

Abstracts

Educating to Soft Skills in Undergraduate Medical Education: a Qualitative Study on Reflective Writings of a Students' Sample

by Lucia Zannini, Maria Benedetta Gambacorti-Passerini, Pier Maria Battezzati

Educating to soft skills is crucial in health-care contexts. These competences include communication skills, empathy, problem solving and also attitude to professional collaboration. Among the diverse pedagogical strategies that could be chosen to develop those competences, which include both emotional and cognitive factors, reflective writing seems to have a prominent role.

This paper reports a qualitative explorative study, based on the reflective writings of a group of medical students, which were written during a course focused on soft skills, addressed to 2nd year medical students (University of Milan, San Paolo Teaching Hospital). Writings reported students' first encounter with the patient, in the ward, which was aimed at gathering his/her illness experience.

Among the 101 collected writings, 70 were casually selected and later analyzed by three blinded researchers. In each writing, researchers evaluated the level of reflection (Moon scale) and looked for the presence of specific characteristics (selected from the reflect grid): the perception of patients' emotions and the students' own feelings, the reference to patient's social context, the experienced difficulties in the relationship with the patient and lessons learned about the future medical professional role.

Data analysis showed a quite high level of reflection, slightly greater in females than males. As to patients' gender and age, no associations emerged with students' reflections. Students' writings seem to be mostly focused on their own feelings, while reflection on patients' emotions appears slightly inferior. This underlines the emotional impact of the experience on students and, therefore, the need for a specific pedagogical work focused on listening to their emotions and aimed at elaborating meaning. Patients' social context is the aspect on which students reflect more in depth, while they are less focused on the encountered difficulties and considerations about the medical profession.

Authors conclude that students' response to this training can be considered good; they point out strengths and weaknesses of the educational project,

which could be useful for those who are planning educational activities similar to those reported in this study.

Reflective Practices and Learning in Organizational Research

by Domenico Lipari

The paper suggests some methodological considerations which, on the basis of a recent research on a medium enterprise in Italy, point out the reflexive potential of the ethnographic approach to organizational analysis. The experience of reflexivity is not a spontaneous phenomenon. It represents the intentional effect of the debate among the actors about the report produced by the researcher. Thus it's possible to stimulate the reflexivity of actors also through more or less structured ways of debating a research in which they're implied. From this point of view driven reflexivity is, de facto, a practice of (self) evaluation in so far as the expositive modalities of the results of research - which have to get strong narrative and descriptive features - are able to involve actors and foster their interest and commitment to reflect and learn starting from the discussion of the interpretations (proposed by the researcher) of their practices.

Extraversion, Reflection and Learning: Prevalent Learning Events and Emotions in the Learning Process in Virtual Environment

by Daniela Frison, Anna Dalla Rosa, Anna Serbati, Monica Fedeli, Michelangelo Vianello

The article presents an experience of *simulation-based training* developed in 2014 with students enrolled in the master programme in Management of Educational Services at the University of Padova. The training programme, devoted to the development of competences in the field of human resources management, has been integrated with vLeader, an online simulator designed for the improvement of leadership competences. As part of the evaluation of the programme's effectiveness, a test for measuring personality traits according to the *Big Five* model and a learning journal to support reflection on simulation have been proposed to the students. Data collected with the two tools were crossed through an automated textual analysis of the learning journal contents in order to explore connections

between reflections prompted by learning journals and personality traits of students involved.

The Educational Innovation Through the Cinema: Facilitate the Acquisition of Soft Skills with the Blob

by *Davide Garofalo*

In a society like ours, marked by a *poetic of fragment*, where the man is living increasingly in a *citationist universe* constantly updated, it must reflect on what could be the most effective tools for a better learning and improved provides acquisition of skills.

The instrument on which the author dwells and focus their thoughts is the cinematographic "Blob": a set of tranches, film clips, which linked together speak directly to the learner, accompanying him on a "journey" powered by images capable to lower the ego-defensive control and prepare the mind to "iconic bouncy storm" of screen. Floating images given away from the screen, which can originate in the minds of the observers a signification personal and intimate. This is due to the fact that every story and plot transmitted by tranches of the Blob, is an open work, where the meaning is realized only through the interpretation that gives the recipient and what the observer sees of himself reflected on the screen.

