order to support the learning of a foreign language. This, according to the enhancement of the “relative strengths”, but also in order to upgrade the forms of intelligence of everyone, in order to progressively reduce the “relative weaknesses” (Mariani, 2000).

When we analyze the implications of Gardner's theory about scholarship, we see how Torresan (2006: 68) showed that the western education system tends to favor only, as much in content as in the processes, the logic and the language. The same areas of linguistic or logical-mathematical subjects are studied through practices that put at the center the reasoning abilities and the ability to express them through language. Instead, there are other cognitive spheres, each one with irreducible characteristics, through which we know and experience the world. Between these cognitive spheres Gardner includes the corporal one for learning, which must absolutely be exploited and repositioned *au pair* with the others, not only in a theoretical way, but also in a practical one.

In education Gardner specifics, therefore, that “the broad spectrum of students would be better served if disciplines could be presented in a number of ways and learning could be accessed through a variety of means” (Gardner, 1991: 31). Often school failure is

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<sup>51</sup> “among all uses of the human body no one has reached the level of dance or has been developed by the different cultures in so many different ways” (my translation).

determined by an excessive distance between the teaching method adopted by the teacher and the students' cognitive propensities.

If it is true that students are different between each other because of their favorite representation systems, it is responsibility of the teacher to accord to an individualized didactic, to recognize the different profiles in the class, in order to promote a didactic and a testing taking account of the resulting data.

Cornoldi also suggests the independence between the different intellectual functions, explaining that many researches prove how a person can be very much in crisis in the use of certain intellectual functions, but can still be efficient in the use of other ones (1999: 13). This must be kept in mind by the time that one evaluates his students only through these linguistic or logic-mathematical forms of intelligence, as if they were the only necessary and justified, as they had the “right of citizenship”, in order to evaluate more equally and to develop into a conscious holistic teaching all the human faculties of the learner, considered by the indissoluble unity of body, mind and emotions.

#### **2.4 Neurological bimodality and directionality**

The researches on brain functioning carried by R. Sperry<sup>52</sup> led to the knowledge of the function differentiation between left and right hemispheres, where each one is specialized in a range of specific tasks.

The fundamental role of the right hemisphere (motory, analogical, global, and emotional) in the learning process and in the use of language together with the left (purely logical, sequential, rational and location of the nerve centers used in linguistic processing) was highlighted by numerous researches in neurophysiology (Danesi, 1998). These point out that the neurological bi-modality mainly involves the right hemisphere and subsequently the left one. The model proposed by Danesi is called “bi-modal” because it combines the *modus operandi* of the right hemisphere with the *modus operandi* of the left one. According to the principle of directionality he specifies: the learning must proceed from the right hemisphere to the left one, it means, from right to left, or better, from the “context” to the “text” (Danesi, 1988: 64).

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<sup>52</sup> For further information: Levi-Agresti J., Sperry R.W., 1971.

The interrelation between the two hemispheres is possible thanks to the *callosum corpus*, a thick band of nerve fibers, or through the limbic system. Non-verbal information is interpreted by the right hemisphere and sent to the left one that logically analyzes it (Vettorel, 2007: 16).

It is interesting to note that both language and motion skills require a coordinated effort of the two brain hemispheres to give their best. At the sensorimotor level the left hemisphere controls and analyzes sensations and voluntary movements of the right side of the body, and the same happens reversed in the right hemisphere; while at the linguistic level, although certain functions reside in the left hemisphere, language as a psycho cultural expressive phenomenon results from connections between the right and left side, activated by environmental stimuli (Vigotskij, 1931).

The combination of these contributions seems to offer direct indications on the planning modality of “totalizing” language teaching activities of motion and interactive features, allowing first of all to 'use' the language (right hemisphere) and then to systematize it in rules and grammatical forms (left hemisphere) in more formal contexts (Caon, 2008: 63). “To use” the language is not intended, however, to immediately produce the linguistic language, since the first objective will be the language comprehension in respect of the natural learning sequence (Krashen, 1985); but to propose linguistic and motion activities in which such a solicitation of verbal language can be done to correspond to a precise movement, without needing to develop a verbal response (Asher, 1977).

## **2.5 Motivation**

If language learning involves the brain in a bimodal way, proceeding from the right hemisphere to the left one, to arouse motivation (essential to stimulate the L.A.D.) (Chomsky, 1965) in the students it will be first of all necessary to question the properties of the right hemisphere.

The sensorimotor skills, together with the awareness of corporal state and emotional processes, implies the domination of the right hemisphere (Damasio, 1995: 113). It is then interesting to notice that motivational, emotional, and cognitive processes systems

are continuously interacting stimulating the development of appropriate strategies for the acquisition of the linguistic *input* (Cardona, 2001:31).

Referring to the definition of motivation by De Beni and Moè (2000), Caon and Rutka state that

“uno studente *motivato* è un soggetto che si attiva (si *muove*, rifacendosi all’etimo) per un bisogno, un desiderio, un interesse particolare o una causa esterna e compie un determinato percorso per raggiungere una meta”<sup>53</sup> (2004: 18).

Dörnyei (1998: 117) outlines that the main incentive to learn a language is motivation, and it always represents the student's support throughout the long and arduous learning process.

Deci and Ryan (1985; 2002) according to the self-determination theory, distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The first is a type of motivation that comes from interest, desire, and pleasure in learning; the second describes a non self-directed motivation, which is then connected to external factors, such as gratification from the teacher.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) made a further distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation: the first is linked to the desire, often intrinsic, to integrate oneself into the culture that speaks that language, the second is supported by utilitarian reasons because it undertakes the learning of the same language.

Since in school it is not always possible to combine the interests/needs of the students with the specific and predetermined contents of school education, it is necessary for the teacher to make an effort when he brings the world of learning into the concrete life of the students (Caon, 2010: LXV).

In this direction, dance can help bringing students closer to the learning content, acting on certain factors that can stimulate motivation, like, for example:

- *The meaningful relation*: based on trust, solidarity, respect, availability to cooperate and on educational values that can be transmitted and tested through sport as

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<sup>53</sup> “a motivated student is a subject that is activated ( he moves, referring to the etymology) for a need, a desire, a particular interest or an external cause and performs a particular route to reach a goal” (my translation).

a “life training”: couple dancing allows to establish with the dancing partner a deep and special relationship that stimulates the participants to integrate profitably each other in a context that supports the different corporal expressions that are both personal and cultural, thus stimulating a type of integrative motivation;

- *The methodology*: the use of cooperative modalities (rather than the individualistic or even the competitive) along with some activist and experiential methodologies that are practicable through couple dancing and language, can help all those students who prefer to learn through social and dynamic practices, in cognitively challenging and emotionally engaging contexts, contexts that dance prepares and requires by its own nature;

- *Materials and environment*: in our case, through the introduction of a content or a disciplinary topic through the description/analysis of various types of typical clothing/accessories that folk dance uses to express and convey its own cultural values; choosing some activities that use videos or paper material related or inspired by the world of dance (even without the dance action); watching a video about the history of a currently fashionable dance in our society and reconstructing the direct or indirect intercultural contamination in its history. Or, reading an article about a famous dancer in order to analyze the structure of the written text in a logic-syntactic/semantic-linguistic way; even the environment (in our case a ballroom or a gym with mirrors, colored walls, etc.) can, through the pleasantness of the *stimulus*, play an interesting role in the involvement of the students at a multi-sensorial level;

- *The type of task*: according to Comoglio (2001) the task must be challenging and attractive. It should intrigue, raise issues which can give an inner satisfaction to the student when he realizes that he can deal with them. It is rewarding and challenging to learn dance steps and combinations in couple, to succeed after several trials and errors, to perform that figure that the instructor did and that used to seem almost impossible to replicate. And then know how to describe this orally, or to dissect it schematically, describing the parts of the body that the figures involve, and so on.

### 2.5.1 The motivation based on pleasure and emotional appreciation

As previously anticipated, the implication of emotional mechanisms in the selection and fixation of the information in the memory is found to have a decisive role in the learning process.

In fact, for the physicist and biologist Boncinelli (2000) it is on an emotional basis that often we decide to transfer experiences from the short term memory to the long-term, since it is much easier that events emotionally connoted are fixed more easily in it, especially if they are compared to events perceived as emotionally “neutral”.

Fabbro (1996), in emphasizing how all mammals involve the emotional structures of the nervous system in the memory fixing process, also adds that situations that involve the emotional system, both in a pleasant and negative way are more useful to the subject than the neutral ones because they avoid what is dangerous and repeat what is pleasant (Fabbro, 1996: 101).

Balboni (2002) leads the analysis of motivation in three main categories, such as duty, need and pleasure, and puts particular emphasis in the third category, described as a motivation essentially linked to the right hemisphere, but that can also involve the left one, becoming, thereby powerful (Balboni 2002: 38). Dance Sport can contribute to a type of intrinsic motivation for language learning based on pleasure if we count that together with the melodic rhythm it is able to produce an increase of endorphins, the so-called molecules of joy. Dance serves as an attraction in order to help the student to self-motivate himself in his personal learning path, together with the huge psychological and physical benefits that it can bring to those who practice it.

The pleasantness of the emotional *stimulus* has been studied by Schumann in the theory of the emotional evaluation of the *input* (Schumann, 1999, Schumann *et al.*, 2004).

The researcher, investigating the role of emotions in language learning from the neurobiological point of view, says that all the cognitive processes do not occur without the emotional one since the brain, during the perception of the input (Krashen, 1985), makes an assessment on an emotional base, according to certain criteria summarized as follows (Scherer, Ekman, 1984; Schumann, 1999):

- *The novelty*: meant as the discrepancy between the *input* and one's expectations (Daloiso, 2009), represents everything that is in some way unusual and therefore a powerful catalyst of attentional resources (Mariani, Pozzo, 2002); innovation therefore can be represented by activities of innovative blend between Dance Sport and the study of the Italian language that moves away (and does not exclude) from a frontal-transmissive model of traditional teaching. It allows a greater interactivity in the classroom, together with the variety of presentations of the input; for Mariani and Pozzo (2002) the variety supports the attention, but it is not intended as “jumping” from topic to topic, but as facing the same concept from different points of view, precisely through unusual strategies;
- *Pleasantness*: it is related to the attractiveness of the *stimulus* that in the case of Dance Sport, as with any other sport in which one is passionate, can induce the student to a type of intrinsic motivation, that can generate a deeper learning nature, touching his more personal interests;
- *Relevance to their needs*: it is related to the satisfaction of a need that the student perceives as such: the need to know the steps of tango or salsa in order to participate to a dance party is attributable to some educational objectives that necessarily involve language skills related to language learning (Caon, 2008: 58); the teacher's role in this setting is crucial, because often the student does not perceive his linguistic needs. Dance can make them emerge when the teacher manages to make them understand that it is a social act, part of a communicative event regulated by social, cultural and linguistic rules;
- *Feasibility*: it is the comprehensibility of the *input* in respect to their abilities, according to the zone of “proximal development” of Vigotskij (1966). Therefore, promoting activities in which the linguistic code is complemented with non-linguistic codes where the mediation of concrete experience allows the students to realize the natural abstraction of verbal language (Caon, 2008: 59) as in the case of the T.P.R. method (Asher, 1977), helps to facilitate the understanding of the linguistic *input*;
- *Psycho-social safety*: in concrete terms the student will evaluate if the task given by the teacher can undermine or strengthen his own social image, without triggering defensive reactions with the consequent insertion of the “emotional filter” (Krashen, 1983).

It is therefore important to be able to create activities and situations that will enhance the various skills and forms of intelligence of the class, allowing everyone to excel in a particular field (in the rhythm, technique, improvisation, or in creating sequences of dance figures. There will be who gives verbal orders or describes and 'breaks' physical responses, who will outline the task in a billboard or will summarize vocally to the class the sequences of a step).

This must happen to allow every student to feel able to “make it” through its own cultural and intercultural resources, without the fear of failure in front of himself and others.

#### **Chapter 4 – From theory to practice: the methodological framework of language learning facilitation through dancing sensorimotor skills**

Our teaching and educational proposal through Dance Sport is at the center of a methodological framework of “language facilitation”; this is the term through which we want to define an action of language teaching that helps some facilitating conditions in order to learn Italian L2 in multilingual and multicultural contexts (Luise, 2006: 172).

The term, however, does not mean that the teacher will save the students the objective difficulties of the language; he will not deceive them making them believe that what is simplified corresponds to reality. But he will strengthen the students helping them to face in a more independent way the linguistic complexity (Balboni, 2010: 8-9), acting on the base of the “different zones of proximal development” in the class.

