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Self-Assessment of Sports-Motor Skills for Will-Be Nursery and Elementary Teachers in Italy

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Abstract

The present academic Italian system in force as of 2011-2012, describing again the didactic-disciplinary features of the degree course of Science of Primary Education, in response to the formative needs that appear in the nursery and primary Italian school, making more and more use of qualified teachers, raises the issue of the importance that in the curricula of future teachers there should be both knowledge and skills that relate to different fields among including the motor-sport field. This research aims to evaluate, through a multiple-choice questionnaire, the way the first year students of the Degree Course in Primary Formation Sciences perceive their own basic skills regarding sports-motor activities and analyze if the students are able or unable to make ad appropriate self-assessment. At the end of the theoretical course of the first semester, each student has been given a questionnaire on the motor autobiography composed of seven closed- questions concerning: *structure of spatial and temporal organization; orientation; dexterity; coordination; balance; posture*. A high percentage of students has considered their posture (50%) and structure of body schema incorrect (69%). A significant percentage has considered themselves unable to evaluate their own motor skills at the end of the theoretical course; this makes more necessary and important a change of docimology perspective on the courses of didactics of motor activities. After the experience of self-assessment of sports-motor skills, students will have the opportunity to attend the specific laboratory of psychomotor activities implementing the theoretical knowledge during the degree course modifying them in a practical knowledge through laboratory teaching.

Keywords: teaching, self-assessment, motor skills, didactics experience, laboratory

INTRODUCTION

The term *assessment* comes from the Latin word *valitus*, past participle of the verb to be worth, to value, to price. (Genovesi, G., 1998). More in general, it indicates a process by which it occurs an " *attribution of value to facts, events, objects and suchlike, with regard to the purposes that the evaluator intends to pursue*" (Sarracino, V. & Lupoli, N., 2003). So, in a didactic field, the assessment can be defined as an attribution of sense-value to a specific didactic action or educational process. However, since "every sense-value is already discriminative in itself in the universe of all the possible sense-values, every assessor has inferred the necessity of a correlative discrimination system concerning the quality of the events and/or the object to be assessed" (Domenici, G., 1993). In other words, the adopted assessment system must be part of a theoretical framework that allows to attach value and sense to the object of one's own action. Therefore it's not surprising that, in a didactic field, assessment models have evolved alongside theories concerning the learning processes and that the modern developments of these have generated the need of new learning assessment tools which call into question the traditional achievement tests.

In the nowadays mathetic vision, learning activity is considered the "creator" of the subjects who learn (Gennari, M., 2002) and not a simple exchange of information between a sender and a receiver anymore. In this perspective, learning is ill-suited to be assessed through the simple comparison of the results achieved by the students with those that they expected. The main limitation of this evaluation model is therefore "in what" it intends and aims to assess. In other words, by assessing a learner subject according to the knowledges he possesses it's possible to control and verify the "reproduction" but not its "construction", and neither it's possible to assess the ability of generalizing and applying such knowledge to a real contest. During the last years, in order to obviate these limits of the traditional assessment, we have witnessed in the educational field a progressive diffusion of the evaluation model called "Authentic assessment". This action of paying

particularly attention to the "ecological" and "constructive" aspects of the learning process seems to perfectly take part into the modern mathetic theories. In fact, it allows the assessment of the elements of learning that cannot be analyzed or verified with the classic models, such as the way in which knowledge gets generalized, perceived, constructed and applied. Even if this model is getting generally diffused inside the different educational fields, the didactics of motor activities in Italy still seems to be deeply connected with the use of traditional evaluation tools. (Meinel, K., 2009).

The Italian Ministry of Education gives nursery and primary teachers a large freedom (according to the regulation on the didactic autonomy) to include sports, games and exercise in the curriculum, since they help them to evaluate sensory, perceptual and tactile skill, gain the necessary experience in order to be able to make a self-assessment of personal knowledges and guarantee the students the acquisition of competences associated with the sense-motor sphere referred, in particular, to the visual-motor, perceptual-motor and coordinative development. The current university education, in force since the academic year 2011-12, has underlined the importance for will-be teachers to have knowledges and competences in different fields (including the motor-sports one), by redefining the didactic-disciplinary characteristics of the degree course in Primary Formation Sciences and in order to meet the formative need of more qualified teachers emerging in the Italian nursery and elementary school. The Presidential Decree n.249 of 2010, starting from the academic year 2011–2012, has provided for the institution of a five-year Degree Course and it has established a university curricula with theoretical courses and compulsory laboratory activities, based on the movement didactics, starting from the 1st degree course. In facts, the current university education has its origins in the need of training generations of both nursery and primary teachers whose perception of their own competences in the motor field could result, otherwise, inappropriate in relation to the responsibility deriving from the large freedom of didactic planning of motor activities.

