

Focal Group Technique: Overcoming Normality Standards While Comprehending Inclusive Learning

Rosane de F. A. Obregon¹, Tarcisio Vanzin², Vânia R. Ulbricht²

¹Bachelor Interdisciplinary Course in Science and Technology, Federal University of Maranhão, San Luis, Brazil

²Program Graduate Engineering and Knowledge Management, Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianopolis, Brazil

Email: antunesobregon@gmail.com, tvanzin@gmail.com, vulbricht@gmail.com

Received 14 February 2016; accepted 25 March 2016; published 28 March 2016

Copyright © 2016 by authors and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The culture of learning that defines Web Society converges to the construction of a new educational model, featured by the diversity and plurality of individuals. However, the normality standards are socially established accentuate the problem that stigmatizes the universe of deficiency, which relates it to incapacity or ineffectiveness. The objective of this article is to comprehend the learning processes circumscribed to the universe of people with hearing and visual impairments along with people without deficiencies. Therefore, it is utilized by the qualitative research supported by the Focus Group technique. Based on the Situated Cognition Theory and Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy, the participants' perceptions are analyzed in three different focal groups. It is possible to reframe the concept of inclusion by indicating that learning difficulties are not directly connected to the deficiency, but indeed come from the shadow formed in unconsciousness. The inclusive proposals must overcome the paradigm of dominantly rational learning and include wider dimensions that also form the totality of being.

Keywords

Hearing Deficiency, Visual Deficiency, Situated Cognition Theory, Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy

1. Introduction

Among global scale transformations in several aspects, such as cultural, economic and social, new perspectives and challenges emerge in education, and old problems are highlighted against the modifications generated and

How to cite this paper: Obregon, R. de F. A., Vanzin, T., & Ulbricht, V. R. (2016). Focal Group Technique: Overcoming Normality Standards While Comprehending Inclusive Learning. *Creative Education*, 7, 520-532.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2016.73053>

experienced in cyberculture (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015a). Learning and creating knowledge become the most important sources of competitive sustainable advantage in the knowledge economy. Therefore, the search for new learning possibilities is demanded by professionals from several knowledge areas (Barney, 1991; Spender, 1996; Boisot, 1995; Teece, 2000; Barney & Hesterly, 2006).

Thus, it is identified a new pedagogic space still found in early stage, which the characteristics are: the respect to individual rhythm, the contextualization and adaptability of systems, the acquaintanceship and/or knowledge networks. In this direction, researches on pedagogic approaches contribute to the creation of a heterarquical space, which is a space where the relations between individuals allow a grupal and consensual decision taking. These heterarquical relations provide social consciousness featured by tolerance and acquaintanceship with the differences between group members. Only by considering these elements, the individuals will be able to feel as an important and active part of the process, and therefore assume a responsible posture regarding their own learning and the group as a whole (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015a).

Thereby, the inclusive education emerges, which for Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht (2015a) constitutes a permanent challenge, with tendencies that point towards concerning results regarding students with certain types of impairment. To Ferguson, (2008), Kauffman & Hung (2009), the normality standards socially established accentuate the problem that stigmatizes the deficiency universe, relating it to incapacity or ineffectiveness.

The research developed by Dotter (2009) "*Hearing impaired-terminologies, identities and education*", seeks the explanation of questions related to access barriers to acoustic communication with people with hearing deficiency (HD). The researcher looks for answers to causes of discrimination of these individuals in education, professional formation and several other aspects of life. Within a scientific perspective, the answer is found by the author points towards two possibilities, or the influential experts do not have enough knowledge regarding the relation between language and cognition, or are in favor of spoken language. From the social point of view, the audition establishes a normality standard; therefore blocks the social interaction of people with hearing limitations. Even though the person with HD does not present the same competence in communication, it does not allow him, in many cases, competing with people with regular hearing.

In a similar way, Acomm (2009), by investigating the particular case of online systems that use interactive frames, finds the challenges faced by students with visual deficiency (VD). The research indicates that the use of these tools is still a big challenge on the inclusive process of students with VD. Even though there are possibilities of acceptance, the intrinsically graphic nature of these systems still seems to be a significant obstacle for its use by students of this profile. On the other hand, Klaus (2004) highlights that e-learning brings new opportunities for deficient students and overcomes educational barriers.

By amplifying the focus, Behar (2009), Pereira (2007) and Vanzin (2005) ratify that the search for knowledge as a purpose of learning processes constitute an important justification, also viabilized by the contribution that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) might offer to educational contexts. To rescue the centrality of men towards the emergency of web connections virtually provided might as well contribute in a significant way for a full effectuation of the inclusion concept.

Through these aspects the present article is justified, which aims for the comprehension of learning processes that involve people with visual and hearing impairment, as well as people without disabilities.

2. Learning as a Subjective Integration of Being

In order to deepen the conceptual framework of this analysis, it was possible to identify that learning conceptions, circumscribed in the literature review of this study, explore shyly the psychic reality of the subject. The emphasis still lies times on subject-cognitivism, times on the subject as a manifestation of the environment-social interactionism. Therefore, it is stated the predominance of perspectives that comprise the subject in a fragmented and reductionist way, to the detriment of totality and the subjective integration of being (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015b).

