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Paola Aiello

**Italian Ministry Guidelines on SLD Students' Special Educational
Needs. Didactic Suggestions and Teachers' Training**

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FOREWORDS

The inclusion of people with disabilities in education can sometimes be described as a strategy of modern education science and an education scenario in which every teacher and administrative staff knows their tasks whereas something just does not seem to work out smoothly. When attempting to achieve the total inclusion of people with disabilities in society and/or in education, it seems to be not quite adequate in spite of the best of our intentions. In some European countries such as post-communist states Hungary, Slovakia, Romania or Czech Republic there is a traditional diagnose-based schooling model for disabled children and this model causes several difficulties in education praxis. (Just for instance, diagnostic process is not uniform in the country due to different protocols applied by different teams.) While the other European countries have traditional pedagogical model for schooling of students with special educational needs such as Scandinavian states or United Kingdom.

According to the estimation of UNESCO, by 2015 all children should be able to enjoy a full course of elementary education. However, without the inclusion of children with disabilities this goal cannot be achieved. Current education policy focuses mainly on school management and the economic status of institutions but the real troubles of inclusive education present themselves in the classrooms.

These reasons above graduate our special interest to read books written on this difficult field of education. This book, opened by you dear Reader will inform you about shaping of Italian model in inclusive education as well as legislation and practical problems in teaching process, specifically about the issue of SLD students.

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INTRODUCTION

The Italian experience in the field of disabled student's school integration shows up all its *complex* characteristics which are typical of an integrated educational system.

It is based on the achievement of a pedagogic ideal project which is oriented on both common and disabled student's right to study. This system, which fully includes the presence of all students requiring specific educational needs, has to be continually developed and it is realizable only through theoretical reflection and experimental activity aimed at the creation as well as the very frequent analysis of both Italian historical and cultural evolutions.

At this proposal, it is also really important to highlight that all progresses of the Italian society, thank to its indispensable values, have never undermined both cultural and ideal continuity, whose main scope is the respect of human rights.

It is not a case if the Italian school context has been considered as the international precursor of the so called "full inclusion" since the passage of the law n. 517 enacted in 1977.

It deals with have a brave choice, which had been very criticized in past times and that required to the Italian school and university system a frequent elaboration of theoretical analysis, operative strategies and procedures, interventions as well as educational routes aimed at the legal and pedagogical foundation of the chosen standards.

For these reasons, during various National Conferences in the last years, an increasing attention to the individualization and the elaboration of intervention strategies has been registered.

Their main goal was to furnish a higher quality of integration processes in Italy re-examining the condition of the fulfillment of provision's text. All these reflections and debates gathered both didactic and pedagogical petitions which constantly take up the Italian scientific discourse community about the integration matters as well as those one concerning specific educational needs.

A new plan emerged from this dispute. It fills a legal gap and, above all, it offers an immediate solution to the special need of suitable educational

strategies and methods, in order to grant a very school success to all students affected by Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD).

The Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research has immediately picked up all suggestions proposed by the debate. It also stemmed the risk that a great quantity of disabled students was excluded by a regular school course, proving a very frustrating experience because of an unsuitable school organization in case of the presence of specific learning disability's characteristics.

In fact, the specificity of some learning difficulties does not require to follow what is stated by the law n. 104 which is aimed at *the help, the social inclusion and the rights of all disabled people* enacted in 1992.

The achievement of both learning and educational purposes for SLD students is possible as long as teachers acquire a suitable compensatory competence, also changing their attitude towards them.

In general, *"Many of them accept students with SEN but only at their schools and not in their classrooms. It means they wouldn't like to get more difficult or newer kinds of tasks than they have currently without integrated students, however they have no reason to refuse if their schools accept students with SEN"* (Nemeth, 2008, p. 34.).

On these assumptions, a certain rearrangement of the school system seems to be necessary. It has to happen through a special teaching which allows local modifications such as the re-establishment and the protection of all accessing conditions to the system, whereas they were compromised by limiting structural or functional factors.

In this complicated scenario, which highlights an open minded Italian society, a research process is introduced and it is outlined on the historical background of the didactic and educational system.

Even if this kind of system develops thank to frequent scientific inputs, it holds on its internal structure to protect the concept of equal opportunity which is based on the educational project, in full awareness of the difference's irrepressibility.

The present work begins with the legal-historical evolution of the Italian integration system, and successively, it enlarges in a wider perspective, in the

description of the law's text n. 170 enacted in 2010, whose title is "New rules on specific learning disabilities at school".

It is also about all guidelines aimed at granting the right to study to both common and disabled students and didactic strategies to adopt in case of the presence of students affected by SLD according to the Italian law's texts.

It highlights the need of both *compensatory tools* and *exemption measures* as well as the specificity of the Personalized Didactic Plan which is considered as the document that links all subjects involved in the educational project as well as the different levels of instruction. It is seen as a necessary resource, aimed at the achievement of evaluated and modified planned interventions in favour of all students affected by SLD.

In the last chapter the theme of both headmaster and teacher's training is faced up, in order to emphasize all characteristics of high preparation in Italy, in which interesting experiences of research are included.

Finally, the reflection about the right to study of all students affected by SLD as well as about its achievement, is enriched by the description of a specific experience of didactic research which has been carried on in the limited area of Campania. Its main aim is to focus on the teacher's training needs in order to find new ways to improve their competence in dealing with the special educational needs of their students.

CHAPTER I

The Italian School Integration Policy and Legislation for Specific Learning Disabilities

I.1. Historical Pathway of Special Legislation in Italy*

The discovery of the past traces within the Italian history of all subjects in need of special educational strategies, funding a suitable way of communication which brings new meanings, represents a fundamental passage in order to fit in the problem of the school integration of all students affected by Specific Learning Disabilities. It is also important to understand all political Italian choices that depend on both specific explanatory and cultural standards, local trends as well as on the progressive acquisition of educational psychologies.

A certain interest for the so called *disabled* or *handicapped subjects* in Italy, or better all people presenting any kind of physical, psychological as well as sensitive “abnormalities”, materialized only in the end of XIX century, when, in 1899, the first attempts for a possible integration were realized. In the same year, one of the most important initiatives was the building of an Institution for oligophrenic patients created by Antonio Gonnelli Cioni (1889), in which working in the fields was used as a therapeutic experimentation.

Other significant interventions were: the construction of the first pre-school kindergarten at Rome in 1900, whose direction was granted to Maria Montessori, and the foundation, in the same period, of the first Orthopsychiatric High School by Giuseppe Montesano.

In 1907 the first special needs classes were introduced, but only through the enactment of the Royal Decree n. 3126 in force from the 3/12/1923 the first special school were born. They had been approved by local authority in occasion of compulsory school enlargement “...to all blind and deaf-mute students which do not present any other abnormality that could prevent its

*This paragraph has been written in cooperation with Carmen Palumbo, who is Phd in “Methodology of Educational Research” at the Department of Human, Philosophical and Educational Science of the University of Salerno- Italy

compliance". The same Decree states that "it is extended to deaf-mute students until their 16th year."

Thank to the unified text of all acts about primary education, passed with the Royal Decree (R.D.) n. 577 enacted on 5/2/1928, essential changes were noticed. One of the most important ones was the passage of the paragraph n. 171 which was about the obligation towards "...the education of all pupils aged from 6 to 14 years" as well as the increase of the school assistance, which until that moment was previewed just for blind, deaf-mute students and all those ones belonging to other "handicapped categories".

The paragraph n. 415 inserted in the General Regulation, approved with the R. D. n. 1297 enacted on 26/4/1928, provides that: *"When all acts of continuing indiscipline led the teaching staff to believe that they can derive from some students' psychological abnormalities, the teacher can, once the opinion of the Health Official, suggest the student's ultimate removal to the governmental or municipal headmaster who will take care of the pupil's enrolment to special needs classes. They have to be established by the Commune or also, according to the different situations and in agreement with student's family, he can start all suitable certifications aimed at the admissions of all those students affected by psychological abnormalities in specific educational Centres"*.

In fact, through this Royal Decree, all criteria for "handicapped" pupils' move in special needs classes and the various length of primary school courses were fixed. But, however in that period, the principal idea was that one to consider "handicapped" individuals as "incapacitated", for whom it was strictly necessary to adopt suitable interventions for those "special" contexts.

The following R.D. n. 786 enacted in 1/7/1933 established that all special schools erected thank to the R.D. n. 3126 enacted in 3/12/1923 were included by the civil service. It stated that: *"The Royal Superintendent of school, together with the Commune and the Body promoted the building of a special primary school effected by the U.T. n. 1175 enacted in 14/9/1923, with a suitable convention that has to be accepted by the National Ministry of Education. All the burden which either the Commune or the Body take upon in order to assure the regular functioning of subsidiary and assistance services as well as all those ones taking upon the school administration, under the clause 2 belonging to the same U.T."*

Only on the 1st January 1948, when the Italian Constitution came in force, inviolable rights and imperative duties of the political, economical and social solidarity were conceptualized. In particular, the paragraph n. 3 which professes *“the social dignity being equal before law with no distinction of sex, race and religion”*, gave a new perspective of the same Constitution extending and substantiating both concepts of liberty and equality. The same principle was affirmed again in the paragraph n. 38 stating that: *“...all disabled and handicapped subjects have the claim of education and professional training”*. This concept is strengthened also from the point of view of the educational legislation which stated that: *“school is opened to everyone”, authenticating the right of each human being to receive a suitable education as well as the social duty to grant and protect this right through a wide choice of education, supported by a coordinated and effective politics of socio-educational interventions”*.

Instead, the 1960's decade coincides with a series of provisions aimed at sustaining and the wide spread of both special schools and classes starting from the law n. 12 enacted in 26/1/1962 whose title is *“Use of financial aids aimed at the loan for school development plan”*.

The paragraph n. 32 explains that they have been established in favour of: *“education in special schools for psychophysics disabled subjects, the built and increasing of special needs classes in complete compulsory primary schools, health service, didactic and all suitable equipments aimed at the functioning of the same special schools and classes, pupils' rational funding as well as the organization of specializing courses for teachers...”*

A further confirmation of this particular vision which tends to the alienation of all “handicapped” subjects is given by the Ministerial Memorandum (M.M) n. 103 enacted on 4/1/1962, whose title is *“General Administration of Primary Education”*. It states that: *“ All superintendents of schools are expected to indicate the number of special schools and classes for disabled students, both in case they are already active and if they are to be established. Special needs classes must be distinguished in the following categories: for all those students who are tardy; false mentally disabled; mentally disabled; affected by amblyopia or hard hearing.”*

Therefore, special needs classes increase more and more with a great rapidity, in order to show up that the past trend was that one to select classes. In fact, in

the Ministerial Memorandum (M.M.) n. 4525 enacted on 9/7/1962, whose title is "General Administration of Primary Education – Special Schools and Classes", a precise manual of all actions to do to facilitate the both special needs schools and classes can be found. In particular, for what that concerns pupils, the law states that: *"According to the symptoms and the kind of abnormalities, pupils must be sent to special needs schools or classes. It is strictly necessary that the teaching staff belonging to those specific schools, who are waiting for an organic discipline in this field, must have a specializing qualification.... All learning activities inside special schools for all students affected by amblyopia and hard hearing, must be granted to specialized staff only. The certification must be gained in the end of specific courses for hard hearing students organized by International State Centres of Specialization; or also specialized diploma given by the Specializing State Centre for educators of sight disabled students "Augusto Romagnoli".*

It is also very important for the organization to consider that all those students who are not generally considered physically disabled, should be included in this category. For example all students who are predisposed to the Time Base Correctors (t.b.c.) as well as all chronic patients should be indicated...All schools destined at these pupils' welcoming, must be appropriately increased, considering that their selection must be very careful in order to, however, exclude all those ones who can benefit from a good education in common schools. All those teachers who are not specifically specialized can manage only special needs classes in which pupils whose abnormalities can grant an easy and fast adaptation to common schools will be inserted".

Instead, in the second part, which refers to students' finding, the law states that: *"...The abnormality's signal will be given by the teacher and it will be written in a report that will have to be read by the headmaster. On the consequence, he will send disabled students to suitable corresponding schools, after all health authorities' acceptance, such as: school doctor or health officer as well as medical officer had classified the kind of disturb...Basing on the number of selected students, H.L. will be able to modify all proposals specified in the referring note, in which the exact quantity of all special schools to be established is defined...."*

The twelfth paragraph, belonging to the law n. 1859 enacted on 31/12/1962 is also referred to the problem of education in secondary schools' special needs classes. In fact, it states that: *"Special needs classes can be established in favour of*

disabled students education...Their selection as well as their move to these special classes will be ordered by specific regulations. It is also strictly necessary to fix up all suitable assistance strategies, the set up of specific training courses for teachers as well as any other useful initiative aimed at these classes' well-functioning".

The last interesting provision adopted during this period, refers to the reorganization of school health services, under the Presidential Decree (P.D.) n. 1518 enacted on 22/12/1967, whose title is Regulation aimed at the enactment of the third Chapter of the P.D. n. 264, in force from the 11/2/1961, about the school health services. In fact, the paragraph n. 30 states that: *"All subject presenting any kind of psychosomatic abnormalities, who do not allow a regular attending in common schools and who need of specific treatments, have to be moved to special schools. In case the student presents more than one abnormalities, the handicap will be considered, in the field of the assignation to special schools, as in need to have right of way over the other ones. All maladjusted students who present light mental disabilities or behavioural disturbs and so might come back to common schools, must be sent to special needs classes".*

Therefore, if the decade between 1960s and 1970s shows up the phenomenon of education of all "handicapped" subjects and their alienation through the admission in rehabilitative centres or in special needs classes (Sibilio, 2003), at the beginning of 1970s a radical change of school situation develops.

In fact, it starts with the enactment of the law n. 118 in force from the 39/3/1971, whose title is New acts and subject in claim, which gives some dispositions about both mutilated and disabled people. The law seems to be innovative in certain points; in fact, the paragraph n. 28, which is about provisions aimed at the school attending, states that: *"The government assures to all disables subjects, who are not self-supporting and who attend compulsory school or professional training courses:*

- a) the access to school through suitable precautions aimed at both the passage and the elimination of all architecture features that deny school attending to disabled subjects;*
- b) a suitable assistance for the hardest disabled subjects during school hours."*

The law still stated that compulsory education must be realized in common classes of public schools a part of cases in which subjects are affected by

serious mental or physical disabilities, so that apprenticeship or insertion in common classes is forbidden or considered very difficult. *“Moreover, the school attending of both mutilated and handicapped students to high schools and universities will be facilitated. The same provisions will be valid for both preschool and after-school time institutions”*. The law n. 118 ratifies the right as well as the obligation of the inclusion of all handicapped subjects in common classes. It consists in their claim to be welcome in those classes and the duty of both schools and all those body which have the responsibility to built suitable structures for them, provide services as well as qualified staff.

It represents the very first step towards integration. Special needs classes start to be nonsense because the very main goal to be reached is to build a suitable school for each student, furnishing a soft anticipation of what individualized teaching is really going to be. In particular, it's in the Ministerial Memorandum n. 227 enacted on 8/8/1975, whose title is Interventions in favour of handicapped students, that the term integration in its figurative sense appears for the first time, even if it still represents an ideal concept. The Memorandum states that: *“Basing on indications come out from both analysis and elaborations recently fulfilled on handicapped students' educational problems...adopting useful measures and strategies has been considered necessary in order to facilitate possibly students' increasing inclusion in common schools. This goal will be realized thank to their transformation and modification, by the way to enable them to welcome progressively also other students who present particular both behavioural and adapting disabilities, during their compulsory school's age. We cannot hide our difficulty in solving both structural and organizing problems to achieve considerable results through provisions aimed at the school and social integration of such students. For this reason, indeed, all required times and ways to achieve valuable interventions, will have to be examined and accepted by all schools' collective bodies, in order to highlight the high value that disabled pupils' integration has got”*.

This new integrationist perspective can be clearly seen in the document of the Ministry of Education: Final Report of the Fallucci Committee about handicapped school problems published on 1975, in which the problem to build a new school careful to “differences” which are considered as a resource for school community.

The document states the: *“Moreover, the trend to separate as less as possible all special initiatives from regular school activities, to which it is granted the task to offer several possibilities of action and integration to everyone, in the field of common groups. By this way, it should be useful not to link all advantages of individual interventions to the disadvantages of the separation from the most stimulating group of normal students. The problem of handicapped pupils forecasts the conviction that all the other ones with learning and adapting disorders must be considered as the true protagonist of their growing up. They surely have cognitive, operative and relational potentialities, which are blocked by the limits of the actual society. Facilitating the development of such capacities represents a school’s peculiar engagement”*.

The law n. 517 enacted on 4/8/1977, whose title is *“Acts about students’ evaluation and abolition of remedial examinations as well as about other rules for the alteration of school regulation”*, is aimed at the recognition of the need to organize the didactic plan through integrative school activities in favour of groups of pupils belonging to the same class or to other ones. It represents a great step in the field of school integration’s legislative evolution, in order to realize individualized learning strategies in case of the presence of disabled students, which is facilitated by the introduction of specialized teachers.

Through this law, handicapped students’ claim to be included in common classes of both primary and secondary schools is ratified. It may happen only in consideration of some limits, such as the maximum number of pupils, which usually is twenty in all classes welcoming handicapped students. The act also confirm the abolition of special needs classes as well as refreshing courses, under the clauses n. 11 and 12 within the law n. 1859 enacted on 31/12/1962.

The following Ministerial Memorandum n. 17831 in force from July 1978 enacts all dispositions included in the seventh paragraph of the law n. 517 in force from the 4/8/1977, which is about the selection related to all provisions in favour of all handicapped students. The Memorandum, instead, clarifies all rules about the use of special teachers for such subjects, stating that: *“Under the second part of the seventh paragraph within the law n. 517, the didactic plan should provide some forms in favour of the integration and support of handicapped students, requiring and benefiting exclusively of permanent qualified teachers or those specialized ones on an annual contract who are already on duty at school”*. The third

part of the same seventh paragraph orders that in all special needs classes containing twenty disabled students *“their suitable specific integration as well as the social, psychological and pedagogical support service must be assured...Therefore, special educational needs teachers should be fully convinced about the educational plan to organize and has equally to partake to all teaching staff’s meetings”*. This law refers to all educators holding this particular function as *“specialized teachers”* (paragraph 2) or *“teachers who have specific specializing certifications”* (paragraph 7), whose number, unfortunately, is always insufficient especially in secondary schools.

