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IN QUESTO NUMEROParafrasando il titolo di un celebre romanzo (*L’amore ai tempi della colera*) di Gabriel Garcia Márquez, questo numero della rivista intende riflettere su uno degli aspetti più problematici della società contemporanea: quello cioè della rinuncia a progettare il futuro, schiacciati su di un presente che non si riesce neanche a vivere pienamente e consapevolmente, perché voracemente inghiottito da una velocità fine a se stessa.In una pubblicazione del 2008 intitolata *Vite di corsa. Come salvarsi dalla tirannia dell’effimero*, Bauman raffigura il tempo della modernità come un insieme di punti sparsi che non indicano alcuna traiettoria futura ma invitano a vivere momento per momento, senza consentire progetti, desideri, sogni da realizzare ma “occasioni” da consumare secondo una logica che motiva solo a godere dell’effimera possibilità dell’ora, vivendo nella dimensione del momentaneo come forma di protezione dall’angoscia di una vita priva di prospettive.La defuturizzazione è figlia della cultura dell’effimero e le vittime privilegiate sono soprattutto i giovani a cui, invece, dovrebbe appartenere – quasi costitutivamente – la dimensione del futuro. I giovani *sono* il futuro: il loro futuro personale ma anche quello della società cui appartengono e che deve poter e saper riprogettarsi insieme a loro e attraverso di loro.

La stagnazione in un “presente onnipresente”, più subito che vissuto, ingigantisce gli aspetti più deleteri di una crisi generalizzata, materiale e immateriale, con cui si è soliti identificare la società contemporanea: si parla di crisi economica, finanziaria, politica, sociale, ma anche di crisi valoriale ed educativa, cogliendo del termine solo la sua accezione negativa (che peraltro pare abbia preso il sopravvento soltanto nel secondo Novecento) rispetto al significato in positivo di trasformazione, di cambiamento, quindi anche di evoluzione e di emancipazione.

Questo numero, quindi, richiama l’attenzione sulle possibilità e sulle capacità che il sapere pedagogico, e le scienze umano-sociali in generale, hanno di *educare a costruire futuro*, con uno sguardo preferenziale alle giovani generazioni: perché sappiano ri-apprendere a sognare, a sperare, a progettare una vita proiettata verso il futuro.

Com’è giusto che sia.



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**Young people with disability:
educational challenges for new inclusive spaces**

di Catia Giaconi

The complexity of the present society presents many challenges for the new generations overall, especially for the young with disabilities.

Disabled youngsters and their families find themselves devoid of projects to follow the end of the school years: the prevailing image is that the disabled youngster is an “eternal child” to be protected, or a “person to assist”, this defuses the capacity to “project” educative actions in the adult spaces of participation and inclusion. Disabled youngsters risk to live exclusively inside the family context or to be “parachuted” in institutions and communities; as the result of necessity, not as reasoned, shared or constructed choices made “with” and “for” the person. This contribution sheds light on the main pedagogic critical points that arise in taking care of disabled youngsters. It re-thinks strategically some of the articulations that construct a life project turned toward future and Quality of Life. In the same direction we propose some devices to support the future of young generations with disabilities, able to legitimise and promote the assumption of an adult identity, also in terms active participation and citizenship.

Nella complessità della società contemporanea, numerose sono le sfide per le giovani generazioni in generale e per i giovani con disabilità in particolare.

Al termine del percorso scolastico, i ragazzi con disabilità, e le loro famiglie, spesso si trovano in un vuoto progettuale: l'immagine dominante del ragazzo disabile come “eterno bambino” da proteggere o “persona da assistere” depotenzia la capacità di “proiettare in avanti” le azioni educative in spazi adulti di partecipazione e di inclusione. Il giovane disabile, infatti, rischia di permanere in modo esclusivo nel contesto familiare o di essere “catapultato” in ambienti, come Istituti o Comunità, per necessità e non in seguito a percorsi pensati, condivisi e costruiti “con” e “per” la persona stessa. Il contributo tenta di mettere in luce le principali criticità pedagogiche nella presa in carico dei ragazzi con disabilità, ripensando in chiave strategica alcuni snodi per la costruzione di un progetto di vita orientato al futuro e alla Qualità della Vita. In questa direzione, vengono prospettati alcuni dispositivi orientati a supportare il futuro delle giovani generazioni con disabilità e in grado di legittimare e promuovere l'assunzione di un'identità adulta, anche in termini di partecipazione e di cittadinanza attiva.