Corroborating, Maturana & Varela (1997), by opposing to systemic theories though in agreement with Piaget's view, define live beings as autopoietic machines locked within themselves, which can be disturbed by external effects. Therefore, these disturbances allow internal trades, and create new schemes from the existing ones. However, the authors question the excessive ponderosity that cognitive psychologists give to the concept of mental representation. Thus, it is noticeable the unifying tendency of emotion and cognition in restoring the psychological being (Oliveira, 1992). Therefore, Camargo (2007) states that the objective aspect of knowledge

comes from subjectivity, where the subject is present in all processes of learning and world comprehension, in order to arrange the references by their experiential reality.

By expanding the theoretical support, which will constitute the conceptual anchor for the development and technical analysis of the Focus Group proposed in this study, the Theory of Situated Cognition and the Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy assume importance. Both approaches will allow the convergence in understanding the learning process as a subjective integration of being: single and collective, individual and social, intra and inter-personal.

2.1. The Situated Cognition Theory (SCT)

The reformulation of the theory of meaningful learning, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, carried out by researchers such as Lave & Wenger (1991), suggests a learning model based on the Situated Cognition Theory. Lave (1988) adds concepts to the sociointeractionist perspective when proposing as object of analysis the relations established between people in a situated context. In this conception, learning can not be identified as the product of a single individual, but it emerges from the relationships established in the group, consequently establishing a dialogue between internal and external references, considering the interaction of the individual and the context in which he is inserted as the articulator link of all human actions (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015b). According to this view, cognition corresponds to an individual and social concurrent processing. Therefore, the emphasis is on the process, where the group shares common goals and the involvement and interaction among the pairs constitutes the driving element of learning processes. In addition, the theory signals the mutual recognition of skills between those who know more and those who know less, occurring in the dynamics of the group from the bottom to the center, aiming to achieve the main objective of the practice community.

The theory investigates learning processes, and notes that each person has the ability to learn, even though organizational structures and systems often do not provide sharing and engagement, causing psychological barriers to learning. However, it does not define which psychological aspects act as delimiters in the learning process nor how relationships emerge, also does not explain either how interactions are formed in a deeper, psychological level (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015b). It is possible to infer that the theory identifies the manifest form of relationships, however it does not delve in researching psychological representations that structure and articulate the experiences of individuals and/or groups.

Accordingly, in order to analyze and understand the processes and psychological mechanisms that operate in the interaction between human actors in learning situations, and aiming to transform the theoretical foundation into something more consistent, it was included in this study the contribution of Symbolic Jungian Pedagogy.

2.2. Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy (JSP)

The Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy (JSP) stems from the theory of systemic education, and brings together the cognitive approach of Piaget with deep emotional psychology of unconscious processes proposed by the Jungian view, resulting in the JSP, created by Carlos Amadeu Byington (2003). The author affirms that the psychic reality of the individual must be considered, constituted not only by rational and perceptive, but also by the emotional and intuitive dimension. The emphasis lies on experience, evoking the imagination in order to unite the objective and the subjective in the symbolic dimension to experience learning. Therefore, the focus traditionally focused on abstraction and reason, is transferred to the development of personality and culture, by making learning something playful, emotional, exciting and emergent from the transference loving relationship established between all involved in the educational context (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015a).

Byington (2003), while dealing with learning processes, included the Jungian concept of Individual Self, Pedagogic, Group, Family, Cultural, Institutional, Planetary and Cosmic, among others. According to the author, group or cultural self includes all psychic subjective and objectives contents, working in a group and being coordinated by the individual self-archetypes. Therefore, the different individual experiences are connected with his individual self, operating from its roots, which means that its original and unique action has its own style, its personal feature. The greater the interaction, dialogue, partnership, joint construction, the more strengthening and realization of the group self, since people feel twinned and welcomed in a learning space.

On expanding the theoretical support, Byington (2003) employs the concept of “shadow” created by Jung, although defines it as an archetypal wound that guards non-explicit directions. Thus, the Shadow is related to a

part of the psyche that, for some reason, fixes the symbol, which can be presented as an idea, a word or an image, which in addition to its conventional meaning yet guards unconscious directions. On the other hand, the redesigned symbol can be integrated into consciousness, enhancing the learning process and, consequently, increasing the awareness of being. Thus, it is extremely relevant to understand the threatening aspect of the shadow in the learning process. In many cases, learning problems are symptoms that delates a bad relationship with knowledge, and that, from the JSP's view, can be perceived as symbols that enable the capture of difficulties possibly found (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015a).

The theoretical basis of Byington (2003) includes structuring functions, which can be classified as creative or defensive. The first one expresses and elaborates the symbol in all the individual experiences. The second defensive structuring function, operating in the shadow, is expressed through unappropriated conduct of distraction, inattention and the lack of motivation, being vulnerable to disease, destruction and error, among others. Highlights that creative structuring functions perform the symbolic elaboration productively, which means that through them, the experience is developed properly, avoiding shadowing, which is the basis for future neuroses and consequently creates serious difficulties in learning.

In Byington's understanding (2010), the disabled person differs profoundly from person without disabilities. Emphasizes the need for studies and researches regarding the emotional life of this specific audience, especially how they deal with disabilities. Adds that it is necessary to investigate how the subject with visual impairment (VI) and/or hearing impairment (HI) prepares its experiences—creatively or defensively, the last one being able to generate a secured complex, and thus, form the Shadow. It claims that the complex, and not directly the disability, is what holds on the subject from learning, since many times prejudice and inadequacy of the means of social interaction contribute significantly in the formation of psychological blocks-shadow. From this perspective, it is necessary to work creatively with VI and/or HI, providing the disabled person the review of his limitations, and then, the advance of experiences (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015a).