This is one of the principal impediments to the law’s materialization. Before the system of specialization courses, enacted by the D.P.R. n. 970 in force by the 31/10/1975, various refreshing initiatives providing, in a certain way, to the lack of specialists, have begun.

Moreover, the urgency of remedial teachers’ organic qualification, which is required in everywhere, is linked to a clearer demand about their role. Both cultural and legislative environment, belonging to period between 1980s and 1990s enlarged operative horizons and principles that had been carefully acknowledged by the following Educational Reforms.

Therefore, if during 1960s in Italy a certain school’s flexibility towards an integrative perspective, only during 1980s, the idea of an equal education for everyone can be considered insufficient, if also all operative conditions allowing its realization are missing.

Ministerial Programs for primary schools, introduced by the D.P.R. n. 104 enacted on 12/2/1985, deeply receive this kind of conceptual change, which acquires a certain meaning above all whereas *“the pupils’ situation make a very difficult request of educational help and didactic support to school”*.

The Ministerial Memorandum n. 250 enacted on 3/9/1985, whose title is Actions of support in favour of all handicapped students, confirms that learning difficulties, deriving from disability situations, cannot constitute a true obstacle to the assertion to both this right and obligation. It also repeats that the school should grant to all students: opportunities, experiences as well as all natural resources they need. In particular, it clarifies that: *“obviously, these considerations*

are considered valid also for all students attending primary school, in which the bases for a pedagogical, curricular and organizational with it should be established”.

The Memorandum highlights also another fundamental issue, which is the analysis and the knowledge of the subject’s potentialities as well as the definition of his “educational needs”.

In the same provision, a “functional diagnosis” to a suitable educational intervention should be followed by the indication of the student as handicapped and to the acquisition of all documents attesting this situation. Such diagnosis will highlight the student’s profile, considering his physical, mental, sensitive and behavioural situation, in addition, he will furnish his personal and family data, as well as all those ones belonging to handicap’s certification. It will also stress both learning difficulties, deriving from disability and its related possibilities to recover; and all possessed skills which have to be stimulated, supported and developed. If all information, coming from the period between 1970s and 1980s, run over the primary school, the secondary school should wait for the Constitutional Court’s Decision n. 215 enacted in 1987. It was successively translated by the Ministerial Memorandum n. 262 in force from 22/9/1988, whose title is Enactment of the Constitutional Court’s Decision n. 215 in force from the 3/6/1987, whose title is Handicapped students’ Application and School attending to the secondary school of II degree for all.

The Memorandum disciplines all modalities aimed at: enrolment, passage from the secondary school of I degree to the second one, fulfilment of didactic plans, examinations as well as the evaluation of all handicapped students, who are going to attend any kind of high school.

The specific situation described by the Constitutional Judges, calls the Parliament, at this point to honour the duty to enact a law, which can be suitable to all those principles previously declared.

On 5/2/1992 the framework law n. 104 was enacted. It was about the right of assistance, for social integration and handicapped people, which constitutes a great answer to all court solicitations but also to a general social expectation. This law orders, assembles and enables everyone to use all numerous different acts which had previously enacted by the various Ministers in different

occasions. It collocates the criterion of integration in the field of peoples' rights and draws many routes dealing with the entire life of handicapped subjects which is not limited to the school or welfare environment. In this sense, this law also finds a solution for the term "disabled", replacing it with "handicapped person", in which the concept of person is linked to that one of unity, singleness, and wholeness in a didactic project referred to *everyone and each one*.

The third paragraph of the same act helps to clarify the ambiguity referred to the term deficit/handicap. So, the school has to *welcome* the "deficit", reducing the "handicap" and granting to disabled students suitable conditions aimed at the psycho-physical wellness, by the way to create a positive social environment in which the student can develop affects, relationships, autonomies as well as apprenticeships.

The self-consciousness is already a form of knowledge and it constitutes one of the best conditions to increase even learning, which is also linked to cultural literacy that represents a goal to achieve for everyone and obviously also for handicapped students.

All information furnished by the framework law can be translated operatively in the "Act aimed at the orientation and coordination related to local health services' duties in the field of some people affected by handicap" enacted in 24/2/1994. It introduces very important documents which are linked to the student's school process, such as: *Functional Diagnosis*, *Functional Dynamical Profile* as well as *Individualized Educational Plan*.

On the one hand the student's personification and individualization are privileged, but on the other hand a kind of support which is not only individualistic is offered. In this sense, the assignation of the special needs teacher is effected not on the base of the number of handicapped students in the class, but on the whole number of the applied ones.

In fact, the Ministerial Decree n. 331 enacted on 24/7/1998 is about "All dispositions referred to the reorganization of the school net, class formation and the individualization of the organic personnel in the school. Section IV – Division and assignation of all jobs related to special activities to all students affected by handicap - Experimentation of effective models of integration". In this act, paragraph n. 37 and

n. 38 furnish numerous indications and advices related to the endowments by the provincial Court about special educational needs teacher in the different school degrees. Successively, the Presidential Decree n. 275 enacted on 8/3/1999 is about All regulation furnishing acts in the field of school autonomy under the clause n. 21 enacted on 15/3/1997. The fourth paragraph of the same law, which is about Didactic autonomy, clarifies that schools promote each student's potentiality, adopting all suitable initiatives to the achievement of this special goal, considering the concept of independent learning as well as families' opinion about it. Schools recognize and improve the value of students' diversities through the materialization of national objectives in educational processes which are aimed at the assertion of the right to learn.

The law n. 53 enacted on 28/3/2003 consists, more precisely, in a Delegation to the Government aimed at the definition of all general rules about education and performances' essential levels in the field of professional training. It is better known as Act belonging to the school Reform by Moratti and is often referred to the theme of school integration. It confirms that: *"the education claim has to be assured to all students for at least twelve years, in order to facilitate their personal growing up and self-consciousness, in full accomplishment of their evolution rhythms, various differences among them as well as families' educational choices"*.

One year after the passage of the school system Reform, the law n. 4 was enacted on the 9/1/2004. It was better known as The Stanca's Act that was about all "Dispositions in order to facilitate disabled students' access to computers". It represents a special case in the history of the Italian Republic because its enactment was required by the whole Italian Parliament unanimously; and it is the result of numerous bills which were presented also by previous legislations. The law is aimed at the recognition and protection of all people's claim to access to all information sources and to their related services. To reach this goal, it introduces the definition of *"accessibility"*, whose meaning consists in disabled students' use of all information systems' skills to easily furnish both services and knowledge, without any kind of selection; and within the limits of technological powers. This kind of supports are called *"technological aids"*, whose term is referred to the use of both hardware and

software in order to allow disabled people to pass or almost reduce their disadvantaging conditions and access to digital information.

One of the most significant steps in the filed of secondary school of second degree, was the enactment of the Ministry Memorandum n. 125 in force from July 2005. It was about all Disabled Students' School Certifications, after the Constitutional Court's Decision n. 215 enacted in 1987 assuring the high school attending to all handicapped students. It allows to all those disabled students who are not going to get any legally recognized educational qualification, to receive course credits. In fact, the paragraph n. 13 belonging to the same law, states that: *"whereas handicapped pupils neither fulfilled any didactic special needs route nor they got any diploma attesting the examination passage, would receive a certification testifying all course credits"*.

These last ones will be related to the school course's address and last, as well as poll results and learning subjects.

Therefore, it is possible to notice, from this complicated legal process, Government's precise intention to protect disabled student's claim to study, even if it is also clear that these acts do not forecast any particular provision for students affected by SLD because they will be fulfilled in the integration politics included in the law n. 104 enacted in 2010.

All difficulties deriving from diagnosis, which are based on defined procedures, prevented the Government to face up with the complicated issue of a unified methodology. In fact, the impossibility to qualify S.L.D. as true handicaps, in order to refer to all criteria and tools within the law n. 104, persuaded the Italian Ministry of University and Research to face up with this issue's complexity. By this way, the risk that students affected by S.L.D. could give up their studies; or that their educational process could be unsuccessful, is avoided. This is possible only through a series of provisions which anticipate the enactment of a national law.

In the meanwhile, for the want of a specific legislative provision, Italian Regions in the exercise of their duties in the field of the claim to study, had enacted some acts in order to face up the problem of specific learning disabilities, as long as the serious risk not to follow univocal routes in its management. In addition, all Ministerial Memorandums about dyslexia and

related to disabled students' evaluation during the school leaving examinations, anticipate the need to adopt didactic and methodological exemption measures as well as compensatory tools without any mention in the final certification (P.D. n. 122 enacted in 2009, paragraph n.10). So, they start a process which definitely comes to an important step that is pedagogically based on a political point of view, through the enactment of the law n. 170 in force from 2010.

I.2 The Italian Law n. 170 on "Specific Learning Disabilities"

The Law n. 170 enacted in Italy in October the 8th 2010, whose title is "New rules about Specific Learning Disorders" in the educational field, stimulated an useful cultural and scientific debate about this matter (SLD).

The importance of this issue is due to its predominance as well as its consequences on individuals, determining most of times a school progress' drop. It involves the risk that children, belonging to secondary school, often give up studies, as well as they reduce their possibilities of self-fulfillment not only at school, but also in the society and at work.

This educational problem has become a true emergency that has to be faced up through specific actions to satisfy specific needs which have to be analyzed scientifically and above all pedagogically in order that emergent petitions could be transformed in lawgiving provisions protecting people's rights.

To reach this goal, the Law n. 170 enacted in 2010 is "integrated in the official body of the Italian Republic's regulations" and looks as a prescriptive background in which it is possible to organize special interventions in different sectors. Since it is a framework law and it is composed of nine paragraphs, its subdivision in further parts cannot assure a complete exhaustiveness, if it is not followed by a series of laws and guidelines which have not been recently enacted.

In particular, this law offers itself as the continuance of the lawgiving history, ratifying all general principles which should guide educational, medical and rehabilitative interventions.

These last ones aim to facilitate the concept modification of diversity which is known as individual difference and special educational need.

Sometimes, this law has been simply considered as an act about dyslexia; limiting all typical various signs in which Specific Learning Disabilities can manifest, to this problem, both if they show themselves at the same time or separately.

The Law n. 170 “recognize the dyslexia, the dysgraphia and dyscalculia as specific learning disabilities, also called SLD which show themselves in case of the presence of adequate cognitive skills, of the absence of neurological pathologies as well as in case of sensorial shortcoming, but they could represent a serious limit for the enrolling of some activities in everyday life” (Law n.170/2010).

The first paragraph of this law officially recognizes specific learning disabilities in their typical various symptoms, according to all information included in numerous books about dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and dysorthography. In particular, dyslexia is meant as a specific disability which shows itself up with the difficulty during reading learning and, more precisely, during the decoding of linguistic signs that corresponds to the correctness and speed of reading. Dysgraphia is meant, instead, as writing disturb which involves individuals’ difficulty during graphic realization. Differently, dysorthography offers itself in the complication during the transcoding of linguistic process. While Dyscalculia is a disability which presents irregularities during automatic calculations and numbers’ elaboration.

The need to give a specific definition to these disorders consists in the necessity to have a common language to be used as a base in order to treat a very difficult field, which nowadays has not been completely defined, even though the World Health Organization (WHO) tried to give it a specific determination in the International Classification of Psychological and Behaviour Syndromes (ICD – 10- initials F81, 1992): so, the definition of “Specific Learning Disabilities” includes all those disorders in which the regular ways to achieve reading and writing skills are upset in the first part of the cognitive development. Moreover, all those disturbs which are not considered as a consequence of a lack on learning opportunities or they are not due to acquired

brain illnesses, but they depend to troubles in cognitive elaboration that that are linked in a certain way to biological dysfunctions, are considered part of SLD's category. Finally, in standardized tests which had been previously individually supplied and analyzed through calculation or written declaration, result to be highly under the regular values considering individual's age, intelligence and education, can diagnose the presence of such disorders. Obviously, as a consequence, they easily interfere with school progress and with all those activities which are part of everyday life and require reading, writing as well as calculating skills.

The Italian legislative system clearly states that none of these disorders can be considered ad true disabilities, in fact the law recognizes that they can show their symptoms even if the individual presents suitable cognitive skills and, on the consequence he/she is not affected by neurological pathologies or by sensorial shortcomings.

Nevertheless, since their limitableness in the enrolling of usual activities; it seems to be necessary to arrange suitable measures that can assure the problem's resolution at school with the assignation of a specialized remedial teacher.

To achieve their scopes, those disorders involve specialized health services as well as school's crosswise, in fact both these institutions are obliged to furnish suitable solutions to all these special needs they are linked to.

Educational organizations, in particular, have been singled out as structures which have been appointed to take care about individuals affected by SLD, through:

- a) the adoption of special measures which facilitate the quickly identifying of such disorders;
- b) the management of all those actions that could bring to pass typical difficulties;
- c) the recurring evaluation of all results and objectives that have to be reached through other reexaminations of the situation or through the adaptation of the technological equipment;
- d) the pointing out of the suitable methods of evaluation.

The second paragraphs of the same law underlines what are the aims to achieve:

- a) granting the right to education;
- b) facilitating the school progress even through educational supports and assuring an suitable educational and promoting potentialities development;
- c) reducing relational and sensorial disadvantages;
- d) adopting evaluation tests according to the educational student's needs
- e) informing teachers and parents about problems deriving from SLD;
- f) fulfilling the precocious diagnosis as well as rehabilitative educational processes;
- g) increasing the communication and the collaboration between families, health services during the educational process;
- h) assuring equal opportunities of skills development in the social and professional fields.

Naturally, one of the most important scopes to achieve is the equal orientation which brought to bear out the right of educational for everyone and each individual, in order to grant equal opportunities through an intervention which is aimed at a diachronic perspective from the building of an educative approach which has been projected to use the power of personal skills' development for all lifelong.

The synchronic element, which involves different contexts in various levels, seems to be equally relevant because it makes the process of integrations of all individuals affected by SLD a fundamental project which at the elevation of the everyday life. It has to start from the schools' interventions and it has to be broadened to all social fields through a communication process in which the principal institutions belonging to an integrated system, get through each other.

It is possible to gather some very important elements from the law's enactment and aims. For this reason, it is strictly necessary to develop all those actions which are considered legally dutiful in the advantage of all numerous individuals which have to insert their actions to achieve law's goals.

Moreover, for the first time, the lawmaker takes note that is necessary to adopt some specific parameters to carry out the educational evaluation of all subject affected by SLD. They have to be related to the different suitable methods that schools must realize according to the diagnosed difficulties.

The diagnosis' moment is very important because the early survey represents one of the first certain possibilities to pass all those difficulties which may interfere with the typical development of special individuals. It involves great responsibilities to families and teacher and it involves evaluative procedures composed of suitable tools and methods aimed to single out any presumed presence of SLD since their first symptoms.

The third paragraphs of the Law n. 170 states that SLD diagnosis is usually expressed in the field of specific treatments which are already assured by the National Health Service and communicated to both student's family and school.

All those areas in which the diagnosis is impossible to be done, can grant its execution to specialists or to qualified structures within the respect of human economic and exploitable resource.

In case student affected by SLD still present constant difficulties even after the enrolling of specific rehabilitative actions, the school is obliged to interact with student's family. Indeed, it is up to schools belonging to every degree to organize suitable well-timed measures to point out all presumed disabled cases, basing on all regional legal procedures and, in particular, the first part of paragraph n. 7. In it, it's stated that *"however, the result of all educational activities does not necessarily constitute a true diagnosis of SLD"*.

So, the diagnosis becomes a fundamental element because it is linked to the legal start of compensatory interventions as well as any other technological action aimed at the solution of the problem. Even if the declaration of such disorders' presence is usually referred to teachers and to families. The diagnosis is granted to the National Health Service.

It is strictly necessary that someone takes the initiative to bring diagnosis' procedures into action; and, to do it, acquiring the awareness of the possible SLD's presence is crucial.

That's way a correct interaction between school and family results to be absolutely relevant. For this reason schools are entrusted to report any presumed case of possible disability to families as well as all cases in which learning disorders continue to show provisions even after the execution of all appropriate measures to this problem, by the way to awaken their sensibility to start diagnostic actions.

The diagnosis, which are usually typical of the National Health Service, have to react to univocal criteria, particularly considering that a national law takes on this problems.

The seventh paragraph of the law n. 170 creates all guidelines which have to be sent contemporary to the Department of Education and Science, to the Ministry of the University and of scientific and technological Research as well as to the board of health. These guidelines will direct the establishment of a referring parameter in order to plan regional legal procedures in the field of precious identification activities, subject to agreement during the permanent Conference aimed at the relationships between State, Religion and the autonomous provinces of Trent and Bolzano.

The administration of the relational trends which are typical of small systems, such as: the class, the school, the family that can also extend in other contexts, depends on the teachers' professionalism.

Their role is implicit in every affirmation, because it necessarily requires a further investigation in the training of both teaching and administrative staff working in schools belonging to every degree, included kind gardens which are mentioned in the fourth paragraph of the law.

In this paragraph enacted in 2010 and 2011 to suitable preparation about all disorders related to SLD is assured in the field of both teachers and headmasters' educational program. It is aimed at the acquisition of all competences that will allow them to recognize precociously all signs as well as their skills in the application of the suitable educational, methodological and evaluative stratagems.

The use of a single and specific educational strategies together with effective and flexible school activities, which consider also the particular individual's characteristics, such as the bilinguism and adopt a suitable educational

methods and stratagems involve teachers' engagement in a revision of their didactic inputs. One of their most important scopes should be that one to remove the stereotyped and classical teaching modalities, proving their conduct by documents, both during the planning and assembling phases.

