

# 9. Self-reflection and storytelling. Pedagogical grounds on the connection between Digital storytelling and Self-assessment practices

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## **ABSTRACT**

The work intends to investigate how the narration of self (through the use of Digital Storytelling) can be helpful to activate a metacognitive process on the reflexivity for the educators. The paper is organized in 4 parts, the first described the theoretical framework of the narrative education and reflective and personal storytelling. The second part describes how we organized the workshop in Unisalento, the phases and the syllabus. The third part focuses on the two rubrics we use for the technical assessment and for the self-assessment.

**KEYWORDS:** Narrative education, Self assessment, personal storytelling, rubric, reflexivity

## 1. NARRATIVE TURN AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN EDUCATION

Today like yesterday we are used to “storify” ourselves producing stories so we live surrounded by a narrative network "made of a sea of stories" (Bruner, 2000, p.162). Unlike the past, nowadays we produce multimedia and cross-media stories with the same purpose from the past: a sense for our personal and group identity. The storytelling, even today in new forms, deives the senemaking of subjects and groups (Cassani and Fontana, 2000). The narrative remains one of the ways we think and with which we build our identity.

If storytelling means to construct meaning "then it becomes evident that the skill to construct and understand stories is essential for the construction of our life." Then we understand the importance of Bruner's invitation to institutions and training institutions (schools, educational agencies, universities) that should "feed the narrative ability, develop it, stop giving it for granted [...] Of course, if storytelling must become an tool of the mind capable of creating meaning, it requires we work hard: read it, to do it, to analyze it, to understand its trade, its usefulness, to discuss it "(Bruner, 2000, p.53), in short," to understand how to swim in the sea of stories "(p.162).

In recent years there has been a significant increase of storytelling practices with different purposes, including that the educational-training in institutional contexts. The motivations behind the dissemination of this method follows many logics, first of all the potential of the storytelling as a communication tool. Storytelling is an intrinsic act of humankind, a skill that is acquired very early and which uses different discursive forms (Mc Cabe, Peterson 1991).

In the specific case of the use of the narrative in education, based a strong need of activating a narrative thinking model through the contextualization (narrative anchors) and narrative structuring as well as mechanisms of re-mediation for understanding and transfer of meanings when people use them as a forms of support in multilinear texts they have a learning aim in formal educational contexts (Martín 2011).

What emerges, then, is the importance of a narrative teaching, that consists in the preparation of a set of stimuli, models, techniques that allow the students to achieve significant skills. In the mid-nineties, the narrative turnpoint coincided with the explosion of the internet and the advent of new communication technologies that created the conditions for a storytelling revival. Today narration and new narrative tools require a change in the teaching of narration still too anchored to textual forms of a linear and sequential nature that recall traditional read-write skills. As we all know, the media are not neutral but rather restructure the thinking, they influence it, they modify it. For several decades, in the United States, educational initiatives have been pursuing

the development of narrative and media skills aimed at the production of digital stories. In the early 1990s, the Center for Digital Storytelling, founded by Lambert and Atchley in California, promoted pioneering initiatives aimed at strengthening the social ties of a community. The fields of digital storytelling have expanded over the years. The current reference literature (Lambert 2013, Ohler 2013, Rodríguez Illera & Londoño 2010) considers the DST, realized through the combination of multiple media, stories to share specific objectives (cultural, educational, didactic), give meaning to actions (individual and collective), create a identity (institutional, individual or group) and finally maintain the memory (individual and collective). Hence the emergence of various kinds of DST. Thus, the narrative takes on different forms: from the form of thinking and narrating in an autobiographical dimension (autobiographical approaching), to a device through which to produce value in consumption (narrative promusing), in order to share knowledge and meanings (co-sensemaking). Stories help us build worlds in which we can recognize ourselves and find meaning by participating in the construction of meaning (sense co-makership). Sharing meaning through storytelling contributes to the formation of a community of recognition. Digital storytellers realize their stories in fandom, communities and blogs, in virtual worlds or in social networks and in the massive and cult tribes of global entertainment (Giovagnoli, 2009).

