

The "Emotion to Know" method by Nicola Cuomo

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In response to numerous requests about the established methodological system of procedures to overcome handicaps resulting from disabilities in the area of "Emotion to Know and desire to exist", I report the rigorous methodological architecture that constitutes this system of intervention. It is important to report the architecture and the basic structure of the method "Emotion to Know" in order to avoid misrepresentation of its deep epistemological and procedural foundations.

Biographical Notes:

(Cfr. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicola_Cuomo
<http://www.emozionediconoscere.com/>)

The methodology called "Emotion to know" was created, evaluated, and verified over more than 30 years¹, taking advantage of multi- and inter-disciplinary confrontations, appraisals, and verifications at the international level.

Recently the methodology has taken shape in a more and more systematic way, for the purpose of wider disclosure, in line with the publishing series "Emotion to Know" (editions ETS, Pisa).

Over the years Prof. Nicola Cuomo and his collaborators have established various practical systems (mainly centralised on disability and development specific to Down Syndrome, Fragile X, Autism, and disorders of learning) based on 3 theoretical basic fields:

1. Lev Vygotskij and Luria: potential development zone and P.A.S.S. Planning, Attention, Simultaneity, Succession. (Das, Naglieri & Kirby, 1994)
2. Max Wertheimer: Gestalt theory, empowerment of capacity of knowledge transfer
3. Husserl: phenomenology and development of intentional abilities and competences

¹ Cfr. Pubblicazioni che parlano dei criteri e degli ambiti metodologici del prof. Nicola Cuomo
<http://www.emozionediconoscere.com>
e rivista internazionale <http://www.rivistaemozione.com>

The method, based on some basic principles (see attached Principles), takes advantage of survey, assessment, observation, and intervention tools:

1. evaluation through observation (S.O.S.E.P, Supportive Operational System for an Educational Project) and C.D.C. (Criteria for Data Collection) to analyse itineraries that propose cognitive solicitation and development or inhibition of potentials (indicators of acted - suffered);
2. work paths, good praxis, and 'project friend';
3. evaluation of effectiveness: autonomies, socialization, and learning.

Each of these is described later in the paper.

Premise

Among the peculiarities that characterise the “Emotion to Know” method we find planning of learning and teaching circumstances that are not removed from relational contexts, include a multiplicity of events, and involve a psycho-affective aspect determined by the desire to communicate.

The visible execution of learning (a change of behaviour in response to a problem and/or the appropriate behaviour to work it out) happens in a relational context and therefore the practical and/or the learned concept, if there has been a strong effect at an emotional level, remains connected to that event. This non-rational dimension, integrated with the learning because of its deep strength, focuses not only on the immediate situation, but also on the climate and the affective atmospheres that connect with emotions in the working memory to the longer-term knowledge, contents, and abilities.

This suggests a sort of double, parallel, an integrated circuit for which the rational part of people with disabilities, that is often viewed as being in deficit and therefore at risk of losing both the experience and the learned contents, finds support in the emotional portion that acts as an evocative reference, empowering the cognitive architecture.

An evocative reference that is not connected to the circumstance on an analytic modality, but on a global one, represents a deeper part of the experience, the structural one, and therefore suggests possibilities and potential abilities that determine the ability to transfer. In this way it is possible to avoid the probable risk of freezing the experiences and learning.

The method involved in “Emotion to Know” does not frame learning in fragmented exercises, but rather in complex and articulated activities, with a strong association at an affective level, involving more concepts, more competences, and more abilities that are not only potential, but realized. The ways of knowing, the experiences, the education, the

knowledge, and the didactics are not presented in a superficial and linear way like the shot of a gun, but are systemic, contextualised, articulated, and complex like the flight of a butterfly. It is an educational and didactic method that does not place experiences, learning, and notions in a superficial rational relation, but rather into a psycho-affective one where learning is essentially a qualitative maturation of the experience, specially designed to arouse the emotion to know and desire to exist including the competences to solve new and unexpected problems.

Interventions in Special Education characterised by the Emotion to Know method aim to link learning to the consciousness and to discover the power of ones own body, through which it is possible to operate on objects, on others, and on the world. It is the power of being able to act and to want to act; to provoke a permanent and dynamic passage in a context of reciprocity, from person to person.

Without these deep emotional attentions and/or preliminary strategies it often gets difficult to involve a person with a disability, because having as reference RATIONALITY and MOTIVATIONS in order to involve him/her in a project is frequently very difficult or impossible: these are sometimes absent.

Therefore it is essential to create the conditions for success, as it is from this success that the motivations derive. The possibilities of success have to be researched in those fields in which the person with the disability demonstrates even only minimal practical competences.