1. Premises

The transformation of society offers increasingly fewer certainties and stability, they lead us to reflect about the scenario made of lights and shadows that seems to wrap the path to adulthood for the new generations with disabilities. Scientific literature is spotlighting increasingly on the avenues that contrast the lack of planning that obstructs the way of disabled young people and their families at the end of the school years. In this way it raises awareness and support structured, dynamic and coherent itineraries that lead to a path in the name of Quality of Life (Goussot, 2009; Schalock et al., 2010; Giaconi, 2014).

The path to adulthood for young generations with disabilities is a path marked by a weak and discontinuous planning throughout the lifetime, this applies to disabled persons and their whole families (Pavone, 2009, p. 28). Paradoxically, it seems that the support network for the disabled youngsters and their families widens its mesh in times of higher critical difficulty and need of support: in transitional phases at school and in social contexts, in familial contexts and in different forms of dwelling; also, in residential structures (Giaconi, 2014, p. 73).

At the end of the school years, disabled youngsters and their families run the risk of not finding an adequate and efficient integrated system of agencies that allows the widening of autonomous spaces of participation and integration in the society.

Exiting school, rather than being the springboard toward adulthood, represents a “leap of faith” for the disabled young. Here, the social network built in the social contexts seems to disappear, including the possibility to live outside the family environment and all recreational activities and leisure time.

Planned and rehabilitative actions seem to come to a halt and vanish in the attempt to find solutions of welfarist nature. This derives from the diffused image that associates the disabled to the image of the “eternal child” to be protected, or a sick person in need of assistance.

Our position intends to rescue lifelong planning for the person with disability through a life project that should realise and structure itself in the space and time inherent to the life cycle; for the singularity of the disabled person and the specificity of the community of belonging.

Transitional phases, from school to job placement, from home to new dwellings, can transform themselves in moments oriented and thought in the time and “in time”. For example, family references decrease, on the contrary, they should become real springboards to adulthood and realisation of the disabled person.

This contribution, even considering the complexity of the subject that calls for a wider conceptualisation related to social inclusion and Quality of Life for new disabled generations (Schalock & Verdugno Alonso, 2002; Pavone, 2009), concentrates on the analysis of the main pedagogical emergencies that lead to a strategic reconsideration on actions and devices to build a life project for young generations with disabilities. The project should legitimise and promote the assumption of adult identity, also in terms of participation and active citizenship.

This question is a delicate one, therefore, it is important to ponder with all possible sensitiveness on this critical point, avoiding to fall into excessive interpretative stiffness, but instead opening to new desirable scenarios.

Conversely, we signal some challenges that special pedagogy must face to re-launch the planning to take charge of the future of the new disabled generations.

2. Out of disenchantment

The first critical point on the way, in dealing with the theme of a possible future for disabled youngsters, regards the collective imagination about the concept of legitimisation of an adulthood for disabled people.

The partial image of the disabled person prevails in social plots and representations, it is the stereotype of the “eternal child” in need of assistance, even from the relational point of view. This misperception involves activating relational styles that are unsuitable to relate with youngsters on the way to become adults, it is rather linked to paternalistic and infantilising modes.

Furthermore, we see, in some situations, that youngsters with Autistic Spectrum Disorders are in a critical scenario that states, on one hand, that autism is rooted into the evolutionary age, as it was previously emphasised by some manuals of nosology. On the other hand, it states that autism dissolves into other diagnostic categories after the age of eighteen; such as intellectual disability (McGovern & Sigman, 2005).

The picture that emerges is the one of a young disabled who, for reasons linked to collective imagination or to longitudinal studies on the subject, see life-planning ideas denied and, with it, the chance of becoming adult. The family of the disabled youngster, worried about the health of the child, runs the risk of obscuring the chance of seeing beyond the deficit, thus raising obstacle that prevent the discovery of his personality. Therefore, the family seems to cancel any idea of “emancipating project” for the child to become adult (Sorrentino, 2006, p. 119). Pavone (2009, p. 28) sees this attitude as a self-projecting mechanism characterised by attitudes of closure and isolation, which leads parents of disabled youngsters into a middle Earth between the perception that the dis-

abled offspring does not inhabit the body of a child and the belief that he is a child to protect and assist all life long.