To put someone in the perspective of language learning facilitation means, in fact, to observe the reality of language teaching and of the educational process, and to realize that the knowledge structures of each one of us differs from that of others; and on this base to use in a flexible way all those strategies that will create contexts that are rich in diversified stimuli, motivating and relationally significant (Caon, 2010: VIII).

### 3.1. The “Total Physical Response” Method

The re-evaluation of the role of motricity and more generally of the corporal dimension in learning processes, contributes, in the context of language teaching, to provide a theoretical support to a method that allows the teacher to “do with the language” (Balboni, 2002) as in the Total Physical Response elaborated by Asher in the sixties and seventies, which draws inspiration from the direct methods and from the Natural Approach (Krashen, Terrell, 1990).

This method is therefore based on a natural, playful and multisensory learning approach, in order to allow a total involvement of the student on a cognitive, emotional and physical level. It consists in participating in activities such as the exposure to an *input* in the form of verbal commands (such as an invitation, an order/exhortation, an instruction) that becomes gradually more and more complex to which they physically respond with non-verbal behaviors. This would lead to the assimilation of “chunks”, linguistic macro-structures.

The method focuses on the development of the ability to understand what is at the base of any real linguistic competence. It is especially crucial in the early learning of foreign languages and in the early stages of reception of students that do not speak Italian. In respect to this, Pallotti (2000) warns that a lack of significant quantities of comprehensible input is capable to affect the acquisition of L2; we must also consider that listening is the ability, in percentage, used more often, with an incidence of approximately 45%.

The reasons that support the usefulness and effectiveness of the method are summarized as follows (Caon, 2008: 94-6):

- *The respect of the " phase of silence" :* in this phase, which has a variable duration from person to person and that affects the acquisition of both the mother tongue and the foreign one, a student can start to understand the language without, however, yet feeling confident to reproduce it. To respect this phase without forcefully asking some unnatural productions has a positive outcome not only from the psychological point of view, but also from the cognitive one, since a delicate process of identification of sounds and expressions is in progress, to which will be assigned a

semantic value, only afterwards it will be possible to develop an independent language production. Then, producing T.P.R. activities through dance, allows anyway to profitably involve the student in the interaction with the teacher and with the colleagues, using all the apparatus of non-verbal communication: gestures, proxemics and kinesthetic dance;

- *Less anxiety in living the mistake*: this point is linked to the first, because to avoid forcing in the phase of silence has an efficacy in reducing the level of stress in order to prevent the conditions for the raising of the “affective filter” caused by both a linguistic and cultural “shock” (Schumann, 1978). This could lead to a loss of motivation, and to the feeling of inadequacy and insecurity. Dance, compared to other sports, has a positive characteristic, the presence of relaxing music together with corporal rhythm, that creates a more relaxing and reassuring learning environment;
- *The direct control of the comprehension by the teacher*: often at the beginning of the course, teachers feel uncomfortable with the lack of feedback that they receive during the “phase of silence”. Therefore it is necessary to obtain a certain and immediate feedback through comprehension activities with a physical response, for example, asking the students to do a certain movement with the leg or foot in order to perform the basic steps of tango or cha cha cha;
- *The immediate feedback of the student*, respect his understanding through the performance of others: the student will be able to self-evaluate, in a less anxious-inducing environment, his language comprehension as well as his dance performance by comparing it to that of his colleagues, without the external *stimulus* of the teacher. Furthermore, the students will have the opportunity, when they feel ready, to use the language giving themselves or to their classmates some dancing commands, in a dynamic of mutual learning certainly less inhibitory and more immediate;
- *Deeper language experience*: it refers to the student's global participation since “la lingua agisce direttamente sui muscoli e i sensi dell'apprendente e si fissa su qualcosa di vissuto che viene interiorizzato senza bisogno di noiose ripetizioni”<sup>54</sup> (Mastromarco, 1999: 141), mainly due to the playful dimension of couple dancing,

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<sup>54</sup> “language acts directly on the learner's muscles and senses and fixes on something experienced which is internalized, without a boring repetition” (my translation).

made of music and creativity, where every movement acquires uniqueness and relevance in terms of memorization;

- *Simulates and accelerates the natural course of L1 acquisition*, based on the observation of the modality of communication between parent and child, which is based on both physical and behavioral elements. In fact when the child is still not able to communicate to his parents, he answers by performing the same gestures and movements which he has perceived. This means giving priority to the understanding ability compared to the language production, which manifests itself only after certain elements and language patterns have been internalized and consolidated. In this way we recall the L1 acquisition course. Through the T.P.R. “ i bambini recepiscono tutto simultaneamente, senza analizzare, nello stesso modo in cui apprendono la loro prima lingua”<sup>55</sup> (Asher, 2007). There is, therefore, a parallel correspondence between the corporal automatism, adapted to perform the dance steps, and the linguistic automatism meant to understand and then produce the description of the dance performed;

- *Initially it activates the right hemisphere, allowing a “natural” learning*, in line with the principle of directionality by Danesi: during the physical response the information are internalized in a flash without repetition at the first attempt, and stored in the “long-term memory”, because they are coded thanks to a clear cause-and-effect relation while, in order to memorize information through activities that involve only the left hemisphere (for example, grammar exercises) become necessary numerous repetitions and various reinforcements at different distances in time (Mastromarco, 2005: 17).

Furthermore, physical exercise activities interspersed with moments of stasis (which coincide with the majority of school time, in traditional learning contexts) promote the oxygenation of the brain, fundamental for attention and the activation of the neuronal learning processes (Fletcher, 2001, in Vettorel, 2004).

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<sup>55</sup> “children recognize everything simultaneously, without analyzing, in the same way in which they learn their first language” (my translation).

### 3.2 The social-mediation methodologies

Learning in a context of “multiple zones of proximal development” is favored by methods that exploit the potential of the inter-subjective dimension such as those of “social-mediation” as an alternative to the “teacher mediation”, which means, the teaching-transmissive front with a purely verbal code (Minello, 2006).

The social-mediation methodologies, which reject the passive reception of knowledge, refer both to a constructivist perspective of education, moving students at the center of the learning process (students are considered resources and sources of learning, actively engaged in constructing their knowledge) (Rutka, 2006: 172) and the communicative and humanistic-affective approaches, focused on quality and significance of the interpersonal relationship established by the subject, who learns in his individual complexity and uniqueness.

Below will be explained those methods that are more suitable to our field of application to Dance Sport, such as Ludic Glottodidactics, Cooperative Learning and Peer Tutoring for language facilitation, acting through a total commitment both in terms of relation and experience, because

“se apprendere significa affrontare un’esperienza globale, diviene importante stabilire i rapporti che legano la mente al corpo, per una glottodidattica che non assume i termini umanistico-affettivo e psico-motorio come slogan di facciata, ma li assume come una condicio sine qua non dell’educazione linguistica”<sup>56</sup> (Cardona, 2001: 43).

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<sup>56</sup> “If learning means facing a global experience, it becomes important to establish relations that bind mind and body, for a language teaching that does not assume the humanistic-affective and psycho-motor terms as a facade, but takes them as a basic condition of linguistic education” (my translation).

### 3.2.1 The Ludic Glottodidactics

The Ludic Glottodidactics is

“una metodologia che realizza coerentemente in modelli operativi e in tecniche glottodidattiche i principi fondanti degli approcci umanistico-affettivo, comunicativo e del costruttivismo socio-culturale”<sup>57</sup> (Caon, Rutka, 2004).

This methodology offers playful and recreational activities (Visalberghi, 1980) intentionally constructed to give an entertaining and enjoyable form to specific learning (Staccioli, 1998: 16). It therefore includes any activity based on the concept of playfulness, understood as “la carica vitale in cui si integrano forti spinte motivazionali intrinseche con aspetti affettivo-emotivi, cognitivi e sociali dell’apprendente”<sup>58</sup> (Caon, Rutka, 2004: 36).

This method assigns to the game, no longer seen only as a “filler” (Caon e Rutka, 2004: 22) a strategic value for a both linguistic and educational achievement, through a global and holistic nature of the playful experience which has excellent potential for a meaningful type of learning.

Dance is fully part of the playful activities, especially if understood in its artistic meaning:

“arte e il gioco presentano molte analogie tra loro: entrambi svolgono funzioni la cui “utilità” sociale è trasversale e sotterranea ed entrambi perdono in autenticità se sono volti a uno scopo utilitaristico. Sia l’arte sia il gioco nascono e dipendono da un fare creativo e sono sostanzialmente “modi per fare le cose”. Jerome Bruner li chiama “ornamenti della coscienza”, ma specifica: “gli *ornamenti* della coscienza sono anche strumenti, ma quanto straordinari”. Dunque in ogni attività artistica è insita una dimensione ludica che rivela una valenza educativa nel suo essere una *qualità dell’esperienza*”<sup>59</sup> (Morselli, 2010).

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<sup>57</sup> “a methodology that achieve coherently the founding principles of humanistic-emotional, communicative approach and of sociocultural constructivism trough operating models and glottodidactic techniques” (my translation).

<sup>58</sup> “the vital energy in which there are strong intrinsic motivations with affective-emotional, cognitive and social aspects of the learner” (my translation).

<sup>59</sup> “art and play are very similar to each other: both perform functions whose “social utility” is transverse and hidden, and they both lose in authenticity if they aspire to an utilitarian purpose. Both depend on a creative meaning and are essentially “ways of doing things”. Jerome Bruner calls them “ornaments of

According to Caon (2008: 70)

“il contesto ludico-sportivo, inoltre, ha il grande vantaggio di offrire un contesto scevro da pregiudizi nei confronti del gioco stesso e quindi di ridurre eventuali reticenze psicologiche nell'accettazione di modalità glottodidattiche diverse rispetto a quelle utilizzate di consuetudine nella scuola”<sup>60</sup>.

What we want to highlight is how the use of Dance Sport for L2 facilitation lends itself naturally to a ludic language teaching, since it allows the student to activate all those capacities such as cognitive, motivational (both psychic and emotional), sensorimotor, linguistic and semiotic (iconic language, kinetic, proxemic, musical, object, visual etc..) activities and abilities (Caon, Rutka, 2004: 26) that only the synergy and the permeability between the two learning contexts is able to generate and produce.

In fact,

“valorizzando la dimensione ludica nell'apprendimento si evita di orientare la scuola solo sul piano cognitivo a scapito delle altre dimensioni formative, come quella affettiva, interpersonale, corporea, manuale”<sup>61</sup> (Polito, 2000: 333).

Freddi (1990), defines play as an extraordinary factor of development and learning for the child, and describes the playful nature of learning, outlining its basics:

- *Sensoriality*: when the student is learning a language he should activate all the sensory channels in order to create stable mental and neurobiological representations. Dance as play allows activating all of them, through physical contact (hands, arms, shoulders, etc.), the perception of the partner's scent, the vision of the surroundings and of other couples, and of course listening to the music can help;

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consciousness”, but he specifies: “the ornaments of consciousness are also tools, but how extraordinary they are”. So in all artistic activities there is a playful dimension which reveals an educational value, being a “quality of experience”(my translation).

<sup>60</sup> “the context of play-sports, furthermore, has the great advantage of providing an environment free of prejudices against the game itself, and thus reduces any psychological reluctance into the acceptance of different language teaching methods than those customarily used at school” (my translation).

<sup>61</sup> “if a teacher enhances the playful learning, he avoids directing the educational institution only on a cognitive side, at the expense of other aspects of formation, such as the affective, interpersonal, corporal and manual ones” (my translation).