The Emotion To Know and the desire to exist has for more than thirty years been the methodological and epistemological reference used by many researchers in public and private universities in more than 18 countries including Europe, Japan, United States, New Zealand and South America.²

The method refers to multi- and inter-disciplinary protocols (specifically between neuroscience, clinical psychology and special education) and results in rigorous developments even if it proposes flexible actions with the aim to produce necessary adaptations between the hypotheses of the project and the uniqueness of the children and people with disabilities. The flexibility inherent in the “Emotion to Know” method is possible because of constant supervision and tutoring (face-to-face and via internet), which proposes a reworking of practices and strategies and the use of mediator instruments during the educational-didactic intervention; an itinerary that proposes a system of work in progress, that is, action-formation-research.

Emotion to Know is based on research conducted in multi- and inter-disciplinary ways on the different and original intelligences, and on the strength of the emotions for cognitive and affective development and empowerment of children and adults with disabilities.

Such foundations lead to a deep reconsideration of the varieties of intelligence. By reconsidering and estimating intelligences not through quantitative but qualitative points of view, and in a dimension where there is not a single form and/or manifestation of

intelligence (this wonderful human trait is to be respected in its variety), we have been able to reorient modalities of teaching and learning connecting them to desire, to emotions, and to the pleasure to exist.

Cfr. Wallon (1976), René Zazzo (1969), Goleman (1977), Duncker (1932)

Some Theoretical and Epistemological Fields of Reference of the Method

1. Vygotskij and Luria: Zone of Proximal Development and P.A.S.S.

When Vygotskij describes language and thought, he means that language is born by contact, by relationships between people, and in parallel thought is the internalisation of language and is inter-subjective. Therefore, language helps to mature thought and vice-versa. (Luria and Vygotskij, 1930)

Emotion to Know, consistent with the hypotheses of Vygotskij, seeks to produce those conditions, those good praxes, that integrate the psycho-biological development of a person with the context, the situations, and those conditions that the educational actions produce to overcome handicaps resulting from disability. The parallelism in the dynamic of thought and language obliges us to always keep in mind the fact that educational praxes lose their sense if they are not thought and directed to stimulate ability and to become part of the potential development zone of an individual.

Vygotskij himself points out that although educational practices are not within the potential of the psycho-biological development of a person, an appropriate education promotes the correct development of a person.

"Learning is not development per se, but a proper organisation of a child's learning promotes his mental development, activates a whole bunch of development processes, and this activation could not happen without learning. Learning is therefore an inherently necessary and universal moment for the development of a child and has those human characteristics that are not natural, but historically formed."

Intelligence, whatever meaning we give her, is to be oriented, educated and empowered. In terms of education, the studies of Vygotskij are an interesting reference because they emphasise that:

"... The learning of a determined activity (development of competence) can be anticipated, not letting the person exercise the same activity that she is not yet mature (not yet competent), but accelerating the maturity (acquisition of skills) through activities that this person is already mature to do (competent) and that are preparatory for the activity wished to be learned (or competence that wished to be developed) earlier, and secondly we have to distinguish between learning that takes place spontaneously by the person

exercising the already developed skills and the one through systematic guidance and help from teachers in performances for which the person is not yet competent, and therefore there are two levels of maturity (or competences): one related to the possibility of spontaneous learning of the person and the one concerning to the possibility of learning if supported. The difference between the two levels is the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotskij, 1930-31)

The methodology of Emotion to Know, by acting on the "proximal development area", on "can do's", on skills already possessed by the child or a person with a disability, will encourage the development of skills in areas different from that reported as being deficient; these other areas will assist with a global cognitive maturation and plasticity of the brain and its functions, having references to a mental organisation, a more mature cognitive system, and a more advanced overall quality; this overall maturity will construct a more competent mental architecture and therefore it is possible to review again those learnings, earlier proposing difficulties, with more competences, and with an evolved cognitive architecture that is more facilitative and supportive for the skill that was initially difficult to acquire.

Another methodological tool used by the Emotion to Know, derived from the theories of Luria, aims to overcome handicaps and gives to the operators references to guide their interventions in the form of a grid that suggests 4 areas of reference (PASS)
{Das, Naglieri & Kirby, 1994}

1. Planning

Planning is the mental process through which the individual determines, selects, applies and evaluates problems and possible solutions. The planning process can address situations which are not immediately obvious and do not have immediately available routes to find a solution. This process is applied not only for simple, but also for complex tasks and may involve other processes like attention, simultaneity and succession. It is necessary to understand that PLANNING, ATTENTION, and SIMULTANEITY should not be interpreted in a linear way, but should be treated as systemic and integrated.

(Watzlawick, Bavelas, Jackson, 1967)

Labelling the elements of the process suggests a linear model, because it is not possible to adequately merge them in spoken or written language. However, it is not intended that they should be viewed in this way.