AIM

This survey aims to evaluate, through a multiple-choice questionnaire, the way the first year students of the Degree Course in Primary Formation Sciences perceive their own basic skills regarding sports-motor activities, in order to evaluate the efficiency of the course and analyze if the students are able or unable to make ad appropriate self-assessment.

METHOD

Carried out at the "*Suor Orsola Benincasa*" University of Naples, this survey has involved 139 students attending the first year's Primary Formation Sciences course "***Methods and didactics of motor and sports activities"*** in the academic year 2011–2012 . At the end of the theoretical course of the first semester, each student has been given a questionnaire on the motor autobiography composed of seven closed- questions concerning:

- *structure of spatial and temporal organization;*
- *orientation;*
- *dexterity;*
- *coordination;*
- *balance;*
- *posture.*

More specifically, question n.1 asks to express an opinion on the motor characteristic developed on the basis of personal sports-motor experiences. Questions n.2-3-4 ask the students to give their opinion on the personal spatio-temporal organization level achieved and to make a self-assessment of their level of development in dexterity and coordination, having also the possibility to mark, among the possible answers, "Not evaluated", in an attempt to let our students reflect on the elements of learning considered essential in order to evaluate the motor skills level reached on the basis of their past sports-motor experiences. Questions n. 5 – 6 – 7 ask to carry out a self-assessment of their body scheme and balance structure level in an attempt to let each student distinguish and evaluating the basic elements of posture as will-be teachers. Even for these questions there was the possibility to mark the answer "not evaluated". Here below you can find the questionnaire that has proposed to students:

QUESTIONNAIRE of motor autobiography

1 I've had didactic experiences in motor and sports field concerning	***A***	***B***	***C***	***D***	***E***	***F***
	Spatial organization	Temporal organization	Orientation	Dexterity	Coordination	Balance

2 My spatio-temporal organization is	***A***	***B***	***C***	***D***	***E***
	Suitable	Not suitable	Higher developed	Not evaluated	Other (please specify)

	A	B	C	D	E
3 ***My dexterity is***	Suitable	Unsuitable	Higher developed for (please indicate what)	Not evaluated	Other (please specify)

	A	B	C	D	E
4 ***My coordination is***	Suitable	Unsuitable	Higher developed for (please indicate what)	Not evaluated	Other (please specify)

	A	B	C	D	E
5 ***My balance is***	Suitable	Unsuitable	Higher developed for (please indicate what)	Not evaluated	Other (please specify)

	A	B	C	D	E
6 ***The structure of my body scheme is***	Suitable	Unsuitable	Higher developed for (please indicate what)	Not evaluated	Other (please specify)

	A	B	C	D
7 ***My posture is***	Correct	Incorrect	Not evaluated	Other (please specify)

RESULTS

You can see the results in the tables below; in the first item you can find both the percentages of closed and multiple-choice answers and the totals for each skill.

SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT (2011 – 2012) - FINAL RESULTS

1 I've had didactic experiences in motor and sports field concerning	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Spatial organization	Temporal organization	Orientation	Dexterity	Coordination	Balance
	60%	**41%**	**18%**	**33%**	**62%**	**37%**

Closed answers						*Open answers*							
A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**AB**	**AC**	**ABE**	**AE**	**DE**	**CDF**	**ACD**	**ABEF**
7%	**1%**	**4%**	**8%**	**2%**	**3%**	**1%**	**4%**	**9%**	**6%**	**15%**	**4%**	**6%**	**30%**

2 ***My spatio-temporal organization is***	A	B	C	D	E
	Suitable	Unsuitable	Higher developed	Not evaluated	Other
	Answers				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
	71%	**1%**	**6%**	**21%**	**1%**

3 ***My dexterity is***	A	B	C	D	E
	Suitable	Unsuitable	Higher developed	Not evaluated	Other
	Answers				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
	77%	**2%**	**12%**	**9%**	**0**