Such disorders individualization classifies the establishment of common goals as preliminary definition for all numbers of the class. Moreover, it is up to teachers to adapt educational methods according to the pupils' characteristics in order to assure to everyone the attainment of all fundamental competences offered by the course. The definition requires also specific activities, such as: knowledge improvement, skills acquisitions as well as certain flexibility in the didactic organization.

On the contrary, the personalization expresses itself in all those educational objects, which have been appropriately distinguished (by the traditional ones) and which are achievable through the engagement of various educational strategies and methods, such as first of the use of didactic mediators, schemes and diagrams; and secondary the attention on the different learning styles as well as the weight of all interventions based on different reached levels.

The development of all individual potentialities happens through the proposal of specific activities which are aimed not only to the fulfillment of fundamental learning strategies but also at a well-conscious increasing of the personal talent.

The law n. 170 also states that all individuals affected by SLD must benefit of compensatory tools, including all those ones belonging to an alternative learning and of all technologies as well as exemption provisions which free disables by some unnecessary performances in order to favor the acquisition of knowledge.

These arrangements are not aimed at the reduction of disturbs' effects, but they just introduce specific learning criteria that can be proportioned to their characteristics.

They are based, in particular, on the observation that a resolute process of rehabilitation does not exist; in fact, besides the numerous improvements, a dyslexic individuals always distinguish themselves for their low speed and correctness in reading.

In particular, compensatory tools, allow disabled individuals to offset their weak learning process in order to facilitate the execution of automatic tests, which is usually damaged by the disturb. A possible example of what we are talking about can be the presence of electronic calculators, formularies, multiplication tables, etc... which are also called supporting technologies.

Instead exemption provisions fulfill to let disabled individuals off, some educational performances, such as: reading at loud voice, taking notes, etc...

They also establish personalized times to execute activities and influence the student's final evaluation, which will be focused only on contents. In the law's corpus there is a passage, dedicated to the learning of foreign languages, which underlines the need of using compensatory tools aimed at an easier oral communication as well as gradual learning steps; they also forecast the possibility of an exemption.

These activities require an useless effort which steals all those energies which could be used in other tasks, because the difficulty of some foreign languages and the absence of isomorphism among phonemic and graphic codes. On the consequence word's phonemes are not represented by direct and certain graphemes as it usually happens in the Italian language making the text very difficult to understand. The same impossibility in the comprehension is reflected in the L2 for all those students affected by SLD. All advices coming from the scientific literature about this specific issue, underline the need of an adaptation to the disabled student's cognitive stile. It consists in avoiding methods which are too linked to syntactical-translating elements in order to prefer the *multisensory approach*, or the *Total Physical Response* method or also more involving activities, such as: the *communicative aspect* or the *project work*.

Both "natural and direct" methods seem to be useless because the situation in which it is applied in the field of a foreign language's learning is less frequent. The monitoring system required by the law n. 170 allow the evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategies applied as well as the achievement of the purposes fixed.

The fourth part of the same law's paragraph also states that "students affected by SLD can benefit of specific evaluation and testing strategies during their

school and university carrier, including the Diploma examinations as well as the follow admission and academic tests.

This aspect is included in a general integration process that consists in special evaluative methods for students affected by SLD.

This diachronic aspect merges with the synchrony of specific interventions which involve other institutions playing the role of “caregivers”. The Italian Government plays its attention on them and fulfills appropriate provisions on the advantage of disabled student’s families. They are explained in the first and second part of the sixth paragraph of the law n. 170 stating that: “all relatives, until the first degree of kind ship, of students affected by SLD attending the first course at school and assisted during school activities at home, can benefit of flexible working hours. All conditions aimed at the assertion of the right expressed in the first paragraph of the law n. 170, are specified by national wage agreements related to all concerned sectors and will not burden any or further taxes to the State Finance.

The turning point that the law n. 170 aims to reach, requires a new educational school culture which will be based on the realization of a grid system to support students affected by SLD and it will assure to assist his/her synergistically and efficaciously during his life. The law grants to individuals an important role of education as strategies that acts requirement of the other parts’ linked to the full assertion of the law.

The Italian Department of Educational established a specific technical-scientific Committee, composed of qualified members of attested experience, who is aimed to support the necessary and gradual implementation process of the Law n. 170. It requires necessarily, a full synchrony aimed at the spread if an inclusive cultures about SLD and all its process which have the scope to create new competences at school in general and in particular as referring of basic teaching.

I.3. Italian Ministry Guidelines for SLD Students’ Right to Study

The Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, in implementation of the law n. 170 enacted in October the 8th 2010 through the Ministerial Decree

n. 5669, publishes some “Guidelines aimed at granting the right to study to all students affected by SLD” conforming to the relevant legislation of the second part of the seventh paragraph belonging to the same law in attachment to the foretold decree.

The Guidelines’ main scope is to furnish some indications about the achievement of what it has already been established in the law n. 170. This law highlights the need to prepare regional legal procedures which will have to be enacted in the following three months in order to start the precocious identification’s activities, as expressed in the third part of the law’s third paragraph.

It is also important to specify what will be the future interventions aimed at the assertion of the right to study for all disabled students.

After a short introduction highlighting the specific cultural environment in which the law n.170 is settled and summarizing all principal issues treated in it, the document furnishes a deep description of the “Specific learning Disabilities”.

It points out, in particular, the involvement of all school learning skills in a suitable intellectual operative system, which has been organized according to the students’ age.

The Italian Guidelines draw up and describe all reading, writing and calculation skills involved in these disorders, basing on the scientific literature about this specific issue.

In a more general way: *“Nowadays we use three different categories to express various degrees of difficulties. The first term is ‘Learning problem/temporary difficulty’ refers to students who have problems with attention and/or understanding but only temporarily because of the state of their health or similar problems, but those kinds of problems can be solved by the class teacher thus students with learning difficulties are not diagnosed by a special education (SE) teachers’ team.*

The second term is ‘Specific Learning difficulty/disorder’ means that students have a long term problem with reading, spelling, counting due to dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. Although these problems’ do not have anything to do with the person’s intelligence but its solving requires both the class teacher and SE teacher’s competences. It means these students need to have a diagnosis from a special teachers’

team. The third term is 'Learning disability' express that students have long term learning problems with some intelligence retardation" (Nemeth, 2008, p. 31.)

Moreover, they trace disturbs' causes in neurobiological elements which produce atypic learning processes that can be modified through particular interventions.

It naturally enlarges the range of the specific didactic possible actions in this field in order to spell out that all educational provisions have been intentionally adopted to face up with this pedagogic challenge.

At this proposal, guidelines confirm that "*if the student is fit to minimize and/or offset the disorder, he can reach the learning objectives forecast by the teaching plan*".

In addition, the Disorders' peculiarity leads educators to reflect on the fact that pupils affected by SLD develop specific learning styles to which the didactic discipline has necessarily to consider. For this reason, teachers' ability to observe students during all their school carrier becomes fundamental to point out all cognitive characteristics on which it is possible to base the achievement of a successful education.

A strict and methodical procedure, suggested by guidelines, allows to conform the educational proposal to the different characteristics of students one by one, fostering the diversity's acknowledgement.

At this proposal, the ministerial order enacted in 2011 strongly confirms what it has already been stated in the Law n. 170, referring to the use of specific and personalized didactic strategies through effective and flexible forms that can also count student's peculiar characteristics.

This kind of *didactics* represents a further tool which is aimed at the protection of the right to study and it is addressed to all those students affected by SLD.

It differs from the content of the Law n. 104 enacted in 1992 which instead requires a sort of educational rehabilitation for *disabled students* consisting in a special educational process. It is usually entrusted to the SEN teacher who acts in collaboration with other institutions and is certified in a series of documents, such as Functional Diagnosis (FD) and Dynamic-Functional Profile (DFP), which precede the drafting of Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

Guidelines' suggestions enrich the educational plan highlighting the need of carrier's personalization. Their value consists in the term's semantics that requires a special attention towards a special student to whom teachers offer the opportunity to develop his/her potentialities as best as possible through purposes' variety.

These criteria specify the difference between the *individualized* teaching and the *personalized* one, in order to point out a common language in which it is possible to base learning processes aimed at the student's successful training.

At this proposal, guidelines suggest some definitions:

"the personalized didactic consists in the execution of some individual special activities that disabled students can use to increase particular skills or to acquire specific competences also in the field of compensatory strategies and study methods.

These kinds of activities can be realized during individual working phases or during peculiar times, according to all flexible forms in which class works develop and that are allowed by the law in force.

As the law n. 53 enacted in 2003 and the legislative decree n. 59 enacted in 2004 states, the *personalized* teaching, instead, measures the educational offer as well as relational modalities on the base of the personal formative needs' specificity and unity. These last ones characterize students in the classroom, considering in particular their qualitative variety.

So, the synergy between individualized and personalized teaching determines, both for students in general and for the disabled ones, the most favourable conditions aimed at the achievement of learning purposes which have to be indicated in the Personalized Didactic Plan, together with proposed inventions. The plan functions as a specific document in which the teaching-learning route is determined and it is useful to grant didactic continuity as well as families' participation in educational initiatives to start and tools to use.

In fact, further indication about this issue prefer to the use of both *exemption* and *compensatory* tools which will be better dealt with in the following chapters.

In them, the value of such information will be specified in order to facilitate the educational process widely in the field of didactic aimed at the specific learning disabilities.

The effectiveness of such measures and tools shows itself not only in a cognitive field but also in an emotional one, whose main scope is the achievement of an absolute interdependence of the cognitive dimension with both relational and sensitive factors.

In this sense, today, the idea that cognitive dimension is released by extra-cognitive factors is considered definitely obsolete at the point that scarce self-esteem and anxiety, provoked by the fear to get wrong, interact positively with learning difficulties so that it is difficult to distinguish the single disturb from the effective learning disability.

In other words, what seems to be really difficult to establish is the limit in which cognitive disturb can be considered as an emotional problem or, if the second one, is dependent or worsened by the first one. (Trisciuzzi & Galanti, 2003)

Every true acquired learning and every school success strengthen the common and disabled students' conviction to achieve their goals beside all difficulties provoked by disturb and it clearly influences their general psychological condition.

This kind of reflection obviously support the fulfillment of both *individualized* and *personalized* interventions.

In fact, the idea that rude behaviors and inadequate didactic actions can influence on the quality and the quantity of learning experiences, creating pathological overtones which enlarge the range of difficulties, induces to increase the value of both tools and measures that do not place disabled students in an inferior condition as regards as their classmates.

For these reasons "*exempting disabled pupils or students from specific performances such as reading in a loud voice, not only does not damage learning, but it avoids also the frustrating sensation linked to the demonstration of their difficulty*".

The absence of humiliating experiences reduce all risking factors as well as school non-attendance.

At the same time, *exemption measures* and *compensatory tools*, as facilitators of the learning process in case of SLD, require socialization and the explanation of their use's reasons to disabled students' classmates, not to make them appear as simple favouritisms. So Guidelines suggest that "*after a short interaction with*

disabled students' family, the form master starts suitable initiatives to share with all class members the reasons for the application of such measures and tools, to avoid their stigmatizing as well as negative psychological relapses".

Therefore, a homely environment during lessons represents as a fundamental condition for the fulfillment of an inclusive learning setting in which the achievement of the educational goals is realized also thank to a relationship based on help and encouragement.

Moreover, these pedagogic parameters define the different roles and tasks of all figures involved in the special actions which are aimed at the accomplishment of disabled students' educational route. They highlight that the policies of the Regional School Office must assure that *"the attention and the care of educational strategies will not be under separate control but it will have to be into a systemic logic"*. The set of rules and actions suggested by guidelines are determined in order to their organization and sharing in the full compliance of every single regional autonomy.

The action proposed by the Guidelines are:

- ✓ The arrangement of regional ethical codes to share procedures and behavior to be applied in case of the presence of students affected by SLD. All strategies to point out risking signs precociously and all insertion modalities, have also to be inserted for the preparation of personalized didactic plans as well as the interactions with students' families.
- ✓ The creation of coordinating groups composed of provincial referents aimed at the implementation of all guidelines enacted by the Region.
- ✓ The stipulation of various agreements such as: conventions and protocols with representative association and with the National Health Services (NHS).
- ✓ Organization of different educational activities basing of specific contextual situations according to experiences competences and previous procedures in different environments in order to make coincide educational plan with the proposal.
- ✓ Increasing Specific Support Centers aimed at the support of disabilities' technologic tools and their functions to be used and spread in case of the presence of students affected by SLD.

In the field of each school autonomy the headmaster, who stands surety for education courses, starts initiatives aimed at the fulfillment of the right to study for every student and each of them in the following modalities:

- a. granting the connection of all people working in the school with territorial areas;
- b. stimulating and promoting every useful initiative aimed at the operation of all indications shared with all collected bodies and families, more precisely;
- c. activates preventive interventions;
- d. communicates special information to families;
- e. receives the diagnosis given by families, adds it to the protocol and shares it with the teaching body;
- f. promotes learning/updating activities aimed at the acquisition of specific common competences;
- g. promotes and increases specific projects, singles and removes all obstacles to them, as well as: he assures actions' coordination, such as times; modalities and loans;
- h. basing on teaching staff's proposal, he determinates all suitable documentation procedures of both individualized and personalized educational routes for common and disabled students. The coordinates all auditing conditions referring, if necessary, to all sample models published on the Ministry of Education's Website (MOE)
MIUR(<http://www.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/dsa>):manages both human and instrumental resources
- i. provides to increase the interaction between teachers and families of both common and disabled students, facilitating its conditions and fulfilling suitable modalities to recognize teachers' engagement in these problems.
- j. monitors all actions in progress, in order to allow the repetition of all good procedures or eventually to modify them.

The headmaster starts a collaboration with families and institutions functioning as informant coordinator and advisor. Teachers, instead, have a

specific professional training which is oriented to the acquisition of knowledge and competences aimed at the execution of their tasks that are specialized inside the Ministerial Decree. Every teacher in particular is expected to:

- a) take care about prerequisites;
- b) activate *special* strategies;
- c) communicate learning difficulties to students' families;
- d) control the diagnosis certification;
- e) proceed in the educational routes documentation;
- f) carry out educational-didactic strategies;
- g) adopt exemption measures;
- h) effect suitable testing and evaluation modalities;
- i) organize frequent meetings with their colleges belonging to the previous and following school degree.

Guidelines also consider the figure of family in disabled children's life; in fact the consciousness of its presence is fundamental for the students' success.

Interacting with teachers seems to be crucial in order to get over every doubt about disturbs and to bring into problems' knowledge.

It can happen only through a continuous information about the school experiences' development about all educational strategies used, about the expected and achieved measures based on texts and evaluations.

Moreover, all family's tasks to facilitate the collaboration and promote educational activities are specified in the Ministerial Decree.

The family, in particular, has to:

- a) supply to the student/pupils evaluation, on his/her own initiative or on pediatricist's one, in its free choice or school's one, according to the modalities previewed by the third paragraph of the law n. 170 enacted in 2010;
- b) give the disturb diagnosis to the school, according to the content of the third paragraph of the law n. 170 enacted in 2010;
- c) share all strategies elaborated in both individualized and personalized didactic routes documents. Families are expected to make an educational agreement with schools in the full respect of their privacy. In it they authorize teachers belonging to class association, the

application of both compensatory suitable tools and exemption measures which are previewed the current law considering the number of the available resources;

- d) support the students' motivation and engagement to their school work;
- e) control the execution of homework regularly;
- f) make sure that all required material have been brought at school;
- g) encourage students' autonomy during studying times, production at school as well as relationship with teachers;
- h) consider both the evaluative and educational meaning of each subject.

The most central element of an educational process are the students themselves who live learning difficulties in first person, so they can benefit from:

- ✓ a clear information about different learning modalities, as well as specific strategies which could help them in the achievement of their potentialities at the highest level;
- ✓ receiving an individualized/personalized didactic and the adoption of suitable compensatory tools and exemption measures.

At the same time, it's up to students *"to devote themselves in the school work, in order to suggest to their teacher what are the learning strategies which help to improve their skills autonomously"*.

Obviously it may happen only if student are mature enough to communicate it to educators.

Moreover the longitudinal prospective of this life-project leads in paying attention to all school cycles in which the execution of integration process of all students affected by SLD is desirable.

To reach this goal, it is necessary to follow disabled students' academic course in order to include their whole educational process as well as their history, casting it in the future gain of a total autonomy.

At this proposal, according to the main scopes of law 170, universities have to adopt evaluative and educational methods, as well as compensatory tools and exemption measures which are able to furnish all suitable solutions to the numerous needs of students affected by SLD.

Finally, the document highlights the emergency a suitable training for all subject involved in the integration process of disabled students proposing its modalities and indicating its contents.

The specificity of educational interventions grants a fundamental role to the research of all useful information to rearrange the traditional system considering all results to get and all students' needs.

For this reasons, it seems to be useful to pay attention on all those education processes in which individual research experiences offer interesting suggestion about a reflections on the school integration of disabled students, strengthening the exigencies of a didactic widening, aimed to the fulfillment of their educational and learning success.

CHAPTER II

Specific Learning Disabilities Didactics

II.1. Special Didactics and Pedagogy for the Educational Needs of SLD Students

The need of integration, as result of a strong egalitarian trend in Italy, has undervalued the study of the needs, that is, understanding problems and suggesting a way to eliminate any difference.

The assertion that everybody has the same human rights doesn't mean that everybody has the same needs so tending to a *general* concept of education. Education, indeed, requires specific answers for each difference, so there has been a general growing awareness of the importance of Special Pedagogy, as a disciplinary domain that aims at identifying the characteristics of special needs education and the *pathways* to follow. In this way, Special Pedagogy may be integrated with the General Pedagogy without losing its identity.

This clarification is fundamental because in Italy the Special Pedagogy has been combined with special educational facilities for a long time. This kind of segregation has increased the categorization of the *deficit* at the expense of the identification of special responses to special needs to be performed in large and not separated contexts.

