

The Contribution of Socio-aesthetics to the Inclusion of Young People with Disabilities

An applied research project with young people experiencing behavioral and developmental problems and specific language and learning challenges

SYNTHESIS



“Young people have access to new discoveries of lots of images about beauty and well-being...They are exposed to lots of images that they do not have access to or feel free to use. For me, above all, they discover that they are able to say, ‘me too, I have the right to do that, me too, I have access to it.’ In addition, what this does for them and what I always see, is provide a sense of relief and well-being.” Sandrine, socio-esthéticienne.

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1. Forward

After an overview of the methodology and principal results of this applied, participative research project, this synthesis describes the tools developed based on the project. The study was conducted at the Institut Départemental de l'Enfance, de la Famille et du Handicap pour l'Insertion (IDEFHI) under an agreement (April 2020-April 2022) between FIRAH and the Fondation L'Oréal.

The project documented the effects of socio-esthetic workshops on children and young people experiencing disabilities. The young participants were actively involved throughout the project. The study was also an example of applied research designed to result in practical tools for use by professionals.

2. Project summary

This sociological study was conducted by a public institution (*l'Institut Départemental de l'Enfance, de la Famille et du Handicap* - IDEFHI) that includes several medico-social organizations.

The purpose was to assess the effects of training in socio-esthetic practices on the development and/or reinforcement of a sense of well-being and self-esteem among young people experiencing disabilities and enrolled in mainstreaming programs.

The study included participants experiencing three categories of disability: patients at Le Chant du Loup IME [Medico-educational Institute] with developmental disabilities, young people at the Vallée de Seine ITEP [Educational and Pedagogical Therapy Institute] presenting behavioral disabilities, and patients at the IDEFHI Centre François Truffaut with specific language and learning disabilities.

A series of 8 socio-esthetic workshops was designed to accompany 5 groups of participants that included 59 young people between 8 and 19 years of age, including 23 females and 36 males. The vast majority of the participants were enrolled in academic or preprofessional mainstreaming programs.

The project methodology was designed to be:

- ✓ Participative (implying the consent and participation of both the young participants and involved professionals in a variety of decisions).
- ✓ Research (seeking to contribute to scientific knowledge).
- ✓ Applied (by producing supporting materials and media with the participants, including video tutorials).

Two sets of qualitative data were collected using ethnographic techniques:

- ✓ Socio-esthetic workshops were observed by the principal investigator.
- ✓ Focus groups (“collective discussions” for the study) were led by the principal investigator.

Study participants were involved in a total of 55 socio-esthetic workshops, 41 focus groups, and 27 video development sessions.

Results showed that the socio-esthetic workshops contributed to the participants’ positive experience by:

- Sensitizing them to acts and techniques of body care and hygiene.
- Taking time to create a pleasant moment between young participants and between participants and professionals.
- Allowing participation in a collective activity.
- Enabling them to gain self-knowledge, particularly with respect to the relationship to the body and physical sensations.
- The workshops also had a positive effect on relationships between the young participants and professionals because they enabled interactions that were different from their everyday lives.

The study also involved the creation of supporting materials and media, including:

- 8 thematic videos created by and for the study participants.
- A user manual to accompany the video to assist professionals.
- A final report “*La socio-esthétique en pratiques. Regards croisés sur un projet de recherche*” [Socio-esthetics in practice: Perspectives on a research project].

These communications tools were co-produced by professional team members, the participants, and videographers. As open-source supporting materials available to all interested families and professionals, they are at the crossroads between applied research, promoting health and education, and strategies to encourage the development and maintenance of a positive self-image in the target population.

3. Supporting materials and media

3.1. The Report

The 20-minute report “*La socio-esthétique en pratique – Regards croisés sur un projet de recherche*” [Socio-esthetics in practice: Perspectives on a research project] presents the objectives, methodology, and the overall process. The report provides a clear, illustrated

overview of the study that is consistent with our core goal of broadly distributed, highly accessible research findings. It is addressed to all audiences.

La Socio-Esthétique en pratique

Regards croisés sur un projet de recherche

The report contains video clips of the socio-esthetic workshops that reflect the participant experience. Interviews with participating professionals, partners, parents, and users at different phases of the project are also included.

Interviews and images also describe the project's findings, as well as the experience of the young participants and professionals. Specifically, the report covers topics such as working with the body, technical steps, socialization to norms of body care, and relations with self and others, individual and collective well-being, and exploring the senses.

