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'Feeling better': embodied self-knowledge as an aspect of movement capability

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ABSTRACT

Background: The literature on movement capability critiques the traditional content of physical education (i.e. the what of physical education) and the subject's reliance on teacher-led methods (i.e. the how of physical education). By re-focusing the content as well as the teaching methods of physical education, the literature on movement capabilities as providing a more student-centered approach to a form of physical education, which is less focused on developing skills and techniques in sporting activities. One important aspect of movement capability is to develop the students' bodily awareness of their own way of moving. However, our contention is that the focus on students' bodily awareness this is done in the service of improving specific movements.

Purpose: In this paper, we want to explore how embodied self-knowledge itself can be considered a movement capability. More specifically, the question guiding this article is: What is there to learn about oneself as a mover in physical education, when one moves without aiming to perfect a specific movement?

Method: The paper draws on analyses from an auto-ethnographic study performed by one of the authors [Bratten, J. H. (2017). *Aktiviteter med lav puls og liten kraft i kroppøvingssog breddeidrettsfaget*. [Activities with low pulse and little exertion]. Master thesis. Oslo Metropolitan University. Oslo, Norway.]. More specifically, she was investigating her role as a teacher in a specific course unit that she had developed, called 'Activities with low pulse and little exertion.' This content, consisting of lessons given over a period of 5–8 weeks, is based on traditionally eastern forms of activity like yoga and Qi-gong, where the aim is to move through certain poses with attention directed inwardly and towards breathing. These analyses are combined with theoretical resources from somaesthetics [Shusterman, 2008 *Body Consciousness. A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2012 *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*. Cambridge University Press] in order to elucidate how the course unit can be understood to work with the students' embodied self-knowledge.

Results: By employing Shusterman's fine-grained descriptions of somesthetical movement practices, we are able to highlight that knowing oneself in movement is a valuable end in itself, not only a means to accomplishing specific movements. Our contribution then has been to give an example of how movement capabilities can be conceived of, when movement is understood as a process that can help students to feel better without the need to perform.



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Movement capabilities – our assumptions and starting point

The aim of this article is to add a dimension to the literature on movement capability that we find missing, namely how knowledge about oneself as an embodied, moving human being can be considered an integral part of movement capability. The basic tenets and empirical findings from the literature on movement capability (e.g. Bergentoft 2018; Nyberg 2014a, 2014b; Nyberg and Carlgren 2015) is thoroughly covered elsewhere in this special issue. For the purpose of this article, there are nevertheless some aspects of the movement capability literature that we will highlight.

First of all, our interpretation of this literature is that it critiques the traditional content in physical education, i.e. the ‘what’ of the subject (Larsson and Nyberg 2017; Nyberg and Larsson 2014). More specifically, there is a commonly held view that physical education puts too much emphasis on a narrow selection of sport activities and the techniques, skills and tactics of these activities (Bailey et al. 2009; Kirk 2010). Working with movement capability is an effort at broadening the content of physical education. Secondly, the literature on movement capability also represents an alternative to traditional teaching methods, i.e. the ‘how’ of physical education (Karlefors and Larsson 2018). In the place of teacher-led instructional methods, also referred to as the DEP-model (Demonstration-Explanation-Practice) (Tinning 2010), the literature on movement capability suggests that *guided discovery* is an equally important teaching method (Barker et al. 2017).

By re-focusing the content as well as the teaching methods of physical education, we interpret the literature on movement capabilities as providing a more student-centered approach to a form of physical education, which is less focused on developing a narrow selection of skills and techniques in sporting activities. Adding to this, one of the intentions of movement capability is to develop the students’ bodily awareness of their own way of moving (e.g. Bergentoft 2018; Nyberg 2014b). However, our interpretation is that the focus on students’ bodily awareness is emphasized in the service of improving specific capabilities. While we share many of the fundamental assumptions about teaching, learning and the content of physical education expressed in the movement capability literature, we want to explore how embodied self-knowledge itself can be considered a movement capability. More specifically, the question guiding this article is: What is there to learn about oneself as a mover in physical education, when one moves without aiming to perfect a specific movement?

