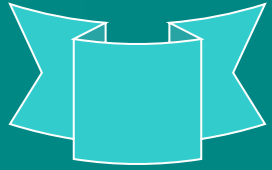


Neurodiversity and Special Needs: how to support a positive learning with students.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Florence, Italy
17 March 2016

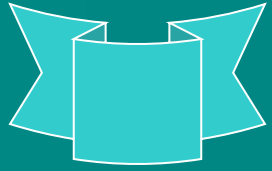
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In the early 1950s,

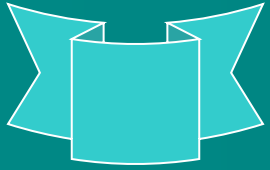
- The first approach to special education and the discussion around the Special Needs was under the view of a *disability discourse*.

Armstrong, T. 2007, *Neurodiversity in the classroom: strength based strategies to help children with special needs succeed in school*, ASCD, Alexandria, VA USA



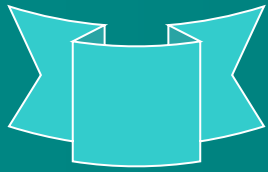
In the early 1950s,

- Many students, in those years, were labelled as special education students as they had difficulties in the classroom, putting in evidence their suffering and not how they can improve in their life.



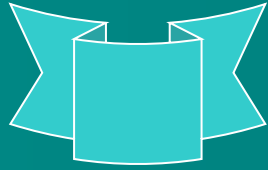
Neurodiversity perspective

- Individuals learn and process information and acquire new skills in different ways
- quality of life[11]
- different learning context.
- integrating learning styles



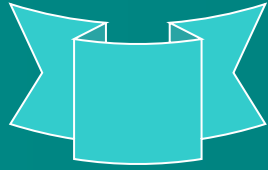
Contents

- It is presented an analysis of the approach adopted as a whole student intervention involving the school.
- A practical guide is presented to support learning:
 - clinical observation
 - organization of school space
 - strategies and methods.



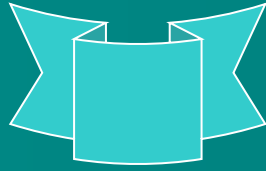
AIMS

- develop better ways of helping students with special needs.
- a positive learning environment
- improve **cognitive functions** and **strengths**
- create **key learning strategies** necessary to support study method.



Neurodiversity

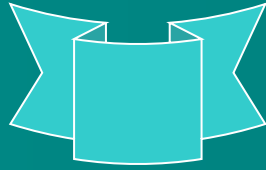
- Neurodiversity is described from the neurology perspective and personhood of people with Special needs.
- Rather than talking about separate disability categories, education can be inspired by an *ecological approach* [1],
- P. Crispiani, Pedagogia Clinica.



Neurodiversity

- Starting from the complex of human behaviour, today it is well applied the concept of neurodiversity because of

BRAIN DIVERSITY

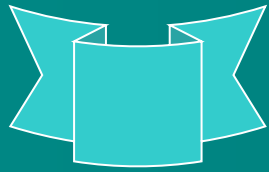


Neurodiversity

- **There is a wide literature on brain-function and how it is related to teaching and learning**

The connections is often between the connections of **biology** and **human brain**

Bransford, B. and Cocking, E., ed. (2000). *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.



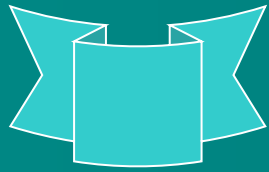
Brain diversity

IN EDUCATION

not what kind of label
could be applied!!!!!!!!!!!!

BUT

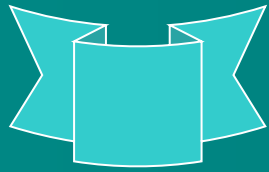
which kind of strengths
have students
with **Special needs in learning.**



Brain diversity

- Neurobiological Approach
- Complex vision of cognitive processes
- The sense of the complexity of the phenomenon.
- The reference to the executive functions and the related cortical system.