Sound planning capacity involves developing an action plan, evaluating the method, monitoring its effectiveness, doing possible modifications or rejecting a plan when the task requires a change, along with the controlling the impulse to act without appropriate considerations. Planning is present in all human activities for which a method is required to solve a problem in school settings, and also in daily life (home, work, leisure, play ...)

2. Attention

Attention is a mental process through which a person selectively focuses on particular stimuli by inhibiting responses to competitive stimuli that are presented concurrently. As you can see, the focus is on the planning process, because while you plan it is necessary to create hierarchies, complementarities, and relationships between the elements that are the subject of the problem and subsequent planning. A good attention span requires one to be selective, focused, committed, and supported. Selective attention requires inhibition of responses to certain stimuli in favor of others that may be difficult to ignore, while sustained attention refers to avoiding changes in performance as time passes, which may be influenced by changing the required effort to solve the problem and perform the task.

3. Simultaneity

The process of simultaneity is a mental process through which the individual integrates separate stimuli into one or into a group. Simultaneity, therefore, involves considering planning and attention as part of the same project at the same time and in the same cognitive dimension. This means a unified process, even if some of the issues at one moment are in the foreground, its major role in the foreground is not hierarchical and does not negate other considerations.

Therefore, if at a certain time the attention leads us to focus on one element of the system in which we are directing our intervention, that does not mean that we miss the relationship with other elements, because the process is a unified one. Its like driving a car: the fact that at times one must focus on immediate concerns such as other cars passing in front of the vehicle does not necessarily detract from the planned organization of the various other things one must do in order to continue driving. Overshadowing one of the elements makes us lose simultaneity of the actions that are necessary to control our driving process. The essence of the simultaneity process is that the person has to interrelate the elements in a single stimulus in a perceptual or conceptual whole.

4. Succession

Succession is a mental process through which the individual integrates stimuli into a specific serial order to form a chain progression. This is the process that brings experience into an organized form constructed by chain points and represented by images and captions. The sequence is nothing but a logical-functional form of organisation that assumes thickness on the field of the cognitive potential only if successione esempio: per aprire una porta bisogna avere prima la porta, poi avere la chiave, infilarla, girarla, aprire, poi aprire those conditions have been integrating planning, attention, and simultaneity.

Without these conditions a process can become merely mnemonic, passive, a result of conditioning, more or less operative. The succession process is necessary when things need to follow one another in a strictly defined order: e.g. the water goes into the pot and the pot in the water when you need to cook, when you need to wash the dishes it could happen the other way. In a particular recipe it is important to use the onion first and later the mushrooms, even though the two elements of this recipe remain the same, the unique flavour that is intended and the sensitivity of the palate radically change the taste and the value of the meal, therefore the succession involves different purposes in different procedures. The distinctive quality of the succession process is that each element is linked only to the one that precedes it, and that these stimuli are not interrelated.

2. Max Wertheimer: Gestalt Theory, Enhancing the Capacity of Knowledge Transfer

Gestalt Theory (M. Wertheimer) argues that the same roads can lead to different destinations and different routes that can lead to the same outcome³. (Wertheimer, 1965)

An education focussed only on content and not on process offers a simple repeating, a "training" without producing a real learning that can be transferred and reused in different contexts, making the person more independent and giving her more autonomy.

The stringency and at the same time the flexibility of the Emotion to Know method, including actively involving children and people with disabilities in planning processes, making them active participants of the learning process, aim to ensure that the child / person acquires the ability to solve problems and to transfer what they have learned to new and unknown situations. Errors, therefore, also become part of the learning process.

With Gestalt the use of instructional training techniques that link learning and skills only to the content and concepts of what is being learned is challenged. In fact, some of the skills possessed and implemented in given situations, contexts, and with certain instruments are so connected and fixed to the circumstances of specific contexts as to become unrecognisable in other circumstances where they are required: this becomes paradoxical and is a risky type of technique to use if a child / a person has a disability.

This is known as "functional fixedness," which is the tendency to focus only on what is the normal and usual function of an object while the context of a problematic situation would require to use the object in a different way. This "fixed" behaviour therefore tends to hinder the solution, whose attainment may depend on just the opportunity to use that object in the new way, not the usual one.

Gestalt, therefore, offers the Emotion to Know method the possibility to inquire and evaluate which methods may be educational-didactic-formative modalities that, in particular way for people with disabilities, tend not to produce a fluidity in transferring skills, allowing one to think about a possible educational project that could be organised in order to supply to the person the capacities that will enable him/her to recognise his/her skills by making minor, secondary, or primary adjustments within the contextual conditions.

Consistent with Gestalt guidelines, the Emotion to Know method proposes respect for diversity and originality considering each of them as resources, and finding the educator in the role of the solicitor and provoker of opportunities rather than a mere transmitter of knowledge and pre-packaged and pre-planned content.