The advent of digital society changes the narrative perspective in Social sciences. The opportunities to meet the storytelling and media have grown exponentially as the development of technological capacity and the increase in chances for the creation, dissemination and distribution of digital format. The latest social and economic changes have produced important modifications on everybody's lifestyle, as the development of ICT and web 2.0 tools have dwelled on people attitude like an evolution of the storytelling model.

With the changing of digital media, even stories change. Today's stories tell us about our relationship with technology. Digital is deeply rooted in storytelling, and in some ways "re-media" (McLuhan, 1976). We have become attentive prosumer able to select and to build with precision choices our increasingly digital "stories" that also tell us about our media diet, our media consumption. Prosumer who are told through the production of increasingly digital stories. The new media call us to invent new ways of conceiving and using our stories, and at the same time, technological platforms are increasingly influencing each other, determining new scenarios and rules for anyone who wants to create and invest in stories (Giovagnoli, 2009).

In this frame we find the case study of DST used as a research methodology able to investigate reflexivity through a crossmedial and personal storytelling technique that uses co-designed tools for self-evaluationassessment constructing interpretative meanings

of reality (Petrucco, De Rossi, 2013). Digital storytelling is not only as a multimedia product or better yet cross-media but is a process of production of media artifacts (photos, video, audio) shared and "participated" by a community of belonging. In the case of the study we will describe we use the DST as narrative documentation of the reflective practices by a community.

In the last two decades, digital narratives have proliferated (Lundby, 2008, Couldry, 2008, Hartley and McWilliams, 2009) to become popular, they have even penetrated educational institutions. Their educational use can be diverse (Robin, 2009): they can serve both to enhance the learning of teachers and students; can be used to instruct in different subjects: mathematics, medicine, science, languages, humanities; can be used to work personal stories from experience, to deepen in some academic subject, to improve the learning of a language, to perform a digital literacy, etc. Finally, following Ohler (2013), Robin (2009), , we affirmed that the educational use of the digital story promotes digital literacy, written literacy, oral literacy, critical thinking, creativity, imagination, the integration of different skills and abilities; It gives meaning to personal experiences and helps to create identity and, in addition, is a very motivating element for students. All this justifies on its own that reflection from the educational world on the digital story as a teaching-learning tool.

### **1.1. A proposal for a DST Lab**

According to Lambert, digital naratives are a genre of self-representation that allows us to create and tell personal stories through short stories in digital format - between 250 and 375 words- composed of textual, visual and sound narration (Lambert, 2009: 19-27 ; 44). This type of narrative is usually personal, autobiographical, where the narrator is the protagonist of the story (Lundby, 2008). Lambert (2009: 24-27) presents us with a typology of personal stories, although he tells us that the categories of stories he presents should not be understood as closed, and that they can even be mixed in many ways. We refer to the construction of personal identity through the stories we tell about ourselves and how we communicate them to others (Rodríguez Illera & Londoño, 2010, p.9). In general, many of these approaches use the technique developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) of Berkeley, with which they have schematized the key elements of personal digital stories and the indications for its production.

Bull and Kajder (2004) explain it in detail, as well as other authors, although there are variations on the steps in which the whole process is divided. However, they agree that they have seven fundamental constituent elements:

1. The point of view of the author-narrator: personal and direct, employing always the first person of the singular when speaking, "I ...", since what is sought is to experience the power of self expression from the experience or personal experience and the author's understanding.

2. Dramatic question: to pose one or several questions to the recipients about what will happen, so that they try to solve them throughout the story; this allows interest and attention to be maintained.

3. Emotional content: involve elements or emotional effects, which make them cry, laugh or evoke some feeling.

4. Own voice: it is also important to provide the tone, the inflection and the timbre of one's own voice to convey meaning and intention of a very personal way.

5. The power of the soundtrack: music and sound effects highlight the story, adding complexity and depth to the narrative.