The first challenge is to reinstate what Lepri (2003) defined the “needs of morality”. Physical welfare, work, the need to have familial and amicable relations, the right to social participation, free time and emotional behaviour fully belong to these needs. These dimensions, which appear as dominions of the Quality of Life (Schalock et al., 2010), represent a founding value for the realisation of all people, disabled ones included.

It is essential to imagine a space and time that lives in the desires and hopes of people who dream from childhood. It includes: what job to do when adult, where and with whom to dwell, which interests to nourish and whom to spend our lives with. It could be fireman, doctor, doorman or be mother or father, these events are planned, forecast and desired. Or, it could be the family environment, or a caretaking one, or a residential solution that enter a life project that allow us to speculate and build possible itineraries of life. Surely, this is followed by the paving of a path that sways between hopes and skills, engagement and mediation, supply and demand, limits and possibilities, action and lifelong training. These normal events re-activate the “need of normality in the role”.

As punctuated by Caldin and his colleagues “all too often, experience present the young with disability with a suffering image: it denies plural identity, roles to be played and reduces the person to a single identity (disabled); furthermore, competent identity that derives from an empowering look or environment is denied too, that is the capacity to see in the other person unusual skills and talent, projecting opportune situations and not handicapping ones” (Caldin et al., 2009, p. 253).

The possibilities to connect to social complexity disappear if people have no role to play. People without a role have no duties or rights and do not play a role in the relationships among the people who live in a society. Disabled people are often exempted from roles, and therefore from duties and rights and from responsibilities. Disabled youngsters who never practised any roles or responsibilities during the period of their education, will find many difficulties in their working life.

This dimension of a partial imagination brings along a trend to cancel or give up the planning by families, teachers, educators and the disabled person.

The lack of a project affects the immutability of roles and social relations. Instead, as we will illustrate in the next paragraphs, entering adult world fundamentally means assuming a specific social role and promoting choice that is a certain degree of self-determination.

The life project is a “collective enterprise” (Pavone, 2009), families and educating agents move “with” and “for” the disabled persons, inserting them in a story of life and relations, forecasting the attainment of possible autonomies from early childhood, in a constant call that sways between micro and macro-planning.

3. New conceptual spaces for an adult identity

The concept of work is the first place to be activated in its deepest form when thinking to the new disabled generations

As we will explain in the next lines, it is impossible to talk about building adult identities for disabled youngsters without reflecting pedagogically on the chances of labour inclusion.

Even in this case, that comes from the connection disability and work, it is need to put these terms correctly inside the pedagogical reflection and, specifically, at the heart of the demand of social inclusion. The focus of our reflection aims the re-thinking and projecting work dimension for disabled people. For a long time, this dimension was interpreted as welfarist paradigms and social control rather than the educational one. When it was included in an approach of special pedagogy it was confused as being the final goal of inclusion and not its mean. In other words, we saw a double conception on work for the disabled: on one hand, it is a mere instrument of rehabilitation of mental illness, with a finality of social containment and control, where the welfarist logic prevails on educative instances. On the other hand, it is simply the end of the process of inclusion. Work is much more than this.

On the contrary, working activity becomes one of the means to go toward social participation and surely “represents the logic conclusion of the whole activity of insertion, socialisation and rehabilitation carried out in a previous age” (Lepri & Montobbio, 1993, p. 10).

The second pedagogical challenge emerging from this complex scenario concerns the necessary support to re-think the work dimension as an event that involves the identity of the disabled, or any other person, while it continues to represent, despite all transformations, an essential moment in the process of inclusion.

Several authors attempt to investigate the complexity of the present society and the meaning of work in the lives of people. They came to a conclusion that evidences that work continues to be the basic link between individual and collective destinies, or the starting point for an active social participation (Montobbio & Lepri, 2000). Disabled people have the possibility to enhance their self, intrapsychic and interiorised image (reflected in the other) through working practices. Working means absorbing the role, and recognising the others, thus changing the quality of socialisation (Lepri & Montobbio, 1993).

This is why working and job training must be intentionally projected ever since secondary school and be extended during the various chances of working stages and job sponsorships. All this can be a real and concrete springboard for the difficult path toward(s) adult identity.

