Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Education and Psychology Doctoral School of Education Special Needs Education PhD Programme

Thesis of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation



Zsuzsanna Horváth

Complex examination of groups of young people with special education needs in reflection of dance and movement therapy

Supervisor: Anikó Illés, dr. habil.

Budapest, 2019

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1. Introduction, disciplinary background

The aim of the thesis is to present the research possibilities of dance and movement therapy processes in groups of young pupils with special educational needs (SEN). For two school years six dance and movement therapy groups were followed in five different special schools.

Both the research and the therapeutical process are interdisciplinary from many points of views. Since I am a special education teacher, an intercultural psychology and pedagogy expert as well as a dance and movement therapy group leader, connecting these proficiencies and experiences meant one of the starting points of the research.

The research is also interdisciplinary in the sense that several areas of scientific disciplines are concerned, which in themselves, from the aspect of their own discipline structure, should be understood dynamically. Special needs education is also a complex diagnostic, educational, therapeutic and rehabilitative practice, which as such, is always adapted to the participants of the activity (Mesterházi, 2012; Gereben, 2014). Understanding the concept of disability is also defined in the above-mentioned complexity and on the basis of the biopsychosocial model it means the individual, its surroundings and its interaction with these surroundings (Papp, 2002; Gereben, 2014). Due to the basic principles – understanding the individual as a whole personality, emphasizing the strong relationship between the individual and its surroundings - the processes of dance and movement therapy can be embedded within these concepts. The processes of dance and movement therapy both at home and abroad show interdisciplinarity as far as their scientific paradigms are concerned; they are shaped by the synthesis of eurhythmics as an art of movement and of psychology, thus combining the two with areas of cultural anthropology, psychodynamic theories, neuro- and sensomotorical development and psychology (Goodill, 2005; Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2009; Chang, 2009; Tortora, 2009; Pylvänäinen & Lappalainen, 2018).

The main elements of the study – on the basis of the importance of interaction between the individual and its surroundings – are the people participating in it. Having a participative focus, the study gives way to interpretations and understandings, it follows a contextual, holistical and qualitative paradigm (Szabolcs, 2001; Babbie, 2001), meanwhile keeping and embedding the interdisciplinarity of its theoretical bases. The concept emphasizing participation and interpretation is also connected to arts-based researches that use different modalities and creative activities of arts in social research. Thus, we are allowed to have an insight through art into the individual's world view (Leavy, 2015; Saldana, 2011; Norris; 2009).

Due to the diversity of this interdisciplinary "map", bringing forward the therapeutical processes accompanied by research may give possibility to articulate the transdisciplinary connections as well. By analysing the adaptation possibilities of a non-verbal, body-experience based group therapy method, we place ourselves at the meeting point of special needs education, different therapeutical processes, interventions based on movement and the theory and practice of group dynamics. Thus, our research is transdisciplinary in the sense that

both theoretically and in its research framework it searches and follows the connection between different disciplines and knowledge-bases.

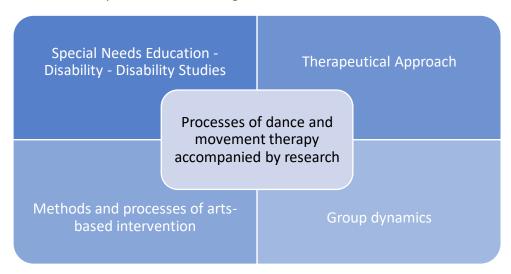


Figure 1: Research matrix – the areas concerned in the light of the transdisciplinary concept

Our research thus meets *education for special needs* partly in the venues themselves, partly in finding elemental connections with the complexity of the practice of education for special needs. The research also has common features with *disability studies* as it underlines participation and universality. The context of *disability* connects these two disciplines and also defines our research. Our study is specified by the aspect of dance and movement therapy, by which we mean not so much the developmental focus of special education therapies, neither the disclosing nature of psychotherapy, but rather the agency and competency experiences gained by the participants during the sessions, which experiences can be related to empowerment in the context of disability.