6. The economy in the details of the story: to present the most relevant in a short time, using various representation resources (photos, texts, voice) that complement each other. Not all of them should "tell" the same, but complement each other to enrich the story.

7. And the rhythm of the narrative: mix rhythms so that interest is maintained and the story becomes dynamic.

To achieve the objectives, we merged the Digital Storytelling Course proposals (Lambert, 2009) and other authors (Moreno (2002), Bull and Kajder (2004), Miller (2008), Robin (2009), Lasica (2006), Ohler (2013) Illera&Londono 2010), and we established the following stages for the realization of the process:

- Stage of approach to personal digital stories: it consists in familiarizing with the possible types of history and with the characteristic elements and, through this adaptation and the visualization of examples or models, to stimulate their memory and their creativity

- Stage of conceptualization and planning: it seeks that the author identify or define the theme, the central conflict of the narrative, exploit the dramatic and mediational structure, and then formally plan the history. In the conceptualization, activities are performed to awaken the memory, sensitivity and natural ability of the person as narrator. In the planning the storyteller begins to structure the story from a previous

investigation and the remembered details on the fact, the literary and audiovisual scripts are prepared (storyboard), suitable materials are identified to capture it, and individual or group exercises are done to allow to control and correct the processes before the production.

- Production stage: collect, select and create the graphic, audiovisual or symbolic elements that are needed for the assembly of the story (photos, drawings, videos, animations, music tracks, sound effects, locutions, etc.)
- Postproduction stage: know or recognize the tools for editing the final story (programs such as Adobe Photoshop, iMovie, Macromedia Fireworks, Microsoft Photo Story, Audacity for sound, among others) and do the assembly or final editing of the story in the computer, adding the effects and transitions.
- Stage of dissemination and final evaluation: share and assess the own history and that of others, and carry out self-assessment exercises that allow identifying the achievements made with the project. After the first stage, the students chose the event on which to tell their story and made a synopsis of it in which they defined the theme, its objectives, the audience they would address, the dramatic question (s) they would try to solve and the resources they would need to recreate it. They received the necessary tutoring to focus the stories as personal and prevent them from making other stories, before move on to production and postproduction.

## **2. THE CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SALENTO**

The case study here represented starts from our field research focused on the reflective practice and, in a particular way, through this analysis we want to analyze the need in the educators training of the operative practice to focus better on the skills, acquired during the triennial degree and the 150 hs, that have to be on system with the self professional growing up.

So, in the Academic Year 2017/18 the research staff conducted a “twentyhours” workshops with 50 students in order to create a 3-5 minute digital stories on the personal representation of their personal, professional and educational choice of being a pedagogue. During the workshop the researchers asks to the educators and future pedagogues to write and represent themselves, using the following suggestion:

*The student wonders on his own history as an educator-pedagogist, reflecting on three fundamental aspects: cognitive, emotional and relational in a space-time arc that represents the 'who I am', 'who I am' and 'who I will be'. The digital storytelling must be represented by a video with a maximum duration of 3 minutes containing 9 transitions (authentic and personal photos/images). It should also contain the voice of the author and a representative background music. Everyone reflects on the moment in which he made the decision to continue his studies in a perspective that will see him as a protagonist of pedagogical actions.*

Here below we summarize the syllabus we use for manage the workshop:

	Content	Participant activities	Facilitator activities	Assessment of learning	Resources
Day 1 – 2 hs	Introduction of the Course	Listen Discuss	Explain purpose of programme – aims & overview	Observation Discussion Time	Programme outline
Day 1 – 1 hs	Introduce the Instrument: Sample digital stories	Watch & Listen to the stories  Discuss impact	Explain the 7 Lambert's elements & the phases process for the DST design through the analysis of the samples	Observation  Discussion	Laptop & projector, sample stories
Day 1 – 2 hs	Storyplanning	Write a 100 words stories - Time limit is 30 minutes.  Students use their artistic, language, and technical skills to create digital stories – the story they want to tell to the community-classroom  Each participant reads out their story to the group, by working collectively, learners are practicing their speaking and negotiating meaning	Instruct the activity: Write a story about your story of educator  Keep time & remind group as time limit approaches  Explain the importance of this stage – creative process  Lead the delivery of the stories & point out how the students start the process of reflection and introduce the items they will find in the rubric they will use for the self assessment  Thank participants for their contributions	Presentation of stories	Microsoft Office: Word
Day 2 – 2 hs	Pre-Production	Select and choose the different media & organize it in the storyboard	Drive & Point out the students in a critical use of technologies (ex: web watching activity)	Design the the stories	Use software for stopryboardi ng: ComicLife, Power Point