Especially for disabled people, work practicing becomes one of the main devices for the construction of an identity, in a game of self-representation and social recognition. Lepri and Montobbio specify that work “does not only represent the essential tool for self-sufficiency and the primary means of socialisation, but also the founding pillar for self-realisation, solution for problems of low self-esteem and identity” (Lepri & Montobbio, 1993, p. 10).

Therefore, work does not only involve self-perception but also strengthens the identity and contributes highly to the person’s self-esteem. At the same time, it allows to test processes of belonging to an adult community and grants experiences of autonomy and recognition. It also activates the basic processes of adult socialisation and economical independence, autonomy from the native family. Most of all work carries the social and civil role of the person with disabilities, it brands itself as a great “emancipatory value” (Zappaterra, 2012). The disabled person obtains a place in the social context through work, with the possibility to live group experiences (Montobbio & Lepri, 2000). The climate that arises on the workplace, marked by the quality of comparison, social exchange, perception of equality and more, is of significant importance for motivation and engagement in the working activities.

Becoming adults means trying new roles, assuming responsibilities, doing things on our own, respect deadlines. Other people’s expectations and interaction with the disabled ones will make them perceive and recognise that the disabled became an adult. This will make the disabled person acquire the right competences and attitudes. The nature of relationships that establish themselves at work is fundamental for the strengthening of the personality, but also for sharing the meanings that take place in the triangulation: disabled person, work and all other people who mediate.

The path towards planning an identity is now activated, it is a personal route of social recognition for the contribution that disabled people can provide to the professional community they work in: an individual who is increasingly part of the sphere of professional relationships, increases his chances to be appreciated (Chicchi, 2001). In the “multiplication of the meanings” (Gosetti, 2004), the worker does not consider work just as the means for self-sufficiency, it signifies it as the condition for personal realisation.

Proposing growth through the working role and the status as worker must be part of a life planning and cannot appear in an unhistorical fashion, or beside of the realistic possibilities of development of the person (Campanini & Presti, 2005). Likewise, the paths to inclusion cannot be generalised, but must be correctly planned according to the needs of the person.

Reflecting about the plots of educational practices, we must overcome the trend to put at work the disabled person in a perspective of using technicalities apt to train the disabled in a specific competence. Better results come from practices that consider *role taking*, or the assumption of a role, and

the person as a whole. The main problems for working insertion do not include only the task, but also activating adequate relational modalities and the awareness of a, implicit or explicit, rules system in a working context.

This marks the working trajectory not so much toward “learning a job”, but toward the complex dimension of “learning to work”.

The responsibility by families, educational agencies and communities of the disabled person is to promote what Caldin defines a “pedagogy of roles” (Caldin et al., 2009), it should highlight paths where the disabled can take roles and be socially recognised, to favour significant and useful changes toward adulthood.

4. Planning toward Quality of Life

Interestingly, research and working fields lead to re-think the forms of adjusting adult age in educational planning (Laurillard, 2012).

Perspectively, the realisation of adjusting life projects goes on different levels (Giacconi, 2014). In our approach, it becomes interesting to highlight some structuring planes that follow, and will be explained immediately afterward:

- Between functional levels and the domains of Quality of Life;
- Among the goals of different interventions;
- Among activities, educational activities and modes of assessment;
- Between micro and macro planning.

In educational projects, an initial level of adjusting can be found between functional levels and the domains of Quality of Life, therefore between the needs of support of people with disabilities and the support that could improve the life condition of disabled adults.

In our case, life planning should be valued from childhood, adjusting functional results with the domains of the Quality of Life (1), this, therefore, means adjustments in line with the right to work. The access to adulthood, here it is meant as labour insertion, is not un-historically built and linked to a specific age, it is rather the result of a project that was realised step-by-step from childhood and shapes itself with ageing with different forms and plots. It is a path that re-thinks integration, as put by Caldin and Friso (2012): “it must depart from a new perspective of work experiences during the school years” (p. 44), it must attend the transitional phases from the end of the school years until the point of re-thinking new forms of training at work and to lifelong learning.