The present study is also connected to *arts-based intervention processes*, where a systematically applied art modality (movement/dance) gives the basis of the therapeutical and research processes, which correspond to important aspects of special needs education and its complex activity, the creative self-expression learning base structures (Papp, 2004).

Another basis of our research and theoretical work is the *group* itself, the group as social microcosmos, the way it works, its dynamics and the social fields where interactions take place. All these transdisciplinary meeting points are interwoven by the concepts of *participation* and *intersubjectivity* that define both the research itself and the dance and movement therapy processes.

The thesis seeks to universality as far as its topic and the use of notions are concerned. We gain our knowledge about ourselves, about the others and the world by and through our bodily experiences and from this point of view the "quality" of the body is insignificant. If our starting point is the human being, human relations and involvement or – as in our case – the method itself, then it is not disability or impairment which is in the focus of our attention during dance and movement therapy, but rather the whole personality (Horváth, 2018).

2. Theoretical framework

In a wider sense dance and movement therapy means using creative dance and movement elements in a therapeutical relation. It is based on the relationship between movement and emotion, therefore this relation will allow the individual to make a clearer picture about him/herself by using the experiences adopted to his/her personal history (Payne, 2004; Wiedenhofer et al, 2017; Chodorow, 2009). It's our own body and voice we most often use during dance and movement therapy, so they are looked upon as the starting points of our space perception. The different qualities of these points are always present in all therapeutical processes. In all therapeutical methods where the body has a central role, feeling the different qualities of bodily experiences greatly influences the formation of experiences. By using the body during therapies, we can experience different levels of space, movement and body, which activate the appropriate experience-levels, also emotional and dispositional states-ofmind connected to these levels (Horváth, 2015). Dancing and moving can actively endorse individual creativity, therefore creative movement as self-expression based on impulsive improvisation is always of main interest. Since improvisation is always conducted by the individual, it has a symbolical meaning for him/her. Movement patterns can be repeated or new forms can be born, thus disclosing special behavioural and relational characteristics of the individual (Chaiklin, 2009).

In this way, body-movement experiences, self-expression and body-expression are always triggered by dance and movement therapy processes (Merényi, 2008). Interpretations of body experiences with meaning in therapeutical situation can be different, depending on the theoretical frameworks of different psychological schools (Hámori, 2016; Merényi, 2004, 2008, 2015). However, we can find some constant elements in the theory and practice of different dance and movement therapeutical methods on both national and international levels: the body is involved in the therapeutical context (Payne, 2004; Brauninger, 2014; Koch et al, 2014; Wiedenhofer et al, 2017), the therapeutic approach of intersubjectivity (Stolorow & Atwood, 1994; Ajkay, 2008), the importance of intersubjective experience and implicit knowledge of relationship (Halász, 2008; Merényi, 2015) or the presence of kinesthetic empathy (Szili, 2010; Tortora, 2006).

The method applied during the research is a possible adaptation of psychodynamic dance and movement therapy (PMT) worked out by Dr. Márta Merényi. The psychodynamic dance and movement therapy is a non-verbal method used mainly in group therapy and adopted in the areas of self-reflection, psychotherapy, socio-therapy or art-therapy. The basic elements of both the psychodynamic form and its adapted version are connected to movement-based special education methods. These common elements can be traced in the conception of movement as the primary source of gaining experience, of the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication or social skills as well. One aim of the therapeutical processes with dual group leadership is to give chance to the members to get in touch with their own body and with each other in a supportive, non-judgement environment, so they can realize and communicate their own needs. Besides, the fact that their experience is becoming part of their personality can help them to socialize easier, thus when they leave the supportive environment of school, social integration can become less demanding for them.

The process of PMT consists of four, organically related work procedures, which can be well adopted in groups of persons with disability. These procedures define the structure of each session: *verbal introduction* is followed by warming-up, which foreshadows body-mind focus in *body-mind work* where emphasis is placed on the body or any appreciable physical phenomenon (breathing, strength, paces of walk, etc). It is followed by work on *interpersonal relations* and finally – adapted to the given state-of-mind and dynamics of the group – the session is ended by *improvisation*. The verbal feed-back is the last part of the procedure.