An auto-ethnographic account of being a different physical education teacher

For the purpose of the paper, we draw on an auto-ethnographic account of being a different physical education teacher (Bratten 2017) together with more theoretical-reflective analysis of embodied self-knowledge. We come to this collaborative paper with quite different starting points, but with joint assumptions about what our contribution to the movement capability literature should be. One of us (Judith) has worked for over 40 years teaching physical education at different levels of the Norwegian school system. She then went on to take a master’s degree in educational science before taking up a position in physical education teacher education. The other author (Øyvind) has worked in academia with sport pedagogy and physical education teacher education for several years. Although he has taught physical education in schools, his main teaching experience is within physical education teacher education. Øyvind was Judith’s supervisor on her master thesis (Bratten 2017).

Autoethnography is a research method which has emerged from postmodern philosophies that challenge traditional ways of knowing. The auto-ethnographical method employs, according to Hamilton, Smith, and Worthington (2008, 24), the ‘ethnographic wide-angle lens with a focus on the social and cultural aspects of the personal.’ Thus, as pointed out by Chang (2008), auto-ethnographies combine cultural analyses with narrative interpretations of lived experiences. Collinson and Hockey (2005) further remind us that the auto-ethnographical method challenges one of the most deeply held traditions in research, namely the distanced, neutral and non-involved researcher. However, while that is true, it must also be borne in mind that by focusing on the self, the auto-

ethnographic researcher aims to elucidate cultural and social features of the context in which the self is embedded. As such, this research method is not a form of introspection or auto-biography, although both of these are a part of the auto-ethnographical method.

As Stahlke Wall (2016) points out, autoethnography 'makes room for divers and nontraditional ways of knowing' that draws on personal experience in order to extend sociological and educational understanding. Stahlke Wall further points out that there exist polarized debates among autoethnographic researchers, for instance about whether the method should be creative and evocative or more traditionally focused on theoretical and analytical applications. This opposition should not be considered as a binary, but rather as placed on a continuum (Collinson and Hockey 2005). In this sense, good autoethnographic research is systematic in linking 'personal experience to social, cultural and political issues' (Stahlke Wall 2016, 5) while also being critical of dominating discourses in the socio-cultural context being studied.

Before and during her master studies, Judith also worked as a physical education teacher in an upper secondary school in Norway with specific emphasis on sports. More specifically, Judith was investigating her role as a teacher in a specific course unit that she had developed, called 'Activities with low pulse and little exertion.' This content, consisting of lessons given over a period of 5–8 weeks, is based on traditionally eastern forms of activity like yoga and Qi-gong, where the aim is to move through certain poses with attention directed inwardly and towards breathing. These activities are combined with visualization techniques, modernized (westernized) ways of massage inspired by Maori-culture. Finally, various forms of indigenous dances are incorporated into the program. While this brief description of the teaching course unit does not give justice to finer details, the main point for Judith has always been to provide a different approach to body and movement for her students.

Judith has provided this program to her students in over 30 years. That is, while activities like yoga, mindfulness and relaxation are now becoming more commonplace and accepted, they were foreign to the physical education environment in which Judith worked. This feeling of being a different teacher, subjected to mockery from colleagues, sometimes even harassed, shaped Judith's interest in doing an auto-ethnographic study of teaching 'activities with low pulse and little exertion'. Therefore, during the fall term of the year she was both working as a teacher and doing her master's thesis, she carefully produced and analyzed the data material for her thesis.

The data consisted of conversations between Judith and her students, the students' reflective journals as well as XX's own log book. The material was generated during the teaching period, but it also included some 'memory work' (Ovens and Tinning 2009) by Judith, reflecting on her history as a teacher. Two groups of students (in total 37 students) took part in the program for 5 weeks each. One of the groups was a regular class of students specializing in sports and the other group was made up of students who due to illness or injury needed special attention. After each lesson, the students wrote a reflective log based on questions prompted by Judith. Examples of questions are 'which expectations did you have?', 'what did you experience today?' 'did you find anything uncomfortable?' These questions sought to tap into the students' experiences, not only for research purposes, but also to stimulate the students' learning. In addition, Judith's own log book about the teaching process was a part of the data material. Here questions like 'what caught my attention today?' 'what was my intention?' were important prompts for reflection. In addition, descriptions of moments, in particular those that had emotional significance were written down. Finally, Judith conducted interviews with groups of students.

Data were analyzed according to guidelines for auto-ethnographic method (Chang 2008), with a particular emphasis on the relationship between the analyzing self and the socio-cultural context the self is woven into. The results were presented in the master's thesis, but for the purpose of this paper, we draw on some of the analysis from Judith's master thesis that we re-frame by situating them in relation to the concept of movement capability. We also draw and expand on (some of) the theoretical framework from her thesis, which concerns embodied learning (Standal 2015) and somesthetics (Shusterman 2008; Shusterman 2006). While the latter perspective to some extent

has been used to ground the theoretical development of movement capabilities (Nyberg and Carlgren 2015), our aim is to add further depth to this development.