Armastrong, T. 2007, *Neurodiversity in the classroom: strength based strategies to helps children with special needs succeed in school*,. ASCD, Alexandria,VA USA



Brain diversity

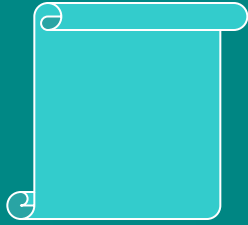
The sense is



**a global assumption
of learning environment respective**



the uniqueness of our brain



TOWARDS A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

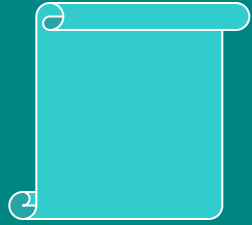
How students learn, process and store knowledge is crucial for teachers



good practices

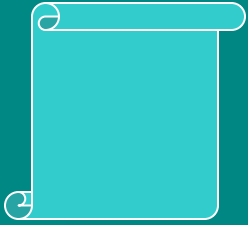
must be applied under

the view of an **ecological approach**



An Ecological Approach in the classroom

A **global vision**
that proceeds
from **body dimension**
to the **psychic one**
to access
to **executive dimension of the person**



Ecological Taking Charge

- a. **Individuality**

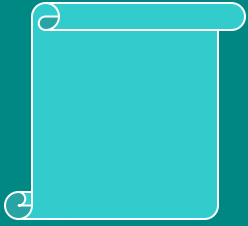
refers to the uniqueness of the person

- b. **Empiricism**

observe from direct experience, close to the individual's life, in an empirical way.

- c. **Ecology**

refers to the whole person (ecology of the first level) and to the different contexts of life (ecology II level) [1]..



Ecological Taking Charge

Different learning styles



need to create



diverse learning experiences

WHAT TO DO

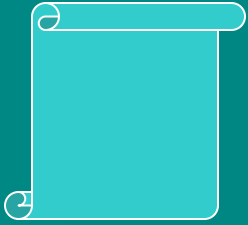
Good practices



applied to all functions of human behaviour:

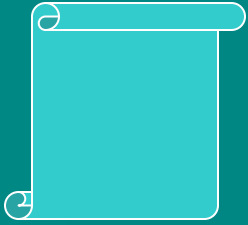


**language,
perception,
motor coordination**



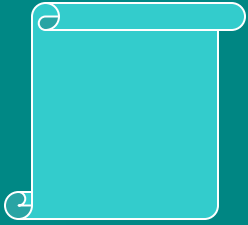
Multiple pathways for learning

- music
 - motor coordination
 - sensory information
 - perception
 - spatial-temporal activities.
-
- [5] Zadina, J.N. (2004). *Brain Research-Based Effectives Strategies to Enhance Learning and Energize Instruction*. A presentation at the U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition Summit Conference.



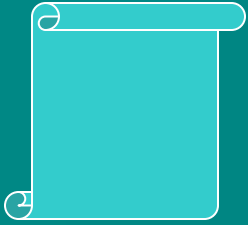
Multiple pathways for learning

- Strategies and methods that differ from standardization.
- neurodiversity suggests that we speak about strengths not simply difficulties



Multiple pathways for learning

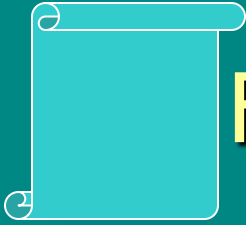
- Numerous differences exist in autistic people, for example
- Under the viewed neurodiversity model, they are often described as individuals who possess a blend of cognitive strengths and weaknesses in the following core domains such as language, Communication, Social Interaction, Sensory Processing (environmental input), Motor Skill Execution.



Multiple pathways for learning

- Academic and professional literature emphasize the strengths, gifts, and talents of people with difference learning.

Crispiani, P. *Qualità di Vita e Integrazione scolastica*, Erickson, 2009.



From educational point of view

- Teachers must understand the theories, continue to study them, reflect upon them, and make appropriate applications for their own students and their own situations[8].

[8] Guild, Pat Burke. (1997). "Where do the Learning Theories Overlap?" *Educational Leadership*. 55: (30).

THANK YOU

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