Body-mind work is a procedure during which one becomes aware of the physical qualities of their own bodies, with body scheme and body image partly included and built in, however, by the help of movement, by focusing on it and "being present" in the space, a certain continuous bodily reflection is taking place as well (Merényi, 2004). In this way, the main goal of the body-mind work is to collect experiences very different from everyday practice. It's of great importance that body-mind work focuses on the actual movement and active perception of the body and the changes in its state (Incze, 2008). It relies on the body itself, the possibilities of sensation, thus creating a state where the reality of the agent (ourselves) can be experienced, so the reflectivity of body levels is well understood. Body-mind work gives chance to perceiving the differences of inner body image, to widening movement repertoire, as well as developing improvisation skills (Merényi, 2004).

Body-mind focus		Questions related to body-mind focus; helping questions to reach body-mind state directing towards self-knowledge	Practical example – individual, without touching
Directions	→	Which direction is it comfortable to move? Is there any situation when your body moves to other direction than your limbs? What triggers movement to different directions? How can you move forward, backward, left or right? How do you feel about these directions? Which feels better: sudden movements or flow movements?	While walking change direction suddenly, unexpected even to yourself, then vary these sudden direction-changes, and convert them to flow movements.

Table 1: Questions related to body-mind focus (Directions)

In *relationship work* we pay attention to our own movements and aims simultaneously with those of the others, while there is a constant fine tuning between us. While moving together with others, one can experience the mutuality and acceptance of the "self-controlling other" (Merényi, 2004).

In relationship work, when members work in pairs or in small groups of three or more, the starting point is the body-mind experience of the individual or the small group. Shared movement, tuning to each other is determined by mutual work and attention, and it is when the subjective self actively steps in to react to shared aims or affectivity. During shared movement the individual senses its own aims and moves, while being constantly aware of the other party, which means that they share experiences based on body and movement (Merényi, 2004). These are intersubjective sessions, full of emotion, significant, vital experiences during groupwork processes.

During body-mind and relationship work the body is percepted as an integrated whole which fosters individual improvisation skills, and the initiative moves are getting more and more subtle and differentiated. Self-discovery intertwists with the sense of self-creation during which process the body relieved in movement becomes both creator and creation and the moves are freely formed in space and time. This improvisation develops in the so-called *highlighted space* which means that some members work individually, in pairs or in groups of three or four in the therapeutical space being monitored by the "audience", that is the other members (Merényi, 2015).

Because the groups taking part in the research were dissimilar, partly due to the members' different SEN diagnoses and partly because they came from different schools at different times, very often with verbal difficulties, the work procedures of PMT varied a lot session by session. Instead of verbal introduction we often had some information about the spirits of the participants, generally presented by their position or series of movement, therefore the focus of the dance and movement therapy process was not on the cognitive level which can be reached by speech but on the relieving effect of movement or on the group as social microcosmos. Otherwise, the structure of the events followed the classical form, emphasis was put on the creational part of body-mind work, which helped strengthen body-image, self-image and the experience of efficiency. Besides, the members of the group could have the strong feeling they were active characters of the process (Horváth, 2018).

The inner factors of the therapeutic process are formed by specific individual and collective features: the relationship between the members, the different psychical state of the individuals, the importance of non-verbal communication. These are the characteristics of relations between individuals within the group; sharing experiences and emerging sympathy endorse the group as such (Marogna & Caccamo, 2013).

The basic elements of *intersubjectivity* also help to understand the process of group therapy methods, by helping to form a group, raise its efficiency and provide group cohesion (Stern, 2004). Furthermore, they deepen mentalisation which makes it possible for group members

to conceptualize their own and others' implicit and explicit mental state (Fónagy et al, 2011). Intersubjectivity is based on the meeting of subjective realities and individuals, that is group members, including the group leader. Functioning of the group leads to the development of "group-self", which helps members to be empathic to each other (Harwood & Pines, 1998). Group activity also supports members to internalize new values which foster therapeutical changes, therefore participants can get other kinds of regulation experiences, being in accordance with the individual's current state-of-mind (Orange et al, 1999; Marogna & Caccamo, 2013).

