Chapter 4
Pedagogical–Didactic Training for an Inclusive Didactics:
The Precision Teaching for Strengthening of Basic and Integrating Skills in Intellectual Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, focused studies have highlighted increasingly the importance of using new technologies during the planning of educational and didactic paths to develop skills and functions in disabled patients. They deal with assistive technologies that represent real opportunities of e-participation and social life. They also work as scaffolding in order to promote developing processes for an inclusive didactics. This chapter moves in such direction: about the importance of technologies in mental retardation. This importance turns around the usability of many inputs, which can offer to disabled patients the possibility to exercise their cognitive styles, their own characteristics, and their own autonomies to increase motivation and self-esteem. A didactic application of educational software, based on Precision Teaching method, is proposed in order to: a) verify the effectiveness of this didactic software on learning of integrative skills and b) verify gender differences. For this study, 40 children were selected (20 boys and 20 girls) with and without mental retardation. Results show learning improvements in each group; in spite of students' difficulties, the use of Precision Teaching seems to have reduced significantly the initial cognitive gap, which refers to the number of correct responses (accuracy) and to response time (fluency) relative to the learning of how to use money. Finally, new perspectives of its pedagogical and rehabilitative application for students with special needs are also discussed.

PREMISE

Before dealing with the subject of our research project is important making a premise to better understand how, today, the paradigm of disability has changed, and in particular intellectual disabilities. Disabilities need to be better analyzed in order to understand how the subject with problems can be helped in the acquisition of basic and integrating skills. This is to achieve a high level of autonomy, a fundamental prerequisite for the realization of their life project.

However, speaking today of inclusive policies imposes the need to refer to a new and more complex paradigm of the welfare of the person with disabilities, which will be the subject of our study.

Disability in the Scenario of Inclusive Policies: Towards New Paradigms of Welfare

Talking about intellectual disability, in order to understand the various facets of terms and concepts that historically have occurred, requires preliminary reflections on the term *disability*. The term is still subject of theoretical speculation and research, which gives rise to the applicability of a number of interpretative models, whose goal is aimed at clarifying the construct and personalize the intervention for a better decoding of psycho-pathological vulnerability.

A vulnerability that occurs through a series of processes related to different ways of experiencing the suffering that the type and degree of disability entails, and which are made explicit on the outside, through the assumption of a diverse series of psychological, social and relational events. These manifestations therefore, require multidisciplinary and multidimensional approaches to be adequately observed. This goes in the direction of a significant planning of habilitation and rehabilitation paths whose reliability has profound effects on the quality of life of people with disabilities, as well as on the quality and effectiveness of care that is given to them.

And the duty of care can not refer to standards but requires practice continuously supported by research and an integrated system of services and supports in order to achieve the project of an integral community that takes care of the life project of everybody. A project as a place of opportunity to act for the person with disability, and as a harbinger of new capabilities to organize and build, step by step, his identity.

In practice, the focus is on the "can be" of each disabled person and in the plurality of different ways of being in diversity rather than its lacking functions. The underlining of deficit, says Larocca (2003), as well as the statistical and metric meticulousness is what the less need those who, despite their difficulties, face and live the everyday life. The ideas above are functional to the arguments that follow, and at the same time they point out that today in the face of a scientific and cultural ferment more and more innovative and diversified, the special pedagogy and psychology, in developing new conceptual and operational perspectives for the inclusion[2], can only point to the conceivability of a *paidea* based on integral humanism (Mariani, 2005; Murdaca, 2008). This principle is the only one capable of sustaining the axiological tension that prevents to translate the existential in labels and uniformity and that rather, aiming to revitalize the planning of many worlds and different ways of being, questions about the fragility of the person with disability, about the problems of his family, about the recasting of existential experiences, without forgetting the pursuit of a balance between neuro-physio-biological world and psychological and contextual world. It is, in fact, from their interdependence that the development of personal potential takes shape, namely the subjective/adaptive connotation that needs a facilitating environment to express itself and significant experiences capable of producing change (Canestrari & Godino, 1997).

In fact, the intervention strategies are effective if they produce "change": hence the importance of the diagnostic and educational survey is not a passive gathering of information, but a process of

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