Day 2 – 2 hs	Production	<p>Speak and record the script using an accurate English, listen the recording and (if not satisfied of their performance) re-record the story again to perfect it</p> <p>They need to practice their narration and work on their oral production (fluency, intonation, pronunciation). As you need to decide what areas need special attention depending on your learning objectives.</p>	<p>Drive &amp; Point out the students in a critical use of technologies (ex: use of open source software)</p> <p>Justify their choices as an additional speaking/ critical thinking activity</p>	Design the the stories	<p>Use software for the sound-track: Audacity, iMovie</p> <p>Use Software for photo-retouch: Adobe Photoshop</p>
Day 2 – 2 hs	Post - Production	<p>Mix all the elements together following the storyboarding developed in the pre-production phase.</p> <p>This is another venue for learners to unleash their creativity as they mix images, and add cool transitions and fun music to their stories.</p>	<p>Drive &amp; Point out the students in a critical use of technologies (ex: which software is better to...)</p>	Design the the stories	Editing software: iMovie
Day 3 – 2 hs	Distribution & Discussion	<p>Assembly the story</p> <p>Share the story</p> <p>Summarise key learning</p>	<p>Recap key learning via Q&amp;A</p> <p>ideally using a computer projector for other students to watch and enjoy. If you decide to include assessment in this project, we would recommend doing so informally and avoiding commenting on form and structure during or immediately after presentations. In fact, all aspects of this activity are based on a communicative approach where focus is on process as opposed to product.</p> <p>Re check that everyone is happy about their story process &amp; Thank participants for their contributions.</p>	Q&A Evaluations	Laptop&Projector

## 2.1. Brief description of the course

The workshop aims to promote reflective practice around theories and methods for career orientation, self-assessment of students. In this sense, activities will be proposed aimed at learning and implementing DST actions for guidance purposes.



## **Educational goals**

- Basic knowledge of values and orientation theories.
- Knowledge related to theories and use of DST.
- Skills of critical reflexivity.
- It also intends to promote the following transversal skills in parallel:
  - To develop "autonomy" of research understood as the capacity to carry out analyzes using its own resources.
  - Promote "self-confidence" through participation in moments of open dialogue and protected from criticism.
  - Promote "resources research and organize" the work of study and research, identifying objectives and account of time available.
  - Cultivate "precision / attention to detail" in reference to the invitation to participate in teaching and accurately to achieve an effective final result.
  - Making it possible to "learn on an ongoing basis" as a capacity for learning, playing and improving skills and competences.
  - Promote the "ability to achieve objectives" by supporting with exemplary and the reference to personal life stories the significance of study and research, thus increasing the determination to achieve the objectives assigned and, if possible, overcome them.
  - Promote "information management" or invite students to effectively acquire, organize and reformulate data and responses.
  - Promote "initiative" by taking advantage of the possibility of autonomous pedagogical ideas to be organized into projects, also running risks to succeed.
  - To take care of the students' "communication skills", putting them in a position to pass and better (in a clear and concise way) of ideas and information to effectively confront each other.

## 2.2. Designing tools for the assessment and self assessment

### The rubric for the technical assessment

During the workshop we always help our students in their technical construction of DST. And, in order to allow them to better understand the different phase of the design syllabus, before the last sharing moment, the research group give them the following rubric to analyze their production.