3. Research questions

One aim of the present study is to bring theory closer to practice: "Practice and science are connected by the method itself. Practice is to applying method; science is the explanation of the method." (Illyés In Gordosné, 2012, p. 57). This analysis is about the applied method in the first place – the method is in the focus, and the two associated dimensions are studied from the aspect of the process.

The two main questions of the research – closely related to the aims – are the following:

- How can non-verbal, collective dance and movement therapy be followed in groups of SEN members by research?
- How can the methodology of dance and movement therapy be adapted to groups of SEN members?

Further research questions also concern several aspects adjusted to the methodological paradigm and exploratory nature of the research. We are interested in mapping group forming (group dynamics, group cohesion, inter-group relations, the individual's position in the group), individual affective skills (expressing emotions, self-regulation, aggression, anxiety), free moves (improvisation) in the process of dance and movement therapy.

Our further questions:

Group dynamics

Talking about groups, it is important to know about the interactions among members, possible conflicts and the formation process of the group. Each and every group has universal and particular characteristics, dynamics that are defined by the group members (Yalom, 2001; Forsyth, 2010; Terenyi, 2011; Rudas, 2016; Horváth, 2015). During the process of dance and movement therapy general regularities of group dynamics prevail, however, they are often interwoven by special dynamic elements, which are formed during the particular movement (Merényi, 2015).

- In case of SEN members, what are the characteristics of group dynamics of dance and movement therapy, how are groups formed?
- Does group activity depend on the state of disability of group members?
- Does the position and role of group members in their school class change during the dance and movement therapy process?

Affective factors

Much research has been conducted on the connection of sports/movement and subjective well-being, its positive effects on stress and tension (Hervey & Kornblum, 2006; Somerstein, 2010; Kovács & Nagy, 2015; Négele et al, 2017). During adolescence, the period of normative crisis is a significant source of stress in the life of the young. This stage of life is full of challenges and is often accompanied by aggression and/or anxiety (Németh & Koller, 2015, Hamvai & Pikó, 2013). If there are difficulties in verbal communication – even if they are of organic reasons – with each other or with adults, it is of utmost importance to pay attention to the possibility of self-expression and self-regulation in other ways.

- Can safe, accepting and supportive environment in the process of dance and movement therapy shape self- expression and self-regulation of the young during the sessions?
- Do the group members' behaviour patterns characteristic of them in their classroom setting change during the dance and movement therapy process?

Improvisation

After going through different procedures (body-mind work, relationship work) during dance and movement therapy, the emergence of collective, free moving, improvisatory creation of the groups at the end of each session is a very important aim of the process.

- Does free, improvisatory movement appear in groups of SEN members taking part in the research?

4. Research methodology framework and data collection processes

As far as the specific aims and methods of the present research are concerned, this study can be defined as an exploratory, prospective basic research and the methodological and interpretation framework is provided by qualitative research paradigm. The focus of the research is the method itself, whereby the question is not "what therapy works with whom, but why and how the given process is working" (Levy et al, 2012, p. xv). The purpose of our research questions and our aims are to get a deeper and sophisticated understanding of the given process (Babbie, 2001; Szokolszky, 2004; Feischmidt, 2007). We follow the path of inductive logic to approach the phenomena in question, accepting and undertaking the diversity of reality images, as well as the constructed, meaningful and interpretative principles of pedagogical and social activities (Szabolcs, 2001, 2004; Héra & Ligeti, 2014; Babbie, 2001; Horváth & Mitev, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Out of the different qualitative paradigms it was the concept of Grounded Theory (GT) that had the most influential and important impact on our work, aiming to nuance theoretical conceptions and also fitting in the interpretative paradigm. With the help of GT research is not divided into separate sequences, but its elements, data collection and data analysis are interpreted as a circular, mutual and reflective process (Glaser & Strauss, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Charmaz, 2013). Our study shows particular meeting points with other research and scientific paradigms, like arts-based research (ABR) (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Leavy, 2015; Novák, 2016), participatory action research (Horváth & Oblath, 2015; Csillag, 2016) and participative research based on disability studies as well (Heiszer et al., 2014; Katona, 2015; Sándor, 2018).