To help the person with a disability to "steal" the pleasure or displeasure of discovering would mean to transmit to him/her: " ... the basic highly dangerous experience (dis-

³ "... "si duo faciunt idem, non est idem, se due individui fanno la stessa cosa, non è lo stesso. In termini esatti due elementi o due gruppi di elementi che sono identici dal punto di vista atomistico possono avere un significato molto diverso dal punto di vista strutturale; può darsi infatti che siano diversi per natura. Un'aggiunta necessaria è la proposizione opposta: se, dal punto di vista atomistico, due elementi compiono funzioni molto diverse, le loro azioni possono essere, ciò nonostante, strutturalmente identiche. Per fare la stessa cosa in una situazione cambiata bisogna farla in modo diverso. In termini esatti elementi diversi possono essere strutturalmente gli stessi."

Max Wertheimer, *Il pensiero produttivo*, Giunti Barbera, 1965, FI, pag. 273

educative), is that there is no necessity of fatigue, as for every type of difficulty or obstacle that the life puts, there is available a 'slave' which takes the entire effort". (Metzger, 1975) The method Emotion to Know criticises ways of teaching that propose learning contents mnemonically rather than actively.

3. Husserl: Phenomenology and development of intentional skills and capacities

Phenomenology (E. Husserl) says that the intentionality of consciousness takes place when the person relates to the world in an active way, not being passive, and acquiring a perspective that is original, conscious, and responsible. (Husserl, 1981)

In this way, an educational process that accompanies the person in the exploration of the world through getting to know and internalizing its rules, will lead her to have an original, authentic opinion, until she is able to choose the her desired way of being present in the world. This leads her towards a free intentionality.

With intentionality of consciousness Emotion to Know means that the person's ability to relate to the outside world (to things in nature, to others, and to the various human and social realities) will be active rather than passive; in other words, the person will have the ability to incorporate the object or the world into their schema, giving them an original sense, and allowing them to reach a personal, conscious, and responsible vision of the world.

For Husserl's phenomenology, and therefore for the phenomenological pedagogy, the vision of the world can be considered as a structured set of experiences for each person: the way that anyone incorporates the world or correlates with it by giving it meaning and structure, and in doing so determines his/her own world views.

Moreover, it is important to emphasise once again that the world view of each person suffers continual modification (of course, more or less significant depending upon the range of experiences the person has and his willingness to accept change) because of the never-ending network of relations with the outside world and with others that characterize his/her existence. Emotion to Know suggests putting the child / person in circumstances involving constantly new experiences so that his/her vision of the world enriches and, if appropriate, leads also to a deep modification of existing schema. (Bertolini, 1996)

Some Tools: starting from Observation (S.O.S.E.P.), getting to the Data Collection Interview (C.D.C.)

S.O.S.E.P. Supportive Operational System for an Educational Project

Emotion to Know is designed to detect through observation and interview the "style" a family adopts for the education of a child with disabilities.

Through the data acquired by observations, discussions colleagues from the medical-rehabilitative area, psychologists, and parents it is possible **to evaluate** and **to orient** the

educational style in favour of the development of originalities and affective and cognitive potentialities of the child/person.

Emotion to Know has identified pointers that can help to reveal appropriate educational styles for the purpose of intervention, forming a "**Supportive Operational System for an Educational Project**", in order to provide parents with pedagogical competences to be used at the most opportune occasions in daily life.

There are two global indicators referring to the method used to identify and evaluate the style

- SUFFERED (passive education)
- LIVED (active education)

Indicators for "SUFFERED"	Indicators for "LIVED"
• does not allow the need and/or desire to emerge	• to attend, provoke, let the need, the desire emerge
• carries the objects to the child/person	• to induce the child/person to go towards the objects
• does not attend to demands, denials, and answers	• to demand and to attend to demands, denials and answers
• does not show the child/person objects and solicit him/her to touch them	• to show the child/person objects in order to make him/her curious, soliciting him/her to look at them, to touch them
• watches without participation	• to keep in mind that physical contact evokes emotions, determines pleasure, and is a powerful occasion for communication
• touches the child/person "in a cold way", "in a technical way", without communicating with him in a physical way	• to highlight the fact that objects do not appear from nothing; to show where they come from, where they were stored before: drawer, shop...
• makes objects appear without showing him/her where they come from	• when moving from one context to another it is important to point out the context changes, to anticipate the reasons for which we move, to supply the rationale for the movement...
• transports him/her from a place to another without make him/her notice the differences, or explaining where they are going and why	• make him/her notice the details, the differences, especially in the contrasts: large/small, black/ white...
• does not show details	• to let the child/person touch the face, the hair, the body...
• does not let the child/person touch the face or the hair	• to make him/her notice the particularity of his/her own body: for example, to make him/her notice his/her feet (ask him/her to touch them, look at them, caress them)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not make him/her notice the particularity of his/her own body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to talk to him/her in a sensible way independently if we are sure that he/she understands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not talk to him/her (independently if we are sure that he/she understands) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to listen to him/her with attention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not listen to him/her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to attend to his/her answers, encouraging him/her
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not attend to his/her answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to always give meaning to the action or the event: where we go, why, to do what
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not give purpose to the discussions, to the events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to make him/her to use objects: from the spoon to the broom, from the remote control to the light switch, from the recorder to the keys...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not make him/her use objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to give him/her a place that is clearly his/hers: at the table, in the bedroom, in front of the TV, the drawer...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not give him/her a place of his/her own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to place objects in order to be accessible in an autonomous way, so the child/person can get them...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not put objects in a reachable place, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to teach him/her, putting the objectives into this process, provoking the desire and the pleasure to know
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaches him/her something in a passive way, without real objectives; a monotonous exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to give value even to the minimal competences, trying to develop them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not pay attention to minimal competences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to start from the positives, from the "know how to do"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes mostly the failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to encourage the successes, and not only the interests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insists on an activity only in order to correct the errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to use the occasions of the daily life as opportunities to learn, to socialise, and to acquire autonomies: the moment of the eating, the bath, ..., breakfast, lunch, supper, personal hygiene...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fails to take advantage of some moments of daily life like eating, bath, breakfast, lunch, supper, personal hygiene. These are occasions to learn, to socialise, to acquire autonomies taking into account only the circumstances as educational ones 	