- *Motricity*: it never intervenes as an autonomous language, but as a constitutive element of other more or less corporal languages like dance, mimicry and pantomime (Freddi, 1990: 67); when motor activities become intentional we talk about actions that can turn into play and then into verbal language. Language is a pragmatic-functional communication medium through which we can, in order to perform an action, give orders or associate the language to many different types of movement, as exemplified by the “Total Physical Response” method; through the interaction of multiple communication codes you learn how to use them in a complex, integrated and simultaneous way, according to the purpose. A language teaching that uses playful activities such as dance, should therefore be based on the trigonometric reality of action, play and language (Freddi, 1990) always starting from motricity;
- *Semiotic*: the foreign language is a part of the verbal language, which is just one of the many languages that the student must develop. It must therefore be balanced with the complex set of existing communication codes, which together create coherently and convey effectively the final message: in our case the richness of the proxemics, gesture, mimic and musical languages that dance offers, in comparison with any other recreational and sport activity;
- *Interpersonal relationship*: it has to stimulate relationships among students and teachers; dance is always a social act, which in Dance Sport is the standardized result of folk dances that once were the basic medium to socialize among people from different social and cultural backgrounds, as a metaphoric meeting place with others, an occasion to be together. It is a traditional symbol of conviviality, as well of courtship between the sexes in almost all societies;
- *Pragmatism*: the language must be presented as a tool to “do things”. To finalize a lesson of Italian L2 in order to learn how to dance allows a subject to use the language in a pragmatic and functional way. It is a way “to do with the language here and now”, allowing the student to be involved in the attention process;
- *Emotion*: a subject can learn better if the language is associated to positive emotions, which the playful activities stimulate. Polito says that “bisogna sviluppare in

ogni persona la capacità ludica che consiste nel coinvolgersi, nell'essere creativi con l'esperienza e con la vita”<sup>62</sup> (2000: 333). The act of playing, like dancing

“accende l'entusiasmo, fa scaturire l'interesse, innesca il coinvolgimento, favorisce le abilità sociali, accresce l'espressione di sé, stimola l'apprendimento, riattiva affetti, emozioni, pensieri”<sup>63</sup> (Polito, 2000: 333);

- *Authenticity*: in play such as in dance there is no need for the “false pragmatic”, because dancing creates an authentic situation at the psychological level, within which we act, communicate and learn in order to get something effective, to really get to know something that we need (for example, to complete a step or a choreography). As a result, what Krashen calls the “rule of forgetting”, is favored. According to this, a subject will learn better and for a long time when he is concentrated to solve a problem or to accomplish a task, without being concerned about learning a language (Krashen, 1983).

Finally, we must not forget the trans-cultural side that both dance and play have, as they are common experiences to all cultures and very important in the educational context for the values they transmit and for the skills they develop. At the same time they are both culturally determined and then diversified from culture to culture.

In fact, it is precisely in this playful but serious context (and not severe) that is possible to convey:

- *The concept of the stereotype to demolish*: the Brazilian dance that we can see on TV is not the same samba danced amongst the common people of Rio. This dance is not rigid and monolithic, but made of thousand shades and variants. Therefore it cannot and must not be exemplified or contained in one version, otherwise it would lose its charm and creativity. It would be distorted from its original dimension which comes from the union of various dances, today enlivened by the contemporary influences that galvanize and evolve it;

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<sup>62</sup> “we must develop in each person the playful capacity, which means to be involved, to be creative with the experience and with life” (my translation).

<sup>63</sup> “stimulates enthusiasm, interest and involvement, promotes social abilities, increases self-expression, stimulates learning and reactivates emotions and thoughts” (my translation).

- *The concept of ethnocentrism that must be mitigated, together with the value of intercultural richness:* every culture tends to feel its cultural origin, because of pride or ignorance, better and “right” comparing it to other cultures. Through a direct dance practice it is possible to appreciate what does not belong to one's own aesthetic experience and at the same time through the history of dance, a subject can bring out the intercultural contamination as an enriching value and not a loss of an imaginary original purity.

### **3.2.2 The Cooperative learning**

Learning to dance in a group lesson involves the fact of having to depend on others moves (it applies both to males and females, who cannot dance without getting into some sort of empathetic listening with those who they are facing, that would bring to stepping on each other's feet). On the other hand it will make both the subjects of the couple equally responsible for the success or failure of the final product: steps, rhythm, choreography, but also the technique and style, and a very good interpretation at the level of expression, in short, the results of a harmonious synergy between the two partners. It also implies to accept the choices and provisions of the dancing teacher (they will have to repeat a certain step several times according to the specific rules of that particular dance, or they will be forced to try the choreography with each participant, unable to prefer someone to someone else, and often finding oneself with someone with whom one does not feel a great dance feeling). It could also be necessary to rescue one's dance partner while meeting his learning time, and for a moment diverting attention from himself and from his personal dancing problems.

These series of social skills that Dance Sport, and sports in general (that are not on an individual basis) are able to develop, can be transferred from the ballroom to the classroom, following the method of the Cooperative Learning for language acquisition. In fact, it promotes more positive relationships between students, a greater psychological well-being in terms of self-esteem and a greater ability to deal with stress. Cooperative learning also allows a to develop higher levels of reasoning and critical thinking skills (Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, 1996: 20).

According to the authors,

“cooperare significa lavorare insieme per raggiungere obiettivi comuni. All'interno di situazioni cooperative l'individuo singolo cerca di perseguire dei risultati che vanno a vantaggio suo e di tutti i collaboratori. L'apprendimento cooperativo è un metodo didattico che utilizza piccoli gruppi in cui gli studenti lavorano insieme per migliorare reciprocamente il loro apprendimento”<sup>64</sup> (Johnson, Johnson, Holubec, 1996: 20).

The group stimulates a positive interdependence because each member is assigned to some specific roles and tasks that appear essential for attaining the objective of the whole group (the ladies depend on the basic step of the males, and males depend on the ability of these last to follow), in order to develop a sense of transparency and accountability (Comoglio e Cardoso 1996).

But it is a responsibility of the teacher, that acts as a facilitator, to structure some tasks that put students in a situation of positive interdependence (creating small dance competitions between pairs, or groups of couples). In this way the allocation of the success or failure of the single will be interconnected with those of the group (Rutka, 2006: 175). All must be done to avoid competitive situations between students that might emerge naturally in some uncontrolled contexts with a strong multicultural presence: a flow of aggression that could easily put at risk the image of a student already made fragile by the linguistic and cultural impact, who would ultimately feel threatened in confrontation with others (Kohn, 1993), and could stimulate an “affective filter” causing serious damages to the acquisition process.

Finally, it is only thanks to the teacher's presence that it will be possible to explicit the links between the two cooperative experiences and transfer the helpful social skills to a better and more meaningful learning from one environment to another, while fostering an “inclusive” environment that sport easily supports during the process of cultural integration.

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<sup>64</sup> to cooperate means to work together with others in order to achieve common goals. Within cooperative situations the single individual seeks to achieve all the results that can benefit both himself and all his collaborators. Cooperative learning is a teaching method that uses small groups in which students work together to improve their learning” (my translation).

### 3.2.3 The Peer Tutoring

The Peer Tutoring could be defined as

“una strategia in cui soggetti dotati di notevole influenza normativa nei confronti del loro gruppo di appartenenza si assumono la responsabilità, tramite un opportuno processo di formazione e training, di esercitare specifiche funzioni di influenza formativa”<sup>65</sup> (Pellai *et al.*, 2002: 41).

However, it is not about a simple unidirectional act, but it is also about negotiations, transitions that are negotiable within a bidirectional situation; this happens because even if in global behavior one is more competent, he is always part of a group of others (Pontecorvo, 1995).

Balboni (2008: 39) talks about a “distributed leadership”, in order to indicate the situation in which each one in turn assumes the tutor's role, and therefore, the teacher acts as a member of equal status, bearer of a knowledge of fair value within the group, that is the class.

According to Caon (2008: 64-65) the Peer Tutoring has the triple advantage of:

- *To help the storage of information:* because the student is more likely to be able to process information in different ways. Indeed, according to Pallotti

“se un determinato contenuto è stato oggetto di varie operazioni -analizzato, riassunto, trasformato- le sue tracce in memoria saranno più profonde rispetto a quelle lasciate da un'esposizione passiva”<sup>66</sup> (2000: 164).

In our case, the students will learn concepts about dance, motor techniques, vocabulary and grammatical structures in dealing with the area of dance, through the transformation of the message, from a code to another (from verbal to non-verbal, and vice versa).

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<sup>65</sup> “a strategy, in which subjects with considerable influence towards the group they belong, take a responsibility through a proper process of education and training, in order to exercise some specific functions of formative influence” (my translation).

<sup>66</sup> “if a specific subject had been the object of various operations - analyzed, summarized or transformed - his traces in memory will be deeper than those left by a passive exposure” (my translation).

The summary orally exposed or written by a group and re-exposed to the class on the sequence of a choreography composed of other couples, and the analysis at the anatomical level of the sequences of motor acts aimed at the dance moves, must be researched through the interaction among the most skilled students at motor level and the most competent in the terminology of the language being studied;

- *To provide less anxious learning opportunities:* in this type of activity the pressure of the teacher's judgment is not possible because he does not assume a leadership role. The interaction takes place between students who operate a self-assessment of their motor-linguistic work so that one becomes more uninhibited in talking and dancing: two expressive and communicative activities that expose the students to a risky situation in their social and cultural image;

- *To provide opportunities for complex learning,* that are oriented not only to the contents, but also to the procedures: in fact, according to Johnson and Johnson (1989: 2) to learn a material with the idea that you have to explain it to your companions produces a more frequent use of some higher-order cognitive strategies; more frequently than how does the learning to pass a test. To explain verbally the material that must be studied produces a higher profit than listening to it, or than reading it by yourself.

So, students with good motor skills and good interpersonal abilities will be able to become useful for the less prepared students in terms of sports; on the other hand the students more competent in terms of second language learning will be able to repeat by voice to these last the names of the figures, the directions, the notions of time and rhythm, and the various fundamental movements performed by the body using key verbs and nouns, each memorizing what he has not yet acquired; the information will be processed in the empathic mode while adopting different cognitive strategies depending on who they will face, aimed at the main objective which is to be understood as much as possible, despite the individual differences both personal and cultural-linguistic, looking for the final success of the dance.

In language teaching context Dance Sport has the best potential for the creation of Peer Tutoring activities if it is compared to other less interactive and especially less interdependent learning contexts. It can therefore be used as a vehicle in which making a Peer Tutoring relationship that is effective as it naturally brings into play the need to own more types of intelligence (corporeal-kinesthetic, musical, spatial, mathematical,

intrapersonal and interpersonal) and more extra-curricular skills (music knowledge, dance, social, and cultural and intercultural abilities). It is highly unlikely that a single student possesses all the skills and competencies necessary to perform the task, but it is more frequent the case that the latter needs an exchange of knowledge and information from an equal source of authentic resources as much as he is.

If it is true that every student is the bearer of resources in terms of knowledge and of special skills the objective of the teacher, then, is to enable these resources to act simultaneously on the cognitive, relational, affective and emotional level and to promote meaningful learning (Caon, 2008: 75).

The personal differences between students will be evaluated in terms of the common good and for a greater benefit to everyone's thanks to the guidance of the teacher who creates activities and interacts both during and after the dance session.

He will have to also pay close attention to the fact that some social conflicts due precisely to these personal and cultural differences could easily occur, because some linguistic and motor weaknesses could be emphasized and denigrated by some students. As well as the lack of some sociocultural foreknowledge mistakenly considered universal, because each student comes from his cultural models that are very distant from each other, but no less worthy of value. Those may not coincide with the school model or with the design and with the construction of knowledge of the host country.

## **PARTE SECONDA: Proposta didattica di facilitazione linguistica di italiano L2 e ballo di coppia.**

In questa seconda parte della tesi verrà proposto un percorso didattico-educativo di facilitazione linguistica di italiano L2 per i livelli A1-A2 (con l'aggiunta di alcune attività per i livelli più avanzati di tipo prettamente linguistico-interculturale) attraverso l'attività sportiva della danza, rappresentata dal ballo di coppia da sala.

Il suo svolgimento prevedrà la descrizione di vere e proprie lezioni di gruppo sul ballo di coppia, strutturate ed organizzate per principianti assoluti che allo stesso tempo desiderano comprendere ed apprendere in modo semplice e divertente gli elementi basilari della lingua italiana. A seguire verranno presentate tutte le indicazioni su come progettare lezioni di lingua italiana (funzionali alla creazione di eventuali unità didattiche e d'apprendimento per utenti adulti e non, da strutturare secondo le fasi gestaltiche di "globalità, analisi e sintesi") che si rifacciano esplicitamente ai contenuti linguistico-educativi incontrati nelle lezioni di ballo; verranno dunque nello specifico elencati i relativi obiettivi lessico-grammaticali, assieme alle più idonee metodologie e tipologie di attività finalizzate allo sviluppo e alla realizzazione di percorsi apprenditivi efficaci e coerenti con le finalità dichiarate.