Following this line, it is proposed to TSC and JSP to guide the analysis of learning processes involving people with visual impairment, hearing impairment and people without disabilities. For so, it was presented the technique of focus group, in order to gather and compile representative elements of the discourse from those involved. The adoption of this technique adheres to the proposal, since it relies on a methodology that originates from paradigmatic principles supported by a special kind of thrill that seeks to clarify the understanding of a given subject matter (Fialho, 2011).

3. Focus Group Technique

According to researches (Gatti, 2005; Kitzinger, 1994; Morgan & Krueger, 1993; Powell & Single, 1996), this technique has been increasingly popular in the context of qualitative approaches in social research. This methodological procedure allows to understand the construction processes of reality, to identify behaviors and attitudes, actions and reactions, as well as knowing the representations, perceptions, prejudices, languages, symbols, beliefs and values, among other features.

3.1. Conceptualization

Powell & Single (1996: p. 449), conceptualize the technique of the focus group as “a group of people selected and assembled by researchers in order to discuss and comment on a topic, which is the object of research, from their personal experience”. In addition, for Kitzinger (1994: p. 103), the group is “focused” because it involves some kind of work or collective action. The emphasis is on the action set in the group and not on the moderator's intervention in the research conduction.

Morgan & Krueger (1993) point out that research with focus group aims mainly, through exchanges carried out in the group, to capture concepts, feelings and experiences, in a way that it would not be possible to make it through other methods, such as a questionnaire or interview. Accordingly, the focus group allows the emergence of a multiple points of view and emotional processes, provided by the created context, offering a good amount of information in a shorter period of time (Kitzinger, 1994; Gatti, 2005).

According to the referenced authors, focus groups are particularly useful when there is the desire of exploring the degree of consensus regarding a certain topic, since the technique provides a full exposition of differences and divergences, oppositions and contradictions, and bringing out more complex answers in order to verify the logic or representations that lead to the answer. Besides helping to obtain different perspectives on a same theme,

it provides the understanding of shared ideas. However, for being a data collection technique, which is produced by the interactive dynamics of a group of people and a facilitator, Gatti (2005) warns that the use of it requires following certain methodological steps from the subjective and plural contribution of the participants, as well as the domain of technical planning of the area about to be developed by the researcher.

3.2. Technique's Objective

To identify learning characteristics in people with visual impairment, hearing impairment and people without disabilities.

3.3. Methodological Procedure

The technique application adopts the procedure of three (3) focus groups in the same investigation, which means a group of people with visual impairment, another group of people with hearing impairment, and a group of people without disabilities. This formation is justified in order to meet the research's scope, as well as for it is considered the most common way to cover the various factors that may be involved in the issue about to be examined. Mainly, the adoption of more than one group allows to identify the differences within perspectives, representations and experiences of different groups of people, including and comprehending factors that influence them, the reasons why certain positions were taken and the implicit motivations (Gatti, 2005; Morgan, 2005).

3.3.1. Research Instrument

The mediating instrument of the technique was based on a script of questions (Table 1), in order to assist the researcher during the procedure. The questions were classified in two levels: individual, having as theoretical basis the approach of Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy (JSP), and the group level proposed according to which advocates the Theory of Situated Cognition (TSC), in a total of twenty-one (21) questions:

Individual level—Initially, questions 1 and 2 prioritizes free expression. Questions 3, 4, and 5 aim to identify the learning process from the perspective of the respondent. In order to deepen this level of analysis, the contribution of JSP can be found in questions 6 to 12.

Group level—Questions 13 to 21 correspond to the group level. They were prepared from the SCT contribution, which is, the relations established in the group.

The mediating question of the debate was divided into three main topics: the role of disability (questions 1 and 2); learning processes (questions 3 - 12); group perspective (questions 13 - 21). It should be noted that questions 1 and 2 are specific to the groups of people with VI and HI.

3.3.2. Selection of Participants

The selection of participants was defined according to the following criteria: the study problem; common characteristics of the participants that qualify them for interactive work and collection of discursive material; experience with the proposed theme anchored in everyday experiences (Gatti, 2005). Following these criteria, the voluntary adhesion of the participants composed the following groups (Table 2).

The participants' socio-demographic profile is characterized by people aged between 25 and 50 years, 60% being female and 40% male. The socio-economic conditions vary, which circumscribes a pattern between middle and lower classes and presenting adequate housing and working conditions. It is possible to infer that the health conditions of the groups present a favorable environment of interaction and interpersonal communication

3.3.3. Results

According to the profile of each group, the technique of focus group was conducted at three different times, providing opportunities to cover various conditions that may be relevant and involved with the present topic. From the participants' consent, the audio was recorded during the technique application. Accordingly, it presents briefly the results, initially describing the most significant elements that emerged in each group, respectively. Next, based on the audio description and the observations made, the work's synthesis is presented. In sequence, the correlations are established with the theoretical support: Theory of Situated Cognition (TSC) and Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy (JSP).

Learning Processes (answers to questions 3 to 12)—According to the participants of this group, in order to

Table 1. Questions script-focus group technique.