The indicators should be analysed in relation to the contexts, situations, activities at home, school, work, and during spare time. It is important to consider key moments in the day of the child/person that while being separate instances can involve the teaching of transferable skills and knowledge: bath time, meal times, cleaning, etc. . Other times may

be as simple and seemingly insignificant as that of awakening or going to sleep.

Using categories of SUFFERED AND LIVED in the research for early intervention.

The areas summarized above, relating to SUFFERED AND LIVED interaction styles, have been used for research into early intervention (specifically from 0 to 3 years). In such cases the operators conducted observations using the criteria of suffered and lived from behind a one-way mirror or on a screen connected through an adjustable camera with the observation room for a period of thirty minutes divided into three sections of about ten minutes each:

- the first sector tries to detect the educational "style" of the family (including siblings where appropriate);
- the second sector tests the intervention in comparison with the intervention of a "guided" specialised operator who substitutes the parents during the game (parents are invited by the operator to step aside and watch without participating)
- in the third sector the responsible supervisor of the observation system invites the parents to sit around the table for the interview (while the guided intervention of the operator continues).

1. First sector.

Parents (and possibly later siblings) are observed in relation to the "SUFFERED AND ACTED" indicators and in relation to the following master plan which in turn will be adapted to individuality of the child and of the family that the previously collected data outlined.

Scheme to direct the observation.

- Has the child had the opportunity to look around?
- Has the child had the opportunity to explore the context?
- Are the games offered to the child?
- Is the child is encouraged to play?
- Is there a particular game presented to the child?
- Is he given the opportunity to choose?
- Are efforts made to involve the child if he starts to exhibit passive behaviour?
- Is he involved through offering games to him?
- Is he involved following his own requests for help?
- Is he involved by stimulating his curiosity?

- Is he offered many games without being given the time to choose one?
- Are the family members coordinated in offering occasions to play?
- Do the family members offer games placing themselves in opposition, in a competitive way?
- Do they play implying the various games in one "playing project"?
- Is the game fragmented because the parents are offering to the child different games to play and therefore he jumps from one game to another?
- Does the play involve the physical use of the body?
- Is there talking?
- Are questions and answers attended to?
- Are attractive inflections of voice used?
- Is the game collaborative?
- Does the game has a meaning/purpose?
- Are the games taken to the child?
- Is the child taken to the games?
- Is the space used small?
- Is the space used large?
- Is praise given for success?
- Is praise given even if success is not evident?
- Is there attention paid to enjoyable moments that arise from the game, and are they used in order to make the game more interesting or in order to transition from a game to another?
- Is the game supported with comments like: "let's set the table for grandmother, so she will be happy when she comes... "?
- Is language used to make him/her curious, to encourage, solicit, attract him?
- Are strategies to overcome problems shown?
- Is the child permitted to use objects/toys?
- Does the parent position himself/herself as a mediator or as a substitute?
- Do the parents put each other in difficulties?
- Do the parents have fun?

2. Second sector.

The operator verifies what has been observed using the Diagram for the Orientation of the Observation used in the first sector. If the parents have produced a mainly SUFFERED relation the operator verifies the behaviour of the child in a LIVED (EXPERIENCED) situation. If the relation has been mostly LIVED (EXPERIENCED), the operator verifies it with the participation of a stranger.

The operator is guided, through a remote receptor-transmitter connection with headset by the working group behind the unidirectional mirror. The group, the notes made during the "first sector", observation on hand can make a comparison and guide the operator's behaviour in the room in order to verify and/or to emphasise some previously revealed aspects.