The video also addresses such issues as self-image and self-representation.

Participants also expressed themselves in front of the camera, potentially a related exercise in itself for both users and professionals. This also encouraged exchanges that complemented the socio-esthetic workshops. Videographers were especially careful to present participants' views in an authentic manner.

The report helped participants and professionals express themselves and build self-esteem, highlighting everyone who contributed to the project.

Professional testimonials from the report:

Socio-esthetics is...

"Socio-esthetics means allowing people to increase their self-confidence through estheticism"
Cyrielle LECAT, specialized teacher (IME Lycée)

"It's offering a sense of well-being to those who practice it in order to improve the image they have of themselves" Hanako BRON, specialized teacher (IME Collège)

"It's about learning to take care of yourself and your body" Soizic BOURGES, specialized teacher (IME Primaire)

"It is a specific approach, a tool for mediation that can be massage, self-care, exchanges, or communication" Audrey NEUMOHR, special educator (CFT)

"Feeling good, feeling beautiful, feeling comfortable" Manon CHARTIER, special educator (IME)

"Choosing the colors that help one look good. Giving confidence back to young people or giving it to some young people." Pascale MAHIEUX, special educator (ITEP)

Testimonials from young participants:

Socio-esthetics is...

"You can talk about how you feel" Kelly, IME Lycée

"It's made for people who don't feel like they're pretty," Rachel, IME Lycée

"Learning to open your heart and open yourself up to others," Alessio, IME Lycée

"It's self-esteem, expressing yourself," Nisa, IME Lycée

"Learning how to take care of yourself," Douglas, CFT

"It's to relax," Mathéo, CFT

"Teaching us to do stuff, to take care of our hygiene," Madissone CFT

"Learning what you have to do to take care of your face, your hands, your nails," Nawfal, CFT

"A self-care activity that takes care of the whole body, of your health," Lucas, ITEP

"It feels good, you take advantage of it," Tom, IME

"It can make people happy," Thérance, IME

3.2. Video Tutorials

The videos created for the project take the forms of tutorials that address the topics covered by the socio-esthetic workshops, including daily hygiene, self-care, fabricating cosmetics, and managing emotions.



The videos were designed and produced by the project participants. They are intended as tools for sensitizing the participant’s peers in IDEFHI programs and other individuals of various ages presenting disabilities.

The participants themselves chose the subjects covered by the videos.

Participants selected activities from socio-esthetic workshops for individual videos and were involved in each phase of their creation, from creating the scenarios to filming and editing. The videos represent the three services that were part of the study--CFT, ITEP, IME—and adopt several approaches.

With the assistance of videographers, the development of the videos occurred in phases:

- ✚ Composing a “tutorial script” with the socio-estheticians
- ✚ Filming the modules

Some videos were simply filmed sessions, while others were planned and staged and still others combined both techniques (particularly when puppets were included).

The participants and socio-estheticians reproduced workshop activities to film the various sequences and stages. When using puppets to recreate workshop material, images were

recorded as in silent films, using shots and reverse shots filmed to match specific parts of the narration, inserts (close-ups), and cutaways.

The participants themselves provided the characters voices and voiceover narration using the voices of individuals not directly involved in the scenes.

The result of this process was a total of 8, 2–4-minute instructional videos with supplementary contents featuring the following activities:

- ✚ Creating Sensory Balls (created by IME Primaire)
- ✚ Creating a Personal Chart (created by IME Lycée)
- ✚ Making a Candle (created by IME Primaire)
- ✚ Making a Shower Gel (created by IME Lycée)
- ✚ Hygiene and Habits (created by IME Collège)
- ✚ Hand Massage (created by ITEP)
- ✚ My Body and Me (created by CFT)
- ✚ Face Care (created by CFT)

The purposes of the videos are:

- ✚ Encourage interactions about subjects related to the activities that they present
- ✚ Encourage young people to engage in practical discussions
- ✚ Encourage practical application of the video contents

The videos address various somewhat complex topics in simple, playful ways so they can be helpful to future peer audiences and their families. The videos are entirely based on the socio-esthetic workshops and the knowledge and skills covered by each session.