1. Initially, comment briefly on the role that disability has in your life:
2. Which are the barriers imposed by the disability?
3. Faced with a new content, which ways do you use in order to assimilate such content?
4. How do you overcome a learning disability?
5. Do you think that disability prevents you from learning?
6. Which one of the two ways do you consider the most appropriate to learn a new content?
 - a) The reading and interpretation of a text is enough.
 - b) The experience, the close relationship with the object of study is very important.
7. How does the imagination help you to know people and objects?
8. In which situations do you consider the tactile perception something essential for your learning?
9. Do you consider feeling something important during your learning process? Comment below:
10. Does your emotional state influence on your willingness to learn? Such as?
11. Imagine a situation where you find yourself lost, without knowing which course to take. What would your reaction be? How would you solve the problem?
12. In unusual situations, do you perceive intuitive actions in your decision-making?
13. Do you prefer learning in groups or alone? Justify your answer.
14. In your opinion, the group learning helps or hinders the learning process? Why?
15. In your understanding, are the cases that require more thinking from you facilitated by the affection level set with other people or not? Comment below:
16. For you, how does it feel to be part of a group? And when the group excludes you, what's your feeling and how does such conduct affect you?
17. How do you feel other people's reaction regarding your disability?
18. In a new situation group, do you interact easily or do you depend on a few factors? Which ones?
19. Which are the people's attitudes you find more difficult to interact with?
20. What do you consider the most important when starting a group work?
21. Do you prefer to relate (form a team) with people who have the same disability as you, or would you rather non-disabled people? Why?

Table 2. Focus groups.

| Groups | Formation | Origin | Number of Participants |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|
| a) People without disabilities | Post-Graduation (Masters/Doctorate students) | Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina/UFSC | 09 |
| b) People with visual impairment | Post-Graduation (Especialization), Graduation | Associação de Cegos de Integração Catarinense/ACIC | 08 |
| c) People with hearing impairment | Graduation, High School | Associação de Surdos/FLN/SC | 10 |
| TOTAL | | | 27 |

learn new content, it is necessary a previous knowledge and certain requirements.

Learning Processes (answers to questions 3 to 12)—According to the participants of this group, in order to learn new content, it is necessary a previous knowledge and certain requirements.

a) People without disabilities

Learning Processes (answers to questions 3 to 12)—According to the participants of this group, in order to learn new content, it is necessary a previous knowledge and certain requirements. The contents must be contextualized, being necessary to know the usefulness of what will be known and learnt about, understanding the difference that part will add to people's lives. To explore various features is vital, as well as the search for other learning sources, such as the Internet. All participants were unanimous in affirming that communication via web

is a quick and appropriate way to settle doubts more expeditiously. However, in cases of more questions regarding a specific topic, or in order to resolve a specific situation, they seek for a more experienced person for assistance. To the group, learning is related to cognitive skills when it comes to solving problems and creating knowledge. On the other hand, they point out that learning difficulties are linked to an emotion-reason relation, since involvement and motivation are necessary to learn significantly, avoiding oblivion. The participants said that, even though the learning process is relatively rational, there is no way not to get emotionally involved. Considering the ludic aspect, and also the resources used to support and facilitate the process. The participants settled that doubt, uncertainty, or the lack of understanding of a subject result in anguish and emotional distress that affect the understanding of new content. Regarding the intuitive ability, they have presented an ambiguous speech. For some, intuition was a synonym of insight that aids learning, as well as life in general. To others, intuition and insight are different terms; the intuitive ability is fallible and unreliable, while insight is settled as a more intellectual capacity and connected to reason. Similarly, the group had many questions in pointing imagination as an element to assist learning, by saying that the imaginative capacity is not very relevant in this process.

Group perspective (answers to questions 13 to 21)—The relationship with others is considered a determining factor in the learning process and the overcome of difficulties. For the group, the necessity of creating emotional relations, proximity, responsiveness, respect between members and the welcoming received make a more pleasant and stimulating learning. On the other hand, they claim that the formality and the unknown intimidate them, and create a barrier that keeps them apart from the group. They commented that in these situations, they try to approach people with similar profiles, in order to break the shyness and isolation, but the purpose is not always achieved. When asked about the possibility of participation of people with VI or HI to compose the working team, there were some difficulties on interacting with them. They justified as if they would be embarrassed, without knowing how to act and what to do, feeling helplessness. Many affirm to feel limited about the establishment of an effective communication with the person with HI with the sign language being unknown. On the other hand, they claim that this estrangement could be minimized through a virtual environment, in which differences could be cancelled. However, it is demanding the need for seeing, talking and feeling the presence of others, adding that web interaction should be enhanced by synchronous tools that provide the strength and closeness of the group.

b) People with Visual Impairment (VI)

The role of disability (answers regarding questions 1 and 2)—The initial debate settled the family dimension as the key element regarding training and personal development. Among eight (8) members of the group, seven (7) signaled that the support, guidance and encouragement from the family drove them into the achievement of their dreams, by greatly assisting into the learning process. The family's positive attitude made them realize that disability did not prevent them from living and achieving goals that once seemed impossible. People always acted naturally and encouraged the studies. However, for one (1) of the participants, the family environment has generated deep barriers and issues bigger than that disability itself, causing difficulties that had a negative impact in his school performance. In childhood, there was this real fear regarding school, being target of laughing-stock and mockery among colleagues and treated with an extremely hostile manner by family and other people. Although he (she) has married and had children, still cannot overcome his (her) own prejudice, still fighting to overcome such records that provide him from interacting in a more healthy and equitable manner. Added that tries to disguise the disability and that, in case he (she) needs some information on the street, prefers to remain silent than claiming for help, in order to avoid people from realizing he (she) is blind. On the other hand, the group was unanimous in revealing that the time to go to school was the most difficult and embarrassing. For them, people have a high level of ignorance regarding disabilities. Prejudice is strong; they are seen as dependent and incapable poor people. They added that: "Much depends on the person itself on drawing the lines and proving that he can".