3. Third sector.

In the room where the activities are carried out (in a predestined corner), the responsible supervisor enters and in relation to what has been observed and discussed behind the unidirectional mirror in the previous twenty minutes conducts an interview with the parents. The operator, still connected and guided via radio by the observation group, continues to work with the child.

The interview aims to check the educational methods (see also "styles" observed in the twenty minutes of observation behind the mirror) used at home and in other activities usually considered marginal, such as times of eating, bathing, watching television, going outside, along with the organisation of objects, time, and space.

The interview will be conducted in accordance with the C.R.D. (see below) in separate and future periodic meetings with the family.

Criteria for Data Collection (C.D.C.)

The C.D.C. is carried out by periodic interviews that reveal the competences of the child/ person with a disability in 4 principal areas:

- home
- school
- free-time
- work

The C.D.C. is comprised of the following steps:

Periodic meetings between families and operators is an informative-formative process that seeks to provide conceptual keys; cultural instruments that orient and provide the basis for the choices of the educational, medical-rehabilitative, and didactic procedures. The meeting between the families and operators uses information from the S.O.S.E.P observation and begins with informal conversation in order to gradually (as the narrative supplies elements and data) become more and more focussed, guided, defined.

The parents and the operators are informed about how the meeting will proceed with the focus being on discussion about the competences and positive aspects of their own child or of the person to which the Emotion to Know intervention is focussed. The meeting attempts to link events; to put together episodes in order to identify and/or to construct coherent pictures regarding the person's life, always taking account of the relation between person and context, and the person and others who may be the siblings, grandparents, teachers, therapists, etc..

The meeting takes in reflective episodes, circumstances that can seem banal, and exactly

for this reason considered marginal, as smaller elements of the complex relational system of the whole family in relation with the events, the contexts, the situations, and the others with whom the family is in contact.

These marginal events often contain key evidence with which to unlock the educational style and relational context of the family and the educational or rehabilitative contexts in a way that might be defined as much “cleaner” if compared to camouflage coatings that tend to reduce the familiar originalities characterising the story of everyday life, behaviours, and original style to a cliché. (N.Cuomo, 2000)

Usually we prefer to have the first meeting with only with the parents and/or the operators as the presence of the child/person and eventual siblings is not helpful because of the unfamiliar situation, the new context, and the fears that can arise from which may provoke anomalous behaviour in the person that does not coincide with that in everyday life.

The meeting with the parents and/or the operators examines how the person with special needs is viewed, considered, estimated by them; a reference that helps us understand their modalities of relation with him/her. Later, if it is deemed necessary to examine the person in a direct way (to investigate further the situation, the relational contexts at home, at school, and in free-time) an operator will visit who will be able to carry out observations directly in the contexts in which the person lives.

Another reason not to involve the presence of the child/person with special needs in the first encounter, particularly when it takes place at the University (or in places that are not organised for the observation), is that in such contexts there may not be suitable and useful atmospheres for observation. The main scope of the initial meeting is to supply conceptual and cultural keys to the parents and the operators in order to help them become active protagonists in the educational-didactic contexts. The objective is to make the family more and more enabled and enabling, the parents to comprehend, to know, to choose the best for their child in relation to the data that the Emotion to Know process uncovers and to be informed players in order to make maximum use of the resources that their environment, their place of residence, provides.

The intention is not to determine situations that may conflict with the data and research experiences, but to create complementariness, network synergy, cooperation between University (institution in charge of scientific research) and the structures of local services

in order to enhance the field of investigation and intervention (as provided by law 104⁴).

We must keep in mind that the initial investigations are exploratory, and it is important to remember that such investigations remain hypothetical and that the praxes proposed may not coincide with the experiences of the child/person. However, formulating an hypothesis is useful in order to increase the number of viewpoints so as to stimulate other new interpretative possibilities of orientation and alternative possibilities for intervention, rather than for "being correct". To widen the field of reference for the analysis is a highly useful road for scientific evaluation, enhancing pure science through the involvement of a human dimension.

A diary should be kept of changes that occur in the child/person in order to be able to promote these changes and to discover the errors, the validity of the designed assumptions, and to renew the working hypothesis, taking into account the individuality of the child/person. Certainly the first intervention will result in some positive changes, but these do not become meaningful if we do not understand:

- A) up to which point they depend on spontaneous development;
- B) if the variations are related to the innovation proposed by the intervention, in confrontation with a routine;
- C) if they are a result of our hypotheses, of the work that parents, teachers, educators, therapists are implementing;

When the causes of the child's progress are more and more clear we will be able to "get inside" more and more and better understand the areas of strength and discover the most powerful and appropriate interventions, or invent other ones.