The birth of a specific discipline, which includes Didactics and Special Pedagogy, has enhanced the scientific nature and the autonomy of this subject from general education, so avoiding dangerous overlaps due to the previous concept of special education, which was in contrast to the idea of integration.

Didactics, likewise, has acquired its independence developing its own theoretical aim, eluding its reduction to mere practice and to the temptation to provide "prescriptions" in contrast with the idea of the *personalization* and enhancement of the differences.

The demand for an autonomous space for each discipline did not mean to set distances. The remarks of the Special Pedagogy are still crucial to "*identify the*

special needs and the guidelines to follow" (Cottini 2009, p. 11). Therefore, the relationship between the Didactics and Special Pedagogy, included in a single scientific-disciplinary sector, meets the need of a necessary scientific integration; so the role of Special Pedagogy is basically to *"identify the special needs of people, accurately understand and interpret them and give them appropriate responses to comply with them"*(Cottini 2009, p.15). The task of education, meant as a discipline that deals with the teaching and learning dynamics, focuses on the communicative interaction between the various actors-agents of the educational system and inside formal and non-formal educational institutions. This means that when the teaching is based on a "special" connotation, it must not only identify the activities to perform, but also actions having a specific intent and an educational ideal, necessary for the evaluation of the contexts in which they can be implemented. The structure of "patterns of action" to foster the integration should not only include the concept of reproducibility at different times and in different environments, but also the usefulness *for each and every one*.

The relationship with the Special Pedagogy takes place when there is an identification of the special needs and objectives to be pursued, taking into account the development of integrated environments.

Therefore, the end, of special institutions in Italy, which can be traced back to the political and cultural reflection of the '70s, when disability finally becomes a resource to be recognized and integrated socially (Sibilio, 2003), does not cancel the special needs and therefore the waiver of special education, but it enhances this discipline as *"scientific research"* (Canevaro 2000, p.3).

This particular view has made necessary to mark the boundaries of each subject recognizing individual differences. It has also introduced the concept of Special Educational Needs in Italy, that requires Special Didactics and Pedagogy to respond appropriately to the educational needs through *individualized and personalized* interventions.

The concept of Special Educational Need introduces the theme of Learning Difficulties, more than the concept of disability does. This concept, which had been theorized by the English world and resumed by the educational policy, connects itself to *"students' particular situations that prevent them from learning*

and development: this negative situation can be an organic, biological, or family, social, environmental one or the combination of all of them" (Ianes 2006, p.44).

The concept of Special Educational Need, although wider, is closer to that of Learning Disabilities as the latter refers to *"any difficulty met by students during his/her school career"* (Cornoldi 1999, p.7).

School difficulties cannot be put in a deterministic logic context as the effect of a specific cause, but involve a number of factors that relate to both the student and the context in a systemic logic. For these reasons, it supports the idea of Special Pedagogy and Special Didactics as "science research", which are required to take *non-linear pathways* to understand the relation of specific factors related to learning difficulties and to special educational needs.

Therefore the recognition of special educational needs beside the normal educational needs (need to develop skills, need for belonging, identity, development, autonomy) requires a science that defines a specific area of investigation aimed at individualizing educational and learning responses based on the awareness of the impossibility to eliminate differences, which are instead recognized and enhanced as scientific resource for the social integration.

In the case of specific learning disabilities, within the wider categorization of learning disabilities of the age of development, the need for special education is linked to the "functioning" of the learning and the development, which generates difficulties, obstacles and delays, even if it sometimes has only a transitory value.

Disabilities are not the direct result of a specific cause and they cannot be constrained to a single area because the relational, cognitive and functional areas have specific characteristics, therefore an inadequate response may broaden the difficulty.

Students with special educational needs, particularly those who have specific learning disabilities, need educational interventions *"tailored to their specific situation and to the factors that originate and keep it"* (Ianes 2005, p.45-46). The methods and the duration of these interventions may vary; specifically the SLD need to be "camouflaged" in school activities in order to eliminate the SEN teacher inside the classroom, as required by the Italian law, so demanding all

teachers a richer and more effective educational and teaching planning to respond to special needs.

In this sense, the attribute “special” refers to a good quality of the teaching-learning process that makes possible the appreciation of differences and at the same time enhances specific interventions on the basis of special needs.

“The teacher collegiality will so take care of the SLD students. This requires teachers to share a culture of inclusion, but also specific skills and unified and coordinated methods to protect the right to education of the students involved” (Simoneschi 2010, p.89).

Therefore, the special educational needs demand a great responsibility to the teachers teams of every school grade.

II.2. Personalized Teaching Plans

The Personalized Teaching Plan (PTP) is the school instrument for all the actions involved in the educational and learning process of a SLD person, as provided by the "Guidelines for the right to education of students with specific learning disabilities" attached to the Ministerial Decree n.5669 of 12 July 2011.

As provided by the law, the PTP is necessary in the presence of SLD students and must be drawn up jointly by the Teachers Staff Meeting, supplemented by the curricular programs and agreed with the parents who must receive it at the beginning of each school year.

Whenever possible, the PTP must also make use of the direct participation of the student (appropriate age) to make him/her an active part of the learning process. It should always be consulted and brought to the attention of the School Headmaster for the monitoring of compliance.

Its teaching theoretical framework set the focus of the educational system on *learning* rather than on *teaching*. *“It requires an «organization of the knowledge» as a whole and, therefore, involving all its different levels, without restricting itself to the individual skills and planning interventions for SLD students in a structured, coordinated and continuous way”* (Simoneschi 2010, p.89).

In this conceptual framework, the PTP becomes a tool for planning, and thus to ensure the appropriate intervention, methods and application of the compensation tools and dispensation measures.

Indeed, the school which has a diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorder, is required to start specific educational interventions and rearrangement of the system at the local level through a series of appropriate actions in which the personalized curriculum is set.

The historical roots of this document are to be found in the importance given to the personalization of learning in the last decades in Italy, which has been ratified by a series of laws which have been paid great attention to the success of learning through specific educational pathways according to the person's needs.

In particular, the need for the individualization and personalization of the teaching-learning actions in Italy has been expressed by the Law 59 of 15 March 1997, considered the landing point of a need to respond practically to the demands for teaching-learning individualized pathways through:

- the promotion of teaching-learning pathways based on the right to learn and on the educational growth of all the students;
- the acknowledgement and the enhancement of the diversity;
- the enhancement of each person's potential;
- the adoption of all the needed initiatives to achieve successful education;
- the adjustment of the time of teaching and of each subject and activity according to the type of study and to the pace of students' learning;
- the adoption of flexible forms of the teaching-learning organization and of recovery, support, continuity and orientation activities.

The following decree no. 275/99 of the above mentioned law ("Regulation on the autonomy of educational institutions") also required schools to regulate "the amount of time necessary and the course of each subject and activity in the most suitable way according to the curriculum and learning rhythms even through the activation of individual educational paths.

The personalization of each intervention responds to the need to build teaching-learning pathways for the students, respecting the individual differences, the interests, the skills, the rate of learning, the cognitive styles, the attitudes, the inclinations, the experiences of life, the context in which different personalities arise.

The creation of different personalized routes can reduce on the one hand the risk of school failure of SLD students and on the other hand the quality of their courses.

Regarding the difficulties that teachers still face in developing a Personalized Teaching Plan and that make it particularly difficult to make observations without having a set of criteria which give order and sense to those observations, it is required that the Personalized Teaching Plan makes use of some criteria to identify "what" observe and "how" to evaluate what has been observed.

In this sense, the information provided by clinical diagnosis are very useful; their acknowledgment is the starting point of the procedure to organize the plan, during a special meeting with the participation of the class coordinator, the parents of the SLD student, the school headmaster and / or the SLD reference to collect information.

The reading of this diagnosis is extremely important as it allows to identify the seriousness of the disorder and its extension to other areas; it is the starting point for structuring the subsequent teaching-learning interventions. For example, if reading, writing and math learning are not associated with an inadequate motivational and emotional support, the person usually cannot cope fairly with the required tasks. It is thus useful in such cases that the subject will work:

- *at the level of perception.* He/she should be able to properly examine the stimuli and to reproduce them in order to coordinate fine and gross motor skills at the cognitive level that is taking place;
- *at the level of memory,* in order to retain the prior learning that he/she will temporarily save to apply the useful information while performing the following activities;
- *at the level of the language* to develop, produce and understand messages;
- *at the level of thinking,* to make proper use of diagrams, representations, etc.

Therefore, teachers can be guided by the diagnosis of the specialist, identifying the areas involved and the level of performance and taking into account the average performance related to the reference classes.

According to the seriousness and the areas of the disability, the Personalized Teaching Plan should make use of different teaching and methodological strategies, of educational and *compensatory tools* and of *exemption measures* and methods of evaluation.

Specifically, the report should read:

- ✓ *the student's data and the analysis of the situation of the student.* This section must contain the information provided by those who drafted the report, those received by the parents and the results of the work of observation done at school, highlighting strengths and weakness points;
- ✓ *the level of learning:* it is necessary to identify the real levels of learning in different subjects or in different fields of study, which should be recognized in the most suitable way to enhance the actual skills of the students, so overcoming his/her specific difficulties.
- ✓ *objectives and learning subjects for the school year.* It should be identified the fundamental knowledge and skills that the student should acquire for each subject or field of study, to ensure actual validity of the studies and ensure a specific work compatible with a SLD student.
- ✓ *Compensation and exemption methodologies and measures.* The most suitable methodologies should be identified for each subject or field of study to ensure the student's learning according to his/her specific conditions. The compensation and exemption measures should be identified for each subject or field of study to support the student in learning. Among them, in the secondary school it is necessary to identify with particular care the compensation and exemption measures that will be guaranteed even during the final year of secondary school examination. Preliminarily to the final examination, the second grade secondary school, these instruments should be drafted in the Document of 15 May (Note MPI n.1787/05 - MPI May

- 2007) in which the Teachers Staff Meeting will indicate exactly how, what and the system of evaluation planned for the examination;
- ✓ *test methods*: creation of multiple-choice tests, closed tests, T / F tests, open answers tests, tests in digital form; the teacher reads the written test; the teacher reads the written test with the use of the speech synthesis; reduction / selection of the quantity (not the quality) of the written tests, organization of planned oral tests, oral tests to compensate the written tests in a foreign language; programming longer times for the written tests; preparation of oral questions for the oral subjects; written and oral tests to support the use of concept maps and mental images and schemes;
 - ✓ *during assessment and final assessment*. According to what is stated in the first parts of the personalized teaching plan, the criteria for evaluating learning processes in different disciplines or fields of study will be specified. For example, the evaluation of the correct spelling and syntax for student with writing (dysgraphia) and spelling (dysortographia) problems should be explicitly excluded. Therefore, the criteria to determine the actual level of learning for each discipline will be identified.
 - ✓ *homework and family relationships*. Teachers will show how to relate with other teachers and families with regard to homework in the personalized teaching plan, specifying how they are assigned (photocopies, cds, etc.), the amount of homework (taking into account that SLD students are slower and work much harder than the others, so teachers need to choose the fundamental aspects of learning), homework deadlines dates, avoiding overlap and overload of homework assignment, methods to arrange homework, when the usual ones are impossible or difficult.

II.3. Compensation Tools and Exemption Measures

“Compensation category is so complex as the complexity of education and of learning processes” (Crispiani 2011, p. 266) and its legitimacy requires a conceptual and practical development that will enhance its function.

It is not a prosthetic replacement, but contribute to the performance of the personnel task, monitoring it and creating more viable conditions (Crispiani,2011).

But before giving a definition of compensation and exemption measures for SLD students it is required a preliminary reflection on the methodological strategies and educational activities designed to promote and facilitate SLD students learning.

In this regard, in Italy, the *New rules on specific learning disabilities* in schools highlight the need for joint teaching activities and strategies to provide adequate responses to the educational needs of students with specific learning disabilities.

In this sense, the following Guidelines (2011) provide directions *“to create individualized and personalized educational interventions, and to use and apply compensation tools and exemption measures.”*

It shows that, in view of the peculiar cognitive features of SLD students, it is particularly effective to rely on methodological strategies that are based on non-traditional teaching methods, such as lectures, cards that require notions or applications of rules, explanation-study-tests.

Focusing on the students' potential requires, in particular, to vary as much as possible the use of materials and strategies, using active, iconic, analog and symbolic teaching devices such as concept maps, pictures and diagrams. They represent an intermediate step of the *“mentalization process”* from reality to symbolic representation of concepts and theories, that is determinant in the reading-writing process.

In SLD teaching, the methodological indications offered by the activists models, with particular reference to Dewey's pedagogy, focus on teaching individualized methods that can support the student's cognitive characteristics.

The pedagogical principles of activism, indeed, shape the form and content of individualized teaching standards, so changing methodologies, tools and methods of assessing the students.

The individualized teaching is linked to Dewey's pedagogy by the concept of 'experience', which underlines the central role and the individuality of the learner.

Without considering the history of this pedagogic-didactic thinking, the concept of an individualized teaching proposed for SLD students is determined by the new scientific images of the learner and it is formed independently and through an intentional training.

The concept of individualization demanded by the Italian ministerial documents, which stresses its need for SLD students, is in contrast with the concept of personalization, which instead means individualization as the student's identity, which is strictly related to his/her psycho and socio-cultural dimension.

Nowadays the opposition to the classic teaching-learning models, aimed at recovering the teaching-learning dynamics, has been overcome and the teaching-learning relationship gets a central role. Hence the personalized teaching-learning process becomes possible thanks to an educational *setting* based on the active role of the subject in the construction process of knowledge.

The current teaching models, inspired to an *enactive* approach of the teaching-learning process, have recovered the laboratory activities, meant *as methods of doing and acting* (Sibilio, 2002) in which the subject learns in the context (Rossi, 2011).

In this perspective, pedagogical and didactic strategies as *cooperative learning* and *community learning* become extremely interesting, since they make learning a process based on cooperation and "*through which different subjects - taking specific roles and functions - share different resources and structures of knowledge to build new and different interpretative interpretations of reality that are more appropriate and functional to respond to specific cognitive tasks*" (Santoianni et al. 2003, p.80).

In this scenario, the teaching flexibility is intended as teacher's ability, both at planning and teaching, to adapt the teaching to the real students' possibilities of learning, with a constant focus on reducing the load level of the task

performance and on motivation levels, often related to the perception of being able to achieve a goal and to be able to perform a task.

The development of the awareness of their own strategies of knowledge is a very important goal for SLD subjects and it has been reaffirmed by the international literature and recalled by the Italian ministerial documents.

The reflection on their cognitive behaviors allows, in particular, the control, adjusting the cognitive processes according to the objects and the contexts of experience, and, at the same time, it urges the search for strategies to optimize the learning.

Metacognition, in particular, allows the subject to learn to think and to learn. In fact, while the cognition (that is, to do experiences and learn) is part of our mental equipment, the metacognitive skills (the knowledge that we have of our own mind, and its way to work) should be constructed. Developing these strategies is an essential step to learn how to learn, to know how to think (Oliviero,1999).

On a teaching level, the metacognitive strategies can deal with the difficulties of learning through teaching methods that take into account the motivation, cognitive styles and strategies, the various intellectual forms, the social dimension of learning and the value of the experience and of the mistake.

The literature on metacognitive teaching theme (Ashman & Conway, 1989; Ianes, 1990, 1996, 2001) shows that to support students with learning disabilities in developing their metacognitive skills and habits, it is necessary to focus the teaching on the knowledge of the four levels (or dimensions) of cognition.

The first level involves *cognitive functioning*, which includes a range of knowledge, information and data on how the human mind works (Boscolo, 1986).

In particular, the educational objective concerns the acquisition of information on the functioning and on the mechanisms of the cognitive processes, on the limits affecting performances and the most frequent characteristics. The aim is to become aware of the variety and differences of cognitive processes, "to promote the structuring of a theory of mind and a knowledge of the cognitive and affective-emotional processes" (Cottini, 2004, p.205).

The second level refers to *self-awareness of one's own cognitive functioning*.

This metacognitive level causes the transition from the general theoretical knowledge to the strictly individual one, with the aim of helping the subjects in developing the awareness of their behavior and cognitive processes, their strengths and weaknesses. A key element to acquire this knowledge is represented by the social *feedback* and, so, the performance feedback. In this respect, the information of the teacher should never involve the affective sphere, lowering the self-esteem and the motivation levels.

The third level refers to the *self-cognitive strategies* that are intended to guide the students in controlling their own cognitive processes, directing them towards the self-awareness of and learning autonomy.

This involves activating specific strategies for self-instruction and self-monitoring that the subject should be able to use to become proficient on the metacognitive level.

The fourth level concerns the *psychological variables of mediation* because, of course, the acquisition of metacognitive skills also involves the emotional-motivational sphere, whose variables strongly influence the structure of a metacognitive approach.

They are, in particular, styles of attribution, perception, of self-efficacy, self-esteem and a sense of helplessness that often develops in people with specific learning disabilities.

All these elements that often have systemic features, can generate a psychological pathology structure that involves the motivation of the student in the performance of his/her learning tasks.

In this regard it is fundamental, both for the cognitive and the emotional-motivational sphere, to adopt strategies to regulate the use of the time available to perform the tasks. In particular, the criteria for defining the time to perform the tests for each subject should be chosen for each subject, according to the diagnostic indications and a periodic revision of the Personalized Teaching Plan.

Alternatively, it is possible to reduce the learning objectives required by each test. It goes without saying that the tests performed in compliance with the above mentioned Plan are effective for the assessment at the end of the school

year. It is in this same context the definition of criteria for the possible reduction of the homework.

Hence, the compensation and exemption measures provided by the Law 170/2010 indicate that schools must ensure *"the introduction of compensation measures, including alternative means of learning and computers, as well as some dispensation measures, even if not essential for the quality of the concepts to be learned"*.