Learning Processes (answers regarding questions 3 to 12)—An interesting aspect regarding the beginning of the learning process is inserted on the contributions of those people that were blind from birth. In the initial stage of childhood, they perceived themselves as normal people and did not identify anything wrong, however this natural state got lost as they were growing. Justified that when they were children, played, ran, jumped, fell and got up like any other child. Highlighted that they acted as if they could see, although with the environment's influence also came fear, insecurity, limitations, and these factors were restricting their actions and the ability to learn. One participant pointed out that only in adulthood he could actually break free from part of the parental

overprotection, even though still notices the family's concern and vigilance. To deepen the discussion regarding learning issues, the participants recognized that the motivational aspect guides the involvement and success in learning. They claim that the greatest difficulty imposed by blindness is related to abstract contents, since the others subjects are facilitated by touch, hearing and imagination. The barriers are considered normal in a way, although they recognize that the assistance of another person is essential. They enjoy reading, and prefer richer texts that stimulate their curiosity and free expression; and reject dense texts and repetitive activities. They highlighted that, even though it does not fully attend to their access and usability needs, the Internet constitutes an important vehicle for searching and knowing the world. On the other hand, the unanimity of the group agreed with the unpreparedness of teachers, which caused serious disorders and problems for inclusion and participation in school activities. Whereas the emotional state is relevant when it comes to learning, the prejudice imposed by teachers and classmates made them feel like strangers within that context, discouraged them and created a barrier that seemed insurmountable. Once again claimed that the family has fulfilled an important role in their lives, by helping and encouraging them to overcome their limitations, and to believe in their ability of learning successfully, since they all have a graduation degree and several specialization courses. Commenting on the relationship between emotion and reason, all participants emphasized that it is not possible to have a satisfactory learning without emotion and, above all, without feeling motivated. The contributions highlighted the cognitive skills of the person with VI, which is in no way compromised by blindness. Said that they learn normally, as the "normals" do. They noted that there are other ways that help them connecting and interacting with life, such as hearing, touching, the intuitions, emotions, reasoning. Following this approach, they stated that the person with VI has a well-developed intuitive capacity, which guides and assists them daily. Intuition is compared to an inner voice to guides them and that is most likely correct. In addition, the group perceives a presence around, an energy that signals the limits of space, allowing them to feel the presence of people, objects and obstacles. This ability, located by experts in the kinesthetic memory area, helps on a daily basis, making mobility a little safer. They recognize that this vibrational field is also perceived at unknown places. In addition to these issues, imagination was settled as an essential and vital element in the learning process of the person with VI. Claimed to use the imaginative capacity to build, structure and consolidate concepts and contents, especially the abstract-colors, for example.

Group perspective (answers regarding questions 13 to 21)—Even though they recognize that teamwork is important, the participants prefer to study individually. However, seemed receptive and interested on participating of an online course with the objective of mitigating the strangeness of the people towards disabilities. They said they would not feel any kind of embarrassment when placed in a group with other people with or without disabilities, especially in a virtual environment. For the participants, it does not matter if people have a disability or not, since what matters is the relationship and friendship. Participants indicate the Blind Association as an example of teamwork, in which they feel united and welcomed by all professionals and others around. The support found in association was vital for them to perceive themselves as capable people with equal rights to all other citizens. In addition, agreed that in a virtual environment, relationships can flow without major contrasts, noting that, with the advent of technologies, a person's life with VI has dramatically changed for the better.

c) People with Hearing Impairment (HI)

The role of disability (answers to questions 1 and 2)—The reports emphasize that the family showed, for some participants, a loving and accepting attitude, and contributed positively to their training and inclusion in society.

However, for the vast majority of participants, the family has created a barrier between them and the context and compromised significantly their social performance and thus school. The reports highlight a strong prejudice coming from family, school and society itself towards their disability. The speech remained focused on the listeners' difficulty of understanding, which failed on realizing and accepting that people with HI are able to have a completely normal life. In the several reports, they expressed that would like to prove to listeners that they are able to learn and develop skills in life. In this context, they claim that consequently end up creating a world apart, defined by deaf culture. Reaffirm that their identities are often affected by people's reactions, and especially by the way his own family and the school deals with the impairment. They add that the loss of social identity constitutes a strong barrier in overcoming these limitations. They realize that their skills diminish overtime, which affects several functions that were once before in full operation.

Learning processes (answers to questions 3 to 12)—Similarly, this group finds the motivational aspect very important during the learning process. However, according to their individual experiences, it is not always pos-

sible to feel motivated, having in mind the severe difficulties caused by the deficiency and people's prejudice. The group related disability as something extremely difficult and complicated in their lives, especially for learning. A relevant aspect is the communication, which results in barriers created by listeners that minimize the inclusive potential of people with HI. The group questioned a lot about which form of communication would be used—oralism or sign language. Sign language is had as the most appropriate and important language that provides inclusion, although there are campaigns and even schools defend oralism, which causes difficulties in understanding the contents and completing the tasks and activities proposed, which are effective and interesting only for listeners. The complaint was significant regarding the prejudice and lack of preparation of educational professionals. According to some participants, the understanding and acceptance from people is crucial for their learning. Participants reported feeling very afraid regarding courses proposals, as they consider the content too heavy, especially Portuguese. Therefore they give up, lose the motivation to continue their studies. They added that the school experiences were frustrating due to successive failures, even though they consider themselves intelligent people.