## Capitolo 5 – Descrizione del percorso didattico di ballo e lingua italiana

Le 8 lezioni di gruppo saranno sessioni di ballo da 45 minuti ciascuna sulla propedeutica del ballo di coppia e sui passi base di 12 famosi danze quali il valzer, il tango, il fox-trot, la rumba, il cha cha cha, lo swing, la salsa, la bachata, il merengue, il tango argentino, la samba e la polca.

All'interno di queste lezioni le spiegazioni, i comandi verbali, le esortazioni ed in generale le descrizioni dei movimenti e dei passi base da eseguire verranno presentati in italiano L2, mentre gli studenti risponderanno fisicamente, grazie anche all'esempio del maestro e dei colleghi di ballo.

Gli stessi studenti, chiamati di volta in volta per nome dal maestro verranno esortati a turno a ripetere e a comandare verbalmente i colleghi, in modo da poter praticare oralmente strutture verbali di tipo pragmatico-funzionale.

Il maestro nel momento in cui utilizzerà il “Total Physical Response Method” dovrà fare attenzione a non ripetere sempre le medesime sequenze, in modo da non far annoiare gli studenti, ma soprattutto per far sì che quest'ultimi non imparino passivamente le sequenze corporee bensì comprendano chiaramente il significato verbale dei comandi di ballo: a tal fine ci saranno esercizi che verranno svolti a turno sia in gruppo, che in coppia, che singolarmente.

Il livello di italiano utilizzato e richiesto sarà principalmente quello elementare A1/A2 per utente base, secondo il “Quadro comune europeo di riferimento per la conoscenza delle lingue”<sup>67</sup>:

Livello **A1**. Lo studente:

- “riesce a comprendere e utilizzare espressioni familiari di uso quotidiano e formule molto comuni per soddisfare bisogni di tipo concreto;

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<sup>67</sup> Vedi : <http://lear.unive.it/bitstream/10278/1194/1/NovelloR.pdf>

- sa presentare se stesso/a e altri ed è in grado di porre domande su dati personali e rispondere a domande analoghe (il luogo dove abita, le persone che conosce, le cose che possiede);
- è in grado di interagire in modo semplice purché l'interlocutore parli lentamente e chiaramente e sia disposto a collaborare.”

Livello **A2**. Lo studente:

- “riesce a comprendere frasi isolate ed espressioni di uso frequente relative ad ambiti di immediata rilevanza (ad es. informazioni di base sulla persona e sulla famiglia, acquisti, geografia locale, lavoro);
- riesce a comunicare in attività semplici e di routine che richiedono solo uno scambio di informazioni semplice e diretto su argomenti familiari e abituali;
- riesce a descrivere in termini semplici aspetti del proprio vissuto e del proprio ambiente ed elementi che si riferiscono a bisogni immediati.”

Lo svolgimento del percorso di apprendimento linguistico per utenti base (anche appena arrivati nel paese ospitante) partirà dunque da vere e proprie lezioni di ballo che prevedranno lo sviluppo di abilità ricettive orali assieme allo sviluppo di abilità produttive e di interazione, sempre di tipo orale.

Al termine della descrizione delle attività caratterizzanti le lezioni di ballo in lingua italiana vi sarà la relativa spiegazione di obiettivi ed elementi linguistici ed interculturali di attività attuabili in un'apposita lezione formale di lingua seconda, funzionale alla sistematizzazione e all'organizzazione del materiale verbale e contenutistico emerso spontaneamente nella lezione precedente (per fissare e comprendere a livello più analitico ed approfondito i contenuti lessicali e grammaticali oggetto del corso di lingua), permettendo contestualmente agli studenti uno sviluppo progressivo di abilità linguistiche sia di base che integrate (leggere, ascoltare, parlare e scrivere, interagire, e così via).

Ci saranno alla fine alcune attività di livello più avanzato dove verrà richiesto agli studenti un lavoro di ricerca, riflessione ed approfondimento di tipo linguistico culturale ed interculturale.

Attività linguistico-espressive adatte invece a tutti i livelli consistiranno nel ballare le danze tipiche della propria tradizione per farle conoscere alla classe, tradurre e cantare nella propria lingua madre e in italiano canzoni legate al ballo e/o di accompagnamento alle danze, inventare dei racconti sul ballo, ricercare nella storia dei balli le influenze e contaminazioni interculturali, usando anche documenti, foto, interviste, video, e articoli di giornale a tema.

## 5.1 Lezione introduttiva di ballo n. 1

- *Attività 1, i movimenti fondamentali del ballo:* agli studenti verrà chiesto di disporsi singolarmente in modo sparso per la sala da ballo, rivolti verso lo specchio a muro e dietro la figura del maestro, in modo da poter copiare ciò che fa lui ma anche vedere quel che fanno i compagni (controllando così anche i propri movimenti riflessi). Il maestro spiegherà che prima di imparare a ballare in coppia è necessario conoscere e praticare alcuni movimenti fondamentali che ci permettono di eseguire e comporre tutti i passi di tutti i balli. Questi movimenti fondamentali sono:

*-la camminata avanti ed indietro:* “camminare è già ballare”; può sembrare uno slogan semplicistico, ma non è affatto così. Il maestro chiederà a tutti singolarmente di eseguire una camminata dritta in avanti di qualche passo partendo con il piede che si preferisce (“camminate in avanti/fate una camminata in avanti!”, “fate qualche passo in avanti!”); poi, sempre perpendicolarmente rispetto alla propria posizione di partenza chiederà una camminata all’indietro, “a gambero” (“camminate all’indietro”!, “fate una camminata all’indietro!”).

Egli spiegherà che nel momento in cui si cammina come prima cosa, anche se non ci facciamo caso (perché per noi camminare è naturale, avendolo imparato inconsciamente dall’età di un anno) si sposta dapprima il corpo, cioè il peso corporeo (identificabile con la parte alta, il busto) e solo successivamente la nostra gamba si muove ed avanza. Questo diventa importante nel momento in cui il cavaliere che deve guidare la dama si appresta ad eseguire i passi: la dama, che segue l’uomo attraverso i punti di contatto col partner (braccia, mani ecc.) avverte lo spostamento del peso corporeo del cavaliere, non della gamba o del piede; se questi resta fermo e muove solo la gamba, la dama resterà ferma e verrà calpestata.

*-il passo laterale:* la prima direzione della camminata è avanti ed indietro, e vale sia per i cavalieri che per le dame; infatti ci sono dei momenti in cui anche l’uomo indietreggia e la dama avanza. La seconda direzione è da destra a sinistra e *vice versa*, solo che in questo caso il movimento laterale presuppone che i passi siano laterali e che terminino a piedi uniti. Quindi il movimento da “ordinare” sarà: “fate un passo a lato verso destra/sinistra!”.

*-il cambio peso sul posto:* senza muovermi avanti/indietro o a destra e sinistra per la sala, posso restare fermo sul posto ed eseguire degli spostamenti di peso corporeo tra una gamba e l'altra attraverso il cosiddetto "rock-step", o dondolio tra un piede e l'altro, eseguibile:

-a piedi uniti, come se si stesse eseguendo una marcia, sollevando di poco i piedi (una figura efficace per comprendere è quella di "schiacciare l'uva con i piedi");

-a gambe divaricate, partendo con un piede o con un altro e dondolandosi da un lato all'altro;

-con una gamba davanti e una indietro, spostando il peso avanti/indietro, sempre però restando fermi sul posto.

Il comando fondamentale per questi esercizi sarà essenzialmente: "alzate il piede destro/sinistro!". Infatti quello che gli studenti dovranno sperimentare è che ogni passo presuppone un cambio di peso tra una gamba e l'altra, e che sapere doversi ha il mio peso corporeo è fondamentale sia per mantenersi in equilibrio che per comprendere i passi che verranno via via insegnati.

Gli studenti praticheranno i movimenti fondamentali seguendo i comandi verbali e i movimenti esemplificativi del maestro che, per permettere agli studenti di prendere confidenza sia con i movimenti che con i comandi verbali inventerà delle sequenze sempre diverse ("Fate un passo a lato verso destra! Poi, un passo in avanti, infine due passi all'indietro!"), in modo da mescolare i movimenti fondamentali tra loro per permettere agli studenti un'automatizzazione più efficace della comprensione verbale.

- *Attività 2, guida e rispondenza:* gli studenti si divideranno a coppie (un maschio ed una femmina, se presenti in numero pari), ponendosi l'uno di fronte all'altro con entrambi i palmi delle mani uniti a quelli del partner, in modo da creare una prima forma di contatto. Con i palmi si chiederà loro di esercitare una leggera pressione reciproca che parta dal corpo e non solo dalle braccia (che non devono allungarsi ma restare semi-rigide), in modo da praticare e sviluppare il contatto e la pressione che sarà necessaria mantenere nel ballo, sia per seguire che per guidare i passi.

A questo punto verrà chiesto di eseguire assieme i movimenti fondamentali che erano stati dapprima eseguiti singolarmente secondo i comandi del maestro, questa volta rivolgendosi l'un l'altro i medesimi comandi, alternativamente (esempio: "Mauro, fai un passo a lato verso destra!").

Poi, tenendo sempre conto delle indicazioni suddette si inviteranno gli studenti a eseguire a proprio piacimento in sequenza libera i movimenti imparati, in un'ottica di sperimentazione reciproca di guida e rispondenza: quindi, tenendo presente che chi fa il cavaliere dovrà, attraverso il proprio movimento corporeo tra una gamba e l'altra proporre i movimenti a chi fa la dama, si cercherà di far esercitare le coppie ad ascoltare oltre che se stessi anche i movimenti del partner.

Questo esercizio sarà ancora più efficace se le dame si lasceranno guidare senza anticipare le mosse altrui, ad esempio chiudendo gli occhi, senza suggerimenti verbali.

- *Attività 3, la posizione dell'abbraccio:* nell'ultima attività della lezione introduttiva gli studenti, sempre in coppia eseguiranno a piacere i movimenti fondamentali attraverso però la posizione dell'abbraccio, che il maestro spiegherà attraverso l'esempio con un assistente, o con uno stesso studente "cavia": il cavaliere con il braccio destro andrà a cingere la schiena della dama a livello della scapola sinistra di quest'ultima, mentre con la mano sinistra andrà a raccogliere la sua mano destra; la dama, sempre di fronte ma leggermente spostata a destra rispetto al cavaliere appoggerà la mano sinistra sopra la sua spalla destra, all'altezza del bicipite. Attraverso l'abbraccio la posizione sarà più ravvicinata e quindi più difficile da mantenere, in quanto risulterà più probabile calpestarsi i piedi a vicenda.

Per il cavaliere i comandi saranno: "appoggia la mano destra sopra la scapola sinistra della dama!"; "con la mano sinistra prendi la mano destra della dama!".

Per la dama invece: "appoggia la mano sinistra sopra la spalla destra del cavaliere!"; "con la mano destra prendi la mano sinistra del cavaliere!".

### **5.1.2 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche**

#### **Attività 1**

Livello: A1

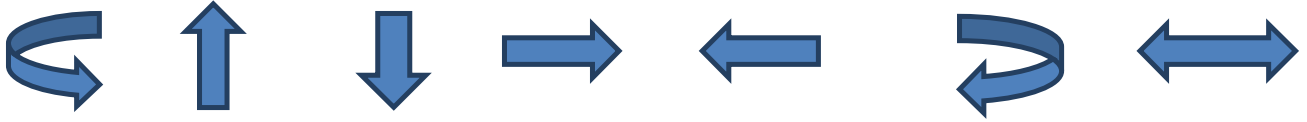
Obiettivi: lo studente comprende per iscritto semplici indicazioni relative alle direzioni nello spazio.

Elementi linguistici: costrutti al tempo imperativo per dare indicazioni spaziali, le direzioni.

Fase nell'U.A.: globalità; accoppiamento parola-immagine.

Collega le immagini delle frecce alle indicazioni qui sotto:

gira a destra – vai indietro – vai a destra – vai a lato – gira a sinistra – vai avanti – vai a sinistra



## Attività 2

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente comprende per iscritto semplici indicazioni relative alle direzioni nello spazio.

Elementi linguistici: costrutti al tempo presente per descrivere indicazioni spaziali.

Fase nell'U.A.: globalità; accoppiamento parola-immagine.

Collega con una freccia le immagini alle loro descrizioni:

La dama balla **di fronte** al cavaliere – Il ballerino è **dietro** la ballerina – il ragazzo salta **sopra** la ragazza – L'uomo cammina **davanti** alla donna – La ballerina danza **a fianco** del ballerino – La ballerina si piega **a destra** – i piedi dei ballerini fanno un **piccolo** passo – il ballerino fa un passo molto **lungo** – la ragazza salta **in alto** a piedi nudi



### Attività 3

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente comprende per iscritto il significato di aggettivi qualificativi riferiti ai movimenti nello spazio.