The following guidelines for the right to education of students and LSD students, attached to the Ministerial Decree of 12 July 2011, have identified the compensation measures as *"teaching and technology tools which replace or facilitate the performance required in the deficit"*. Among them, there are mentioned:

- ✓ speech, which transforms a reading task into a listening task;
- ✓ the recorder, which allows the student not to write lesson notes;
- ✓ Software Writing programs with spell checker program, which allow the student to write clearly without the effort of re-reading and the correction of mistakes;
- ✓ the calculator, to make the calculation easier;
- ✓ other technological devices such as tables, forms, concept maps, etc.

The teacher should encourage the use of these tools, since they do not alter the performance of the cognitive task but overcome the obstacles generated by deficit.

The exemption measures instead are defined in the above mentioned document as *"interventions that allow the student not to perform certain tasks that, due to the deficit, are particularly difficult and that do not improve learning. For example, it is not useful for a student with dyslexia to read a long passage, because this exercise, because of the disorder, does not improve his/her reading"*.

The *raison d'être* of these measures lies in the awareness that the decoding and the performance time of the cognitive tasks for SLD students are longer than the time needed by the other students. These exemption measures do not interfere with the content, though it is presented in an abridged version.

In this regard, the Guidelines clear the reason for this choice by invoking the literature on this subject that suggests *"to consider, taking into account the student's performance, how much the difficulties penalize him/her in the front of*

his/her classmates and therefore to fix an additional time or a material reduction. In the absence of more precise indexes, more than 30% appears a reasonable extra-time”.

The use of exemption measures requires a preliminary assessment of the deficit impact on the performance to avoid unnecessary facilitations and to create a curriculum according to the learning objectives of the SLD student.

The chart below gives some interesting suggestions:

Characteristics of the cognitive processes	Compensation tools and exemption measures
<p>slowness and mistakes in reading and consequent difficulties in understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to avoid reading aloud • to encourage the use of computer voice softwares, tapes, digital dictionaries, etc. • to synthesize concepts with the use of concept and / or mental maps • to encourage the use of specific voice softwares in different languages • to read the exercises and / or provide audio and / or digital support during tests • to decrease the number of written tests without changing the objectives • to avoid written tests in all oral subjects, allowing the use of maps or hypertext (PPT) during the oral tests
<p>difficulty in the reading and writing processes: inability to perform at the same time two "Procedures" as listening and writing, listening and reading, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to avoid to take notes, copy text or mathematical expressions, etc.. • to provide notes in digital or on paper preferably in the following fonts: Arial, Comic Sans, Trebuchet (size 12-14 pt), whenever the integration of the books is necessary • to allow the use of the recorder • to avoid dictation • to avoid copying from the blackboard
<p>difficulty in remembering categorizations: the names of the tenses and the Italian and foreign grammar structures,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to encourage the use of schemes • to focus on the correct use of grammar forms and on their acquisitions • to show examples for each exercise

Characteristics of the cognitive processes	Compensation tools and exemption measures
the objects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to use multiple choice tests
dysorthography and / or dysgraphia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to encourage the use of specific voice softwares with spell checker in different languages for Italian and foreign languages
dyscalculia, difficulty to acquire arithmetical skills: difficulty in memorising tables, formulas, sequences and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to allow the use of the multiplication table, calculator, tables and forms, procedural maps, both in tests and in multiple choice tests
difficulty in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage the use of textual patterns
difficulties in rapidly remembering concepts previously acquired and understood and consequent difficulty and slow oral exposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to encourage the use of maps, diagrams and hypertext (PPT) during tests, as expected even by the final examination of secondary school in order to facilitate the collection of information and improve the oral verbal expression • to avoid requiring the mnemonic and notional study, keep in mind that there is a great difficulty in remembering names, technical terms and definitions (eg. material for science, history,...)
easy fatigue and too long recovery time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to set tests and scheduled tasks • to avoid the overload of homework and tests • to avoid requiring task performances in the last hours • to reduce the homework overload • to establish a productive relationship between school and family / tutor • to control the management of the diary
difficulty in learning a forcing language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to focus on the oral form • to use the written multiple choice tests

Characteristics of the cognitive processes	Compensation tools and exemption measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to perform tasks relating to tradition and culture in Italian
if some of these peculiarities coexist with a deficit of attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to divide the test at different times as it will not allocate more time
for every disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to address the educational intervention to metacognitive activities, such as strengthening the "high" processes, related to anticipation and mental and visual mnemonics representations • to induce personalized study • to prefer a formative assessment that points more on content than on form • to foster self-test and control mechanisms • to increase self-esteem by not only emphasize the difficulties

CHAPTER III

Italian Specific Learning Disabilities Teaching Training

III.1. School Teachers' and Headmasters' Training in compliance with the Law n.170*

The Guidelines attached to the Law n.170 refer to both teachers and headmasters' training that is considered as a fundamental element to achieve the correct application of all innovations proposed by the act.

It is strictly necessary for the school staff to be prepared in a short time about all contents included in the law n. 170. In particular, their knowledge should be concentrated on the different kinds of SLD, on all teaching-learning compensatory strategies, aimed at students' aid and strengthening.

Moreover, it is also really important to count the management of all classes with the presence of SLD pupils, the adoption of suitable personalized educational measures of evaluation, as well as all other significant aspects concerning students' education, such as guidance for the school course.

The enactment of the law n. 170 in force by 2010, represents an opportunity to think about the importance of teachers' role.

In a context of flexibility and autonomy introduced by the law n.59 enacted in 1999, the school has to consider "the student's personality" as the centre of its activities and interests, as specified by Guidelines. For this reason, the achievement of teaching and educational strategies should take into account the uniqueness and complexity of each person, of his/her own peculiarities, considering both advantages and disadvantages.

In any case, the main goal of the law n.170 enacted in 2010, under the clauses n°4 and n° 7, is teachers' training. But it is important to underline that it was not considered as obligatory, as specified also the framework law n.104 enacted in 1992, which was about disabled students. On the contrary, the assessment of all training procedures were granted to the Collective National Contract.

* This paragraph was written in cooperation with Maristella Dorotea Rita Fulgione, Phd at the University of Salerno and Headmaster of Primary School

Nevertheless, the Italian Ministry of Education has been realizing for years several specific interventions, considering the complexity of the SLD issue.

First of all, the seventh actions of the Project “New Technologies and Disabilities” organized, a training program referred to school staff, which is completely concentrated on SLD.

To achieve this plan one of the most important tool that was used was the e-learning. It consisted in the realization of a specific online network, which in addition of a didactic use of technological supports, allowed the creation of a first group of points of reference for the dyslexia, in many Italian schools. Their function is to help their colleagues in the specific use of suitable exemption measures and compensatory tools.

The main scope to be achieved is the possibility for each school to have, at least, one referring point for the dyslexia. The idea seems to be really logic, considering the spreading of such disease in about 350 thousand students, and that each school must have statistically at least one student affected by SLD .

A precious contribution in sensitizing about specific learning disabilities is the one of The Italian Association for Dyslexia¹ which is working to foster learning and success of SLD students.

In 2010 The IDA signed a protocol agreement with the Italian Ministry of Education, together with Telecom Italia (FTI). It was aimed at the beginning of a cooperation in order to be developed in the within the years 2009-2011, which can be eventually prolonged until the end of the years 2011/2012. Its main scope is that one to increase all different school activities realized by IDA and extend them on both a local and national area.

The Ministry singles out among its own principal tasks, the promotion and the encouragement of educational initiatives in favour of all disabled students. Since its previous experience, the IDA, shows itself as referring point to obtain information and help aimed at the consultancy and assistance to identify the problem or to intervene with educational and rehabilitative actions in order to promote research and training in different fields of intervention. In the end,

¹ The Italian Association for Dyslexia (IAD), was established in 1997 and has been intervening on the national area for several years and it is aimed at the promotion of health assistance, education as well as the spread of all information related to dyslexia symptoms.

the Italian Telecom Foundation, among its social goals, starts to realize suitable initiatives to improve people lifestyles by the way to offer substantial aids and tools to intervene effectively on disabilities.

All three partners agree about the realization of specific Projects, through the use of competences, resources and specific abilities of each one, defining common strategies of intervention.

The projects realized by them are: “*It is never too early*” and “*Dyslexia courses*”². The first one established and realized a screening three-yearly campaign in all national area, in order to pick out the eventuality of SLD among all pupils attending first classes of primary schools. The second one, through the application of specific interventions by teachers, created teaching models conferring equal learning opportunities to students affected by SLD . Also this project exploits all possibilities offered by new communication tools. In fact, the platform aimed at *on line education* was implemented and it is already present in the site of the National Agency aimed at the Development of Scholastic Autonomy (NADSA).

A series of educational interventions involved all school institutions belonging to every degree and type. They were aimed at the establishment of new training courses and projects pointing out new teaching plans and technologies. The goal was to form a web of competent and up-to-date teachers which are able to manage, the problem of learning disabilities in order to offer to all children and teenagers with SLD equal formation opportunities. That’s because the school success needs effective and aware teaching methods as well as simple and real supports, to develop their own great potential.

The goal is divided into four actions:

1. Basic education

² MIUR-FTI-AID, (2009) *It is never too early: A typical project aimed at the recognition and the precocious intervention in favour of all students affected by SLD*. It deals with a longitudinal project whose main goal it to follow the evolution of 8000 children’s reading and writing competences, in few years. Subjects have been chosen randomly by all those students belonging to suburban schools, which have been involved in the research by the way to seem representative in the national area. MIUR-FTI-AID (2011) , *Dyslexia Course: An announcement aimed at the introduction of specific projects in order to realize some didactic, methodological and evaluative strategies in favour of all students affected by SLD*.

Training Courses in seven different Italian Regions in order to form at least one teacher per each school about basic knowledge.

2. High education

Deepening courses in six different Regions for secondary school teachers about general didactic issues and each subject (Italian, Mathematics, Foreign Languages)

3. Announcement published by Ministry of Education, University and Research for research/intervention activities about didactic issues during teaching staff meetings in all the Regions.

4. E-learning Platform about early identification activities of LST for referring teachers of all Italian Regions.

All formation courses are realized in many Italian Regions using educators belonging to the Dyslexia Italian Association and other Scientific Societies as well as formation Corporations. Among them, there are also some of the most important Italian experts about the specific learning disabilities. Activities directed by educators aimed at the exchange of different ideas and strategies, the collaboration in order to find a knowledge that receives the neuro-science, psychology, pedagogy and didactic contribution, will be organized too, because, learning how to afford dyslexia requires the collaboration and the interaction of different scientific areas to be faced up from different points of view.

These activities can develop a renewal process of the teaching methodologies in the Italian school, to bring us to the same level as other European Countries, and to constitute a hint for independent initiatives of further revision.

Educational interventions are realized locally through the enactment of both agreements and collaborations with Regional and Suburban Institutions Offices, and the Local Sections of LST.

In the basic education, it is possible to point out fundamental themes for a first right approach of the problem:

- Risk indicators
- Individuation tools
- Diagnostic route
- Psychological disturbs

- Laws
- Personalized evaluation and didactic plans
- Phonological awareness
- Learning of read-writing
- Didactic strategies
- School, services and family role
- Multimedia and computer resources.

All related contents of the high formation refer to:

- Relationships and psychological aspects during the adolescence
- Mental functioning
- Class Management for an inclusive didactic
- Specific Educational strategies for each disciplinary area
- Organizing and technological aspects
- Personalized Law and didactic plan

(with the law n. 170, the activation is relied to Universities through the improvement of courses or Masters, directed to headmasters and all kind of schools' teachers).

The announcement for the project of teaching staff meetings about the didactic wanted to give to the selected school a contribution for the experimentations of new normal procedures and the realization of personalized didactic plan. At the end, projects suggesting the most significant experiences will be published and spread from the Ministry to propagate the best practices the most as possible in the Italian school (Pardi et al., 2010).

This agreement and the activities promoted and realized before the law n.170 enacted in 2010 and guidelines of July 2011, are totally included in the law. Education, that has represented one of the most important junctions, represents also, in the recent law, the strategic element for the introduction of the originating elements to afford the problems of dyslexia students, in schools. An important project was "New technology and disabilities" that was promoted and financed by Ministry of Education for the Student and by the Department for the Technologic Innovation of the Chair of Ministries Council in 2007; its main goal was the promotion of the integration of the disabled students through the use of new technologies (Pardi et al., 2009).

The seven actions of the project pointed at the structural intervention upon the criticism that influence the right and spread use of the technology for the integration of disabled, in order to improve the quality of the didactic offer, also through exalting the existent resources on the land.

Thank to this project ninety six *Supporting Territorial Centres* (CTS) were spread on all the national areas. They were born “as supporting places” for all kind of schools in order to cumulate, hold and spread the knowledge (good practices, formation courses) and the resources (hardware and software) in favour of didactic integration of disabled through New Technologies aimed to realize a permanent territorial web.

The web had to be able to really support school acquiring and efficient use of new technology for the school integration. In this centres teachers able to use new technologies could operate; they were in their turn formed at national level through residential seminars with the clear purpose to give indication about hardware tools and specific software products, and moreover about the use of compensative tools.

They received all the support to realize education courses locally for operators, teachers or laboratory, through the financial resources and formative initiatives.

The “educators” of the centers were identified from the Regional School Offices according to their particular helpfulness and competence, in the didactic and computer field.

The didactic model used for the educational activity was that of the Integrated Form. This model, more and more experienced by the Ministry of Education, was worthy to integrate within all the advantages and to reduce all the disadvantages both of the formation in class and of the self-formation.

The model of integrated education forecasts:

- Learning in house: in suited and well prepared rooms
- Self-formation: using interactive courses, operative textbooks and easy guide
- E-learning community: in connection with the services of the e-learning platform (Forum, Chat, Mail) and with tutors.

The role of supporting centres is fundamental:

- in the acquisition phase of the equipment HW and SW and their management;
- in technical assistance, that is, to help to resolve the most common problems, such as problems in the development and adaptation of technologies to the demands of single users;
- in the field of didactic assistance, that is giving right indication to use the tool very effective in all school activities, considering also the psycho-pedagogical aspects and the needs of different disciplines;
- in the first part of the student's training and in the following actions aimed at the growing up of his/her competences;
- in the formation for the educator with flexible, punctual and pointed interventions able to answer to the suitable needs(i.e. change of teacher or school).

The aim is the support the existent centres and to stimulate the creation of new ones in the areas where there are not any. This aim is achieved in two ways:

- with a sponsorship addressed to the a purchase of hardware and software to give the single school which form the Territorial Supporting Centre, in the measure and in time corresponding to the need connected to the presence of SLD students;
- with a specific training targeted to improve operators' competences using the aids in the school field.

For these *Supporting Centres* further "supporting actions" have been pointed.

In particular:

- Additional funds to the centres considered "weak" to improve training and to buy new technologies.
- Promotion of cooperation among the Centres. The National organization of the project tries to associate to each centre a similar structure with more rooted experiences and competences. Special funds are assigned in these cases to the school pivot of that centre that will act as support. These funds can be used for journey costs, professional services or other;

At this proposal, the Action 5 of the ministerial project is about "local training participations" and it has as its goal the activation of teachers' training

activities about the correct use of technologies. In these training courses can also participate the parents of the SLD students, as well as other people that are involved in the educational process.

The Action 6 has as first goal the improvement of the quality and the efficacy of the use of the new technology to foster the school inclusion of disable and SLD pupils. With this action the Ministry wanted to pursue an important goal: to activate research activities to realize through one of the schools of the network in cooperation with Universities, Associations and others Corporations oriented to find new answers to the special needs of disable and SLD students.

The aim of these research, mainly action-research, is to pointed out effective solutions to some problems related to the use of “assistive technologies” in some specific school activities and to elaborate innovative strategies to improve, through technologies the active involving of pupils with learning difficulties in different school activities (Fogarolo, 2010).

The Action 7, as already stated, concerned the training of a referent person for each school about the Specific Learning Disabilities. The Italian Dyslexia Association, its Regional and Provincial referents, contributed to sensitize school and public opinion about the difficulties of SLD students since their first school years.

These projects in Italy can be considered a milestone in the process of gradual recognition of SLD as not a disability, in a common sense, but as a difficulty that can be overcome thank to integrated actions aimed to answer to the special needs of SLD students in a well and full integrated system.

The expectations are upon the teachers, trust relies in their passion and above all in their professional competence. At this regards, during the last decades, the experiences of social and school *full integration* in Italy have shown that one of the most important thing for people living any kind of difficulty is to meet during their educational pathway, professionals able to understand their needs and to be able to satisfy them (D’Alonzo,2008).

III.2. Function and Structure of SLD Master Courses

The correct application of the Law no. 170/2010 and the achievement of its objectives is a key priority for the teachers' training. It is not a coincidence that the article 4 of the this law requires an *“adequate preparation on issues related to special learning disabilities, aimed at acquiring the competence to understand common signs of SLD and the consequent ability to apply the right teaching, methodological and assessment strategies. As part of the training programs of the teachers and the management of schools of every grade, including primary schools, the Italian State has allocated a sum of one million euro for the years 2010 and 2011, only to fund the training courses”*.

The principle governing the in-service teacher training comes from the need of collegiality to make teaching choices, decisions and activities, since it allows teachers to share the management and planning of the teaching and learning activities during the teachers staff meetings.

The need for a specific training involving, in particular, in-service teachers of the kindergartens and the primary schools, is part of the Italian history which has shown an urgent need for it. In Italy, in these school grades, graduated teachers co-work with qualified teachers since only in 1999/2000 the Italian law established that it is necessary a four year degree to become a primary school teacher. For this reason, only in 2003 the first graduates have made their way into schools with a Primary Education degree (Law 19 November 1990, 341), which is now the only degree course that qualify to teach in an Italian primary school. This new degree course has provided the access to teaching only to those who have a Primary Education degree, so removing the qualifying courses of study which had previously allowed all those who were at least 18 years old and had a teaching diploma to teach (D'Elia et al., 2009; Galdieri et al., 2009); anyway they are still in service in the Italian primary schools.

