

# Editorial: Special issue: Bodily Learning Conference 2021

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The articles presented in this special issue were first presented at the international conference BODILY LEARNING, arranged by NTNU, Trondheim (2021, 22.–23. April, digital event).

The aim of the conference was to continue the ongoing discussion about the role of the body in educational contexts. Bodily learning challenges dominant learning theory. Therefore, an engaged discourse on the topic that is open for new perspectives is needed. By discussing bodily learning, we may contribute to extending and rearticulating learning theories and initiate the development of new knowledge on how the body is involved in learning processes.

In this special issue, we gather articles that shed light on diverse practices and research fields about body and learning. The following topics were considered for submission:

1. Critical investigations of how bodily learning challenges learning theory as an educational practice and research field
2. The contribution from bodily learning to formation of learning theories within different subject fields like arts, physical education, languages, vocational subjects, social sciences, natural sciences, or other fields
3. The contribution of bodily learning to de-colonialization of predominantly Western learning theories in formal educational contexts
4. Critical studies on how bodily learning is presented or lacks presentation in different educational policy texts, practices, or organisations

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5. The learning potential in the different relationships between human and non-human bodies
6. The teacher profession as bodily learning

The six articles included in this special issue have been through 1–3 phases of double peer review in the period of June 2021–May 2022. These articles show complexity, breadth and depth in different issues on bodily learning.

**Maria Grindheim, Tiri Bergesen Schei and Elin Eriksen Ødegaard** investigated how the term *movement* is used in the framework plan for kindergartens in Norway. One conclusion of the study “**Children’s movement according to the Norwegian Framework Plan: A document analysis**” is that there is a need for a more elaborated definition of the term, including a holistic approach to the aspect of movement to foster preschoolers’ development. Furthermore, the authors suggest that educational design for kindergarten should not only focus on the development of motor skills but also on children’s emotional, communicative, and kinesthetic discovery of their being, self and their environment.

What is a body and how can it be defined? **Tone Pernille Østern, Rikke Axelsen Sundberg and Rose Martin** challenge the concept of body in their study “**The body – friend or foe in dance.**”

When the term ‘body’ was introduced into the draft of the new national curriculum of upper secondary school subject Dance techniques in Norway in 2019/2020, it became clear that there was disagreement amongst the parties involved in the hearing process about the meaning of the word ‘body.’ Using critical discourse analysis, the authors disclose a disembodied view of the body and assume a still prevalent desire in parts of the dance community to disembody, disengage and desensitize the dancing body and, consequently an underlying deny of the bodily turn.

How is embodied knowledge transmitted? **Hilde Ervik, Tone Pernille Østern and Alex Strømme** studied how Norwegian fishermen pass their experienced based knowledge. In their narrative inquiry-based study they show that fishermen’s knowledge is deeply embodied and not even perceived as ‘knowledge.’ In the article “**A narrative inquiry into fishermen’s experience-based knowledge**” the authors give insight into fishermen’s embodied working practices that has been handed down in communities of practice over generations where bodily experience and actions speak louder than words.

Embodied knowledge is also in the center of interest in **Hilde Rustad’s and Gunn Engelsrud’s** article “**A dialogical encounter with teaching practice-based subjects in higher education.**” Bodily and interaffective relations between teachers and students play a significant role in dance education. By analyzing the dialogue about their teaching practices in dance teaching, the researchers reveal that

they as teachers constantly develop knowledge by interacting with the students – moving bodies communicate meaning. Students and teachers’ embodied knowledges are shaped and passed in an interplay. Student teachers that are given the opportunity to react freely to their teacher’s bodily impulse will create awareness for the fact that teaching is anchored in the body.

How the body can be understood as a professional knowledge is also in focus in the article **“Entangled bodily planning – developing bodily workshop design for kindergarten teachers’ bodily professional knowledge through somatic dance,”** by **Ida Pape-Pedersen and Live Strugstad**. The authors present a study of how they collaboratively and bodily planned dance workshops with the aim of developing bodily professional knowledge for kindergarten teachers. The authors argue that bodily planning is of high value to sense what is at stake when aiming to develop workshop design for bodily professional knowledge.

How are bodily experiences intertwined? In the last article, **“Analyzing students’ experience of bodily learning – an autoethnographic study of the challenges and opportunities in researching bodily learning in own teaching practice”**, **Trine Ørbæk** presents a study that explores challenges and opportunities in trying to capture students’ experience of bodily learning based on own teaching practice in teacher education. The study shows, from the point of view of her own teaching practice, that various dilemmas were unveiled. One result of this study is that encounters with others can induce body memories that have impact on the analytical process. The findings indicate that reflection on affective and emotive experience from own teaching practice is crucial in research on students’ bodily learning in own teaching practice.

The here gathered articles reveal that the concept of bodily learning roams in an area of tension, including research on and thereof of bodily learning, national curricula, professional knowledge and practice, creating/provoking resistance in practice, higher education, and research. It seems that the “bodily turn,” as Eva Anttila (2013/2019) suggests, has not yet been operationalized in higher education. This brings forth a need for developing new ways of investigating the body and bodily learning in order to explore and communicate findings with relevance to both practice, research fields, education and policy documents.

Based on the findings from the articles in this special issue, we will argue that ignoring the body, emotions and bodily learning in school, education and professions will exclude a ‘silent’ dimension of knowledge in learning, teaching, professional practice, and research. Ignoring the body means also ignoring pupils’, teachers’, practitioners’, and researchers’ embodied knowledge and embodied experiences of being a human being, that is always present in all human relations. We conclude that there is an urgent need for further research in the field and the development of new research methods in order to develop more knowledge of bodily learning and the impact of bodily learning on educational and professional contexts, and on practitioners, pupils,

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and students' learning processes. We also need a discussion of how to understand bodily learning as a concept in an educational and professional context. We hope these articles will initiate further discussions in the new, and fast-growing, research field.

Larvik 23.6.2022

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Trondheim 23.6.2022

Karen Bauer

## **References**

Anttila, E. (2019). Kroppslig læring og dans: En teoretisk-filosofisk bakgrunn (T. P. Østern, Trans). *På Spissen forskning/Dance Articulated, Special Issue Bodily Learning*, (3), 45–72. <http://dx.doi.org/10.18862/ps.2019.503.3> (Original work published 2013)