Elementi linguistici: aggettivi qualificativi relativi a dimensioni spaziali e temporali.

Fase nell'U.A.: globalità; accoppiamento di termini di significato contrario.

*Collega con una freccia gli aggettivi qualificativi al loro contrario:*

Piccolo	Corto
Lungo	Veloce
Alto	Grande
Lento	Basso

### Attività 4

Livello: A2

Obiettivi: lo studente comprende oralmente e verbalmente semplici ordini riferiti a movimenti e direzioni di ballo.

Elementi linguistici: verbi all'imperativo, lessico dei verbi di movimento, direzioni e orientamento nello spazio, preposizioni semplici ed articolate.

Fase nell'U.A.: sintesi; flashcard e mimo.

*Gli studenti (divisi in A e B) si dividono in due un mazzo di flashcard dove c'è l'immagine del movimento e la scritta del verbo corrispondente.*

*Lo studente A deve mimare il movimento al compagno B, che deve indovinare e pronunciare l'ordine corretto. Gli studenti poi si scambiano di ruolo.*

Studente A

Cammina in avanti!
Cammina all'indietro!

Fai due passi laterali a sinistra!  
Fai tre passi laterali a destra!  
Alza il braccio destro!  
Abbassa le braccia!  
Piega le ginocchia!

Studente B

Stendi le ginocchia!  
Alza la gamba destra!  
Alza la gamba sinistra!  
Fai due passi in avanti!  
Ruota le spalle!  
Prendi la dama per mano!  
Prendi il cavaliere per mano!

## Attività 5

Livello: A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa ordinare in sequenza semplici comandi riferiti alle figure dei passi base dei balli.

Elementi linguistici: verbi all'imperativo, lessico dei verbi di movimento, direzioni e orientamento nello spazio, preposizioni.

Fase nell'U.A.: analisi; riordino.

*Numera in ordine corretto la sequenza di comandi per l'uomo/la donna che servono ad eseguire:*

*-il passo base del tango:*

Fai tre passi in avanti/indietro

Fai un passo laterale a destra/sinistra

Parti con il piede sinistro/destro

*-il passo base della bachata:*

Fai due passi laterali a sinistra/destra

Fai altri due passi laterali verso destra/sinistra

Comincia con il piede sinistro/destro

Appoggia a terra la punta del piede destro/sinistro

*-il passo base del fox-trot:*

Fai due passi in avanti/all'indietro cominciando con il piede sinistro/destro

Avvicina il piede destro/sinistro a quello sinistro/destro

Fai un passo laterale verso sinistra/destra

## **Attività 6**

Livello: A1-A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa scegliere le preposizioni corrette in base al contesto dato.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: preposizioni semplici e articolate

Fase nell'U.A.: globalità; scelta per esclusione.

*Scegli tra le due preposizioni proposte quella che ritieni corretta, cancellando con una X quella sbagliata:*

- a) Maria, per favore puoi metterti a/sul fianco di Marco?
- b) Il maestro di ballo fa gli esercizi vicino tra/allo specchio
- c) La dama segue i passi al/del cavaliere
- d) Mettetevi da/in coppia e fate i passi per/a tempo
- e) Adesso fate un giro di valzer di/con il vostro partner di ballo
- f) Camminate con/per la sala seguendo la linea di ballo
- g) Fate un passo sullo/a destra e due passi nella/all' indietro

### **5. 2 Lezione di ballo n. 2**

- *Attività 1, ripasso:* per i primi minuti verranno ripetuti in coppia i movimenti della lezione scorsa, attraverso la posizione dell'abbraccio, secondo il principio di guida e rispondenza da esercitare. Poi il maestro chiederà alle coppie di cambiarsi di partner

(“Cambiate compagno di coppia!”) per provare gli stessi movimenti con guide e risposdenze diverse;

- *Attività 2, il ritmo:* verrà introdotto il concetto di ritmo musicale: il ritmo è l’andatura costante dei nostri movimenti di ballo, fondamentale per ballare a tempo. Noi tutti possediamo in modo innato il ritmo, ad esempio quando camminiamo la nostra passeggiata può essere lenta o veloce ma l’andatura è costante e non abbiamo alcuna difficoltà nel mantenerla tale. Le coppie perciò saranno invitate a camminare per la sala l’una di fronte all’altra nella posizione dell’abbraccio seguendo la linea di ballo (il perimetro della sala) in direzione antioraria assecondando con la camminata il ritmo che il maestro darà con il battere delle sue mani. Potrà essere tutto lento (2 battiti musicali: len-to), o veloce (1 battito), oppure il maestro potrà decidere di mescolare in una stessa sequenza tra loro sia i lenti che i veloci;

- *Attività 3, il passo base del tango da sala:* alle dame e ai cavalieri verrà chiesto di dividersi nella sala in due gruppi distinti, per imparare ciascuno il proprio passo base separatamente. Ognuno eseguirà i propri movimenti mantenendo la posizione dell’abbraccio senza il partner affinché si resti dritti e in equilibrio, senza la necessità di aggrapparsi o appoggiarsi al partner una volta che si sarà ritornati in coppia.

I cavalieri partendo con il piede sinistro eseguiranno tre passi in avanti, e al terzo passo ne faranno uno laterale che chiude verso destra, con il piede destro (es.: “Cavalieri, partite con il piede sinistro e fate 3 passi in avanti; al terzo, fate un passo laterale verso destra!”).

Per esercitarsi, successivamente i cavalieri ripeteranno tutti assieme: “avanti, avanti, avanti a lato e chiudo.” Le dame, partendo con il piede destro eseguiranno 3 passi all’indietro e al terzo passo eseguiranno un passo laterale che chiude con il piede sinistro verso sinistra (es.: “Dame, partite con il piede destro e fate tre passi all’indietro; al terzo, fate un passo laterale verso sinistra!”).

Alle dame verrà dunque chiesto di ripetere tutte assieme: “indietro, indietro, indietro, a lato e chiudo”. A questo punto, insegnato il passo base grazie ai comandi e all’esempio del maestro, sarà necessario ripeterlo numerose volte tutti assieme, associando a questi 5 passi il ritmo del tango: “lento, lento, veloce, veloce, lento”. L’insegnante farà contare a turno a ciascuno studente dapprima fino a 5, e poi associando ad ogni passo i tempi lenti e veloci del tango.

- *Attività 4, il passo base del tango in coppia:* negli ultimi 10 minuti gli studenti saranno invitati ad eseguire il passo base in coppia, seguendo la linea di ballo e rispettando il ritmo del tango scandito a voce dal maestro.

### 5.2.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche

#### Attività 1

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente sa scrivere e distinguere le seconde persone singolari e plurali di verbi di movimento al presente e imperativo indicativo.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: verbi di movimento alla seconda persona singolare e plurale al tempo presente e imperativo indicativo.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; tabelle a compilazione progressiva dei verbi.

*Completa la tabella dei verbi che abbiamo finora usato in classe all'imperativo e all'indicativo presente per la seconda persona singolare e plurale:*

<b>camminare</b>		
	presente	imperativo
tu	cammini	
voi		

<b>andare</b>		
	presente	imperativo
tu		
voi		

<b>girare</b>		
	presente	imperativo
tu		
voi		

		<b>fare</b>	
		presente	imperativo
tu			
voi			

		<b>appoggiare</b>	
		presente	imperativo
tu			
voi			

		<b>cominciare</b>	
		presente	imperativo
tu			
voi			

## Attività 2

Livello: A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa ricercare nel testo i costrutti verbali e sa individuare se appartengono alla persona singolare o plurale.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: costrutti al tempo presente di verbi di azione e movimento.

Fase nell'U.A: analisi; ricerca di parole nel testo; inserimento di parole in griglie.

*Sottolinea in questi appunti tutti i verbi che sono all'indicativo presente. Poi mettili tutti dentro la griglia che trovi qui sotto. Troverai tutte le persone.*

Io ballo sempre quando sono a casa da sola. E tu, cosa fai nel tempo libero?

La casa è piccola, così per fare spazio sposto i mobili, poi mi tolgo le scarpe e accendo la musica. Ogni tanto accendo la radio, ma di solito metto su il mio CD preferito, con tutte le canzoni di salsa degli “Aventuras”, che sono un gruppo di cantanti molto carini.

Inizio a muovere le spalle e i fianchi, poi alzo le braccia verso l'alto, e infine salto di qua e di là per tutta la stanza! E' molto divertente e ogni tanto invito la mia amica Monica, così balliamo insieme: ci teniamo per mano, facciamo tutti i passi base della salsa, cantiamo a squarciagola e alla fine abbiamo un gran fiatone! Lei è molto più brava di me, perché va a scuola di ballo da 1 anno.

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

### Attività 3

Livello: A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa coniugare per iscritto al tempo presente i principali verbi di azione e movimento usati finora.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: coniugazione al tempo indicativo presente di verbi di azione e movimento.

Fase nell'U.A.: riflessione; tabelle a compilazione progressiva dei verbi.

*Adesso coniuga questi verbi all'indicativo presente*

### Ballare

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

**Essere**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

**Fare**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

**Spostare**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

**Togliere**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	

Voi	
Loro	

### **Accendere**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

### **Mettere**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

### **Muovere**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

### **Alzare**

Io	
----	--

Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

### **Cantare**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

### **Saltare**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

### **Invitare**

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

## Tenere

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

## Avere

Io	
Tu	
Lui/Lei	
Noi	
Voi	
Loro	

## Attività 4

Livello: A2

Obiettivi: lo studente comprende e sa rispondere per iscritto a semplici domande relative al conteggio del tempo e dei passi nei balli finora imparati.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: i numerali ordinali e cardinali.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; domande a risposta chiusa.

*Rispondi alle seguenti domande:*

Scrivi i numeri che indicano il tempo e il passo base del valzer .....

Che ballo è quello dove al numero 4 e al numero 8 c'è una pausa?.....

Nella bachata cosa succede al quarto e all'ottavo passo?.....

Fino a che numero si conta per fare il passo base del merengue?.....

Qual è quel ballo dove si fanno due passi in avanti/indietro e un passo a lato?.....  
Nella rumba, cosa succede al terzo e al sesto passo?.....  
Nel tango argentino quali sono i 2 passi che vanno a lato?.....  
Conta il passo base della samba.....

## **Attività 5**

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente comprende e sa completare semplici frasi con elementi numerici mancanti.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: i numerali ordinali e cardinali

Fase nell'U.A: analisi; completamento di frasi

*Completa le seguenti frasi con i numeri cardinali e ordinali corrispondenti. Aiutati con i numerali ordinali e cardinali presenti in calce.*

Nel tango si balla sempre in ....

Il passo base del cha cha cha è composto da ... passo laterale, ....dondolii (o rock-step) e da ....chassè laterali.

Nel valzer e nella rumba al ...passo e al ....passo i piedi si trovano uniti sia per la dama che per il cavaliere.

Nello swing al ...passo entrambi i ballerini spingono le braccia in avanti

Nel passo base del fox trot al ...tempo veloce i ballerini hanno le gambe divaricate.

Il passo base del cha cha cha è .....,.....,.....cha cha cha, cha cha cha, ..., ....., cha cha cha, cha cha cha.

due – uno – due – due – primo – terzo – primo – primo – un, due, tre – due, tre
---

### 5. 3 Lezione di ballo n. 3

- *Attività 1, ripasso:* nel ripasso verrà chiesto di ripetere in coppia il passo base del tango lungo la linea di ballo, secondo il ritmo scandito dal maestro. Verrà poi chiesto a ciascuna coppia a turno di dettare il ritmo a tutti i partecipanti, mentre si esegue il passo. Ci sarà anche il cambio coppia.

- *Attività 2, il tango in musica:* a questo punto gli studenti saranno finalmente pronti per eseguire il passo base del tango assieme alla musica appropriata. Verrà fatta ascoltare la musica e fatto contare a tutti il tempo con il battito delle mani sopra i battiti musicali. Poi gli studenti si rimetteranno in coppia e grazie alla guida vocale del maestro e all'utilizzo della musica eseguiranno il passo base andando a tempo. Ci sarà un cambio coppie e l'utilizzo di più musiche di tango per allenare l'orecchio dei partecipanti.