So in the intermediate assessment, in order to gather useful information to be able to make an overall balance of the experience told, we use a rubric containing the items, chosen and co-designed during the formal and reflective moments in the classroom. The methodology is totally bottom-up and put the learner in the center of the process. The items are dialogued and shared with the storytellers.

So we designed a rubric, a measurement tool that clearly expresses the quality levels for each criterion considered useful, based on the seven elements of Lambert's Cookbook, starting from minimum levels accepted. In our research the rubric consists of: evaluation criteria, a defined scale and descriptive indicators to differentiate levels of understanding, skill and quality. These definitions guide us to the attribution of comparative score that tries to evaluate the performance of the storytellers based on a set of criteria that they range from a minimum to a maximum level (Danielson C., Hansen P., 1999).

Items	Performance levels			
	Exemplary	Proficient	Needs improvement	Incomplete
Story construction	The narrative plot inserts original and creative elements	The narrative plot is quite original	The narrative plot is clear, but not original	The narrative plot is rather trivial
Storyboard	The storyboard presents a sequence of images that fully corresponds to the story told.	The storyboard presents a sequence of images that corresponds (85% - 95%) to the story told.	The storyboard The storyboard presents a sequence of images that corresponds (70% - 84%) to the story told.	The storyboard presents a sequence of images that does not coincide with the narration
Time	The DST respects the times foreseen by the relevant scientific literature (min 2 minutes - max 5 minutes).	The respect of the times is correct, but it seems a bit 'forced'.	It does not respect the expected times (min 2 minutes - max 5 minutes).	The DST requires a total revision regarding the duration of the presentation.
Images	The choice of images is original and creative and is appropriate to the narrative intent.	The choice of images is appropriate to the narrative intent.	The choice of images is not perfectly suited to the narrative intent	The DST would require a more accurate search of images for the representation of the narration.
Image-audio matching	Perfect correspondence between image scrolling and voice recording.	The correspondence between the image scrolling and the voice recording is offset only in some points of the DST.	Image scrolling and audio recording are not perfectly in line for almost the entire duration of the narration.	The lack of correspondence between the images and the vocal recording does not allow an understanding of the story.
Pacing of the rec	The rhythm is absolutely in line with the times and scenes of the narration.	There is an alternation of rhythms too fast or too slow.	The rhythm does not fit the narrative.	No attempt to keep up the narrative through the rhythm of the voice.

Rec quality	The voice quality is clear and audible throughout the duration of the presentation.	The voice quality is clear and audible over almost the entire duration (85% - 95%) of the presentation.	The quality of the voice is clear and audible over almost the entire duration (70% - 84%) of the presentation.	The quality of the voice requires more care and attention
Soundtrack - Music	All the music is original and perfectly consistent with the narration	Almost all the music is original	The music is not very original, but consistent with the narration	
Soundtrack	The audio has been modulated and enriched with effects chosen appropriately and inserted correctly in the video.	The audio has been modulated and enriched with sound effects chosen appropriately, inserted not always correctly in the video.	Audio has not been enriched with many sound effects, but at least one audio track is present in addition to voice recording.	There are no audio effects that enrich the DST.

### Self assessment for the reflective practice

In the era of acceleration, characterized in the first paragraph, there are dimensions and conditions on which the narrative “habit” is totally absent, for lack of time and moreover for a feeling of shame. Even in the educational professional figures globes, it is rarely considered relevant to re-count the educators or educators’ knowledge, or to talk about self-awareness, or to frame communities of practices and to focus on the ways in which assessment is carried out, or the pedagogical principle of the planning etc., but it could be necessary to ‘storify’ this aspects, to reconstruct the memory and personal path and, moreover, it is necessary to become the own designer of own personal professional identity, so, once understood, interpreted and transformed all this items, they could be related to professional practice also in relation to the framework of institutional transformations (Calvani, 2011). The autobiographical storytelling must be performed as a matter of personal development for educators, oriented to increase their skills for introspective analysis and acquire a greater and better awareness of personal and professional self situation.