Good Praxes: Some Work Tracks

Over the years, Prof. Nicola Cuomo, in collaboration with his team, have devised some intervention instruments for the development of cognitive and affective potentials acting on:

⁴ * cfr: Legge 5 febbraio 1992, n. 104 (in GU del 17 febbraio 1992) Legge-quadro per l'assistenza, l'integrazione sociale e i diritti delle persone handicappate Art. 5 - Principi generali per i diritti della persona handicappata -

1. La rimozione delle cause invalidanti, la promozione dell'autonomia e la realizzazione dell'integrazione sociale sono perseguite attraverso i seguenti obiettivi:
sviluppare la ricerca scientifica, genetica, biomedica, psicopedagogica, sociale e tecnologica anche mediante programmi finalizzati concordati con istituzioni pubbliche e private, in particolare con le sedi universitarie, con il Consiglio nazionale delle ricerche (CNR), con i servizi sanitari e sociali, considerando la persona handicappata e la sua famiglia, se coinvolti, soggetti partecipi e consapevoli della ricerca.

Increased awareness of space and time
categorisation, seriation, classification
eye-hand coordination and fine motor
knowledge and use of money
enhancement of attention, memory, and observation
acquisition and upgrading of skills of reading, writing, and calculating

The good praxes/work paths are intended to help the child/person overcome the handicaps that result from their disability and to determine conditions for integrated and inclusive didactics, designed to overcome difficulties of learning and teaching for a project of life of independence and autonomy with the emotion to know and desire to exist. These paths also take into account life “after parents”
(N.Cuomo, AAVV., 2009)

The operating strategies/work paths to be enacted in the four contexts (home, school, work and free time) are implemented with continuous supervision both in person and at distance. The work tracks indicate how to involve the children and the people with disabilities in the processes of development, to place them in a position to reflect on their actions in order to get hold of the competences in a deep and structural way so as to enable cognitive transfer.

Reflection on the intervention takes the cognitive and affective architecture of the child/person with a disability from its current state towards a qualitative change, allowing the child/person to discover the possibility of transferring the acquired competences in the experience to other contexts.

The work paths, through a methodology that uses multiple and rigorous strategies, solicit participation in the area that Vygotskij calls the potential development zone.

Emotion to Know offers a method that pays attention to an observation of the competences of a person and her “know how to do's” in order to produce a hypothesis of intervention. This allows her to become more conscious of processes, paths, choices, and about what type of organisation has been used in past to find a resolution for a problem; about how it is possible to organise research, find solutions; about the fact that it is possible to cope with a problem through the use of various modalities and instruments and that his analysis, his evaluation, can be conducted from multiple points of view; about: how to be able to ask, who to ask, how, when, how to look for help, individuate facilitating tools, etc..

The protocol provides moments at a residential level (usually two weeks) for the orientation of both the families and the operators together with the children/person with the disability. Following this the operators, who are instructed in the Emotion to Know method, engage in regular professional development, through modules of 3 hours each. This time with the overall supervisor (usually Prof. Cuomo) provides a mentoring for both families and operators, depending on the case monthly or quarterly, both in the presence at a distance. These work paths/good praxes offer a meticulous methodology for the proposed work that is tested and evaluated from the outside, in the head office of the research, based on two epistemological angles, the area of neuroscience and the area of

clinical psychology, which strictly monitor the avenues of work and good practice guided by the principles of the Emotion to Know.

The work paths, by acting on contexts, situations, relational atmospheres, and including the children and people with disabilities in an active way into the working processes aim to produce a cognitive and affective improvement in thought processes and language.

Contexts, Situations, Atmospheres and Relational Methods: Project "Friend" (cit)

In terms of methodological guidelines for the operator's intervention, Emotion to Know is based on a project called "project friend" that offers an opportunity for relationship, communication, and practical learnings, facilitating cognitive and emotional development, reconnecting with the integrated hypothesis of autonomies, socialisation, and learning.

"Project friend" is intended to create paths of knowledge acquirement and skills with the aim of improving the life quality through opportunities normally found in friendships and in everyday life situations.

First, the friend-educator must produce conditions of friendship that may seem artificial, as usually in 'project friend' friendships between those with and without disabilities do not naturally occur but must initially be engineered. Waiting for friendships to occur naturally is often not feasible for reasons related to concerns-fears resulting from misinformation and/or inhibitions with respect to disability: "I would not know what to do ... and if something happens ?...". In addition, the 'friend-operator', because he has more experiences and/or is older, because of his professionalism, because of his intervention skills, is more able than a peer to give advice and guide experiences.

In such situations, the artificially produced friendship is an opportunity to provide the person with a disability with useful skills, to be able to initiate and maintain a friendship. At the same time these situations are enhancing research and giving opportunities for educational reflection and analysis.

People, places, and contexts can be a disadvantage or promote the birth of a friendship, so the friend-operator, at the heart of the project, will demonstrate skills that foster and maintain a state of friendship.