- *Attività 3, il passo base del merengue:* gli studenti avranno così visto che per fare il passo base del tango si sono utilizzati movimenti in avanti/indietro e quelli laterali a destra/sinistra, che erano stati insegnati nella prima lezione.

Adesso impareranno che il “dondolio”, o cambio di peso sul posto, è il movimento fondamentale che contraddistingue il passo base del merengue, simile ad una vera e propria marcia sul posto.

Le dame e i cavalieri saranno nuovamente separati e verranno loro insegnati i passi distintamente, con la presa aperta, che quella è usuale dei balli latino-caraibici. Per i cavalieri si dovrà marciare sul posto, dondolandosi tra un piede e l'altro contando fino a 8 e partendo sempre con il piede sinistro (“Cavalieri, partite con il piede sinistro e marciate sul posto per otto volte!”); per le dame sarà il contrario, 8 volte dovranno premere a terra i piedi, partendo con il piede destro (Dame, partite con il piede destro e marciate sul posto per otto volte!). Il maestro dapprima conterà lui stesso, e poi farà contare a turno sia alle dame che ai cavalieri.

### 5.3.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche

#### Attività 1

Livello: A1

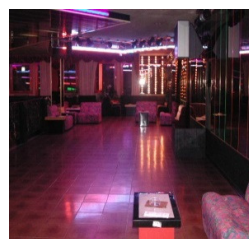
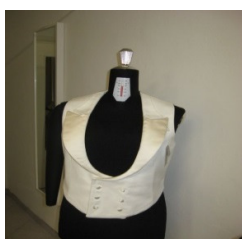
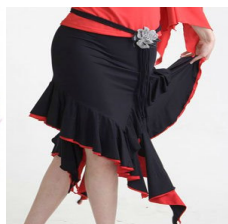
Obiettivi: lo studente comprende per iscritto il significato relativo al lessico del ballo.

Elementi linguistici: lessico di luoghi per ballare e accessori per il ballo.

Fase nell' U.A: associazione parola-immagine.

*Associa la parola all'immagine utilizzando una freccia:*

palestra – sala da ballo – scarpa – sandali – guanti – abito – completo – cappello – gilet  
scaldamuscoli – borsone – gonna – discoteca – casa – piazza – cappello





*Ora ordina le parole nelle categorie qui sotto:*

Luoghi per ballare	Accessori per il ballo

*Lavora con alcuni compagni. Quali altre parole italiane conoscete? Fate una lista di parole, poi provate a ordinarle per categoria.*

## **Attività 2**

Livello: A1- A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa scrivere i nomi di semplici oggetti riferiti al mondo del ballo e rispondere a domande inerenti ad essi.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: lessico di accessori/articoli da ballo e sportivi.

Fase nell'U.A.: sintesi; denominare oggetti presenti in immagini.

*Scrivete sotto ad ogni immagine il nome dell'oggetto che vedete. Poi cerciate in rosso gli oggetti che secondo voi sono da donna, e in blu quelli da uomo.*

*Ci sono degli articoli che vanno bene sia per l'uomo che per la donna?*

*Quali sono? Confrontate le vostre scelte in classe.*



.....



.....



.....

### Attività 3

Livello: A1

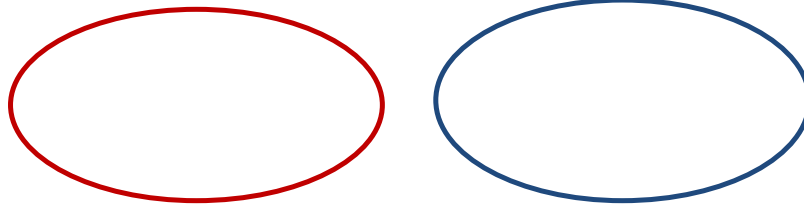
Obiettivi: lo studente distingue il maschile e il femminile di lessico relativo al mondo del ballo.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: le uscite regolari dei nomi al maschile e femminile.

Fase nell'U.A: analisi; uso di diagrammi.

*Queste parole sono maschili o femminili? Scrivi quelle femminili dentro il cerchio rosso, e quelle maschili dentro il cerchio blu.*

Sala – radio – stereo – palestra – scarpa – pavimento – soffitto – specchio – quadro – vestito –  
parete – musica



#### **Attività 4**

Livello: A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa chiedere e descrivere oralmente il colore di semplici oggetti e il loro uso.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: i colori, domande e risposte per chiedere e dare informazioni, lessico relativo ad oggetti presenti nel mondo del ballo.

Fase nell'U.A: analisi; roletaking.

*Lavora con un compagno: descrivete il colore di ciascun oggetto presente nell'attività 2, e spiegate a cosa serve nel mondo del ballo e non, usando questo esempio;*

Studente A: Di che colore è il cappello?

Studente B: Il cappello è nero e rosso.

Studente A: A cosa serve?

Studente B: Serve per bellezza/come coreografia/per coprire il capo

## 5. 4 Lezione di ballo n. 4

- *Attività 1, ripasso e passo base della bachata:* gli studenti separatamente ripeteranno il passo base del merengue, contando a turno con i numeri; poi lo eseguiranno in coppia con la presa “aperta” dei balli latini, e continueranno a contare, fino a che il maestro metterà loro la musica del merengue. Poi sempre da separati impareranno il passo base della bachata, che per il cavaliere consiste in 2 passi laterali chiusi a sinistra (sempre partendo con il piede sinistro) e subito dopo due passi laterali chiusi a destra ripartendo con il piede destro, il quale non viene del tutto appoggiato ma solo puntato con la pianta del piede: “Cavalieri, partite con il piede sinistro e fate 2 passi laterali; poi, ripartite con il piede destro e fate altri 2 passi laterali!”. Il conteggio sarà fino a 8, e il passo delle dame sarà lo stesso eseguito specularmente.

Gli ordini verbali che dapprima scandirà il maestro, che poi saranno ripetuti in gruppo ad alta voce, e infine singolarmente a turno su richiesta del maestro, saranno: “a lato, chiudo, a lato, punto; a lato, chiudo, a lato punto”.

- *Attività 2, il quadrato:* gli studenti divisi tra dame e cavalieri impareranno ora la figura del quadrato. Il tango è a forma di L rovesciata, il merengue è una marcia sul posto, la rumba è come disegnare un quadrato. Ma il quadrato è anche uno dei passi base della samba, e ci serve anche per esercitare il passo base del valzer lento.

I cavalieri partendo con il piede sinistro eseguiranno un passo in avanti e poi un passo laterale chiudendo verso destra. A quel punto, da piedi pari eseguiranno il passo indietro con il piede destro e un passo laterale chiudendo verso sinistra. Per le dame si mostrerà e si comanderà verbalmente il contrario. Si potrà far contare fino a 6, e si potrà far contare anche il tempo: “lento, veloce, veloce, lento, veloce, veloce”.

- *Attività 3, il passo base della rumba in musica:* gli studenti saranno pronti per eseguire il passo base della rumba, che è appunto la figura del quadrato, utilizzando la presa latina, e contando il tempo prima esercitato. Ci sarà un cambio coppie e l’uso di più musiche di rumba, sia lente che veloci, per esercitare il passo.

- *Attività 4: mix di tango, merengue, bachata e rumba:* nell’ultima parte della lezione sarà necessario riprendere “in mano” i 4 passi base dei balli fin qui imparati, ripetendo il tempo, le direzioni, i cambi peso, ed esercitandosi a cambiare partner tra una musica e l’altra come in una vera e propria festa danzante.

### 5.4.1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche

#### Attività 1

Livello: A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa scrivere le parti del corpo più comuni al singolare e al plurale.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: lessico relativo alle parti del corpo. Singolare e plurale delle parti del corpo.

Fase nell'U.A: analisi; denominare immagini.

*Scrivi dentro il rettangolo 6 parti del corpo che conosci. Poi, scrivile al plurale.*



*Quali parti del corpo usi per ballare? Sottolineale. Se ci sono delle parti del corpo che non sai come si chiamano, chiedile ai compagni o all'insegnante.*

#### Attività 2

Livello: A2

Obiettivi: lo studente conosce il singolare e plurale delle principali parti del corpo.

Elementi linguistici: le parti del corpo, morfologia singolare/plurale di sostantivi.

Fase nell'U.A: analisi; completamento di griglie.

*Completa la tabella scrivendo il plurale o il singolare mancante delle seguenti parti del corpo:*

<b>singolare</b>	<b>plurale</b>
occhio	
	spalle
sopracciglio	
	braccia
tallone	
	orecchie
labbro	
	ginocchia
dito	
	guancia
scapola	
	gomiti

### **Attività 3**

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente comprende il significato lessicale delle parti del corpo e il loro utilizzo nella dinamica del ballo.

Elementi linguistici: lessico di specifiche parti del corpo funzionali ai movimenti del ballo.

Fase nell'U.A: globalità; completamento di frasi.

*Completa la descrizione dei movimenti utilizzando le parti del corpo che trovi in calce.*

tallone – pianta – punta – mano – braccio – scapola – fianchi – bacino – ginocchia – gambe – piedi
---

-La camminata in avanti:

quando si cammina in avanti, prima si appoggia il ....., poi la .....e infine la .....del .....

-La camminata all'indietro:

quando si cammina all'indietro, prima si appoggia la .... del ....., poi la ....ed infine il .....

-La posizione dell'abbraccio per la dama:

la dama, prima appoggia la ...sinistra sopra il... destro del cavaliere, e poi solleva in alto la ....destra, a fianco del cavaliere.

-La posizione dell'abbraccio per il cavaliere:

il cavaliere, prima appoggia la .... destra sopra la .... sinistra della dama, poi solleva in alto la .... sinistra a fianco della dama, e infine prende e stringe la...sinistra della dama.

-lo stile nella rumba:

nella rumba sia la dama che il cavaliere muovono i.... roteando il ..... . Le .....restano stese come anche le punte dei .....

-lo stile nella salsa:

nella salsa sia la dama che il cavaliere tengono le .....flesse e i ....in movimento cubano.

#### **Attività 4**

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente è in grado di chiedere e dare informazioni a livello orale relative alla descrizione di terze persone e di se stesso.

Elementi linguistici: lessico utile alla descrizione di una persona.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; intervista.

*Lavora con un compagno: uno studente è A e uno è B. Lo studente A sceglie una delle 4 descrizioni qui presenti e non lo dice allo studente B; lo studente B fa la stessa cosa:*

Nome: Natalia

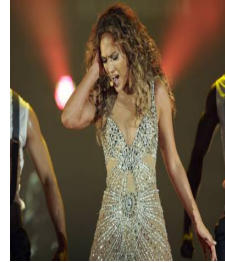
Cognome: Titova

Età: 39



Nazionalità: Russa  
Professione (lavoro): ballerina  
Colore dei capelli: rossi  
Colore degli occhi: azzurri

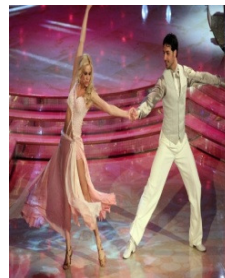
Nome: Jennifer  
Cognome: Lopez  
Età: 44  
Nazionalità: Americana  
Professione (lavoro): cantante,  
attrice e ballerina  
Colore dei capelli: biondi  
Colore degli occhi: marroni



Nome: Kledi  
Cognome: Kadiu  
Età: 39  
Nazionalità: Albanese  
Professione (lavoro): ballerino e attore  
Colore dei capelli: neri  
Colore degli occhi: marroni



Nome: Raimondo  
Cognome: Todaro  
Età: 26  
Nazionalità: Italiana  
Professione (lavoro): ballerino,  
insegnante di ballo e attore  
Colore dei capelli: neri  
Colore degli occhi: marroni



*Lo studente B chiede le informazioni, lo studente A legge la descrizione e risponde.*

*Lo studente B potrà utilizzare le domande che seguono:*

- Come si chiama?
- Qual è il suo nome? Qual è il suo cognome?
- Quanti anni ha?
- Che lavoro fa?
- Di che colore ha gli occhi?
- Di che colore ha i capelli?

*Ora scegliete un'altra carta d'identità, rifate l'esercizio e scambiatevi i ruoli.*

## **Attività 5**

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente sa presentare se stesso e gli altri sia per iscritto che oralmente.

Elementi linguistici: lessico relativo alla descrizione di semplici informazioni personali (età, interessi, nazionalità, ecc.).

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; presentazione incrociata.