Scientific literature highlights some aspects that educational planning usually overlooks (Giacconi, 2014), and that should return to have a fundamental role. We refer, for example, to the need to widen the levels of self-determination (Wehmeyer et al., 2010). Understating the dimension of self-determination, the possibilities and needs of choosing a social role, means favouring what Montobbio and Lepri (2000) define the “controlled development of the disabled”, where others decide for him/her. On the contrary, high levels of self-determination increase the chances of success at work, and in quality of life.

In the same direction, intentional actions are relevant, because they accept eventual discrepancies in skills possessed, expectations, aims and the performances required by the contexts. This allows to adjust training paths and grant higher co-responsibilities and co-participation in the life project of the adult with disabilities.

Furthermore, in planning, adjustment is where the goals of the different interventions materialise. In other words, the necessity of a life project comes through, it allows the right personalised and longitudinal planning to integrate the necessary clinical, re-habilitating and educating interventions, which are not always sufficiently organised and coherent, or are fragmented by the passages from a school level to the other, from school years to work insertion.

This aspect carries along the needs of different forms of personal and professional guidance that, instead of taking action in terms of work insertion, should start from far away and develop an adequate temporal span. The essential element of this form of adjusting is represented by the choice of goals: turned toward adult autonomies, which are relevant and functional to the working context and favour participation to social and professional network (Adams et al., 2006). In this way, it is possible to take into account of the two important working contexts: one is surely acquiring competences to fill the tasks, but also the one of conquering competences to manage and maintain the unavoidable professional relations.

It is possible, following this direction, for professionals of educational planning to follow some guiding questions on table 1.

Table 1 – Scheme of construction and evaluation of educational projects

Indicators	Describers
Relevance	Within the individual life project, are rehabilitation goals relevant and meaningful?
Observability	Are goals translatable into observable behaviours?
Appropriateness	Are goals appropriate to the chronological age of the subject and his/her health ?
Functionality	Are they functional to daily life necessities and significant in relation to the living contexts?
Temporality	Are they temporally pondered and limited in time to ascertain their attainment ?
Monitoring	Are they possible to monitor and monitored in improvable terms and eventual worsening?
Measuring	Are they qualifiable and quantifiable?
Realism	Are they attainable within human and resources?
Inclusion	Are they functional to increase autonomy, self-determination and <i>empowerment</i> of the person, and adjusted to his hopes?
Participation	Do they favour social participation and amicable, familial and social relation networks?

Adapted from Adams et al., 2006

A further level of planning adjustment must happen in real space and time and significant activities: significant activities in real contexts must, therefore, be empowered, as well as in tutoring and in simulation of real problems, assumption of specific roles and more.

Lepri (2001) writes: “working is a normal environment is for all, especially for people with disability, one extraordinary opportunity to give a meaning to one’s existence. It provides with a self-image, defined by mirroring into the other workers. This is especially true for people with intellectual disabilities, because work is one of the few, if not the only, valued social roles for them, where they can really appear adult” (p. 39). As we will see, these activities require the realisation of new devices of evaluation and self-evaluation. Planning concerns always a movement between micro and macro.

Individual paths of individualised training and work insertion meet history, biographical points, personal needs and characteristics paths, also the cultural and organisational contexts within which these processes are accomplished (Lepri, Montobbio & Papone, 1999). Reflections and research meet each other in experimentation that try to integrate these forms of planning and interventions focused on people and the working contexts of reference.

5. New spaces for identity building

In reference to our specificities of professionals who deal with the training of teachers and trainers, we would like to signal some brief strategic lines that could trigger some significant steps to review the training practices for those who, in various forms, deal with work inclusion and that are now the core in many projects and experimentations at national and international level.

In short, we can find three potential actions of intervention that could strengthen initial and orientating training practices, as well as lifelong learning. They include the joint effort of institutions and training agencies, but also universities.

The first strategic line could re-think the circuit between school and work. Training proposals focus on projecting for activities (Laurillard, 2012) in the school years and in the working life, which may represent, on different levels, the continuity and change in joint projects. Italian and international theories and experimentations point out toward (Rossi, 2011; Laurillard, 2012) an approach in planning and didactical action that enhance new devices that allow goals, activities, materials and tools that help shared activities firstly between teacher and students; then, between the group of people at work (employer, work assistant and workers) and disabled workers. In the same direction, planning and explanatory work about the sequence of teaching-learning activities in line with *Teaching Learning Activities* theorised by Laurillard (2012), could mark a opportunity to reach significant levels of personification and inclusion. This applies both to the school context and to the working environment thus becoming a bridge between working practices and the working practices linked to the relational system.