Therefore, in Italy, there is the need for specific training courses for all in-service teachers, involving teachers who only had a teaching diploma and who have specific training needs even with regard to the special educational needs. To this end, the Regional School Dept. has the responsibility *“to set up training courses involving the local health institutions, the universities, the research institutions and the training agencies and identifying the specific training needs,*

according to each school grade and also taking into account the priorities demanded by the previous training activities in the territory” as stated in the Italian Ministry Guidelines for SLD Students' Right to Study.

High Education activities are part of these initiatives. They provide, in compliance with the recommendations of the Italian Ministry Guidelines for SLD Students' Right to Study, the activation of Course of Perfectioning and Masters in “Specific Learning Disabilities Teaching and Psychopedagogy”, by agreement with the Ministry of the National Conference of Deans of Permanent Education.

These courses have involved school headmasters and teachers of the schools of all grades, starting from the academic year 2011/2012. In general, to plan a flexible educational offer, the provisions in the area of higher education establish some criteria split *“into three modules, each one is equivalent to 20 CFU; they exactly correspond to a ‘basic’ level, an ‘intermediate’ level and an ‘advanced’ level, and they can be attended even individually. The general structure includes at least ¼ of the CFU credits acquired through the direct experience, the application of the theoretical knowledge learned at school and through certification of the activities performed, certificated or by the head teacher, or by tutor of any specialized center and selected school”* (Italian Ministry Guidelines for SLD Students' Right to Study, p.29).

Universities are required to use methodologies and innovative e-learning technologies in order to allow participants to perform educational activities up to a maximum of 50%, although the hours of classes take account of school commitments.

At the end of the courses it is issued a certificate indicating the university formative credits, which complement those already owned and recognized by a special commission.

With regard to their structure and the contents, a specific Technical Committee is responsible for the coordination and the monitoring. It is supported by a Scientific Committee composed of experts who are asked to develop and document the scientific and the teaching activities of the university and to promote research programs with the teachers.

Therefore, in compliance with the Law 170 of 2010 and within the time required by the Ministry of Education, University and Research has identified the methods for teacher and headmaster's training, setting up a Scientific Committee of experts in SLD, according to the tasks required by the Law.

According to the instructions provided in the Guidelines, the University Masters have provided specific procedures, without departing from the basic principles dictated by the regulations. These procedures meet the training needs of those attending the various universities, in order to achieve the educational objectives.

III.2.1. First Grade University Master: "Specific Learning Disabilities Teaching and Psychopedagogy" - University of Salerno - Italy: Teaching Plan and Teaching Training Course Plan

The need to ensure the training program, based on the instructions of the Law no. 170 of 2010 and the Italian Ministry Guidelines for SLD Students' Right to Study, led to the establishment of University Master on this specific topic in various Italian University of Educational Sciences.

In particular, the University of Salerno established a one year First Grade University Master in "Specific Learning Disabilities Teaching and Psychopedagogy" for headmasters in State Schools, Teaching Coordinators of private schools, teachers of state and private schools in Campania region, both those who have with the employment contract of indefinite duration (TI) or temporary contract (TD). This Master is configured as Scientific and Permanent and Recurring Higher Education Perfectioning Course, at the end of which, after passing the final exam, it will be given the first level University Master's degree.

The training is aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and skills "for the identification of specific learning disorders (LSD) in schools in order to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies" to promote the educational success of SLD students, to get a full integration of everyone in Italian schools. The course includes a total of 60 CFU credits and it is structured in disciplinary fields, defined by the Scientific Committee. Professors with expertise were recruited for each scientific/disciplinary area involved.

The choice of the themes of the course, divided into three modules, each of 20 CFU, includes "the specific learning disorders: SLD models and classifications, SLD with particular reference to the law 170/2010, detection and diagnosis of SLD, special pedagogy and teaching, technologies for disability. "

The curriculum of the Master in "Specific Learning Disabilities Teaching and Psychopedagogy" at the University of Salerno therefore requires the use of scientific resources related to the field of neuropsychiatry, general psychology, developmental psychology and education, teaching and special pedagogy, which show the specificity of the *expertise* involved in the training initiative.

Each module fits specific disciplines, each discipline shows the contents and the number of credits.

In compliance with the instructions given in the Guidelines on higher education, at the end of each module it is required to do an internship in specialized centers or selected schools with the support of a tutor. At the end of the four modules there will be a final examination for the issue of the certification that includes all the credits acquired.

The first level Master established at the University of Salerno, pays particular attention to the experiences in the field and the training experience as key moments to promote the acquisition of skills based on knowledge learned during the lectures.

The specific aims and objectives are well-defined in the Table of Contents of the Guidelines for the Training Project attached to this work. It shows a clear need to promote the acquisition of observation skills in the classroom to early detect signs of delay or atypical development due to specific learning disabilities, to identify the main characteristics of cognitive styles that often develop subsequently to the disorder, and to prepare a personalized teaching program.

Teachers' observation skills have a fundamental role, not only in the early school years to recognize a potential specific learning disorder, but also for the rest of their school careers. It allows in particular to identify those cognitive characteristics to achieve educational success. In the case of SLD students, in fact, it is essential to refer to learning styles and strategies to promote school success.

The observation, however, meant as an instrument to collect information with a high scientific value, requires a particular expertise acquirable through a specific training that refers to the scientific criteria on which the observational technique is based. For these reasons, the trainees are guided on the design of the instrument (observation grid) and information about the behaviors targets to be observed.

Specifically, during the first phase of the training course, the observation is intended to collect information on the main variables related to the areas involved in the disorder, which are essential for the preparation of Personalized Teaching Plan.

The second phase of the training course is dedicated to the drafting of the Personalized Teaching Plan, that represents the operating moment aimed at acquiring methods and tools useful for the teaching activities.

During this training experience it is expected the planning of a personalized teaching path for SLD students.

This project, which requires to take into account the contents of the theoretical course, requires the necessary participation of the teachers of the course, who will guide the preparation of the Personalized Teaching Plan, through specific *scaffolding* strategies. So students will be able to choose critically among numerous methodological options and a wide range of compensatory measures, proving a selection of the most appropriate exemption measures, also on the basis of what has been observed.



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Training project’s guidelines³

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³ The training project’s guidelines have been realised by Professor Paola Aiello, Assistant Professor in “Didactics and Special Pedagogy” at the Faculty of Educational Science of the University of Salerno. The document is the result of a research work monitored by Professor Felice Corona, Associate Professor in “Didactics and Special Pedagogy” at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Salerno, and with the cooperation of Stefano Di Tore and Pio Alfredo Di Tore P.H.D. students at the Department of Human, Philosophical and Educational Sciences of the University of Salerno.



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Purposes

One of the purposes that this training is aimed to reach is to furnish students both general and specific competences related to classified and classifiable difficulties in the field of Specific Learning Disabilities, through direct or indirect guided experiences which supports the theoretical revision and the elaboration of the knowledge acquired during the course.

Objectives

- Developing basic knowledge about both various kinds of Specific Learning Disabilities and about the related learning styles.
- Acquiring suitable knowledge about principles that rule school activities in case of the presence of pupils affected by SLD.
- Acquiring all suitable knowledge to identify all disorders connected to SLD.
- Reaching sufficient skills which allow to select, manage and use specific compensatory tools to facilitate the educational process of all individual affected by SLD.
- Projecting and realising specific educational interventions aimed at the autonomy of pupils affected by SLD.
- Developing both communicative and relational competences with pupils affected by SLD.
- Acquiring suitable competences to interact with families, other schools, health services and universities, which represent the most important institutions for the integration process.
- Planning and realising educational interventions with the support of compensatory tools.
- Developing all skills to carefully evaluate all circumstances in which adopting exemption measures is considered appropriate.



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- To know all educational potentialities of technologies to promote the educational process of pupils affected by SLD.

Organisation

The Training is composed of two parts:

- Part I: Observation
- Part II: Action

In the first part of the training, students will fulfil to observe and report on the observation grid, which is based on all information included at the bottom of Appendix A, the school context and all institutions acting in and with it, such as: families, other schools, health services, teachers and students. It is also fundamental to state other aspects which are considered useful for a suitable educational program for all individuals affected by classified and classifiable disorders, like SLD.

The second part forecasts the student’s planning of a specific educational intervention (see Appendixes B and C) arranged with course teachers.

Training: Part I

The observation part of the training previews the collection of all information related to the fundamental targets which have been considered crucial for the drafting of the Personalized Teaching Plan that will be realised during the second part. To reach this goal, an observational grid will be given to course students as a guideline to orient and facilitate the observation phase. The observational grid’s structure shows a series of items that have to be considered purely indicatives. Therefore, the grid is not to be used directly. On the contrary, it just represents an introducing scheme to work out a personal observation tool that has to be presented to tutors before starting the second part of the training.

Training: Part II

The effective part of the training is aimed at the acquisition of all suitable methods and tools for educational activities in case of classified or classifiable



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disorders’ presence like SLD. During this second part, a specific educational path will have to be projected through all direct and indirect experiences stored up during educational activities with individuals affected by SLD. The project will be completed with the help of course teachers who will orient and guide course student to the drafting of a Personalized Teaching Plan. It will function as a proposal document including all educational indications aimed at improving all courses offered by schools. All plans’ patterns reported at the bottom of Appendixes, together with its related indications and separated in order of schools, can be downloaded at this link: <http://www.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/dsa>. To create this plan, it is possible for the course student to select some useful information included in Appendixes B/C. At the end, the Personalized Teaching Plan will be presented to tutors and successively, it will be accepted by teachers before its drawing up. In this case too, each pattern’s alterations as well as the insertion of new items, according with the contents of the observational grid, will have to be motivated in details.



Appendix A: Observational grid

All indications reported in this observational grids offer interesting suggestions to the observation process and they are related to all school degrees. The integration of some indicators linked to directly to the acting context, such as: school degree, kind of disorder and environmental target are essential to work out a valid observation tool.

Anamnesis

- Name (please, just put in initial letters)
- City
- School
- Date of Birth (M/Y)
- Gender (M/F)
- Please, give details of any pupils' disabilities or special needs
- Please, give details of any pupils' language disorder
- Please, give details of any medical-specific diagnosis
- Please, give details of any remedial teacher's presence
- Please, give details of any individual affected by SLD in the pupil's family
- Please, give details if any member of the pupil's family had a SEN teacher
- Please, give details about pupils' previous education
- Please, give details about previous or actual educational intervention complementary to the school path
- Please, give details about all parents-teachers conferences.
- Please, indicate the eventual presence of an excessive variability in different activity's enrolling time.



Indicators

The pupil: The attention area

- During activities’ execution: Please, indicate any presence of diverting or discouraging behaviours against himself/herself or other students, etc.
- In case of failure: Please, indicate any presence of aggressive, nervous or discouraging behaviour.
- In case of reaction to actions’ consequences: Please, indicate the presence of any difficulty in understanding, completing or getting fond of things.

Space area

- During reading times: Please, indicate any pupils behaviour on and next the chair: and far or close the book, etc.
- During writing times: Please, indicate any problems in tracing letters or numbers in unusual points of the sheet; organizing the space on it, keeping regular margin along it, etc.

Speaking area

- Please, indicate if the pupil shows to have poor or imprecise vocabulary
- During speeches, please, indicate any speaking disorder, such as: stumbling, very fast speaking, very slow speaking use of poor and short phrases, etc.

Reading/Writing area

- During writing times, please, indicate all writing disorders, such as: preferring capital letters, italics, very slow writing, very frequent grammar mistakes even during copy works, etc.



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- During reading times, please, indicate all reading disorders, such as: very slow reading, words and lines jumping, mark loosing with easy eyestrain, etc.
- Pupil’s writing: Please, indicate if it changes continually, various times in a day, during the drafting of a specific texts, etc.

Calculation area

- During numbers reading times: please, indicate if the pupil makes confusion with numbers, has got difficulties in reading long numbers, etc.
- During numbers’ writing: please, indicate if the pupil upsets some numbers, if he/she has got difficulties in reporting complicated numbers, etc.
- During calculation procedures: please, indicate if pupils present problems with the space management, while lining up, or if it takes long time to be realised.

Time and Memory area

- Time management: please, indicate if the pupil presents difficulties in time management or in understanding the link between time and space, etc.
- During memorization: please, indicate if the pupil has problems in memorizing difficult terms, reproducing days, numbers, months, letters and presents information loss in a short time.



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Appendix B

Personalized Teaching Plan for Elementary Schools

SCHOOL:

SCHOOL YEAR:

PUPIL:

GENERAL DATA

Name and Surname	
Date of Birth	
Class	
Referring teacher	
Medical-Specific Diagnosis	Please, indicate when, where and by whom it has been drawn up.
Previous and/or actual interventions for the educational path	Please, indicate where, when how, how long and by whom it has been carried out.
Previous Education	Please, furnish all documents related to education in elementary schools.
Parent-teachers conferences	

SKILLS WORKING: READING, WRITING AND CALCULATING

Reading		Elements deduced by diagnosis	Elements deduced by the in-house
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	Speed		
	Correctness		
	Comprehension		
Writing		Elements deduced by diagnosis	Elements deduced by the in-house
	Graphology		
	Mistakes		
	Production		
Calculation		Elements deduced by diagnosis	Elements deduced by the in-house
	Mental		
	Written		
Other	Eventual disorders belonging to motor areas:		
	Further connected disorders:		
	Bilingualism or Italian as foreign language:		
	Autonomy’s level:		



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Teaching strategies and methods:

Linguistic-expressive macroarea	
Logical, mathematical and scientific macroarea	
Historical, geographical and social macroarea	

Exemption measures/compensatory tools/adding times:

Linguistic-expressive macroarea	
Logical, mathematical and scientific macroarea	
Historical, geographical and social macroarea	

EVALUATION

To evaluate pupils’ preparation in the different subjects, the course student will make use of:

Subject	Exemption measures	Compensatory tools	Adding times
Italian			
Mathematical			
English language			
.....			
.....			
.....			

Educational strategies and methods



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- Increasing the value of alternative communicative languages, such as: spoken, iconographic, etc.; by using other educational mediators, such as: pictures, drawings and speeches summaries.
- Using schemes and diagrams
- Favouring practice education and learning in labs
- Promoting meta cognitive processes to stimulate pupils’ self-control as well as their self-assessment of their learning evaluation.
- Encouraging learning processes through creating small groups and pair works
- Promoting cooperative learning

Exemption measures

Pupils affected by SLD are granted to be exempted by some performances which are not considered essential for the acquisition of concepts. The exemption happens according to the school degree, the subject to be studied and in case of specific activities, such as:

- The contemporary use of the four alphabetic, including small and big capital letters and italics
- Loud voice reading
- Writing from dictation
- Notes taking
- Copying from the blackboard
- Memorizing multiplication table
- Writing in a foreign language
- Respecting written tests’ delivery terms
- Homework amount

Compensatory tools



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On the contrary, pupils affected by SLD can benefit of some compensatory tools which will allow them to offset disorder’s functional lacks. They help pupils to be concentrated during cognitive works as well as they will have important repercussions on tasks speed and correctness, through their support during the automatic delivery. Compensatory tools can be selected according to the presence of:

- Alphabet table
- Numbers’ methodical writing
- Multiplication table
- Time line
- Tables of geometrical measures and formula
- Educational formularies, summaries, schemes and diagrams
- Computers equipped with word processors, spellcheckers, speech synthesis, printer and scanner
- Electronic calculator
- Recording equipment, such as: speech synthesis, talking and digital books
- Specific didactic software

Evaluation

- Arranging graduated evaluations
- Planning and agreeing evaluations with pupils
- Forecasting oral tests to offset written ones, above all in case of foreign language’s evaluations
- Evaluating the content more carefully than the form
- Using educational tools and mediators both during written ad oral tests.
- Introducing computerized tests
- Planning longer times during tests’ unrolling.



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Appendix C: Personalized Teaching Plan for Secondary School

SCHOOL:

SCHOOL YEAR:

PUPIL:

GENERAL DATA

Name and Surname	
Date of Birth	
Class	
Referring teacher	
Medical-Specific Diagnosis	Please, indicate when, where and by whom it has been drawn up.
Previous and/or actual interventions for the educational path	Please, indicate where, when how, how long and by whom it has been carried out.
Previous Education	Please, furnish all documents related to education in elementary schools.
Parent-teachers conferences	



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SKILLS WORKING: READING, WRITING AND CALCULATING

Reading		Elements deduced by diagnosis	Elements deduced by the in-house
	Speed		
	Correctness		
	Comprehension		
Writing		Elements deduced by diagnosis	Elements deduced by the in-house
	Graphology		
	Mistakes		
	Production		
Calculation		Elements deduced by diagnosis	Elements deduced by the in-house
	Mental		
	Written		
Other	Eventual disorders belonging to motor areas:		
	Further connected disorders:		
	Bilingualism or Italian as foreign language:		
	Autonomy's level:		



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SPECIFIC DIDACTICS

Teaching strategies and methods:

Linguistic-expressive subjects	
Logical-mathematical subjects	
Historical, geographical and social subjects	

Exemption measures/compensatory tools/adding times:

Linguistic-expressive subjects	
Logical-mathematical subjects	
Historical, geographical and social subjects	

Strategies and tools used by pupils while studying:

Linguistic-expressive subjects	
Logical-mathematical subjects	
Historical, geographical and social subjects	



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EVALUATION SCHEME (Please, use it in case of final examinations too)

During the pupils’ evaluations in different subjects, course students will make use of:

Subject	Exemption measures	Compensatory tools	Adding times
Italian			
Mathematical			
English language			
.....			
.....			
.....			