Embodied learning: a somasthetics perspective

In this section, we will make clear the theoretical perspective that has informed the analysis of XX's movement program and its relation to movement capability. We have both been concerned with the role of the body in movement, learning, and in human existence more broadly. As such, embodied learning is a key concept in our respective work, and we understand embodied learning from a phenomenological perspective (Standal 2015).

Embodiment has emerged as an important concept in many disciplines over the last couple of decades (Cheville 2005). Central to embodiment is the understanding that the body is not only *connected* to subjective experiences – rather, it is *the ground* of such experiences (Standal 2020). By drawing on phenomenological philosophers, such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1963; 2002) physical education researchers have explored the role of the body in learning (Arnold 1979; Brown and Payne 2009; Standal 2015; Stolz 2015).

Standal (2015) argues that since practical knowledge is expressed through actions, activities and practices (Carr 1981), embodied learning is a particularly important concept in physical education. The learner, as an embodied subject, expresses his/her knowing by embodying the knowledge objects. This perspective on embodied learning has some important implications for the purpose of this paper. First, it implies that the student/learner is always both the object of learning (I learn to move my by objectifying the body or parts of the body) and simultaneously the subject of learning (the *I* who learns to move is an embodied being). The body is thus something we both are and have. In this sense, the phenomenological perspective represents an alternative to both the dualism which is prevalent in thinking about the body in physical education (Tinning 2010), as well as an alternative to the monism expounded by proponents of physical literacy (Durden-Myers and Whitehead 2018). Second, and following from the first point: when we learn to move, we also learn about ourselves (Standal 2015).

Somesthetics

In the following, we will expand on our perspective on embodied learning by presenting Richard Shusterman's concept of somesthetics, which will be used to analyze stories from Judith's teaching. The goal of this analysis is to throw light on movement capabilities. Shusterman defines somesthetics as concerning

the body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning... it aims to enrich not only our abstract, discursive knowledge of the body but also our lived somatic experience and performance; it seeks to enhance the understanding, efficacy, and beauty of our movements and improve the environments to which our movements contribute and from which they draw their energies and significance. (2012, 27)

Somesthetics is thus the splicing of two words, soma (body) and aesthetics/aesthesis (in this case esthesis as sensory-aesthetic appreciation). As an aesthetic practice, somesthetics is concern with perception, consciousness and feelings of the body. One very interesting aspect of somesthetics is the aim of *feeling better* (Shusterman 2012, 111) with which Shusterman points to the dual meaning of both enjoying better feelings in the body and in movement and/or to perceive more accurately what we experience in our bodies. This dual notion of feeling better, and its implication for movement capability lies at the heart of our argument.

While there are fleeting references to Shusterman's work in the movement capability literature (Nyberg 2014b; Nyberg 2015), to the best of our knowledge, his perspective has not been applied in analysis of movement capability. Standal (2015) has argued that Shusterman's work on somesthetics

is of relevance for physical education ‘because he has developed a way of turning explicit attention to the body while at the same time respecting the subjectively lived experiences of the body’ (102). For Shusterman (2012), a basic idea of somesthetics is that as a field of study, somesthetics aims to ‘enhance the understanding, efficacy, and beauty of our movements and improve the environments to which our movements contribute and from which they draw their energies and significance’ (27). In the following, our presentation of somesthetics is weaved together with vignettes from Judith’s autoethnographic study.

While preparing for my master thesis, I read research about the history of physical education and its teaching practices. This made me aware that I had been an untraditional physical education and sport teacher. Since the end of the 80-ties, I have used eastern training methods and massage in my classes. The activity program I have developed came from my own interest in yoga, qigong, massage, dance and relaxation-techniques. My students’ positive feedback on these activities were meaningful to me and made me continue to develop the program. However, providing these activities also made me being seen as different by others. Colleagues questioned whether these activities belonged in physical education. Gradually, I got the feeling of being othered and felt that I had to ‘tread lightly’ with my approach to physical education. It became particularly difficult when I began working at a high school with sport specialization. I felt on thin ice, not knowing how to respond to comments like ‘you shouldn’t let your students sleep during physical education!’