The second perspective concerns a new “training in action” proposal for people with disabilities in working contexts. The job place is not only the place of manual and relational exercise, but also of continuous learning. As explained by Eraut (2000), working experience requires learning from action that starts from routinely working actions and from the organisation of the action in itself through an itinerary planned with the involvement of multiple roles that are linked with our role. Here, informal moments of comparison with other workers become essential, as well as use and reflection about the artefacts found on the workplace. The approach of French authors like Vinatier and Altet (2008) applied to the Italian system, concerns Professional Didactics, which, when professionally analysed, allows action, technical and relational schemes to surface, they are specific to a profession and related to contexts and organisational concepts that belong to the working reality of the disabled person. In fact, these are new frontiers also in training new corporate tutors, who could base themselves on the documentation produced for professional action. For example: through videos that make possible to re-run the procedure of actions and understand what Pastré (2002) defines the “organisers of practices” destined to a precise situational class with adaptive functions. This process of professional thinking makes the professional gather a documentation, it also selects the problematic situation and confronts itself with a group made of other teachers and researchers. This

process allows the beginning of a process of practice review and the detection of new solutions and meanings for inclusion.

The third strategic line is linked to the previous ones and we would like to explore them, it concerns the creation of new devices for balancing the competences of disabled people. In the same direction, we find fundamental to focus the attention toward the development of the competences, but also to the exploration of beliefs, certainties and values of the disabled person in the working context, to intervene *on the job* during the phase of insertion, to reshape possible beliefs that can limit the disabled person's performance on the job place. In fact, several researches show adult that disabled workers have inadequate professional beliefs that can cause adaptation difficulties, or may make any attempt of working insertion fail (Hitchings et al., 2001).

In our belief, generally and specifically in some professional itineraries, a *Professional e-portfolio* is extremely important. It, which is made of significant experiences and all that would risk to be fragmented during the passages from a context to the other, and within the thoughts of the person. The aim is to shape up the worker in the working environment. A true learning environment that allows students to rebuild their training path using a number of *tools* that support and help them in it. Nowadays, research on e-Portfolios (Giannandrea, 2012) is connected to *Personal Learning Environment*; that is network applications that allow people to tell their stories and talk about the elements that describe their identity.

A *Personal Learning Environment* (PLE) is an environment set by a single person, it is different from a traditional LMS for the light structuring and for the lack of distinction among roles (teachers, students, tutors). In other words, a PLE is built by a people on the basis of their needs and interests. It is not linked to a single course or to an institutional learning path, however, it is potentially finalised to lifelong learning. Therefore is built around people and their choices. The attainment of such kind of environment exploits the potentialities of the web 2.0 to full extent; in aggregation and at cooperative level. Aggregation is intended as a *mashup*, the combination of web space and resources available from some suppliers, which are used with material produced by the student, as well as to the student's personal and professional relations. For many youngsters the PLE concept is in many ways a novelty, also in rescuing new planning for new generations affected by disabilities.

Firstly, every PLE is never a completely finished product; it is composed of assembled spaces and contexts, shaped and personalised by students, who will be aided by tutors and referring mediators in case of disability to attain their goals, interests, activities that engage them and their moods.

The trainer and planner's roles are to strive to provide the right integrating solutions and the personalization referred to the specificity of the disabled person. Secondly, conception, personalization and management of a PLE are social activities and constitute cognitive competences that develop on their own in the course of the building and widen the chances of participation and social inclusion. Finally, indeed, PLEs are not only a collection of artifacts, they connect and integrate people, groups and communities. This communitarian presence modifies the environment inside the personal environment, it makes it richer and more varied all the time. If it is true that significant relations exist inside the traditional contexts, the outward look of PLE permits the widening of the space for relationships that go beyond the institutional ones of the school class. It also includes elements "external" to the educational path among the potential users of the resources. A noteworthy aspect in our argumentation concerns the fact that the youngster with disabilities may have multiple environments where to act and find a place: the great value of personalization is that different environments may be built to pursue different learning paths, which must be connected among themselves, they permit to keep, without fragmenting it, the necessary continuity of the intervention on the educational projects in the life of the youngster.