The qualitative paradigm and the nature of our research – that is dance and movement therapy processes accompanied by research – assume the researcher being open-minded and creative in selecting the methods of data collection as well. In accordance with our research aims, the applied methods and theories should be interwoven with complexity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), therefore the participants of the research were approached on several levels and all groups involved were taken into consideration when selecting our data collection processes.

In our study we adopted *participative observation, reflective and research diaries* and *semi-structured interviews* together with other methodology techniques.

Participative observation

Participative observation of dance and movement therapeutic sessions was based on a theoretically grounded structured guide, the focus of which followed the structure of the sessions, it contained individual and collective aspects and referred also to the interactions during and in-between exercises within the therapeutic space. On the course of the moving sequences special attention was paid to the members' use of space, their relation to touches, the level of their presence and involvement, as well as their choice of pairs.

Reflective and research diaries

The process of research and therapy was accompanied by reflective and research diaries (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Charmaz, 2013), which contained the group leaders' deductive and inductive observations, the reflective dialogues following the sessions, the reflections on the different roles and research inspections of the group leaders, as well as the dialogues with the professionals of the institutions. The reflective and research diaries were, on the one hand, the main bases of the analysis, but on the other hand, they are documents which can help improve the work of qualitative research. With the help of reflective and research diaries the principles of group dynamics, life stages of group members, as well as their attitude to the method and the group itself can be traced. The diaries also showed how dance and movement

therapy practices were realised, how effective they were in special fields and processes, planning and methodological problems of the research were considered as well. All these supported establishing theories and analysis on the basis of GT (Charmaz, 2013).

Semi-structured interviews

When the therapy process ended, on the basis of the participative observation guided interviews took place with the participants' headmasters, school teachers and occasionally their school psychologists. The interviews consisted of primary and secondary pre-formulated questions or headlines (Szokolszky, 2004; Kvale, 2005) concerning the role of group members, their behaviour in the classroom, their motivation for movement and their communication strategies.

5. Research process

During dance and movement therapy we use a different "interaction language", other than in everyday life. Both the predominance of movement and non-verbal communication (gestures, mimics) and the possibility of touch are rules produced and used in a creative way in situations, which enable the participants to provide a wide range of interaction acts and events.

When studying dance and movement therapy processes with a qualitative approach in a special field, besides the holistic and transdisciplinary approach, it is necessary to apply a complex research plan, where aspects of both research and dance and movement therapy processes can appear. Our linear flow chart shows this process, when the two closely related fields are treated as one.¹ Prior to starting the dance and movement therapy process, we visited the co-therapists and the possible institutions and in case they were open to the study, we started to outline the ethical framework of the research. Together with the parents and the youngsters we formed the initial dance and movement therapy groups and asked the headmasters involved to hand in the open-ended questionnaires previously filled in. Then we started the dance and movement therapy process and data collection based on participative observation.

Six different groups participated in the research, that is, two groups of physically disabled people with multiple disability, a group of mentally able people with hearing impairments, a group of people with moderate mental disability, a group of people with learning disabilities and a mixed group of people with learning disability and moderate mental disability. The six groups (volunteer, SEN pupils from junior high schools) took part in the dance and movement therapy process in five different special educational institutions for two school years. During the research we worked together with 42 pupils, however, group leaders and in certain cases participant supporters were also included in the groups because in an intersubjective,

¹ Purple refers to dance and movement therapy, blue refers to research stages, when both colours appear, it means both fields are involved.

collective creation space all participants are both creators and parts of the process at the same time. In one school year there were three parallel group processes taking place every second week. We met the groups 100 times altogether for 45-60 minutes in the afternoon within the framework of research and dance and movement therapy.