It is useful to highlight the distinction between analytical, pragmatic and practical branches of somesthetics (Shusterman 2008). *Analytical* somesthetics is concerned with theoretical analysis. By drawing on various philosophers, such as Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone DeBeauvoir, Ludwig Wittgenstein, William James and John Dewey, Shusterman (2008) creates a humanistic approach to somatic experience. Through sociological and cultural analyses, he also shows how the body is shaped by social powers. Analytical somesthetics further includes interdisciplinary work with the natural sciences, such as biology and physiology. By drawing on these different intellectual sources, Shusterman has developed insights into the role of the body as instrumental in movement and in life more generally. Furthermore, he has also analyzed how our bodily life is constrained by social structures and thus becomes an instrument used by forces of power and domination.

In a culture dominated by natural scientific approach to sports, physical education and the body, Judith experienced that her approach was being questioned and seen as a deviation from what ‘normal’ physical education should be like. Although she believed strongly in the value of the experiences she provided, and in spite of positive feedback from her students, Judith found it difficult to mount sufficient arguments in favor of her approach. Somesthetics, and the theoretical and philosophical traditions that Shusterman draws on, was experienced as a validation for Judith. It showed her that there existed theoretical traditions that could provide arguments for her teaching program. More importantly, somesthetics therefore served as a language to express other ways of knowing and moving than the more technological, third-person language of the natural sciences.

Pragmatic somesthetics is the critical and comparative study of various methods and practices that aim

to improve the experience and use of our bodies: various diets; modes of grooming and decoration; meditative, martial and erotic arts; aerobic; dance; massage; bodybuilding; and modern psychosomatic disciplines such as the Alexander Technique and the Feldenkreis Method. (43)

One distinction within pragmatic somesthetics is between practices that are *self-directed* or *other directed*: a massage therapist is other-directed in her practice, while you would be considered self-directed when you participate in a yoga class. Teaching physical education would probably mostly be considered as other directed. However, in XX’s analysis it is also clearly something that can be self-directed:

How beautiful it is to see the boys and the girls dancing with scarfs around their hips to the soft Hawaiian rhythms. I catch up on and becomes a part of the movements to some of the students. They enjoy it. I stop and tell them about young football players who love their sport so much that they bring the ball with

them to bed. – ‘Now I want you to dance with the scarfs and imagine that the scarf is your best friend.’ They make it! Then, in flow, the group is lined up face to face. They are going to use scarfs, body and facial expressions to chase others away or ask them to come closer. They are going to express pride, sadness, fear, anger and happiness with their bodies and faces. They don’t want to stop. As we end the lesson with a Haka from New Zealand, some of them ask: can we do more of this? Others are quiet.

Both enjoying the sight of students immersed in activity, but also taking part, moving together with students can be a source for enjoyment for a teacher.

Furthermore, somesthetics can be considered as *holistic or atomistic*: Whereas atomistic somesthetics can be exemplified with a bodybuilder who is intensely concerned with training specific muscles or groups of muscles, holistic somesthetics draws attention to the person as an integrated whole. Also, somesthetics can be aimed at *external appearance or inner experience*. At one level this distinction is concerned with representations of the surface body (piercing, cosmetic surgery) or experiential activities that aim to heighten our inner sensitivities (e.g. yoga) respectively. This distinction can also be referred to as either representational or experiential categories of somesthetics. Yet another category is performative somesthetics, which are disciplines that aim to build strength, skill and/or health. However, as Shusterman (2008, 45) points out ‘to the extent that these disciplines aim either at the external exhibition of performance or at one’s inner feeling of power or skill, they might be associated with or assimilated into the representational or experiential categories.’

African rhythms fill the room. The students are told to wriggle their hips. Jenny, one of the students, looks down on her hips, looks at the other students and looks anxiously over at me. ‘This is hard’. Suddenly, she exclaims: ‘How cool, I can feel something within my hips! I am dancing!’ Four weeks after, when the program is over, Jenny writes in her reflective journal: ‘Honestly, I think this has been an exciting course. I think it is exciting to see what kind of impact it had on me when we were doing practical stuff. As a football player, who always has a lot of energy and want to do things with a lot of intensity. But when we have spent time relaxing and breath calmly (stretching is what I would have called it earlier if I hadn’t learned about all this), I have felt like an alien in my own body, because I really didn’t know that I could take things slowly. To feel through the body and feel my heart pound slowly is a very soothing sensation’.