Group perspective (answers to questions 13 to 21)—When asked about the possibility of participation of people with VI and non-disabled people to compose a team, they proved to be receptive and fully agreed with the possibility. Justified that even though they often feel a certain prejudice for people without disabilities, they think that would be a way of proving that they are able to interact and establish a proper communication. In addition, even not using Internet as much, they agreed that a virtual environment may assist in learning and acceptance of people with HI.

3.4. Analysis and Synthesis

As a research technique, the focus group has its constitution and development built on the problem to be researched. Thus, this technique is not characterized as a collective interview, but as a proposal for effective exchange among the participants. In turn, allows the emergence of reports, ideas and opinions, featuring an open and interactive discussion and, above all, of exploratory nature. In this approach, the mediating instrument of the technique was an elaborated script that guides and stimulates the debate, and consequently enables the analysis of the participants' perceptions. The questions were presented flexibly and randomly, so the adjustments could be made according to the interactive process achieved, without missing the research's objective. It is possible to infer that relations were warmed by dialogue and sharing, which demonstrates the self-management potential of the groups. Moreover, it is necessary to observe that the focal group, even though considered a rich technique for capturing perceptions, forms of language, comments, and specific reports, is a procedure that has limitations in terms of certain generalizations, when it comes to a small number of participants. In addition, the focus group formed by people with HI was committed in a certain way considering that: 1) the communication being mediated by an interpreter in sign language compromised the technique's development; 2) the group with ten (10) participants made the process extremely slow; 3) the participants' level of training compromised the debate's depth, making it possible to identify perceptual and experiential contents in a restricted way impregnated by complaints and affective gaps, unlike the two other groups.

Considering the theoretical foundation, the observations and audio description, it was possible to develop an overview regarding the most representative elements identified in the analysis of the results, accordingly.

Considering questions 1 and 2, confined to groups of people with VI and/or HI, it was possible to perceive the need of reporting the positive and/or negative experiences related to the family context. From the perspective of Jungian Symbolic Pedagogy (JSP), such reports, impregnated by standards times defensive or creative, indicate how the relationship between the subject and the social environment have been prepared in self level, apart from the effects of these relationships in the psychic reality and the formation of the existential self of a disabled person. The experience from one of the participants with VI allowed the identification of the shadow's presence in his psyche/self arising from the fixation of complexes related to the rejection provoked by family, school and his social context. Defensive behavioral characteristics that acted throughout life were evident, which compromised the full development of his capacities. On the other hand, all other participants showed a more harmonious behaviour with good memories and positive records of their experiential elaborations. Advancing through the concepts of JSP, it is inferred that disability, when elaborated creatively by the individual and other people composing the context, brings out a relational pattern that enhances the creative elaborations on the individual Self and, consequently, in the group self. On the other hand, when the elaboration of deficiency occurs defensively,

which means full filled with deprivations, guilt and prejudice, it compromises and imprisons the individual, forming a wound in his psyche—the shadow, affecting intra and interpersonal relationships. The realization of this technique allows inferring that overcoming or not the limitations imposed by the disability occurs in a level of symbolic elaboration in the Self, being affected by the experiences and the context in which the person is inserted. Thus, it ratifies Byington's speech (2010), who states that the disabled person is psychologically very different, requiring a more careful look at certain aspects of his psyche.

When asked about their preference regarding the formation of groups with people who have the same disability or people without disabilities, participants with VI and HI seemed receptive and enthusiastic about the idea of partnership with these groups. On the other hand, the group of non-disabled people were afraid with the possibility. It is possible to infer that such behaviour may imply directly in the process of sharing and group interaction, compromising the learning of everyone involved in a situated social context. According to Furlanetto (2010), the process of learning and knowledge creation emerges from the movement generated by conscious and unconscious contents that involve a symbol, producing an energetic charge, which elaboration can provide learning or not. In this approach, it is possible to say that prejudiced attitudes affect the individual as well as the whole group, being able to produce defensive attitudes and compromise the achievement of educational goals.

According to the JSP, the forming shadow the psyche comes from the circumstantial Shadow, and if the experience that led to the fixation is not reviewed, the shadow could become cronified. This affirmative was possible through the groups' speeches that revealed the cronified shadow in many of the HI's cases. Therefore, it is possible to infer that, for the group Self formation, the interaction and involvement with each other is necessary. At this level of analysis, it is noted the relevance of the Theory of Situated Cognition's principles (TCS), which highlights that social interaction and collaboration are critical components for learning. The multiple perspectives from an individual to see the world around are mainly shaped by the relationships established with the social environment (situated). In addition, through the lens of JSP, the self's social dimensions show the interdependence network between everyone involved in the situated context, where relationships are modeled and activated in individual self level, and consequently shared with the group through established exchange links. As an example of group identity, it is quoted people with HI who had an extremely defensive group behavior loaded with intense emotional complaints, making evident the shadow pairing on their individual and group psychic reality.

