

The Body and Movement Dynamics as Tools for the Formation of Educators and Therapists

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This session addresses the dynamics of the body and its movement as tools in the formation of educators and therapists. We examine the potential of using the body as an active reference and as a tool in teaching across disciplines. This somatic approach to learning and professional development is not limited to the movement educator or creative arts therapist, but can be expanded to include learning and teaching aspects of professional development in all disciplines.

The eleven-minute video, *"Care In Motion"* shows one example of the importance of the therapist, educator and caregiver all having the opportunity to master a basic body-based movement vocabulary. In the video we see how this work has been integrated into training caregivers who work with people with profound disabilities.

A sub-theme, but one of major importance, is the role of the senses in understanding one's own process in the classroom setting as well as in the larger learning environment. Focusing attention on the senses is designed to help integrate the experience and understanding of the body into a usable curriculum for therapists and educators.

Another important element is to bring attention to one's own physical experience and to provide an opportunity for incorporating somatic awareness into learning and teaching. We reference the work of Celeste Snowber and Alex Fancy as researchers who have been attentive to rhythm, gesture, posture and non-verbal elements of the learning environment. In this context, the body is not only an entity to be learned about, but also a tool through which educators can enhance their self-awareness, as well as their skills of expression and communication.

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