The workshop on personal digital narratives lasted for 12 hours in the classroom. The items in the rubric (Annacontini, Paiano, 2019) were widely discussed with all the participants and arose from their needs, shared during the moments of dialogue. Self-assessment is necessary to gain greater awareness of the educational and professional practice, so that they are urged to change attitudes, communication styles, educational-teaching methodologies, to review their valuable function as educators within an effective training process, we have chosen to design a self-assessment rubric in column with them.

For the design of the rubric, we used the procedures and terminology supported by the relevant scientific literature (Allen & Tanner, 2006; Arter & McTighe, 2001; Danielson & Hansen, 1999; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). Educators' working methodology explicitly referred to Collaborative Learning aimed at building

professional communities (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace & Thomas, 2006, Wald & Castleberry, 2000).

It was intended to constitute a working group motivated by a shared vision of learning, able to support and share the commitment and work of each of its members. Through a specific training action, the students were prompted to question themselves on their work, to reflect together on the characteristics that outline the competence of an educators and, therefore, its effectiveness. Throughout the process of constructing the column, educators, future pedagogists, have been asked about the guiding questions, previously prepared, in order to structure their reflection.

Here below, the rubric that results from the co-codedigned process, totally student oriented and aimed to the self-reflection.

Items	Performance level			
	Excellent 4	Good 3	Tolerable 2	Poor 1
Self-awareness	During the exercise of storytelling I was very sure about myself, my role, my position.	During the exercise of storytelling I was sure about myself, my role, my position.	During the exercise of storytelling I was quite sure about myself, my role, my position.	During the exercise of storytelling I was lost myself, I did not recognize my role and my position.
Recognition of emotions	During the exercise of storytelling I was able to recognize every emotions I felt, positive and negative ones.	During the exercise of storytelling I was able to recognize some emotions I felt, positive and negative ones.	During the exercise of storytelling I was able to recognize few emotions I felt, positive and negative ones.	During the exercise of storytelling I was totally disoriented.
Management of emotions	During the exercise of storytelling I was able to manage the emotions I felt and maintain a high performance.	During the exercise of storytelling I was able to manage the emotions I felt and maintain a good performance.	During the exercise of storytelling I was cannot manage all the emotions I felt and maintain a good performance.	During the exercise of storytelling I was totally upset and disoriented.
Neoteny	The exercise of storytelling helped me to realize I strongly believed to improve my personal and professional life.	The exercise of storytelling helped me to realize I believed to improve my personal and professional life.	The exercise of storytelling helped me to realize I not so convinced to improve my personal and professional life.	I could not change or improve nothing.
Locus of control	During the storytelling I was aware to determine all the close links between my personal actions or decisions and the events of my life.	During the storytelling I was quite aware to determine some links between my personal actions or decisions and the events of my life.	During the storytelling I understand that there could be a correlations between my personal actions or decisions and the events of my life.	It is difficult for me to explain the possibility of a link between my action and the events of my life.
Stability	During the storytelling I realized I lead all the past events of my story.	During the storytelling I realized how could I lead all the past events of my story.	During the storytelling I realized that the instability of some events made me uncomfortable and not the lead of my life.	During the storytelling I was not able to face up the instability of the events of my life and this made me confused.
Fail Management	During the storytelling I realized how I was able to manage the fail moment of my life and re-act fully believing that every I could re-start in a positive way.	During the storytelling I realized how I was able to understand the fail moments of my life but I was not able to re-act immediately.	During the storytelling I realized how I was not able to manage the fail moments of my life but I believed that I could re-start in a such way.	It was very difficult for me to understand and manage the fail moment. I felt astonished.