Educational strategies and methods

- Increasing the value of alternative communicative languages, such as: spoken, iconographic, etc.; by using other educational mediators, such as: pictures, drawings and speech summaries
- Using schemes and diagrams
- Teaching the correct use of textual alternative equipment, such as: title, paragraph, images, etc.
- Increasing inferences, integrations and links between knowledge and subjects
- Divide tasks objectives in sub objectives
- Offering graphic schemes related to topics in advance, in order to orient course students in the selection of the most important information
- Favouring practice education and learning labs
- Promoting meta cognitive processes to stimulate pupils self-control as well as their self-assessment in their learning evolution



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- Encouraging learning processes through small groups and pair works
- Promoting cooperative learning

Exemption measures

Pupils affected by SLD are granted to be exempted by some performances which are not considered essential for the acquisition of concepts. The exemption happens according to the school degree, the subject to be studied and in case of specific activities, such as:

- Loud voice reading
- Writing from dictation
- Notes taking
- Copying from the blackboard
- Respecting written tests’ delivery terms
- Homework amount
- The enrolling of various evaluative tests in short times
- The rote-learning of formula, tables and definitions
- Writing’s replacements with the speech and/or iconographic language

Compensatory tools

On the contrary, pupils affected by SLD can benefit of some compensatory tools which will allow them to offset disorder’s functional lacks. They help pupils to be concentrated during cognitive works as well as they will have important repercussions on tasks speed and correctness, through their support during the automatic delivery. Compensatory tools can be selected according to the presence of:

- Educational formularies, schemes and diagrams
- Tables of geometrical measures and formulas
- Computers equipped with word processor, spellcheckers, speech synthesis, printer and scanner



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- Calculators or computers with Excel software and printer
- Recording equipment, such as: speech synthesis, talking and digital books
- Specific educational software
- Computers equipped with speech synthesis
- Multimedia dictionaries

Strategies used by the course students during the training

- Underling and identifying key-words as well as creating schemes, tables and diagrams
- Adopting new tools to face up with written tests, such as: computers, schemes, spellcheckers, etc.
- Indicating if the pupils are autonomous or if their need ant help in completing their test
- Texts rewriting using different graphic strategies
- Indicating the eventual presence of any tactic to remember, such as: images, colours and circling

Tools used by course students during the training

- Computerized tools, such as: digital books, graphic software, etc.
- Adapted photocopies
- Use of pc to write
- Records
- Books including images
- Didactic Software
- Other



Evaluation scheme, to be used for final examinations too⁴

- Planning and arranging tests with pupils
- Forecasting oral tests to offset written ones, above all in case of foreign language evaluation
- Evaluating knowledge as well as analysis and synthesis skills more carefully than syntactical correctness
- Using educational tools and mediators both during written and oral tests, such as: diagrams and cognitive schemes
- Introducing computerised tests
- Planning longer times during tests’ unrolling
- Planning educational evaluation tests

⁴ D.P.R. n.122, 22 June 2009- The regulation is aimed at the coordination of all laws in force of students’ evaluation as well as further application under paragraphs of the law decree 2 and 3 n.137, enacted in 1 September 2008, converted with modification from the law n.1969-par.10.enacted in 30 September 2008- Evaluation of students affected by specific learning disorders.(SLD)

1. The evaluation and the skill tests included those ones enrolled during final examinations, must be adopted to all pupils affected by SLD and to all specific subjective situations deriving from these disorders which have to be absolutely certified. For these reasons, it is really important to adopt suitable and exemption methodological tools during the enrolment of school activities also considering the economical resources available in the current legislation.
2. The procedure to adopt to enrol the examinations and its diversifications that will not be mentioned in the certification of the diploma that will be released to students at the end of finale examinations.

CHAPTER IV

Report of Research Experiences: An Explanatory Research*

IV.1.Explanatory Research on Teachers' Personal Epistemology

The necessity to improve the quality of the training of headmasters and teachers to provide adequate and effective answers to foster the educational success of SLD students has given rise to some experiences of research aimed at identifying the training needs of those attending the courses.

This part of the study is aimed at showing the first results of one of these researches, conducted among the teachers attending the First Grade University Master: "Specific Learning Disabilities Teaching and Psychopedagogy", held at the University of Salerno in Italy. They have been involved in a research with an explanatory goal; its rationale was the importance attributed to intentionality and awareness in the teaching practices aimed at granting the right to study to SLD students .

The function of intentionality and awareness of the adopted teaching strategies in the shaping of educational actions is strictly linked to the knowledge of the main theoretical, both intuitive and scientific, approaches to teaching, showing contrasting operational impacts depending on the point of view adopted in the course of their formulation. The point of view not only shows a particular disciplinary approach but also a personal choice in the educational training program to guide operational teaching decisions (Stollo, 2008).

In order to cope with the complexity of Special Educational Needs is required to distinguish between different models, to avoid the risk of using contrasting positions applying disorganized, incoherent and therefore not very effective teaching strategies.

In this scenario can be considered the issue related to the personal epistemology of teachers that is a habit of creating a personal network of "epistemological resource" from the specific training and experience, taking

* This research has been conducted with the cooperation of Stefano Di Tore and Pio Alfredo Di Tore Phd Students at the Department of Human, Philosophical and Educational Sciences of the University of Salerno.

into account the cultural models, teaching models of different theoretical approaches, personal ways of interpreting the teaching- learning situations. The ability to build, consistently and consciously, such an "epistemological network", if scientifically demonstrated, would show the ability to cope, in a heuristic way, with the stimuli and affordances of the educational "Umwelt" (Uexkeüll von, 1965)., and would be strategic in dealing with special educational needs.

Theoretical Background

The term personal epistemology refers to the personal beliefs of individuals about the nature of knowledge and learning. "Personal epistemology has a special focus on the individual nature of concepts." (Walker, Brownlee, Whiteford, Exely, & Woods, 2012)

The seminal study in "personal epistemology" is by William G. Perry "Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years (1970), conducted at Harvard University in the 1950s and 1960s (Wendell, 2005).

From then, "the ideas that individuals hold about knowledge and knowing have been the target of research programs with different names, such as epistemological beliefs, reflective judgment, ways of knowing, and epistemological reflection, all of which appear to be a part of a larger body of work on "personal epistemology." Epistemological perspectives are relevant in numerous academic experiences. They have been shown to be related to learning in various ways, influence reasoning and judgment throughout our lives, and have implications for teaching" (Hofer, 2001).

"Theory and research related to personal epistemology is one way in which we can better understand teaching and learning (Kang, 2008). Much of the personal epistemology research has taken place in academic contexts (Schraw & Sinatra, 2004) and there is a great amount of studies that shows how personal epistemologies influence student learning. However, very little research has investigated the relationship between personal epistemologies and teaching (Kang. 2008), and even less in the specific field of teacher education" (Brownlee & Berthelsen, 2006).

Hammer and Elby (2002) argue for an ontological approach in which personal epistemology is viewed as a collection or network of “epistemological resources,” connoting something more fine-grained than a theory and more context-specific than any of the current models. (Hofer & Pintrich, 2012).

The definition of personal epistemology adopted in this study is that proposed by Barbara Hofer: “an identifiable set of dimensions of beliefs, organized as theories, progressing in reasonably predictable directions, activated in context, operating as epistemic cognition” (Hofer 2001, p.361)

At present, the international literature has not devoted much attention in the investigation of the relationship between personal epistemologies and teaching practice.

“Personal epistemological beliefs reflect an individual’s views about what knowledge is, how knowledge is gained, and the degree of certainty with which knowledge can be held. However, there has been no research that specifically investigates the relationship between such epistemological beliefs and teaching practice “(Brownlee & Berthelsen 2006, p.1).

Aim

The aim of the research is to verify how the teacher's personal epistemology is attributable to a defined theoretical framework, how this adherence is conscious, how much the type of teaching that the teacher states to practice is consistent with this framework.

Methods and Instruments

The instrument used to carry out the research, given the premises and objectives, is a questionnaire elaborated by the group of research, divided into five sections.

The first section identifies the profile of the teacher (current position, years of service, curriculum, professional training, experience)

The second section includes a series of statements about the process of teaching – learning.

The statements must be reordered on the basis of the significance attributed to each. Each of the statements proposals is attributable to one of the following theories: Cognitivism, Constructivism, Behaviorism, Enactivism.

The 14 items that compose the section are divided into 7 groups:

- Statements about learning
- Statements about teaching
- Statements about the student
- Strategies and technologies
- Theories of learning
- Statements about planning
- Educational Contexts

In the third section, the interviewee is asked to give a series of statements to one of the theories covered in the questionnaire. The statements are the same as in the previous section

If, in section 2, the was asked to sort in order of significance, statements like the following:

Learning is

- A form of elaboration managed by mental processes.
- The appropriation of concepts by students.
- A systematic response to a stimulus.
- The construction of personal identity of the student

In Section 3, the interviewee is asked to indicate which theory he believes to be mainly attributable the statements

Learning is a form of elaboration managed by mental processes.

- Behaviorism
- Cognitivism
- Constructivism
- Enactivism

Section 4 requires the interviewee to provide a personal definition for each of the theories:

- Provide a personal definition of enactivism
- Provide a personal definition of behaviorism

- Provide a definition of cognitivism
- Provide a personal definition of constructivism

Section 5 requires the interviewee to provide an assessment of personal knowledge and an assessment of teaching effectiveness for each theory.

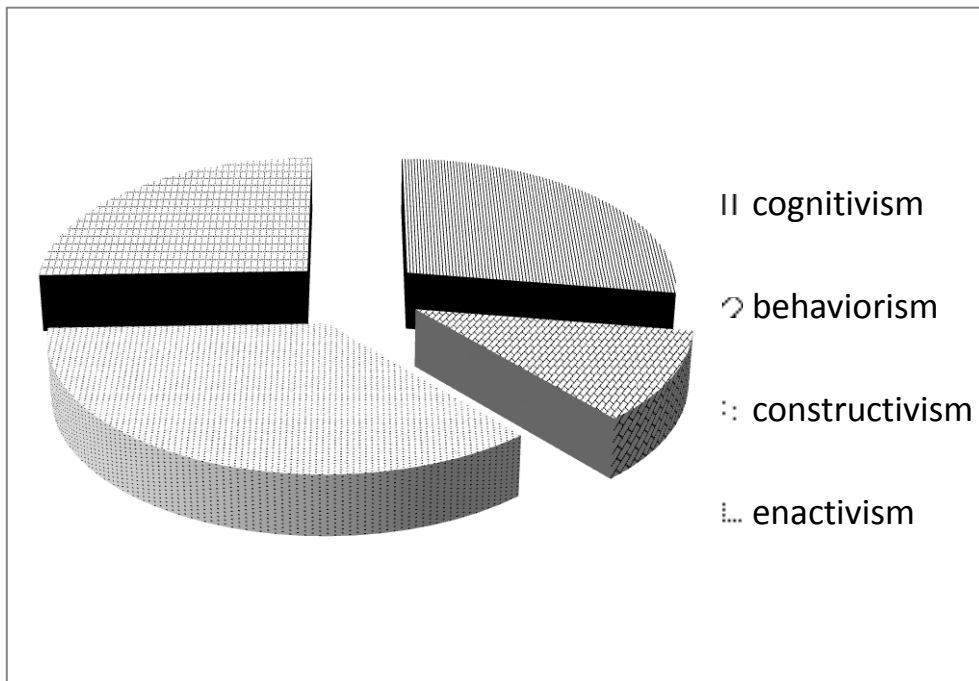
The sample is made up of teachers from the three school levels, all operating in the Campania region.

The sample for now limited to the participants in the Master, should include a total of about 1000 teachers.

Results

The results presented here are related to the data collected in section 2 (statements) out of a total of 80 completed questionnaires today. The graph is generated from the table below, which shows the frequency of statements that are attributable to each theory (rank 1). The frequency indicates a high heterogeneity, otherwise distributed, however, between the different theories.

frequency of statements attributable to each theory



Graph 1 - frequency of statements attributable to each theory

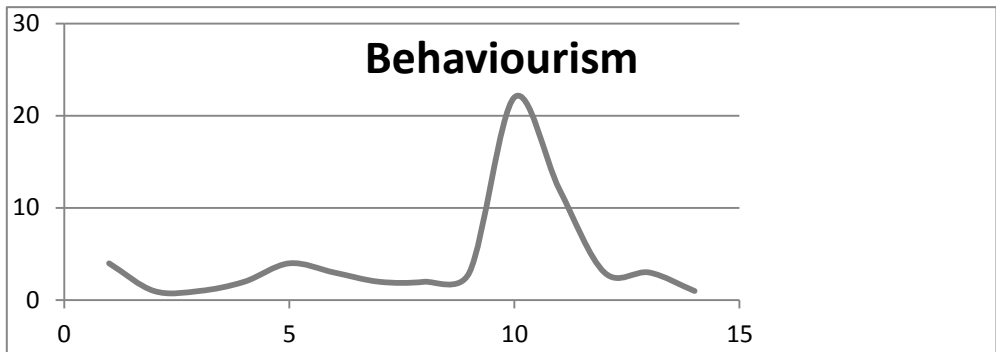
Table 1 - statements attributable to each theory

answers														total	
cognitivism	1	1	1	2	3	1	4	9	7	8	3	7	1	7	140
	8	3	3	4		1							3		
costruttivism	9	2	1	8	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	206
		3	2		3	0	8	1			0	0	5	4	
behaviorism	4	1	1	2	4	3	2	2	3	2	1	3	3	1	63
										2	2				
enactivism	9	3	1	6	1	1	6	8	2	9	5	1	9	1	151
			4		0	6			8			0		8	

The frequency of statements attributable to behaviorism, for example, appears homogeneous, with a significant peak to the statements 10 and 11 (relating to planning and evaluation).

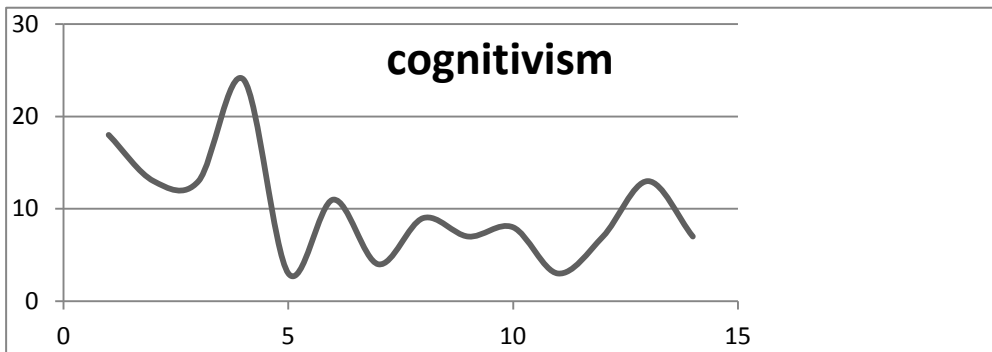
This leads us to consider as a small percentage of teachers has systematically indicated in first position the statement attributed to

behaviorism, with the exception of statements 10 and 11, which have received a number of preferences significantly higher.



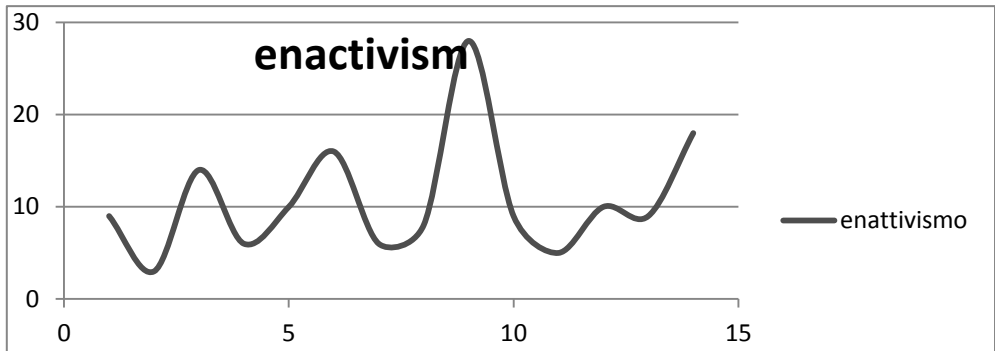
Graph 2 - Frequency of statements attributable to behaviorism

The frequency of statements attributable to cognitivism looks less homogeneous, pointing as a percentage, among the respondents, has indicated in the first position the statement attributed to cognitivism only for a few statements.



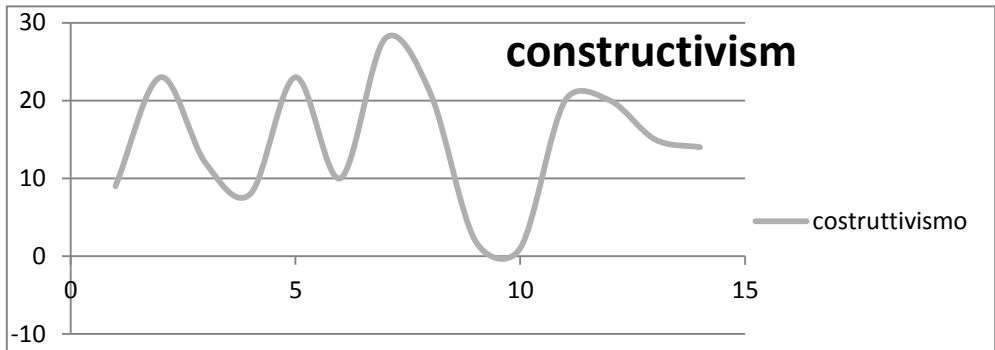
Graph 3 - Frequency of statements attributable to cognitivism

The frequency of statements attributable to enactivism looks even less homogeneous, suggesting that a small percentage of teachers, have systematically indicated in the first position the statement attributable to enactivism, while another, more substantial, percentage chose the statement of template enactive only in a few cases, selecting different template statements in the other.



Graph 4 - Frequency of statements attributable to enactivism

The frequency of statements related to constructivism is, among all, the less homogeneous: in one case (item 10) the constructivist statement has not been indicated in the first position by any of the respondents, while in other cases (item 7) obtained a clear predominance over the other, presenting a very fluctuating trend in other cases.



Graph 5 - Frequency of statements attributable to constructivism

Item analysis

The item analysis makes clear the irregular trend. The item "*Learning is*", which could be completed with the following options:

- A form of elaboration managed by mental processes.