*Scrivi la tua descrizione personale, completando la tabella qui proposta. Puoi aggiungere a fianco anche una tua foto.*

Nome:

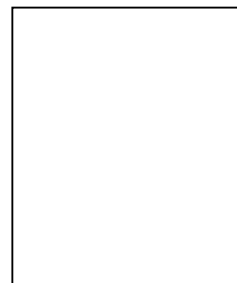
Cognome:

Età:

Nazionalità:

Sport/balli preferiti:

Motivazione al corso di ballo:



*Ora chiedi al tuo compagno la sua descrizione, utilizzando queste domande:*

- Come ti chiami?
- Quanti anni hai?

- Da dove vieni?
- Che sport/che balli ti piacciono?
- Perché vuoi imparare a ballare?

*Con i dati ottenuti dal compagno, presentalo alla classe, come nell'esempio:*

Vi presento....., ha..... anni e viene dal.....

Gli piace...e.....

Vuole imparare a ballare per...e.....

## **5. 5 Lezione di ballo n. 5**

- *Attività 1, il passo base del valzer lento:* gli studenti divisi tra dame e cavalieri ripasseranno sempre in gruppo e contando a turno con i numeri la figura del quadrato sul posto, questa volta con la presa dell'abbraccio utilizzata nel tango.

Poi l'insegnante spiegherà di aprire questo quadrato, effettuando il "passo di cambio", che è il passo base del valzer: i cavalieri effettueranno la prima mezza parte della figura del quadrato. A quel punto, anziché indietreggiare, cominceranno ad avanzare con il piede destro creando una specie di "greca". Le dame effettueranno anch'esse la prima mezza parte del quadrato e poi anziché avanzare con il piede sinistro, indietreggeranno. Ci si eserciterà numerose volte contando ciascun passo a turno.

- *Attività 2, il valzer a tempo di musica e in coppia:* le coppie potranno ora esercitarsi assieme, contando inizialmente sia senza che in presenza poi della musica. Il maestro si assicurerà che ci sia lo scambio di coppia e farà danzare gli studenti lungo la linea di ballo utilizzando diverse musiche e canzoni di valzer.

- *Attività 3, il passo base della salsa:* adesso gli studenti impareranno che il "dondolio", o cambio di peso sul posto in avanti e indietro, è il movimento fondamentale che contraddistingue il passo base della salsa. I cavalieri si divideranno dalle dame e si comincerà a spiegare il passo base della salsa ai cavalieri: 1 "rock-step" in avanti con il piede sinistro fino a chiudere sempre con il sinistro a piedi pari. Poi un "rock-step" indietro con il piede destro e chiusura con lo stesso piede al punto di partenza. Per le dame sarà il contrario. Si utilizzerà poi il conteggio fino a 8, tenendo

presente le pause al numero 4 e al numero 8. A turno il maestro farà contare agli studenti.

- *Attività 4 il passo base del fox-trot:* separatamente verrà mostrato e spiegato il passo base del fox-trot, partendo sempre dal cavaliere, utilizzando la presa “chiusa” dei balli da sala. Il cavaliere partendo con il piede sinistro farà due passi in avanti e andrà a chiudere con il piede sinistro verso sinistra. La dama eseguirà il contrario. Ci si può dapprima esercitare in plenaria contando i passi fino a 4, e poi con i tempi del fox-trot: “lento, lento, veloce, veloce”. Negli ultimi minuti si potrà già provare in coppia, senza musica ma contando a voce alta.

### **5. 5. 1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche**

#### **Attività 1**

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente conosce i nomi dei colori e sa scriverli correttamente.

Elementi linguistici: lessico relativo ai colori della sala da ballo e agli oggetti presenti.

Fase nell'U.A: analisi; riordino di lettere.

*Prova a ricordare i colori della sala da ballo e degli oggetti presenti. Rimetti a posto le lettere e scrivilo correttamente.*

Le pareti sono (ELGAIL).....

Il soffitto è (CONIBA).....

Il pavimento è (RRMNOEA).....

I mobili sono (LUB).....

I quadri sono (SRSOI).....

Le lampade sono (IREVD).....

Lo stereo e le casse sono (REIN).....

## Attività 2

Livello: A1

Obiettivi: lo studente conosce i nomi di oggetti e colori presenti in sala da ballo.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: lessico relativo a colori e oggetti.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; completamento di griglie.

*Cerca nella sala altri 3 colori e scrivi il nome dell'oggetto di quel colore. Se non conosci il nome in italiano, disegna l'oggetto.*

Colore	Nome oggetto	Disegno oggetto

## Attività 3

Livello: A2-B1

Obiettivi: lo studente sa motivare decisioni e scelte, oltre a saper esporre i propri ed altrui interessi e passioni, a seconda del proprio vissuto culturale.

Elementi linguistici: motivare opinioni; dare spiegazioni; chiedere e rispondere a domande aperte.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; completamento di frasi, domande aperte.

*Perché secondo te le persone decidono di imparare a ballare? Pensa a tutte le motivazioni che conosci, e scrivile dentro il cerchio. Se ci sono delle motivazioni che*

*non sai spiegare in italiano, scrivile nella tua lingua madre e chiedi come tradurle alla classe e all'insegnante.*

Secondo me le persone ballano perché...

Nel mio paese si balla per....

E tu, perché vuoi imparare a ballare?.....

Chiedilo al tuo compagno di banco, e scrivi qui la risposta.....

#### **Attività 4**

Livello: A2-B1

Obiettivi: lo studente sa esprimere le proprie preferenze e sa motivarle. Inoltre è in grado di confrontare le proprie risposte con quelle altrui e di trarre delle conclusioni, sulla base di confronti interculturali.

Elementi linguistici: uso di mi piace/non mi piace; uso del “perché” per motivare delle preferenze.

Fase nell’U.A.: sintesi; risposta a domande aperte.

*Rispondi alle seguenti domande:*

Tra i balli finora imparati, quali ti piacciono di più? .....

Perché? .....

Quali, invece, ti piacciono di meno? .....

Perché?.....

Lavora con un compagno: ora intervista i tuoi compagni utilizzando queste domande e confronta le loro risposte e motivazioni con le tue. Trovate e scrivete i balli che vi piacciono/non vi piacciono ad entrambi, e/o le motivazioni che condividete al riguardo, a seconda anche del vostro vissuto culturale.

## 5. 6 Lezione di ballo n. 6

- *Attività 1, ripasso:* si farà un ripasso del passo base del valzer senza musica, sia da soli che in coppia. Verrà ripassato il passo base della salsa sempre a coppie separate, sia contando con i numeri da 1 a 8, sia contando con i tempi: “veloce, veloce, lento, veloce, veloce, lento”, facendo a turno tra uno studente e l’altro. Poi verrà provato senza musica in coppia. Infine si riprenderà in mano il fox-trot, contando il tempo ed eseguendolo prima da soli e poi in coppia.
- *Attività 2, mix di valzer, salsa e fox-trot più tango, merengue, bachata e rumba:* Si procederà a fare una specie di simulazione di discoteca utilizzando le musiche dei 3 balli precedentemente ripassati in modo da esercitare l’ascolto della musica e lo scambio tra le coppie.
- *Attività 3, lo chassè:* singolarmente dame e cavalieri impareranno il movimento dello chassè, che altro non è che un doppio passo laterale senza chiusura a piedi pari. Verrà dimostrato e ordinato verbalmente ed eseguito in entrambe le direzioni laterali, dapprima lentamente e poi più velocemente, visto che sarà necessario memorizzarlo bene in vista dei vivaci balli del quale questo movimento è la principale componente. Si potrà contare così: “uno e due, tre e quattro”, dal momento che si ha un’azione sincopata in quanto il ballerino muove 2 volte su un unico battito.

### 5. 6. 1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche

#### **Attività 1**

Livello: A2-B1

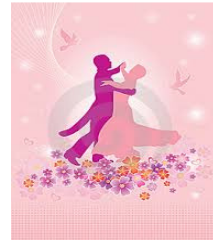
Obiettivi: lo studente conosce e sa scegliere gli aggettivi qualificativi appropriati al contesto richiesto.

Elementi linguistici: aggettivi qualificativi.

Fase nell’U.A: sintesi; ricerca di aggettivi.

*Per ogni ballo qui elencato scrivi 3 aggettivi qualificativi che secondo te lo descrivono al meglio.*

Valzer .....



Merengue .....



Tango.....



## Attività 2

Livello: A2-B1

Obiettivi: lo studente comprende il significato di semplici aggettivi qualificativi usati per descrivere i balli e sa ricercarne di nuovi, cooperando con i compagni.

Elementi linguistici: aggettivi qualificativi.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; lavoro a coppie sugli aggettivi.

*Lavora con un compagno: confrontate i vostri aggettivi, e aggiungete alla vostre schede quelli che condividete con il compagno,*

*Infine, provate a trovare almeno altri 2 nuovi aggettivi per ciascun ballo: se non li sapete in italiano, scriveteli nella vostra lingua madre e chiedete aiuto alla classe per sapere la loro giusta traduzione.*

### Attività 3

Livello: A2-B1

Obiettivi: lo studente sa descrivere ambienti e luoghi pubblici e privati adibiti al ballo.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: descrizione di ambienti e luoghi pubblici e privati adibiti al ballo.

Fase nell'U.A.: sintesi; composizioni di brevi descrizioni.

*Come sono secondo te gli ambienti in cui si può ballare? Scegline 3 e descrivili, aiutandoti con le immagini.*

teatro – palco all'aperto – sala da ballo – ristorante – piazza – palestra – casa – discoteca



*Puoi usare le parole che seguono in calce e aggiungerne altre:*

piccolo/a, grande, tranquillo/a, affollato/a, rumoroso/a, silenzioso/a, caldo/a, accogliente

#### 5. 7 Lezione di ballo n. 7

- *Attività 1, il passo base dello swing:* il passo base dello swing consisterà nel combinare i movimenti già imparati precedentemente, e che rappresentano i movimenti fondamentali usati fin dalla prima lezione, come il dondolio e il passo laterale chiuso, che però in questo caso è doppio e non si chiude alla fine, cioè lo chassè. Per i cavalieri

sarà un rock-step indietro con il piede sinistro più uno chassè laterale a sinistra e uno a destra, per le dame l'esatto contrario. La posizione sarà quella aperta dei balli latini. Il conteggio sarà: 1,2 3 e 4, 5 e 6”.

- *Attività 2: lo swing con la musica:* si ripeterà singolarmente il passo base dello swing, contando come sempre a turno e mantenendo la posizione aperta dei balli latini. Poi in coppia ci si eserciterà ad eseguirlo tenendo presente che nel rock-step iniziale ci sarà da parte di entrambi i ballerini una pressione a livello dei punti di contatto l'uno verso l'altro per darsi la spinta iniziale per eseguire il passo. Per finire si inserirà la musica swing insegnando come stare a tempo, sempre contando i passi da eseguire assieme secondo il principio di guida e rispondenza.

- *Attività 2, il passo base del cha cha cha:* il passo base del cha cha cha verrà spiegato come una combinazione di chassè laterali e rock step avanti ed indietro. Per il cavaliere consiste in un primo passo laterale a sinistra di preparazione, seguito da un dondolio all'indietro con il piede libero destro, continuando con uno chassè laterale a destra; a questo punto, a metà base il rock step sarà eseguito con il piede libero sinistro in avanti, per seguire poi con uno chassè laterale verso sinistra. Per la dama sarà lo stesso ma al contrario, il conteggio per tutti sarà: “1, 2, 3 cha cha cha, 2, 3 cha cha cha”, dove nel 2,3 si esegue il rock step, e nel cha cha cha lo chassè laterale a ritmo sincopato. La posizione anche in questo caso sarà quella aperta dei balli latini. Gli ultimi minuti si farà una prova in coppia e poi con la musica.

- *Attività 3, il passo base della polka:* il passo base della polka verrà spiegato come essere un doppio chassè che anziché essere laterale, è in avanti e ripetuto in sequenza. La direzione per il cavaliere sarà: avanti con il piede sinistro, chiudo con il destro, avanti sempre con il sinistro; avanti con il destro, chiudo con il sinistro e ancora avanti con il destro. Per la dama il contrario camminando all'indietro e partendo sempre con il piede destro. Il conteggio per tutti sarà: “1 e 2, 3 e 4”. Si proverà ad eseguirlo come sempre in coppia e poi con la musica, utilizzando la posizione dell'abbraccio che vale per i balli da sala, ed eseguendo i passi lungo la linea di ballo.