Previsional skills	When I wrote my story I could describe my future choice and I had clear ideas.	When I wrote my story I could describe my future choice but I had no ideas about the way to reach my aims.	When I wrote my story I had some doubts about my future choice and the way to reach my aims.	When I wrote my story I was totally confused about my future choice but I had no ideas about the way to reach my aims.
Intellectualization	When I did the exercise of storytelling I was able to understand and name every troubled situations of my life and	When I did the exercise of storytelling I was able to understand and name some troubled situations of my life.	When I did the exercise of storytelling I was able to understand but not to name every troubled situations of my life.	When I did the exercise of storytelling I was not able to understand and name every troubled situations of my life.
Self efficacy	When I wrote my story, I had the full perception of my skills to perform my role. I fully distinguished between the effectiveness of personal expectations and my outcome of expectations.	When I wrote my story, I had the perception of my skills to perform my role but I did not know if they are the right ones for the effectiveness of personal expectations and my outcome of expectations.	When I wrote my story, I was confused about my skills and the performance in my role, I try to understand the effectiveness of personal expectations and my outcome of expectations	When I wrote my story, I was totally confused about my skills and my performance.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Narrative skill is the basis of the reflexive professional's ability to learn from the educational experience (Schön, 1993, p 301), so, the storytelling is a critical reflection with a triple value: on training, on professional and on personal life. When we, as research team, decided to use the storytelling, in particular the personal digital storytelling, to investigate how the reflective thinking is necessary to build the professional identity, we design these two rubrics: one for the assessment of the product and one for the self assessment. This last is useful to focus on those aspects, related to the professional skills, usually not involved in the professional evaluation.

The key words of the self-assessment process are relationship, interactivity, dialogicity, reflexivity, which, moreover, are common to those of the formative process as they recall the didactic aspects (teaching as mediation: the dialogicity the relationship and the interactivity) and the finality (reflexivity "critical of oneself"), which concerns both the teacher or the territorial operator or educators and both the student and the community in which the training course is realized).

The assessment process in this sense does not measure, does not judge but helps, takes note of how we are and what we do to plan the future. The educational and professional practices of educational operators are necessarily always guided by theoretical reflection on their own experiences that can also lead to personal reflections and to possible innovative proposals that can be the object and result of psychopedagogical-didactic research. The process, according to Varisco (2004), has its own legitimacy and validity when, from evaluative moment and external control becoming a real moment of internal control, that is when the evaluation moment is lived, understood and acted in a way autonomous from every subject involved in the same process.

Therefore, self-assessment means performing an exquisitely metacognitive operation: it means distancing oneself from one's own self, objectifying one's own experience, one's own experience, and looking at it as something other than oneself. Now, in a socio-constructivist approach, or, in more general terms, centered on the student and his learning rather than on the discipline and on his teaching, this metacognitive operation is not optional or secondary, but constitutes an essential part of the construction of knowledge and the skills of the person. On the contrary, if we want to be even more explicit, self-assessment is only one of the phases or of the metacognitive activities within a more global approach. A metacognitive approach implies knowledge and skills along the whole learning path: from planning before the task to monitoring during the task to the real self-assessment after the task. And these operations are so closely related that they can be described as a continuum: in particular, self-assessment does not just mean giving a judgment at the end of an activity or a course of study; this is the opposite of an operation involved in planning, ie the choice of objectives, methodologies, materials and activities before the task; and it continues in monitoring, that is, in the evaluation that the learner makes of how it is proceeding during the task and of the adjustments that are gradually becoming necessary; and continues after the task, when it is necessary to decide how to proceed and how to plan the next steps, both in terms of recovery and in terms of development.

Self-assessment requires the ability to know how to ask questions and independently seek answers in one's professional life; it requires a mentality of research, proper to every intellectual, who never feels fully satisfied with the results achieved. Three factors are the basis of self-assessment: the perception of one's ability, the level of performance and the effort made to reach the goal. Knowing how to evaluate oneself helps educators to identify their skills and the effectiveness of their professional goals and to make the appropriate decisions in order to achieve self-improvement (Danielson, 2007). The ability to self-evaluate is, therefore, an important factor for obtaining positive results in the professional activity; it is part of the educator's metacognitive competence, which involves the awareness of personal variables, of the variables of the task and of the strategies that influence professional performance and which is enhanced by experience.

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