4 ***My coordination is***	A	B	C	D	E
	Suitable	Unsuitable	Higher developed	Not evaluated	Other
	Answers				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
	79%	**4%**	**7%**	**9%**	**1%**

5 ***My balance is***	A	B	C	D	E
	Suitable	Unsuitable	Particularly developed	Not evaluated	Other
	Answers				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
	81%	**3%**	**6%**	**10%**	**0**

6 ***The structure of my body scheme is***	A	B	C	D	E
	Suitable	Unsuitable	Higher developed	Not evaluated	Other
	Answers				
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**
	69%	**11%**	**1%**	**19%**	**0**

7 ***My posture is***	A	B	C	D
	Correct	incorrect	Not evaluated	Other
	Answers			
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**
	50%	**33%**	**15%**	**2%**

Figures

Results are showed in the following figures:

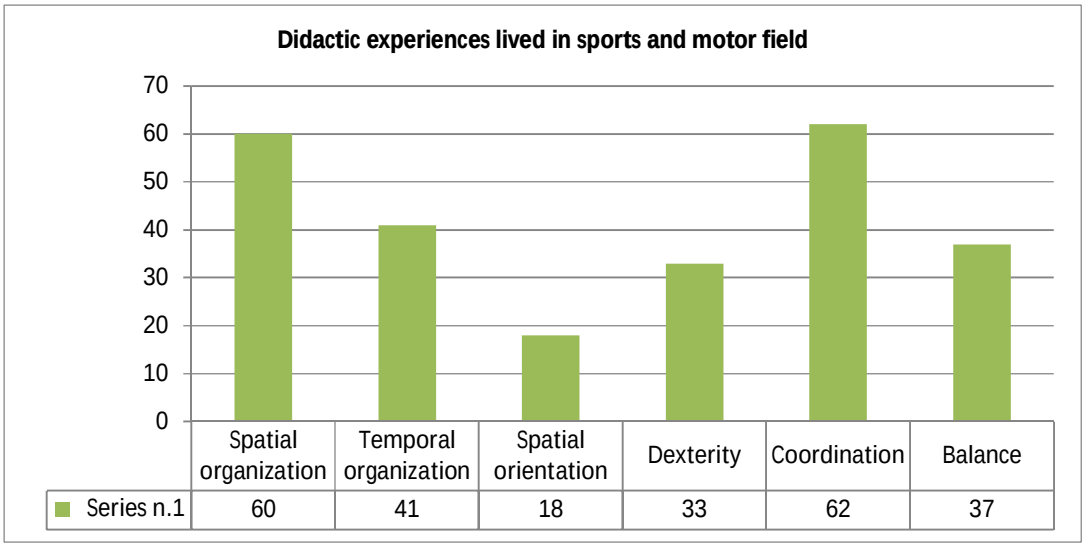