They cover topics that include:

- ✚ Hygiene
- ✚ Relationship with the body
- ✚ Well-being
- ✚ Self-esteem
- ✚ Relations with self and others

Creating the videos reinforced what the participants learned in the socio-esthetic workshops and demonstrated their learning through interactions with the socio-estheticians. This underscores the importance of attending to children and young people's actual experiences and the fact that this multi-phase process helped them acquire meaningful new skills and knowledge.

The videographer allowed the participants to play active roles in each phase of video production.

The open-source instructional videos are available online to all interested users, families, and professionals.

Video Excerpts:

“The massage balls help with anger management, relieve stress, help concentration, bring a state of calm, and increase self-esteem”

Sensory Balls Video, IME Primaire

“Our hands are precious tools, which is why we need to take care of them”

Hand Massage Video, ITEP

“It helps discover the body and better accept oneself, but also to relax”

My Body and Me Video, CFT

“Hygiene is important to be in good health. Taking care of the body and washing well help avoid developing microbes that can make you ill”

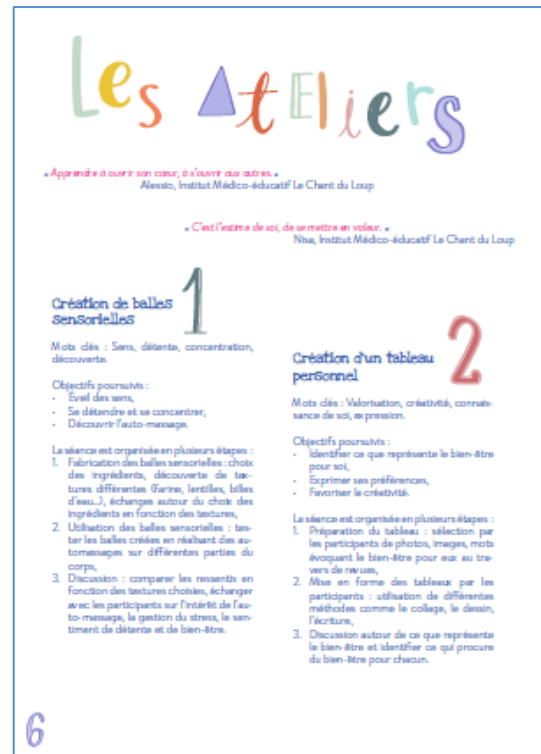
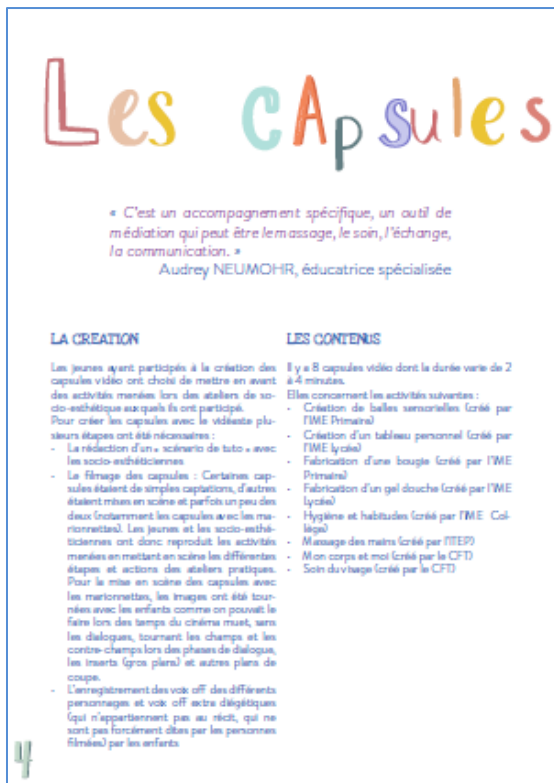
Hygiene and Habits Videos, IME Collège

“Sometimes you feel sad, a little lost, not with it. But what should you do when you improve your sense of well-being?”

Creating a Personal Chart Video, IME Lycée

3.3. Manual for professional use of the videos

To help professionals use the videos more effectively, we created a manual.



The manual summarizes each workshop and the research objectives underlying each video.

The videos are designed as supplements to exchanges related to their contents, including hygiene, managing one's emotions, self-esteem, well-being, etc. They could also be used separately or as complementary resources, depending on subjects addressed by professionals.

The videos also help professionals to explain techniques that can be addressed through socio-aesthetics.

The open-source tools developed by the project may be consulted and downloaded from the project's page on the FIRAH website.