- The appropriation of concepts by students.
- A systematic response to a stimulus.
- The construction of personal identity of the student

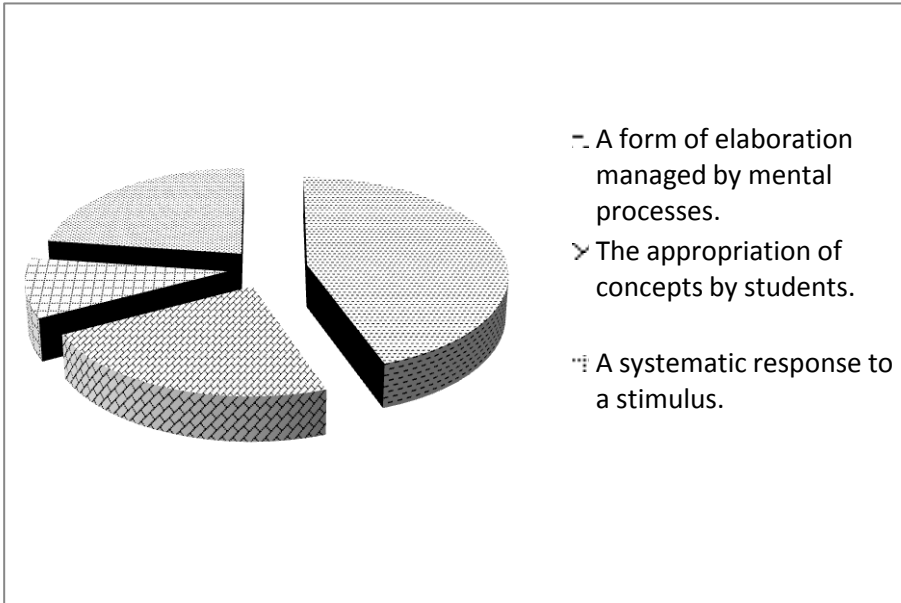
generated a prevalent cognitivist statement, while the item "*Learning is effective when*" that could be completed with the following options

- It is oriented to the acquisition and processing of new information.
- The student assimilates and integrates new thinking patterns.
- The student develops skills through eulogies and encouragement.
- The student produces interpretations of reality based on personal experience.

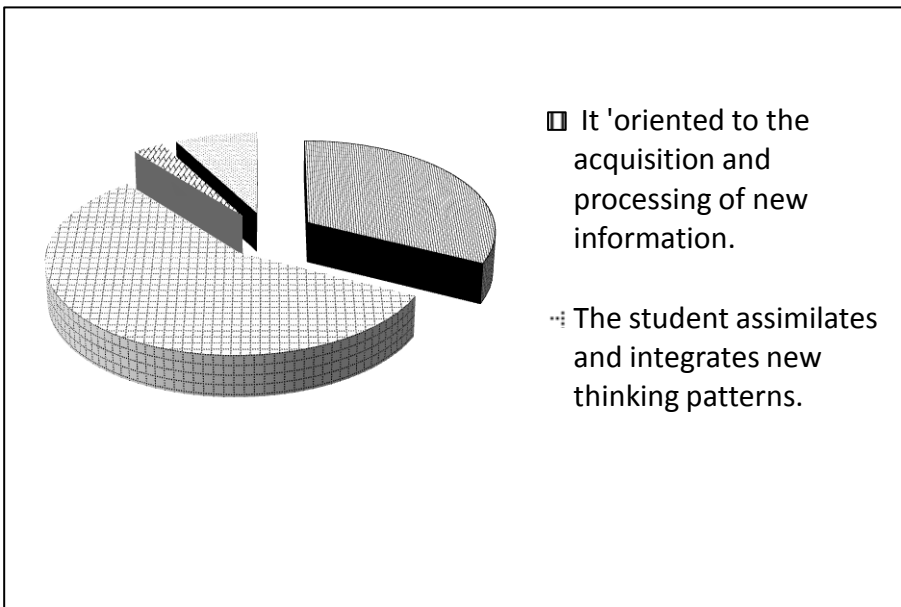
generated a prevalent constructivist statement

Table 2 - comparative table of statements about learning

Learning is



Learning is effective when



The same trend can be traced in the two items related to teaching:

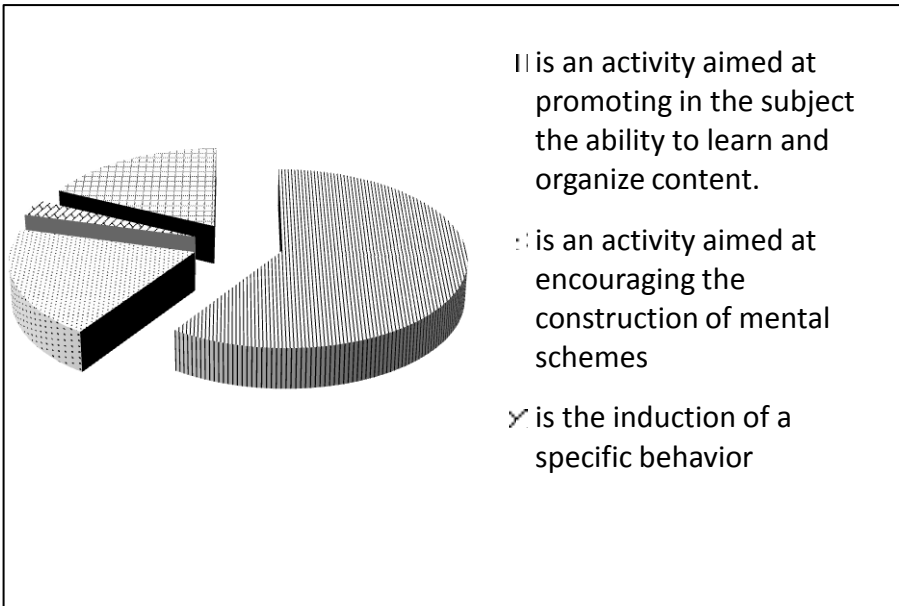
« *Teaching* »

- is an activity aimed at promoting in the subject the ability to learn and organize content.
- is an activity aimed at encouraging the construction of mental schemes
- is the induction of a specific behavior
- is an activity that promotes the co-definition of knowledge through interaction with the environment.

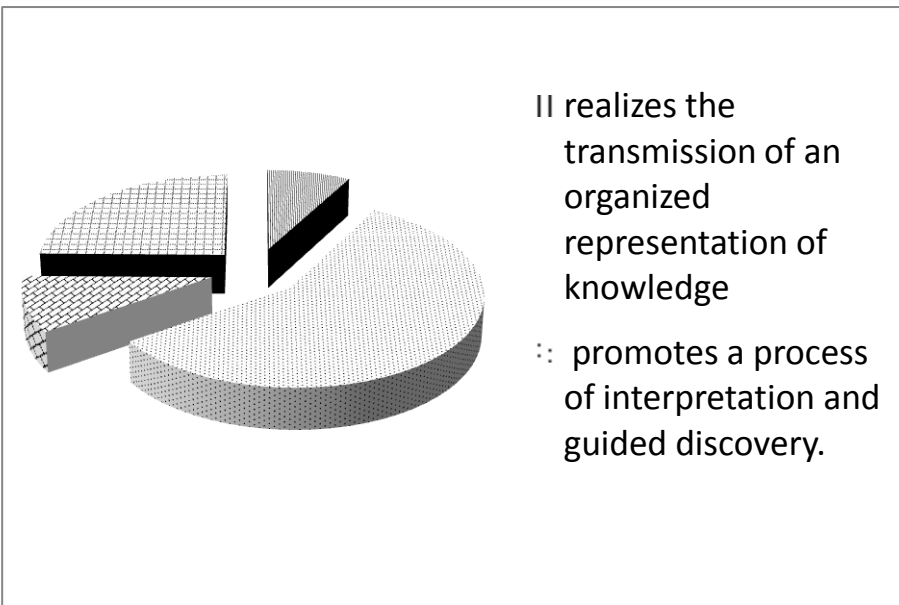
« *Teaching is effective when* »

- realizes the transmission of an organized representation of knowledge
- promotes a process of interpretation and guided discovery.
- induces a behavior.
- apply continuous fine adjustments of the system in which it operates.

Table 3 - comparative table of statements about teaching
Teaching



Teaching is effective when



Two items, one for the assessment and one for planning, generate predominantly behaviorist statements:

«In assessing a student, you should focus»

- On the way the student represents and processes information transmitted through my teaching action.
- On the way the personal experiences, beliefs and prior knowledge of the subject interacted with my teaching action generating new patterns of thought.
- On the acquisition of knowledge transmitted through my teaching action.
- On the way the interaction between my action teaching and learning processes activated by the pupil have given rise to new forms of modeling of reality.

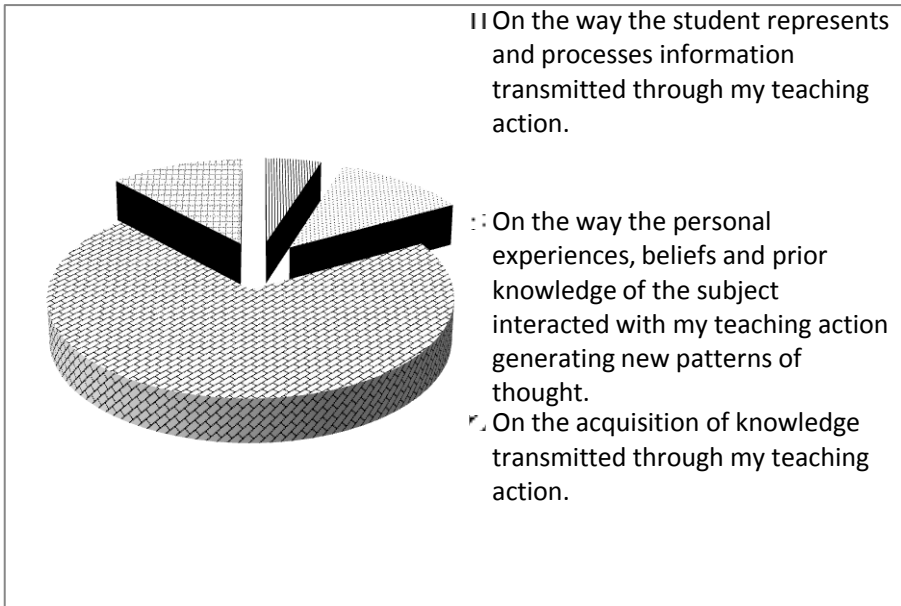
« Planning is most effective when organized»

- For concepts.
- For problems.
- For goals.
- in a self-regulating way.

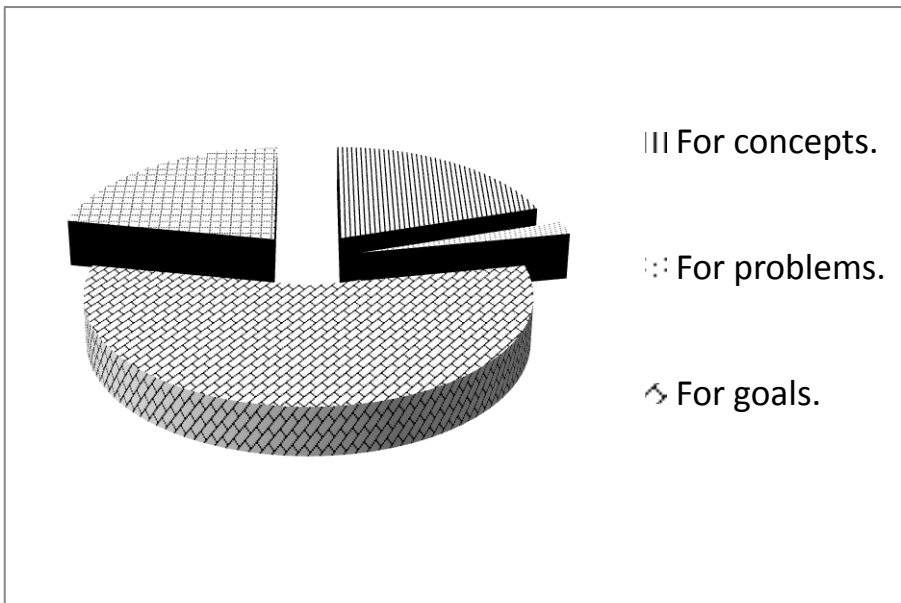
It is necessary, in this case, to remember that the statements of behaviorist type obtained, in all other items, a number of preferences systematically lower than the other theories.

Table 4 - "Behaviorist" items

In assessing a student, you should focus



Planning is most effective when organized



Text Analysis

Section 4 requires the respondent to provide a personal definition for each of the theories:

- Provide a personal definition of enactivism
- Provide a personal definition of behaviorism
- Provide a definition of cognitivism
- Provide a personal definition of constructivism

The texts thus obtained were subjected to textual analysis using software tools (T-LAB).

The analysis concerned:

- Keywords
- Co-word analysis
- Dominant words
- Key contexts

The results, at first sight, seem to confirm what emerged from previous section:

the definitions of “behaviorism” and “cognitivism” are shared, while the definitions of “constructivism” and “enactivism” appear not find a statistically significant sharing basis. This finding may be related with the “swinging” trend identified in section 2. The automatic extraction of keywords for texts relating to the item “Provide a definition of cognitivism” has identified 146 entries in 11 elementary contexts.



Figure 1 -Distribution of the key terms for "cognitivism"

Cognitivism: Keywords Translation Table	
PROCESSI	PROCESSES
MENTALE	MENTAL
APPRENDIMENTO	LEARNING
INFORMAZIONE	INFORMATION
ELABORAZIONE	PROCESSING
FUNZIONAMENTO	OPERATION
STUDIO	STUDIO
COGNITIVO	COGNITIVE
STUDIARE	STUDY
ACQUISIZIONE	ACQUISITION
ELABORARE	PROCESS
BASARE	BASE
NUOVO	NEW
SCHEMA	SCHEME
CONOSCENZE	KNOWLEDGE
BIOLOGICO	BIOLOGICAL
MENTE	MIND
PROCESSO	PROCESS
SISTEMA	SYSTEM
AVVENIRE	FUTURE
FASE	STAGE

The distribution of key terms in the graph indicates that the term 'learning' is present in the majority of texts and presents a systematic basis with "computing" and "information." The automatic extraction of keywords for texts relating to the item "Provide a definition of behaviorism" indicated

that the term appears evenly distributed throughout the corpus is "teaching"



Figure 2 - Distribution of the key terms for “behaviorism”

BEHAVIORISM: Keywords Translation Table	
APPRENDIMENTO	LEARNING
COMPORAMENTO	BEHAVIOUR
RISPOSTA	RESPONSE
BASARE	BASE
STIMOLO	STIMULUS
STIMOLO-RISPOSTA	STIMULUS-RESPONSE
STIMOLI	STIMULI
DETERMINATO	DETERMINED
INSEGNAMENTO	TEACHING
TEORIA	THEORY
PROCESSO	PROCESS
OSSERVABILE	OBSERVABLE
COMPORAMENTISMO	BEHAVIORISM
ASSOCIAZIONE	ASSOCIATION
ANALISI	ANALYSIS

The distribution of key terms in the graph indicates that the term 'teaching' is present in the majority of texts. The term learning occurs systematically related to "answer", "stimuli."The automatic extraction of keywords for texts relating to the item "Provide a definition of constructivism" does not find a matching 'core' term.



Figure 3 - distribution of the key terms for “constructivism”

Constructivism: Keywords Translation Table

APPRENDIMENTO	LEARNING
MENTALE	MENTAL
SCHEMA	SCHEME
COSTRUZIONE	CONSTRUCTION
COSTRUIRE	BUILDING
PROPRI	OWN
CONOSCENZE	KNOWLEDGE
BASARE	TO BASE
APPRENDERE	LEARNING
NUOVO	NEW
MAPPA	MAP
SOGGETTO	SUBJECT
TRASFORMARE	TRANSFORM
CONCETTO	CONCEPT
PROCESO	PROCESS
CONVINZIONE	CONVICTION
CONTENUTI	CONTENTS
ELABORATO	PREPARED
RICOSTRUIRE	REBUILD
TEORIA	THEORY
CREDENZA	BELIEF

The extraction of the key contexts for 'learning' does identify "No significant co-occurrence with the keyword <LEARNING>". The automatic extraction of keywords for texts relating to the item "Provide a definition of enactivism" does not find a matching 'core' term.



Figure 4 - distribution of the key terms for "enactivism"

Enactivism: Keywords Translation Table

APPRENDIMENTO	LEARNING
INTERAZIONE	INTERACTION
PROCESSO	PROCESS
DIDATTICO	TEACHING
MENTE	MIND
SOGGETTO	SUBJECT
AMBIENTE	ENVIRONMENT
COEVOLUZIONE	COEVOLUTION
AZIONE	ACTION
PERSONALE	PERSONAL
BASARE	TO BASE
CORPO	BODY
CONOSCENZA	KNOWLEDGE
MONDO	WORLD
ESPERIENZA	EXPERIENCE
GLOBALE	GLOBAL
REALTÁ	REALITY
DIPENDENTE	EMPLOYEE

The extraction of the key contexts for 'learning' finds a significant relationship only with the term "PROCESS"

Discussion and Conclusion

The research is still ongoing, and the database analyzed so far does not allow clear-cut conclusions, but a trend seems to emerge in a distinct manner. Different paradigms coexist in the concept and practice of teaching, and this hybridization is explicit and conscious.

Further developments and any confirmations come from the analysis of the sections on the job profile and assessment of effectiveness for the various theories.

The personal epistemology of teachers appears to be the ability to create links and within a set of epistemological and methodological resources, built up during experience and training, aimed at reducing the complexity of the learning environment and can be activated in networks and different configurations depending on the context in which it operates. This strategy is even more effective because it can detect, on the methodological and epistemological level, the best solutions to meet individual and special needs, that assume in this perspective the status of special according to their specific nature and not according to the difficulty of categorization.

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