Institution	Number of participants (boy/girl)	Full number in the group	Number of occasions
"A" institution 1. group	5 members (2/3)	8 members	18
"A" institution 2. group	6 members (2/4)	9 members	18
"B" institution	7 members (1/6)	9 members	16
"C" institution	7 members (5/2)	9 members	17
"D" institution	8 members (4/4)	11 members	17
"E" institution	9 members (3/6)	11 members	14
Total	42 members (17/25)	-	100

Table 2: Institutions and groups participating in the research

After each occasion a reflection of 60-90 minutes took place between the two group leaders focusing on the exercises, group dynamics, group members at present and the group leaders themselves. Following the closure of the whole process the institutional professionals were interviewed, so our analysis, which is very strongly based on grounded theory, dwells on both the reflective and research diaries and the opinions of the teachers involved.

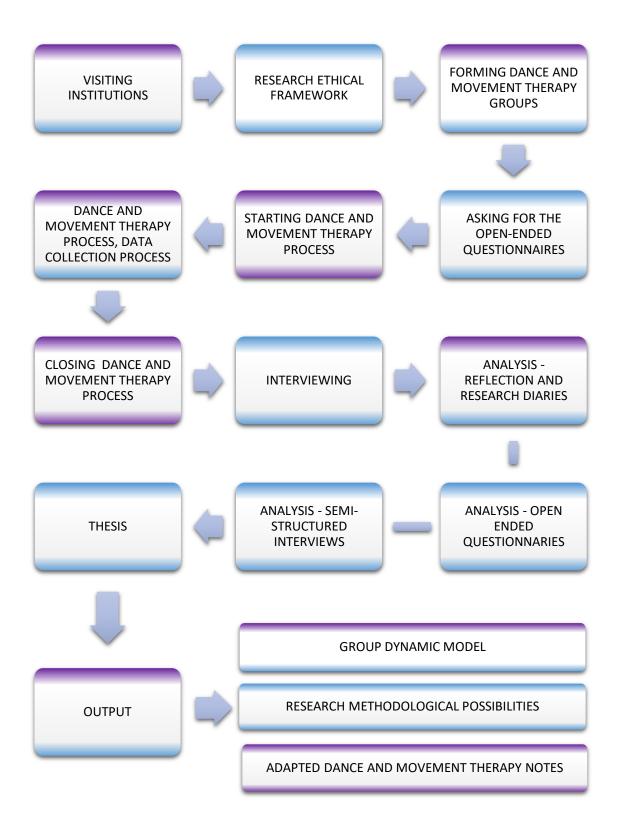


Figure 2: Research and therapeutical steps of the dance and movement therapy research (flow chart)

6. Analysis results

Our analysis is based on process analyzing strategies in the context of grounded theory (GT), while all the time monitoring the transdisciplinary nature of our theoretical starting points; the application of dance and movement therapy method in a special field; the exploratory nature of our research; the possibilities of our data collection processes and qualitative research paradigm defining our research. The concept of grounded theory fits in the research of a therapeutic process, as it offers a systematic approach to studying the development and changes of individual and interpersonal processes. Grounded theory follows interpretative traditions and is linked to the participatory paradigm. It is based on internal knowledge, so the process of research and analysis is initiated from the knowledge of the person collecting experiences (Kende & Illés, 2011; Charmaz, 2013; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Horváth & Mitev, 2015).

Creating theory can be defined as a circular process: in this concept data collection (participatory observation in the dance and movement therapy process), the therapeutic process, process analysis, the reflection of the researcher's previous professional experience and source analysis are simultaneously displayed and built on each other. Their combined presence and their interaction with each other provide the main basis of our analysis.

Our analysis in the context of grounded theory using process analysis strategies has three parts.

1. Presentation of the groups and dance and movement therapy processes

The groups taking part in the research are handled separately and we present the following about them: general characteristics of each group (class, grade, gender, age, average age, type of disability); the initial group structure based on our first observations; a description of the group members' personality characteristics based on their role behaviour (Rudas, 2016); the main exercises of dance and movement therapy sessions and the realization level of the sessions; the involvement patterns of the young people during each session. The latter two elements provided the basis for our group dynamics analysis, with the help of which one of our theoretical aspirations became visible: in fact, we could create a group dynamics model, valid for our groups.