The author argues in his work that one of the added values that this educational tool, which the Blob, is able to give the acquisition of skills, and more generally to the learning paths, is derived precisely from its strong polysemic value. Function able to work the mind of the learner, managing to "weave" the imagination to a more rational mental dimension, being able to create a condition of involvement and essential stimulation to adult learning.

The Use of Linguistic Metaphors to Create Soft Skills in Healthcare Professions

by *Marika D'Oria*

The modern medical education is trying to direct its path towards practices and methodologies that introduce the use of "multimodal metaphors" (narrations, music, cinema, art etc.) to develop and enhance the soft skills of healthcare professionals. However, in health care settings, this vision is not always accepted and there is a strong resistance to the art-based

education. How to create these skills in other ways? Starting from the literature found in PubMed, this article analyses cases, experiences and research that highlight the ability to generate soft skills in healthcare professionals through the reflection on "linguistic metaphors", symbolic elements still little studied but already inherent in clinical practice, sometimes unconsciously. Based on the discovered sources, four groups of skills have been identified: personal soft skills, clinic and social soft skills, organizational soft skills and educative soft skills. The purpose is to promote greater consideration of these issues in the training of students as well as in the continuing education of physicians, and in health organizations.

The Graphic Medicine in the Training and Education of Medical Care Professionals

by Carola Girotti

This paper will explore and investigate the possible links between the graphic narrative, expressed in the form of comics, and the current approaches, methods and tools used in the medical-health care training. The guidelines within which the study moves are related to Graphic Medicine, closely intertwined with Narrative Medicine inside the broader framework of Medical Humanities.

The narrative within its artistic value, represents a worthwhile training experience to enhance sensitivity, creativity, self-awareness and self-acceptance. A particular kind of graphic story is the comic, which is an effective tool/language for the training of medical care professionals in order to favour new learning, improve skills of observation, diagnosis, problem-solving and build empathy.

Graphic stories can be used in medical and health training to allow both students in training and professionals operating in the field, to describe and depict their experiences, in order to explore critically the medical-health world. Graphic medicine is effective as it gives also the opportunity to provide medical students with new methods and approaches to teaching and learning, being a way to re-write the professional and personal self. The use of comics encourages the development of a thoughtful and creative thinking, which will be useful and necessary to medical students to deal with the transition from basic training to the work context.

The comic, therefore, facilitates the construction of soft skills and it represents a space in which care professionals stop and think about their own existence.

This contribution will also provides a view over the American and Italian reality, presenting some experiences of medical and health training based on the used of graphic stories, in order to promote and decline methodologies and paradigms of the graphics medicine in the care practice.

Reflections about Development Perspectives of Social Workers in the Reception Centers for Immigrants in Italy

by Mario Giampaolo

During the years 2014 and 2015, the Mediterranean Sea was the theater of a huge migratory flow. Only in these two years, thousands of people left their countries for a long journey hoping to find a place, in Italy and in Europe, where to live with dignity. From November 2015 to April 2016, the work experience in the reception center for asylum seekers in Conetta, a small village in the province of Venice, allowed to identify some practices of the community (Wenger, 2006; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2007) of social workers that every day are committed to address the challenges of the reception and relate to people with a different culture. Founded at the end of July 2015, the center, one of the largest in the north-east of Italy, hosted more than 500 immigrants from Africa and Asia. The second part of the work identifies, thanks to an initial literature review of institutional and academic sources, three models of competencies needed for the development of this professional involved in the management of migratory flows. Starting from the identified competency models and the experience of participation in the community of social workers, the work suggests some core themes and methodologies for the design of development programs.

Dynamics of Collaborative Learning in On-Line University Teaching

by Paolo Raviolo

The last years have seen a strong increase in the offering of on-line courses by Italian universities (105 courses, about 56.000 students enrolled in 2016), among who teach in universities many have found themselves to re-design their courses for Learning Management Systems (LMS). The requirements for course accreditation and the LMS constrains have given rise to a re-conceptualization of the teaching models in a complex and

multidisciplinary context. The aim of this work is to investigate this scenario assuming that the reconceptualization of university teaching for on-line structures triggered a community of practice (CoP) that animates the search for effective and sustainable models. The first step of the research is a questionnaire to find out the key features of a CoP, the early results seem to confirm the existence of informal learning dynamics, common objectives and an interdisciplinary identity dimension typical of communities of practice, while the borders perception and the relations with the outside looks more nuanced and yet to be explored.