Following, the topic related to learning indicated that the VI or HI does not imply on learning impossibility. In opposition, the deficiency may bring innovative ways of learning and seeing the world. Unlike people without disabilities, the loss of hearing or vision, when creatively prepared, might lead to discoveries of other functions or channels that may act compensatorily, such as intuition, imagination, feeling, touch and hearing, among others. Thus, it appears that certain individual Self constituent dimensions prove to be more activated than others, although, according to JSP, all dimensions are affected at different levels and forms, since all are interdependent and participants in the learning process. It indicates that, in order to build the Self knowledge, concept from JSP and similarly the group learning, in the view of SCT, it is necessary to overcome the paradigm of predominantly rational learning, including broader dimensions that form the totality of being. Therefore, pedagogical proposals based only on the individual appear to be limited. From the analysis of the focus groups, it is concluded that the sharing process emerges based on social relations, which must be anchored in common goals, consequently increasing learning and the full development of the individuals.

The contributions reaffirm the importance of contextualization for learning new contents, especially during the practical application. The groups' statement that the emotional state interferes on learning, where the motivation or apathy helps or undermines the process, adheres to the concept of JSP regarding the creative or defensive elaboration, indicating dimensions that operate during the experiential learning. The participants of the technique signaled that doubt, uncertainty or lack of understanding regarding a certain issue generates anguish and emotional distress, which affects the understanding of new contents. Byington (2003) expands the understanding of this process, proposing that learning takes place in the psychic reality's totality, involves several dimensions and a multiplicity of complex and deeper relationships, including conscious and unconscious aspects, individual and collective.

Another important aspect regarding the search for understanding learning processes was the report of people with VI, which highlighted the intuition as enhancer element for intra and interpersonal interactions. On the other hand, it was not possible to gather stronger evidences on the topic of intuition in groups formed by people with HI and those without disabilities. The contributions apparently are fragile and ambiguous, which appears to

be a capacity that only a few people have. However, for people with VI, intuition is considered an important capacity, intensely perceived during daily activities. In addition, and advancing throughout this more subtle and complex field, this same group identifies the existence of a vibrational field around them, which helps them to understand and feel the world around them. This fact confirms the psyche's totalizer field, or the individual Self defended by JSP. Approaching the analysis of SCT that defends the existence of a thin barrier, almost imperceptible, which defines the actions in a practice community. This barrier is perceived by all members of the group and signals the relational space where the activities are circumscribed. Therefore, the intuition identified as a totalizer field perceived by people with VI corroborates the investigated subject, which confirms that learning involves other dimensions beyond cognitive objective and rational aspects.

Following this, the technique allowed to observe behavioral patterns that coordinate the participants' relationships in each specific group. As an example, it is quoted the group of people with HI that demonstrated a strong group identity, formed by the identification among the pairs, and based on the problems shared by the deficiency. A pattern was noticed with intense matriarchal characteristics, expressed by defensive postures—dependence, emotion, need, weakness, impotence, revealing the individual and group shadow that was fed and somehow had a collective symbiosis effect. The observation is aligned with the concepts of JSP, which defends the assumption of a totalizer field of psychic conscious and unconscious reactions in the interactions that occur in the group Self. In addition, points to the dynamics of introjection and projection, representing the exchange that occurs between the social dimensions of self, known as the phenomenon of pedagogical transfer that influences learning processes.

Therefore, the analysis is anchored on the SCT, which identifies that the group is oriented and based on common grounds, featuring a community in which disability identifies and brings members together, in a universe of peculiar experiences. To confirm this analysis through the contribution of the participants with HI, it was possible to observe that the lack of support to overcome language and communication barriers affect their learning performance and compromises the interaction with the social context, which has a negative impact on their development. This information is very important because it confirms the need for interaction during the formation of the group self. Therefore, educational processes must prioritize communication channels in order to support and facilitate social relations. In Freire's view, there must be a liberating form of education: plural and intense environment fulfilled with articulations, which releases limitations that apparently prevent them from learning (Obregon, Vanzin, & Ulbricht, 2015a). According to Byington (2010), the disability defines a profoundly different profile, but does not characterize the inability of these people to learn, since the profound differences that circumscribe the individual's psyche are properly noticed. Therefore, the inclusion cannot be based on the principle of disability, but in the way people with disabilities are perceived entirety.

3.5. Studies Contributions

The performance of the technique helped the establishment of many concepts proposed in this study. The dialectic between theory and practice ratified in many ways the conceptual convergence between SCT and JSP. In addition, the technique allowed the reinterpretation of the inclusion concept by demystifying certain patriarchal models based on the normal range, excluding those with visual and/or hearing impairment from equitable citizenship opportunities. Similarly, it was possible to observe that the matriarchal patterns characterized by protectionist postures increase exclusion, in a way to elect them as unprotected, vulnerable and needy people.

These affirmatives indicate that the path to inclusive proposals should consider the learning processes as an environment of integration that favours the emergence of a totalizer field of sustainable and dynamic interchangeable dialogical relations. From this perspective, the inclusion consists on equal opportunities for people, regardless of individual profiles. An extremely important aspect in the advance of pedagogical approaches is related to learning disabilities, both of people with and without physical disabilities. The resulting key element of the analysis and synthesis indicates that learning difficulties are not directly linked to disability, but they come from the shadow unconsciously formed, which the cause can be fixed in their psyche, which means in the individual self.

Although the methodological procedure has allowed interesting reflections regarding singular universes and, at the same time, known by the individuals related to research, it is possible to infer that the group of ten (10) people with hearing impairment somehow compromised the interactive dynamics of the debate, considering the significant psychological shadow that involved the group and the need of support from a sign language interpreter. Even though a further deepening on the subject was not possible, it enabled the theoretical approach in

overcoming conceptual gaps that are still present in the education of deaf people.