Group dynamics and group members' level of involvement in dance and movement therapy sessions are very strongly influenced by group structure, general principles of group activity, the group members and leaders' current mood and state-of-mind. Some important factors in our case were the type of the institution, its size, the professionals' permanent support of the therapeutic and research process, which played a prominent role in creating and maintaining dance and movement therapy frameworks. Considering all the above, the general principles

of group dynamics, the specific features of dance and movement therapy are completed by certain aspects (special education, institutional) concerning this specific field.

2. Coding process in the context of grounded theory

During its phases some particular categories appeared with the help of which we could define new aspects of therapeutic factors and our dynamics analysis. As a result of the participative observation in our group processes, the analysis of the reflective and research diaries and the opinions of the teachers, two main categories and 4-4 analysis units (codes) were identified.

The two categories are named as Group/Relationship and Movement, to which four codes are related. With the help of these categories and codes, we presented the activity patterns of the six groups involved in the research, including their preferred interpersonal relations, group dynamics, changes in their space management or their motivation for movement.

Codes of Group/Relationship category	Focus points in the analysis (Reflective diary)	Focus points (Teachers' opinion)
Development of relationships during the process	Choosing a partner, preferred interpersonal relations Group exercises Group dynamics	Sociability Relationship between class or group members
Group behaviour patterns	Helping each other Self-regulation Control function of the group Individual ways	Change in behaviour Personality development
In case of verbality - the appearance of deeper, more personal topics	Guided topics Shared experiences	Expressing emotions
External and internal conflicts in the group	Conflicts within and outside the sessions Resistance strategies	Conflict management Giving or asking for help

Table 3: Codes of Group / Relationship category

Codes of Movement category	Focus points (Reflective diary)	Focus points (Interviews)
Differentiation of movement	Initial movement Changes in the relation to movement Expansion of movement repertoire	Motivation for movement Need for movement Development of movement
Appearance of creation Individual creation	Individual, free movement, improvisation Group improvisation Highlighted space	-
Space management	Process of recognizing space Confidential space Resistance strategy Consequences of changing space	-
Changes in the quality of touch Group members' relation to touch	Changes in the relation to touch	Pedagogical approach to touch and tactility

Table 4: Codes of Movement category

The results of our analysis confirm the concept of universality as one of our starting points and prove that we could put the six groups with different ability structures, that is with different types of disability into a shared analytical focus and we could treat these groups as one in terms of Group/Relationship or Movement categories.

3. Relevant therapeutic factors

The third part of our analysis results relates to therapeutic factors. The process analysis of dance and movement therapy revealed that by analyzing the dense dots and group dynamics elements, 6 out of the 11 therapeutic factors as defined by Yalom (2001) were found to be more relevant than the others for our groups. Meanwhile, the following factors, that is (1) Primary family bonds (2) Raising expectations (3) Exchanging information (4) Existential factors (5) Catharsis couldn't be looked upon as competent ones. As for the relevant factors, the process analysis of group dynamics and the qualitative analysis of the reflective diaries in the context of grounded theory show that six therapeutic factors (by Yalom) were present in our research project: (1) Interpersonal learning (2) Socializing techniques (3) Universality (4) Altruism (5) Imitative behaviour and (6) Group cohesion. The emergence of these therapeutic factors on the result that those therapeutic processes which focus on

groups are relevant in the specific field of special education as well. We could witness how group cohesion was formed in each group participating in the research, how group capacity of keeping members within the group was activated each time by the current dynamics of the group. In the method of dance and movement therapy, special attention is given to gaining shared experiences in the intersubjective space, which is well reflected in our results. The participants had the opportunity to experience both the development of their social skills and the dissolution of feeling loneliness. Meanwhile, some new therapeutical factors – characteristic to the groups involved in the research – appeared, which could be related mainly to dance and movement therapy.

Understanding as a therapeutic factor should not primarily be interpreted as a cognitive skill, much rather as a reflective behavioural response to how dance and movement therapy process functions. Understanding is in close correlation with the dynamic changes of the group process: at the beginning participants seek to grab the meaning of the activity, then they get some movement and group experiences, finally they 'arrive' in the process of dance and movement therapy. In this way a space of shared movement activity is created, where participants take action in a familiar and comprehensible way.