By participating in a program that focuses on inner experience rather than performance or training of a correct technique, the student in this vignette experiences her body in a new way. She is able to notice sensations in parts of her body that she has not had contact with earlier. Also, she can experience a slower form of energy as enjoyable, as a contrast to the intensity with which she is normally used to move. The vignette can also serve as an example of the dual meaning of *feeling better*. Clearly, Jenny felt better with herself when she finally experienced that she was able to move her hips in rhythm with the music. But she also felt better in the sense that she was able to notice certain aspects of her body that she earlier had not known about.

It is important to emphasize that the distinctions between holistic/atomistic, self-/other-directed and inner experience/external appearance are more matters of degree rather than either/or categories. As Shusterman (2008, 44) puts it, it is a matter of ‘dominant tendency rather than rigid dichotomy’. In the following vignette, this is highlighted by how students performing a massage on each other must be attentive both to themselves and their partner:

The students are grouped in pairs for a short massage. I show and explain with one student, while the others are following my instructions: ‘You are allowed to be playful and have fun, but at the same time you have to behave responsibly and pay close attention to what you feel when your hands are on your partner. Feel that you breath and move softly. Your hands become like feline paws, like a panther, a lion or a kitten. Move your hands over your partner’s shoulders. Now, move with soft movements across the shoulders towards the neck: what force are you applying? Does your partner like what you are doing? Let your paws have claws’ I demonstrate how the fingers can carefully rasp down the back. We continue with different ways of touching and massaging each other, before they shift roles. I have a strong wish that my students should feel well. In a way I try to seduce them with my voice, my music and the picture that I visualize. I know that many of them transcend some borders when it comes to touch and intimacy. A thought strikes me! Is this ethical? I can see that the students relax and enjoy it. They are challenged in terms of how to apply force with their hands and their

movements and they have to relate to another body in a quiet and attentive way. They have to pick up on signals from the other, they learn to communicate with their bodies.

The final branch of somesthetics is the *practical*, which concerns the actual engagement in somesthetical programs or practices. Shusterman is deeply concerned with systematically performing, whether for representational, experiential or performative reasons, activities and practices that aim at somatic self-improvement. His ideas about the body and somesthetical practices are in line with the perspective on embodied learning that we briefly introduced above. In actual practice, the body is both a purposful subjectivity and

the user of the tool it is In educating and cultivating the sensibility of somaesthetic awareness to improve our thinking through the body, we not only enhance the material means of human culture but also our capacities to enjoy it. (45–46)

Movement capability and embodied self-awareness

The program that Judith has developed over the years has in this article been analyzed with the help of Shusterman's idea of somesthetics. It has, as we shall see, also helped us bring forth a point of interest for the literature on movement capability that we find has been missing. Overall, and in light of Shusterman's (2008; 2012) idea of somesthetics, the activity program called 'activities with low pulse and little exertion' can be characterized as a holistic and (for the students) self-directed practice aimed primarily at inner experience.

Although it is primarily directed at holistic experiences, these experiences are also gained by being attentive towards specific parts of the body (as illustrated in the vignette with Jenny) and/or focusing on other's bodies (as in the case of massages). Shusterman (2008) describes a form of body scan in which attention is slowly and meticulously directed to specific parts of the body as an example of how turning attention inwards towards specific parts of the body can be conducive to feel oneself better. However, the flow of activities in the activity program ensures that attention is moved from specific body parts to more holistic experiences of the body in movement (Standal 2015). Indeed, as pointed out by Shusterman (2008, 44), these distinctions are more to be thought of as matters of degree rather than as a clear-cut division. The same can be said about how the activities are mostly self-directed. Both during the activities and in the reflections over the activities, the students are taught to notice and pay attention to their own experiences. But, through activities like massage and dance, the students are encouraged to be bodily aware of others. During these kinds of activities, the students can experience transgressing others' or their own comfort zones when it comes to touching. In these instances, when the students work in pairs, it is vital to be explicit about both students' responsibility to be sensitive to their partner. As such, activities that may feel transgressive also may cultivate a heightened sense of embodied relationality (Connolly 1995).