Cohesion, Self-regulation, Self-confidence: the Pedagogical Reflective Methods of Oriental Disciplines

by Manuela Valentini, Alessandro Beretta

This article examines possible pedagogical applications of reflective methods not only in “Evolutive Age”, similar to those used in oriental discipline settings, in educational or other contexts. Through extensive bibliographic research focusing on theoretical sources and empirical data and culminating in an analysis of findings related to the reported psychosocial characteristics under study, the author highlights the importance of rediscovering such disciplines from a free modern perspective, without preconditioning, and with opportunities for a wide range of applications.

Building Partnership with Parents in Child Home Care

by Silvio Premoli

The research proposed in this paper, presents the results of a training workshop which, through reflective thinking instruments, led a group of home care professionals to explore the complex issues related to the cooperation skills development and the involvement in parents that they support daily.

The research, based on the practical research model proposed by Ilse Julkunen (2011) that aims to produce shared knowledge, is placed in the domain of deep changes that the field of services for children and vulnerable families is living. Among the new emerging trends is possible to include the imperative to evaluate the socio-educational practices and do research on them, in order to improve the quality of this practices. The

promotion of training contexts that foster reflexivity is a research and evaluation strategy that simultaneously provides useful knowledge to the improvement of services and has a positive effect on the development of the professionalism.

The path of research-training, here proposed and analyzed, highlights the transformative value of reflective practice in the involved professionals. It leads to the emergence of a very strong similarity between the changes required to operators at this historic juncture and the transformations that the system of child protection requires to parents of vulnerable families in child welfare services. Parents should demonstrate the ability to improve their skills in the interest of their children. For these parents the development of a reflective thinking appears an unavoidable step in their own biography.

The article highlights key skills to promote collaboration between services and parents to realize effective interventions.

Metacognitive Awareness Teaching Tool Kit (MATTK) Reflective Teaching for Critical Thinking and Creativity Development in Classroom

by Leonarda Longo, Alessandra La Marca, Elif Gulbay

Situation awareness has long been recognized as an important variable in teacher performance. Research to date has focused on identifying characteristics of situation awareness for individuals, not on the behaviors and processes associated with situation awareness. The purpose of this review is to delineate and identify characteristics of teacher metacognitive awareness. In addition, implications are discussed and research questions are outlined that target the measurement and training of situation awareness.

The research has examined the positive correlation between the meta cognitive awareness of teachers and the development of two soft skills (critical thinking and creativity) in students.

The study involved 846 volunteer Sicilian teachers. Within this contribution, we present as a research result, the “MAT Tool Kit”, a tool for reflective teaching which consists of six stages and aims at fostering meta cognitive awareness in teachers.

These stages are based on a class-based inquiry approach which stems from the widely used “plan-do-review” cycle.

In the Beginning was the Verb. Educate your Voice to Educate Listening

by Ivano Gamelli

The voice, even before the word of which the vehicle is thus understood in its phonic quality, is the ' "essential tool of the educational relationship. A tool that every teacher and educator constantly uses to explain, to talk, to call, to give and take away the word. And yet, and it is important to emphasize this, almost never in his now multi-year university training, that even includes a variety of disciplines and knowledge, who invited him to take charge of a reflective competence for the task that awaits him (Fabbri, Striano, Melacarne, 2008), it is the least taught to "use it", to recognize it, at least to become aware. It's possible, but above all what it can mean, educate the voice? What they tell us, and how you can meet the items "undisciplined" of the "actors" of any educational occurrence? Learn to use it does not mean much to acquire the techniques, but to acknowledge the way in which we, through the voice, starting from our history we relate (in "resonance") with ourselves, with others and with the environment that we surrounds. The educational awareness and research tracks on the item, which are the subject of this reflection, we recall, in particular, the close connection between the size of the item and that of listening, a connection that contains the form and the emotional-affective game into which it unravels the fate of every educational process.