## 5. 7. 1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistici e attività didattiche

### Attività 1

Livello: A2-B1

Obiettivi: lo studente sa coniugare correttamente i verbi modali.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: i verbi modali (potere, dovere, volere, sapere).

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; esercizi di coniugazione verbi modali.

*Coniuga i verbi modali tra parentesi:*

Mauro, ..... (potere) avvicinarti alla pista da ballo?

(Dovere) ..... fare passi più lunghi se volete andare veloci!

Claudia (sapere)..... ballare sui pattini il cha cha cha

(Volere)..... assolutamente vedere l'esibizione di bachata che faranno stasera i nostri amici!

Quel che ....(sapere) è che non posso sempre chiedere i passi al mio ballerino, perché non li ... (sapere)

Non ... (dovere) tenere le braccia troppo alte nei balli latini

Marika non ...(volere) ballare con Carlo perché è troppo lento

### Attività 2

Livello: A1-A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa scegliere correttamente gli avverbi di tempo in base al contesto.

Elementi linguistici: avverbi di tempo.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; cloze.

*Inserisci gli avverbi di tempo negli spazi*

Durante – dopo – poi – oggi – prima – infine – adesso – domani – ieri – quando
--

- a) .....impariamo il passo base dello swing dobbiamo rilassare e flettere le ginocchia.
- b) Ma che bella lezione di salsa che abbiamo fatto ....! Mi sono proprio divertito.
- c) Nella rumba ....di ballare la base a tempo è necessario esercitarsi nella figura del “quadrato”.
- d) Maria ha partecipato ad una festa di ballo in maschera proprio .... sera.
- e) Ragazzi, siete stanchi? Forse è meglio continuare la lezione .....
- f) ..... facciamo tutti quanti un passo in avanti con il piede destro!
- g) Per imparare a ballare in coppia bisogna prima fare i passi da soli, e solo .... è possibile provare insieme.
- h) Ieri, .....la lezione di samba mi è venuto un forte mal di pancia.
- i) Per migliorare la postura innanzitutto alzate le spalle, poi ruotatele all’indietro, e .....abbassatele.

### **Attività 3**

Livello: A1-A2

Obiettivi: lo studente sa scegliere correttamente gli avverbi di frequenza in base al contesto.

Elementi linguistici: avverbi di frequenza.

Fase nell’U.A: sintesi; cloze.

*Utilizza gli avverbi di frequenza in calce per completare le frasi*

Nella rumba devi ....tenere le ginocchia stese

Quando ballo la salsa ....mi dimentico di contare il tempo

Il maestro di ballo ci ha insegnato che .... bisogna .... guardare per terra quando si balla  
 .....mi capita di sbagliare qualche passo dello swing

Anche se mi piace ballare, vado .... a ballare in discoteca

.....vado fuori tempo e calpesto i piedi della mia ballaerina

...ho .... partecipato ad una gara di ballo, anche se mi piacerebbe molto!

A lezione di ballo .....mi distraigo, perché è molto divertente

## 5. 8 Lezione di ballo n. 8

- *Attività 1, mix di swing, cha cha cha e polka, valzer, salsa, fox-trot, tango, merengue, bachata e rumba:* si eseguirà un'altra simulazione da discoteca mescolando i balli recentemente appresi, più quelli iniziali attraverso varie canzoni e vari cambi di coppia, per allenare guida, rispondenza, tempo e scioltezza dei movimenti.
- *Attività 2, il passo base della samba e della mazurka:* per il passo base della samba si riprenderà ad eseguire il passo base della rumba, il quadrato, però con tempi diversi e passi non più scivolati ma saltellati: il tempo sincopato della samba sarà scandito come segue: “1 e 2, 3 e 4”, oppure “lento e lento, lento e lento”. Per la base della mazurka invece basterà riprendere il passo base del valzer lento, velocizzando l'andatura attraverso passetti più ravvicinati e saltellati.
- *Attività 3, le basi girate dei balli latino-americani:* i passi base dei balli latini e caraibici (salsa, bachata, rumba, cha cha cha, swing, merengue, tango argentino) essendo passi che si eseguono sul posto senza percorrere la linea di ballo potranno essere ora praticati ruotando le basi in senso antiorario. Il passo resterà lo stesso, ed i ballerini dovranno sforzarsi di restare l'uno di fronte all'altro nonostante la rotazione dei passi impressa dal cavaliere. Per aiutarsi cercheranno di mantenere la presa abbastanza rigida senza allontanarsi troppo, soprattutto le prime volte.
- *Attività 2, il passo base del tango argentino:* ora gli studenti impareranno separatamente il passo base del tango argentino, che si distingue dagli altri balli perché il cavaliere comincia con il piede destro indietreggiando, e la dama con il sinistro, avanzando. I comandi per il cavaliere saranno: “partite con il piede destro e fate un passo indietro, uno a lato verso sinistra, due avanti ed infine uno a lato verso destra”. La forma “disegnata” per terra sarà all'incirca quella di un rettangolo. I tempi nel tango argentino sono a discrezione del ballerino, a seconda di come preferisce interpretare la musica, perciò si potrà esercitarsi sia nel contarli semplicemente fino a 6, che nell'interpretarli con tempi tutti lenti, o tutti veloci, o attraverso un mix dei due.

## 5. 8. 1 Obiettivi, elementi linguistico-culturali e attività didattiche

### Attività 1

Livello: A2-B1

Obiettivi: lo studente riconosce le varie sfumature di significato relative ad un unico termine, anche in relazione al contesto culturale nel quale la parola viene utilizzata.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: i vari significati e usi del termine salsa nei diversi contesti culturali.

Fase nell'U.A.: globalità; brainstorming;

*Pensa alla parola "salsa" e scrivi nel cerchio tutte le parole che associ alla salsa. Scrivine anche 3 nella tua lingua e di cui non sai la traduzione in italiano. Con i compagni e il tuo insegnante, poi, potrai provare a tradurle.*



*-Completa le frasi della colonna sinistra con il finale corretto presente nella colonna destra, utilizzando le frecce.*

Quel programma in TV	è sempre la stessa salsa!
Che ingredienti ci sono nella	salsa al pomodoro?
Mia mamma sa cucinare	il pollo in salsa verde
Il professore oggi ha provato a	il congiuntivo in tutte le salse
spiegarci	

### Attività 2

Livello: dal B1 in su.

Obiettivi: lo studente sa spiegare oralmente e per iscritto il significato dei più comuni modi di dire con la parola "ballo".

Elementi linguistici/culturali: espressioni e modi di dire in italiano e nella propria lingua madre.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; spiegazione orale e scritta di modi di dire comuni.

*Lavora con un compagno: in italiano ci sono alcune espressioni, alcuni modi di dire, con la parola "ballo". Prova a spiegarne il significato a voce; poi, scrivilo a fianco.*

Essere in ballo.....

Entrare in ballo.....

Tenere in ballo qualcosa.....

Tirare in ballo qualcosa.....

*Nella tua lingua madre (o nel tuo dialetto) ci sono espressioni o modi di dire con la parola "ballo", "danza" e/o il verbo "ballare", "danzare"? Se sì, scrivile qui sotto e poi fatti aiutare dai tuoi compagni nel tradurre l'espressione in italiano.*

*Se i tuoi compagni parlano altre lingue, scopri con quali frasi esprimono gli stessi tuoi concetti.*

<b>Espressione nella mia lingua madre</b>	<b>Traduzione letterale in italiano</b>	<b>Espressione simile in italiano</b>	<b>Significato</b>

### **Attività 3**

Livello: dal B1 in su.

Obiettivi: lo studente conosce i termini che derivano dalla parola ballo e sa creare delle frasi legate al contesto culturale al quale appartengono.

Elementi linguistico-culturali: termini derivanti dalla radice della parola ballo e contesti ai quali si riferiscono.

Fase nell'U.A.: sintesi; comporre frasi intorno a una parola data.

*In italiano ci sono diverse parole che si formano con la parola "ballo". Per ogni termine fai una frase, usando il termine dato. Se non ne conosci il significato, prova a fare delle ipotesi; poi, verificale in classe con i compagni e l'insegnante.*

Ballerino.....  
Ballata.....  
Balletto.....  
Ballabile.....  
Ballonzolo.....  
Traballare.....

#### **Attività 4**

Livello: C1-C2

Obiettivi: lo studente comprende per iscritto il significato dei più comuni proverbi ed espressioni italiane con tema il ballo.

Elementi linguistico-culturali: proverbi ed espressioni italiane e straniere con il tema del ballo.

Fase nell'U.A.: sintesi; accoppiamento espressione – definizione.

*Secondo te questi proverbi ed espressioni che cosa significano? Prova a collegare con una freccia l'espressione con il suo significato corrispondente.*

-Quando il gatto non c'è i topi ballano	-Mangiare volentieri, con appetito
-Avere il ballo di San Vito	-quando non c'è il capo, i dipendenti fanno quello che vogliono
-Far ballare i quattrini	-essere incapaci di star fermi
-Far ballare sulla corda qualcuno	-Si dice di un luogo molto ampio, spazioso, e in
-Esserci posto per far ballare i topi	

-Far ballare i denti	senso ironico, di un locale pubblico con pochi clienti
-Ora si balla!	-Adesso arriva il momento più atteso
-Ballare sulla tomba di qualcuno	-Gioire della morte o delle disgrazie altrui
-Ognuno balla con sua zia/nonna	-Costringere alla propria volontà, far fare a qualcuno quello che si vuole, in genere con le minacce, il ricatto e simili
-Ballarci dentro	-Spendere i soldi in modo dissoluto
	-Avere indosso abiti troppo grandi.

*Esistono dei proverbi o dei modi di dire collegati al ballo anche nella tua lingua madre? Confrontati in classe con i compagni.*

## **Attività 5**

Livello: dal B1 in su.

Obiettivi: lo studente è in grado di svolgere in cooperazione con i compagni una ricerca volta a conoscere gli avvenimenti interculturali che hanno portato alla formazione dei balli odierni.

Elementi linguistici/culturali: lettura di testi orali e scritti, visione di video e documenti in lingua italiana sulla storia dei balli.

Fase nell'U.A: sintesi; ricerca di gruppo.

Lavora in gruppo: fate una ricerca sulla storia di un ballo a scelta, attraverso notizie su internet, interviste, libri e video, sia in lingua madre che in italiano. Suddividetevi i compiti, in base alle vostre competenze specifiche: uno studente approfondirà la parte storica, un altro la parte relativa alla musica e alla coreografia, un altro ancora curerà la grafica e l'impaginazione, l'organizzazione dei paragrafi e la scelta ecc.

Al termine della ricerca scegliete una musica e create una coreografia del ballo prescelto a seconda della vostra creatività ed esperienza a seconda della vostra tradizione di appartenenza, mantenendo inalterato il passo base imparato a lezione.

## **Conclusioni**

Nella presente tesi si è voluto affrontare ed approfondire l'importanza del ruolo dell'esperienza corporea e sensomotora nei processi di apprendimento, in particolare della lingua straniera quale l'italiano L2 attraverso l'attività sportiva della danza. Si è voluto altresì evidenziare quanto lo sport e la dimensione corporea possano fungere da vettori di educazione e comunicazione interculturale.

Nella seconda parte della tesi si è offerta una descrizione di alcune lezioni propedeutiche al ballo per studenti stranieri, e a seguire una serie di possibili attività didattiche praticabili in contesto scolastico che mirano a riprendere e a sistematizzare elementi linguistici ed interculturali emersi durante le lezioni di ballo stesse.

Si è pertanto voluto dimostrare come l'utilizzo intenzionale e consapevole della danza sportiva possa rivelarsi potenzialmente favorevole nel campo dell'apprendimento linguistico di classi plurilingue e multiculturali, nel momento in cui i fin qui delineati principi neuroscientifici e glottodidattici, assieme alle metodologie e alle proposte operative esposte vengono seguiti e praticati coerentemente nella didattica, al fine di renderla più efficace, arricchente e coinvolgente anche dal punto di vista personale del soggetto che apprende.

Riteniamo che la tipologia di didattica in oggetto, molto affascinante ma sicuramente ancora poco studiata e considerata dagli stessi “addetti ai lavori” meriti e necessiti via via di maggiori ed ulteriori ricerche sia di tipo teorico che pratico, e dunque di vere e proprie sperimentazioni “sul campo” con studenti non italofoeni attraverso apposite unità didattiche strutturate a seconda dei bisogni delle classi, al fine di conseguire tutti gli obiettivi linguistici propri dei livelli del “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” (CEFR).

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