While some of the activities, like dancing and yoga, have certain aspects that could be thought of as performative (i.e. there are some ways of moving that are considered as better than others), the main intention of these activities are the inner experience students have while taking part. We could think of this distinction between performative and inner experience as that between dance as a noun and as a verb (Borgen and Engelsrud 2020): once dancing (or running or playing football) is turned into a noun, the process of dancing becomes reified to an object which is (or at least can be) circumscribed with standards for right or wrong. Again, it must be emphasized that this distinction is a matter of degree. It should also be emphasized that in the same class, different student may find the same activity (dancing, for instance) enjoyable or not *due* to its performative potential, while others may find pleasure *despite* the same performative potential. All of this requires sensitive participation of a teacher. As we showed earlier, Judith found that teaching was a self-directed somesthetical practice (Britten 2017). Even though we will not go so far as to

say that teaching physical education for one's own sake as a teacher is a requirement, we want to suggest that this aspect of being a physical education teacher is an unexplored area in the literature.

As stated in the introduction, we share some fundamental assumptions with the literature on movement capabilities when it comes to the *what* and *how* of physical education. However, our approach in this article differs from (or stated more positively: adds to) the movement capability literature in the sense that we are primarily concerned with the students' own experiences of moving and being in movement rather than with learning and perfecting specific movements. Movement capability researchers are interested in how students' embodied experiences, feelings and sensations are important for learning to move in different ways, but these ways of movement are nevertheless connected to specific activities and practices, such as running (Bergentoft 2018), pole vaulting (Nyberg 2014b), juggling (Nyberg, Barker, and Larsson 2020), house hopping (Nyberg and Carlgren 2015) and so on.

In one study, Nyberg (2015) explored what it means to know complex movements by studying free skiers. Her analysis suggests that in contrast to velocity as a bio-mechanical, third-person measurement, the participants in the study experienced their body in movement as a form of *somatic velocimeter* that enabled them to both discern and modify their own velocity for instance in the in-run to a jump. While Nyberg takes care to point out that 'the capability to *grasp relationships between movement actions, discerning one's velocity or navigating one's embodied awareness* will reflect an engagement in the learner's learning rather than in how movements should be performed from a technical point of view' (501. Italics in original), it is also clear from the article that the participants' somatic grasping of their own speed turned out to be significant for improving movements, and for performing tricks on the slope. In other words: paying attention to one's own movements – feeling better, as Shusterman (2008) might have put it – is seen as valuable. However, it appears to be valuable first and foremost in a performative perspective. That is, it stands in the service of improving one's proficiency in skiing.

Bergentoft (2018) examined how students, aged 16–19 learned to analyze sensations and feelings while running. In the study, a series of physical education lessons were planned and conducted on the tenets of variation theory, with the aim of teaching students awareness of critical aspects of running (e.g. position of head, chest and hip). In her analysis, Bergentoft showed how students learned to discover these critical aspects through bodily awareness and watching themselves on video. More specifically, Bergentoft concludes that 'the study reveals that focus on the object of learning and its critical aspects, instead of the activity per se, creates potential for students to develop their body awareness' (18).

In both these examples, learning about oneself as a mover, being able to feel better in the sense of more precisely being aware of the position and movements of one's own body is highlighted. However, in these studies, as in the literature on movement capability more generally, body awareness, knowing oneself in movement, is primarily a means towards another end, which is to perform a movement whether this is running or a free ski jump. Even though Nyberg (2015), for instance, clearly states the movement capability perspective is concerned with the learner's learning rather than performing the movement in accordance with a technical standard, movements are still reified as nouns. Nevertheless, we want to make clear that our point is not a critique of improving and using body awareness in order to perfect a specific movement performance. Rather to the contrary, as Øyvind Standal 2015, p. VV. Italics added) has written earlier:

Shusterman also argues that the methods of somaesthetics can help improve skills. Experiencing the body as an object enables skill learning by helping the moving subject to become more aware of how she performs her movements. *More precisely, it is not the end product of the performance she becomes aware of, but the way her body moves through space in order to complete the performance:* What does it feel like to move? By becoming more aware, the moving subject can more easily improve her existing habits, develop new ones and repair faulty ones.

According to Shusterman (2008), a core philosophical injunction is 'know thyself.' He argues that this knowing also includes our embodiment. If physical education should indeed be an

education of the physical, especially in the sense of educating the whole human being, then knowing oneself *in movement*, is a valuable end in itself. It is not only a means to improving or perfecting specific movements. Our contribution with this article has then been to highlight that there is a value to embodied self-knowledge. Furthermore, the movement program we have presented and analyzed can be conceived of as a process that help students to feel better without the need to perform.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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