Providing models as a therapeutic factor is primarily specific of the research and the method of dance and movement therapy. It precedes Yalom's imitative behaviour, which means that group members observe the behaviour of group leaders and their peers, and as a result, they try to act by these new behaviour patterns. Providing models is a guided version of imitation: during dance and movement therapy sessions, group leaders deliberately show movement patterns to group members.

Trust as a therapeutic factor affects participants' confidence in both the dance and movement therapy method and the group leader and groupmates. During therapeutic sessions, acquiring shared bodily and movement experiences is emphasized, so mutual confidence between participants is essential: to feel trust, members need to get used to the group leader whom they have not known before, they should accept his/her personality in a safe and steady environment of the therapeutic sessions.

Participation as a therapeutic factor involves several elements, both the research and the therapeutic process take place within a participatory paradigm. The possibility of decision-making follows from this approach, members can decide if they want to belong to the group, how they want to realize an exercise, whom they want to be paired with. Participants are creators of a shared process and in order to guarantee proper group activity, they should take responsibility for their own presence and decisions. This therapeutic concept can pave the way to a possible internal demand and self-advocacy.

7. Summary

As a summary of our research and analysis, we believe that the research focusing on the methodology of PMT and the therapeutical processes focusing on the group as such have relevance in the specific field of special education, keeping the transdisciplinary nature and holistic approach of the theoretical bases. Our research is - from the very beginning - of complex nature, it has both research and therapeutical focuses and aims to which our main questions are closely linked. The process of dance and movement therapy accompanied by research and carried out in six groups, as well as our research results and the answers to the research questions confirm the relevance of our starting points.

Questions, possibilities, dimensions and challenges of implementation, together with the reflections given to them by the research leaders and the therapeutic group leaders, characterize our research and thesis. All these are usually essential features of an exploratory, prospective, qualitative paper of this kind. There has been no research done either in Hungary or abroad so far that would combine the method of dance and movement therapy with the specific field of special education and the systematic analysis of group dynamics. Our research concept thus underlines the exploratory character of the research, which in itself assumes and expects a creative approach to the research process, thus providing opportunities to examine our starting point, that is how we can follow dance and movement therapy processes by research. However, it is important to note that these are also the most significant challenges of our research. Although requirements concerning quantitative research for testing hypotheses were not considered as bounds of our research, we encountered some challenges specific of dance and movement therapy processes and the field of special education.

One of the challenges was the conflict between the roles of one person in the participative observation, namely the role of the researcher being also the group leader and the leader of the therapeutic process. This conflict has been addressed from many aspects, e.g. with different levels of reflectivity in mind (Szivák, 2010), with being aware of the importance of introspection and self-examination elements (Horváth & Mitev, 2015; Mruck & Breuer, 2003) or the accurate documentation of these elements in our reflective and research diaries.

Another challenge was the difficulty of verbality in both our therapeutic and research focuses. Verbal feedback from the participants of the therapy and research could have broaden the spectrum of our analysis, making the presence of participants in the research and analysis process even more intense. The possibility of verbality as it normally occurs in the original methodology of psychodynamic dance and movement therapy was quite limited in our research, both because of age-group characteristics and of the specific fields of the study. After all, this challenge could be put at the service of our adaptation effort, so verbal difficulty has become one of the focal points when it comes to adapted dance and movement therapy method. However, it is necessary to note that in order to answer this important question of our research, it would be worth considering to plan some further studies in the topic.

As we see, therapeutic factors and group dynamics models developed in our research should be further studied, also we strongly believe that the present research and its results can be the base and starting point of an impact assessment if institutional and interdisciplinary professional teams have adequate financial and human resources. In the present thesis our analysis in the context of grounded theory focused on movement and the group as such, but since in the reflective and research diaries the aspects of *body*-related experiences and the topic of *power* appeared, we would emphasize to proceed our analysis in these directions as well.

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