Figure 1: Didactic experience lived in sport and motor field

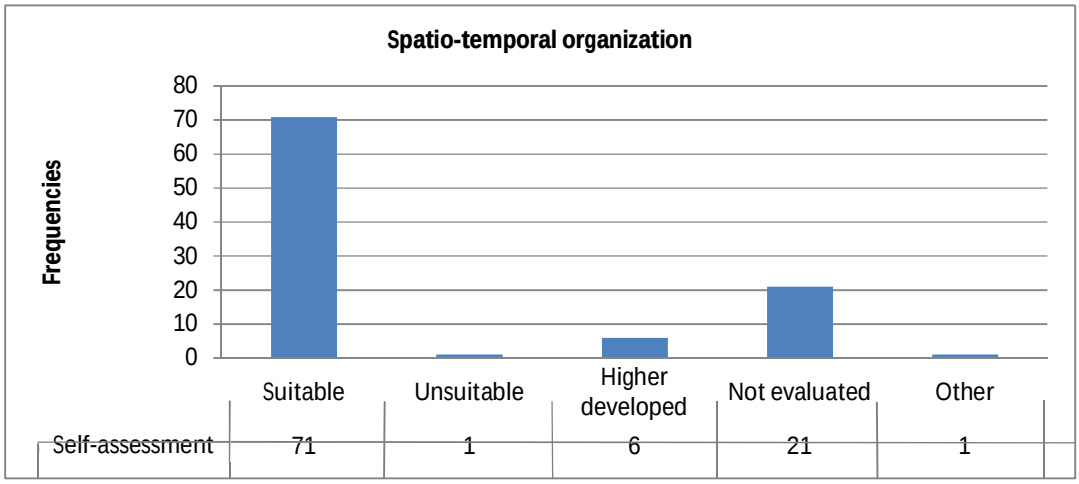

Figure 2: Spatio- temporal organization

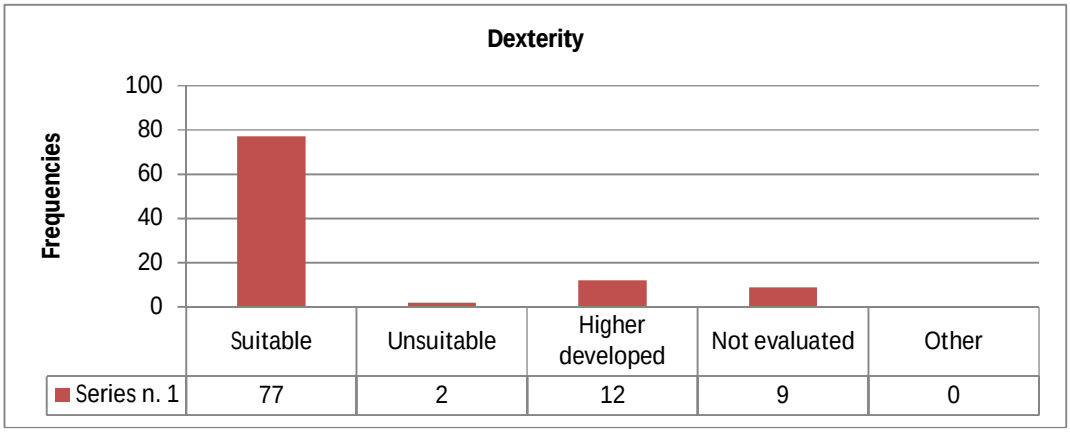

Figure 3: Dexterity/frequency graph

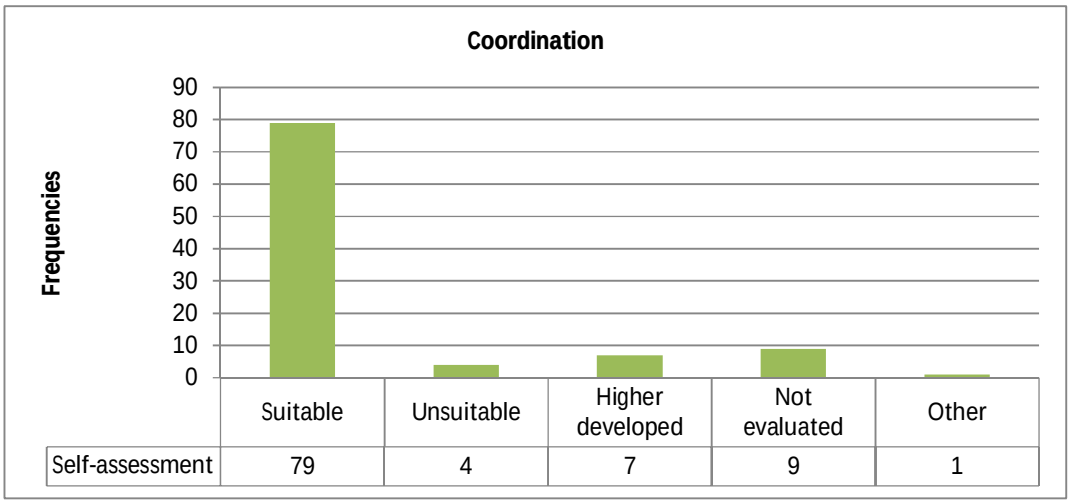

Figure 4: Coordination/frequency graph

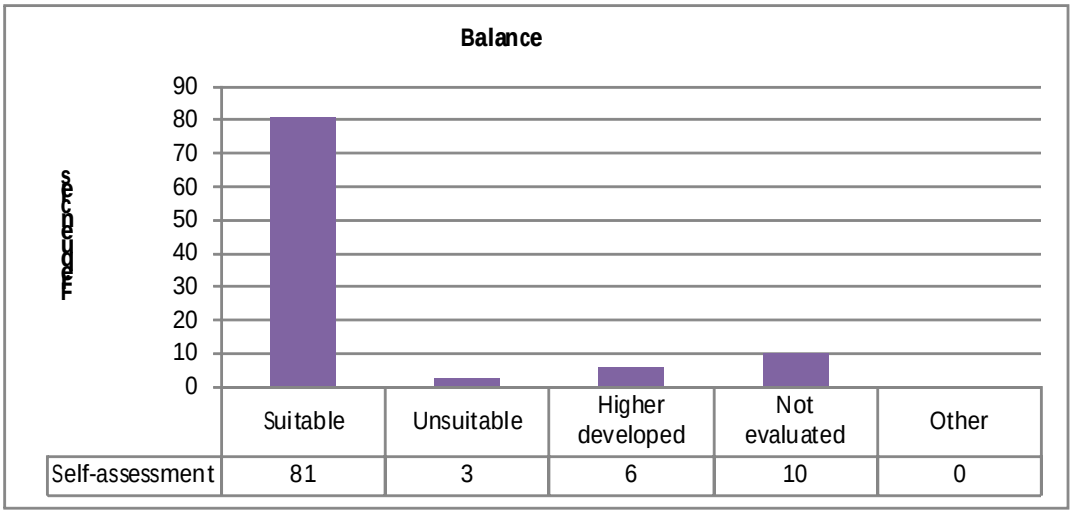

Figure 5: Balance/frequency graph

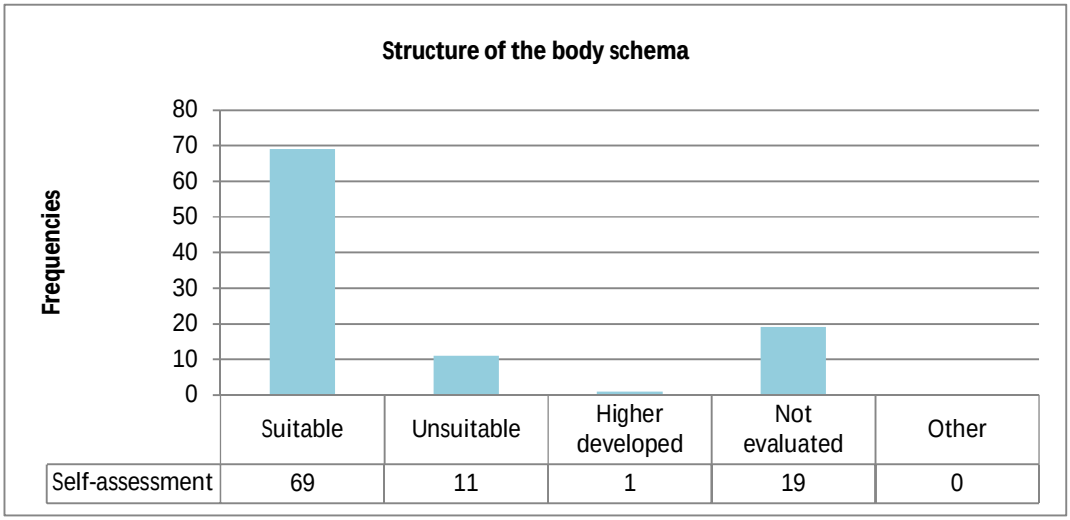

Figure 6: Structure of the body schema

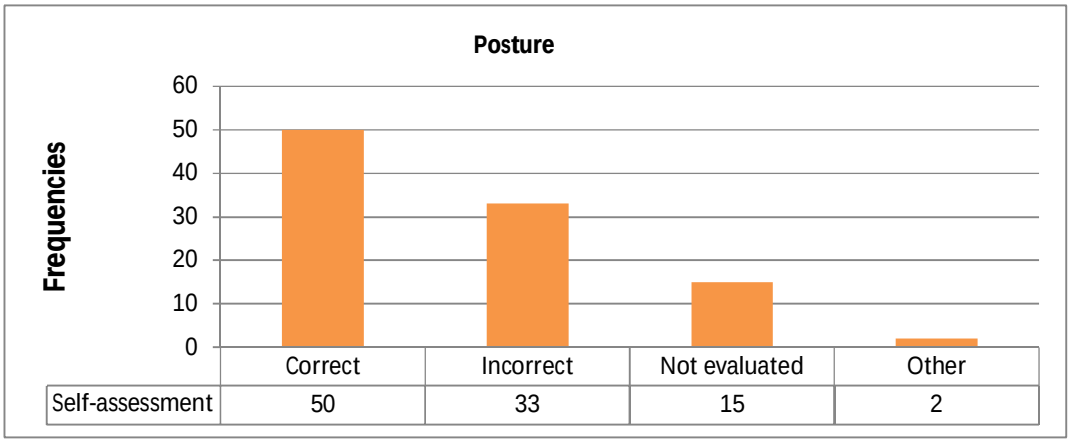

Figure 7: Posture frequency graph

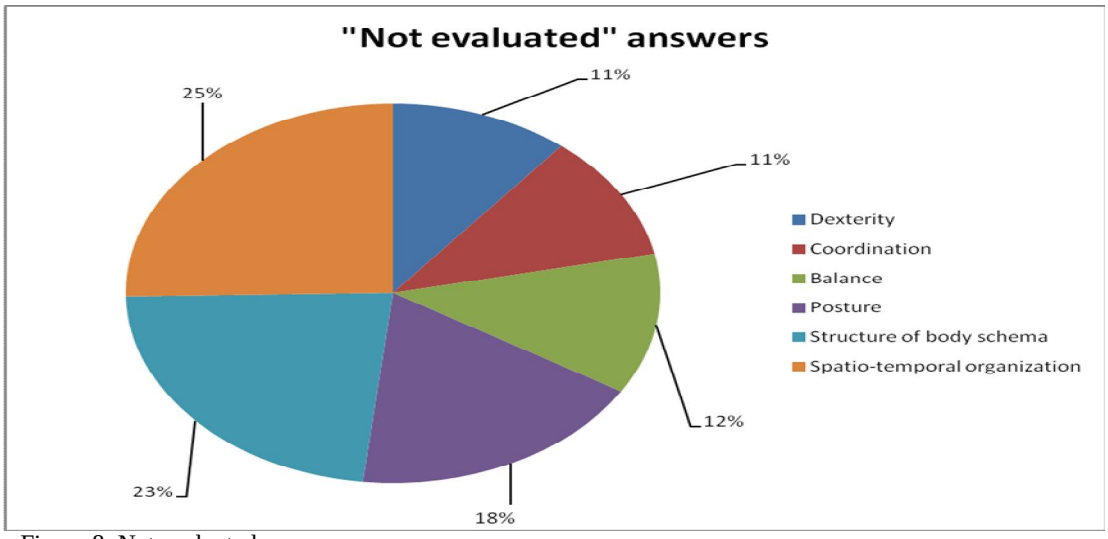

Figure 8: Not evaluated answers

DISCUSSIONS

For what concerns the curricular evaluation of personal didactic experiences in sports and motor field , 62% of the sample has affirmed to have lived didactics experiences in coordination, 60 % in spatial organization, 18% in spatial orientation, 33% in dexterity, 37% in balance and 41% in temporal organization (see Figure 1).

Therefore, the number of those who have lived significant motor experiences about spatial orientation is very low, while less than a half of students has lived experiences in dexterity, balance and temporal organization.

For what concerns the evaluation of personal coordination, conditional and individual body schema‘s knowledge skills:

- between 69% and 81% has considered spatio-temporal organization, dexterity, coordination, structure of body schema and balance adequate;
- 50% has considered their posture correct, but 33% has considered it incorrect and 15% has not evaluated it (see Figure 7);
- 11% of students has considered inadequate the structure of their body schema;
- a high percentage of students has not been able to evaluate their own experiences, particularly in the case of the structure of personal body schema and the spatio-temporal organization (see Figure 8).

CONCLUSION

As you can see, a high percentage of students has considered their posture and structure of body schema incorrect. A significant percentage has considered themselves unable to evaluate their own motor skills at the end of the theoretical course; this makes more necessary and important a change of docimological perspective on the courses of didactics of motor activities. Moreover the strong percentage of students has considered their posture incorrect to their needs for the teaching of posture and to show an inability of self-assessment should be reduced after

the laboratory activities subsequent to degree course, because the psychomotor activities during the laboratory of degree course of Science of Primary Education are particularly point for the assessment of motor skills.

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