According to the sustainers of this approach, the challenge for new generations of disabled students is not to find adequate resources for their learning paths, but to be helped in selecting the most useful and suitable resources among the enormous ones available, in reference to the personal cognitive profile. There is always a disabled youngster, at the core of the construction and development of a PLE, he is supported to adopt all the operational decisions to the modality for publishing the con-

tents, the presence on the web and the sharing of all posted materials. This should be without interferences from formal educative institutions such as schools and universities. However, the role of student must be emphasized next to the role of the played by figures such as planners, teachers and mediators who support the youngster. These figures cannot be sidelined because the process needs training to develop skills that allow room for autonomy in managing the context.

In fact, some authors sustain that these skills and competences can develop in due course, through the online communication with the other users of the same networks, or finding feedbacks and advice within the network of contacts of the PLE (Downes, 2009; Giannandrea, 2012). Even if the PLE is built with the purpose to promote learning, it remains necessary to foresee some form of support or scaffolding, which will not leave the disabled student totally “alone” in facing the contents and the proposed activities.

Several researchers agree in sustaining that the inherent learning of PLEs is structured upon six basic elements, even if not all assign the same level of importance to all components: gathering information; social interaction; activities; reflections; conceptualization; re-forwarding information (Downes, 2006, Kop, 2006, Mason, 2006). These elements can be traced and promoted with different forms and intensities, even inside a context of online learning. However, the main challenge is constituted with modalities through which the different elements can be related with each other to build one qualitative learning experience. Within the PLE, various technical tools can play an important role for a deeper and significant learning (Giannandrea, 2012, p. 135):

- a personal profiler, a section able to support an updated profile of the student during the course of the process. The personal profiler could gather personal data, from the ones relative to learning and free time, to the learning styles or the preferences in the use of materials and contacts. Furthermore, they could support the research of this information, suggesting to the user to adopt tools, apps and data on the basis of a rating given by the user. This information is gathered by the user and re-used according to the need of the student during the different phases of the learning cycle. For example: during planning and conceptualization, or during the collaboration with other students, while negotiating or receiving a feedback;
- some tools for editing and publishing contents on the web. For students it is very important to have the chance to use their PLE with tools that allow them to visualize information, rethink it, building a blog, a video, a web page for the site. This helps the user to create new contents and promote them outside toward other readers. This kind of editor represents a support during the registration, activity, conceptualization and re-forwarding phases;
- an e-Portfolio-like application, it is useful for personal development, which could be used to gather digital artifacts and ideas, reflections, feedbacks that students may select and share with friends and colleagues. This instrument offers to the opportunity to ponder about their personal story to the students. Furthermore, it supports meta-cognitive competences and places itself in the organizational phases as well as in planning and documenting the abovementioned model;
- a tool for peer assessment, a sort of learning consultant. If students accept to question themselves, the peers’ feedback is a powerful weapon to stimulate the reflection and the improvement of the learning process;
- a number of communication tools, such as chats, blogs or links with traditional Learning Management Systems.

Finally, PLE proves to be different from other tools of learning that propose to gather data and information: in fact, its goal is to re-construct a whole world that contains the documentation of the itineraries and successes obtained in traditionally structured educational contexts for the young generations with disabilities. Next are the working and learning context contacts, tools to produce and create, access to library and document resources, as well as a whole array of online services, such as tools for social networking or file sharing. “It can contain all the necessary tools and applications for people to start their learning process using the information provided by their previous research

and personal profile, in addition to the feedbacks about their projects and shared artifacts. Students can use it to bring forward a personal project outside the group, or receive advice and feedback during the course of the project. PLE provides and proposes from time to time the correct tools on the basis of the development and type of project” (Fournier & Kop, 2010, p. 4).

In conclusion, these could be three guiding lines for an integrated work online shared and co-responsible that supports working inclusion for disabled people. It permits to re-think new relations among people who live with the institutions, work for different agents and research in the field of special pedagogy, in a collaborative approach to research

Notes

(1) Our argumentation reminds the wide international consensus on the multi-dimensional model of the domains of Quality of Life found by Schalock and Verdugo Alonso (2002). In their proposal they find the following dimensions that characterise the Quality of Life of people: social inclusion, physical welfare, interpersonal relations, material welfare, emotional welfare, self-determination, personal growth and rights.

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