Finally the friends will cease to be closely linked to the overall formal intervention, where there is a state of permanent control, but rather will be monitored and evaluated in a relationship that has as a base the "principle of sincerity". The paths are documented (audio - visual - monographs) and represent a rich mine of strategies, and provocative tactics of "improvements" induced to academic achievement (transfers).

The "friendly" relationship becomes genuine between the operator and the person with the disability, and involves a kind of relational privacy, without the interference of parents, therapists, teachers, in a "land" where nothing is expected and anything can happen.

A friend is the one who teaches us by his example, with his confidential recommendations to behave properly on the bus, on the street, in the post office, at the restaurant, A friend is the one who offers us his experience in order to be more successful in work, and in

relationships.

Evaluating the Effectiveness: Autonomies, Socialization and Learning

At the heart of Emotion to Know, the effectiveness of the pedagogical intervention is evaluated in relation to the gradient of mutual involvement and integration of autonomies, socialisation, and learning, that means: any autonomy must provide skills in relation to socialisation and learning, socialisation has to produce skills in the areas of autonomy and learning, and learning must produce skills in the areas of socialisation and autonomy. These three, called "areas of competence", are distinguished only by the need for analysis and to find useful data for research, but should be considered as an integrated, contemporary system. The three areas of competence should be analysed as part of a systematic investigation, in order to be able to relate them to different situations-contexts in which skills and competencies emerge, and in order to identify the actions, the procedures, and the conditions that have favoured them.

In this respect, understanding the ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) is important to Emotion to Know, as an instrument developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to describe and measure health and disability of the population, because of its organisation that allows you to capture, classify, and describe what may occur in association with a condition of health, in order to give further direction to the good praxes.

The ICF is complementary to "Emotion to Know" because it takes account of contextual factors and environmental issues.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE METHOD TO KNOW AND ITS WIDE PRODUCTION OF RESEARCH, AUDIOVISUAL DOCUMENTATION AND PUBLICATIONS

CFR. <http://www.emozionediconoscere.com>

Annex – Principles

Global dimension.

Ensure that the child does not linger on a part without having links or understanding the meanings of the contexts, the relationships, the situations. Often we linger too long on a particular and lose sight of the broader meaning.

Signification.

We must not do activities or exercises without purpose, or that are an end in themselves. In reading and writing, take into account the global dimension and focus always on situations and significance, avoiding teaching individual letters but rather the words, the

short sentences.

Information.

The child must always be clearly informed about what he is going to do, what he is doing, and why he is doing it.

"Can Do"

It is essential to encourage the positive side, the skills that the child already has , in order to start from there to begin new learnings.

Multi-accessibility.

Regarding the teaching of reading and writing, our research has shown that some children prefer starting with reading while others start better with writing. Teachers have to start with the skills that the child shows.

Occasions.

When activities are organised, it has to be taken into account that they may bring forth unforeseen opportunities and sometimes these may be more meaningful, more significant than the one we had planned. We must be prepared to use such occasions, and be ready to change while continuing to follow the general objectives.

Multi-medial dimension.

To be able to communicate contents to the child: speech, writing, images , ... sometimes are not enough if they are separate, so a multimedia message integrates languages, words are supported by images, images support words, sounds, images.

Emotional memory.

Remember that there is also the emotional memory, the affective memory that recalls to mind images, situations, circumstances, scents, sounds, tastes and smells ,..., that scents recall to memory images, situations, words; that words recall to memory smells, contexts, ... The memory evoked through the emotions can be a support for the cognitive development.

Doing.

Active educational paths: touching, moving, going, watching, doing, sizing, cropping, throwing, hitting, running away ,..., are actions that should be included in the education plan and that become reading, writing, remembering, because there has been acting, moving.

Original cognitive style.

Some children remember more, focus more, pay more attention if they are still in the morning rather than in the afternoon, in silence. Others are very attentive and are more willing to memorise if they are in action, if they are moving, if they are chatting, if they listen to music, in the afternoon rather than in the morning . Each has his own individual modalities to learn.

Hetero-chronicity.

From a perspective of a linear development that is more or less homogeneous and uniform, there have to be spread cases that go to observe, monitor, and evaluate development processes in their extreme variability, with asymmetries, instabilities, inconstancies, inconsistencies, discrepancies, heterochronic developments, which seem to have no closely and paradigmatically linked ties to a concept of homogeneity, uniformity of development.

Attention to the contexts, situations, atmospheres, the relational system.

Reflection about the inconstancy of the psycho-biological development of the person has broadened the perspective of analysis even in relational and emotional areas, paying particular attention to experiences, contexts, situations, events, a global system that is extremely complex and variable and opens new theories on intelligence, memory, learning in theoretical, methodological and operational horizons. In this dimension, the ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) results complementary to the Emotion to Know.

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