In order to bundle this item, it was noted that the observations made within different focus groups allowed the analysis of the subject matter. It is possible to infer a significant contribution to overcome normal ranges and understand inclusive learning.

4. Conclusion

It is concluded that the development of the technique is adequate on clarifying and confirming the theoretical concepts advocated on this theoretical approach. It is possible to infer that the defence and creativity mechanisms are two extremely relevant concepts when it comes to learning processes. Similarly, the shadow concept previously quoted shows its importance. Therefore, the need of reviewing teaching methodologies emerges, in order to attend singularities and individual profiles. For such, it is necessary to exclude conceptions based on exclusive paradigms, based on normal standards.

Despite of being restricted to three groups, this technique allows the analysis by illuminating still grayish areas that permeate learning processes. However, the study confirms that learning involves other dimensions beyond cognitive, objective and rational aspects. This affirmative needs further strengthening in future researches.

References

- Acomm, A. (2009). Tutor, Instant Messaging and Whiteboard Tool. <http://www.atutor.ca/acomm/>
- Barney, J. B. (1991). Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17, 99-120.
- Barney, J. B., & Hesterly, W. S. (2006) *Strategic Management and Competitive Advantage: Concepts and Cases*. Pearson: Harlow. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700108>
- Behar, P. A. (2009). *Constructing Pedagogical Models for E-Learning*. Porto Alegre: Artmed.
- Byington, C. A. (2010). Interview Made in São Paulo/SP, September.
- Byington, C. A. (2003). *The Loving Construction of Knowledge: The Foundation and Purpose of Jungian Symbolic Education*. São Paulo: Religare
- Boisot, M. H. (1995). *Information Space: Framework for Learning in Organizations: Institutions and Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Camargo, D. (2007). *Jung and Morin: Critique of the Modern Subject and Education* (Title Adapted). São Paulo: Xamã.
- Dotter, F. (2009). Hearing Impaired—Terminologies, Identities and Education. *SWS-Rundschau*, 49, 347-368.
- Ferguson, D. L. (2008). International Trends in Inclusive Education: The Continuing Challenge to Teach Each One and Everyone. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 23, 109-120. www.scopus.com/http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08856250801946236
- Fialho, F. A. P. (2011). *Psychology of Mental Activities: Introduction to Cognitive Sciences* (Title Adapted). Florianópolis: Editora Insular.
- Gatti, B. A. (2005) *Focus Group in Research in Social and Human Sciences* (Title Adapted). Brasília: Líber Livro Editora.
- Kauffman, J. M., & Hung, L.Y. (2009). Special Education for Intellectual Disability: Current Trends and Perspectives. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 22, 452-456. www.scopus.com/http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/yco.0b013e32832eb5c3
- Klaus, J. (2004). Living, Teaching and Learning at Any Time and at Any Place. E-Learning-Opportunities and Barriers for Visually Impaired Students. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science (Including Subseries Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence and Lecture Notes in Bioinformatics)*, 3118, 151-156. www.scopus.com
- Kitzinger, J. (1994). The Methodology of Focus Groups: The Importance of Interaction between Research Participants. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 16, 103-121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.ep11347023>
- Lave, J. (1988). *Cognition in Practice: Mind, Mathematics, and Culture in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511609268>
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>
- Maturana, H. R., & Varela, F. (1997). *Of Machines and Living Creatures. Autopoiesis, Organization of Living* (Title adapted). Porto Alegre: ArtesMédicas.
- Morgan, G. (2005). Paradigms, Metaphors, and Puzzle Solving in Organization Theory. *Revista de Administração de Empresas*, 45, 58-71.

- Morgan, D. L., & Krueger, R. A. (1993). When to Use Focus Groups and Why. In: D. L. Morgan (Ed.), *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art* (pp. 3-9). Newsbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483349008.n1>
- Oliveira, M. K. (1992). Vygotsky: Some Misunderstandings in the Interpretation of His Thoughts (Title adapted). *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, 81, 67-74.
- Obregon, R. de F. A., Vanzin, T., & Ulbricht, V. R. (2015a) *Recommendations for Inclusive Virtual Learning Environment from the Perspective of Archetypal Pattern of Otherness* (Title Adapted). São Paulo: Ed. Pimenta Cultural.
- Obregon, R. de F. A., Vanzin, T., & Ulbricht, V. R. (2015b) Different Perspectives of Creation and Knowledge Sharing in Virtual Environments. *Creative Education*, 6, 564-575. <http://www.scirp.org/journal/ce>
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2015.66056>
- Powell, R. A., & Single, H. M. (1996) Focus Groups International. *Journal of Quality in Health Care*, 8, 499-504.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/8.5.499>
- Pereira, A. T. C. (2007). *Virtual Learning Environments: Different Contexts* (Title Adapted). Rio de Janeiro: Ciência Moderna Ltda.
- Spender, J. C. (1996). Making Knowledge the Basis of a Dynamic Theory of the Firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17, 45-62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250171106>
- Teece, D. J. (2000). *Managing Intellectual Capital: Organizational, Strategic, and Policy Dimensions*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.
- Vanzin, T. (2005) TEHCO—Hypermedia Environment Model with Error Treatment, Based on the Theory of Situated Cognition. Doctorate Thesis, Post-Graduation Program in Production Engineering in the Federal University of Santa Catarina/UFSC (Title Adapted). Florianópolis.