

Learning environment

The expression "learning environment" is widespread in conjunction with the change of perspective recorded in psycho-pedagogical field.

There has been a shift from a vision focused on teaching, that is, what to teach, to a perspective focused on the learner and the learner processes.

Particular attention was therefore paid to how the learning support context is constructed, how to organize the "environment" to facilitate, guide and accompany pupils in the construction of their knowledge.

In a very broad sense, the learning environment can be understood both as a physical or virtual place, but also as a mental and cultural, organizational and emotional / affective space together.

It is necessary to observe the set of components present in the situation in which the learning processes are implemented and that is to analyze the conditions and factors involved in the process: teachers and students, cultural, technical and symbolic tools.

The school environment can be understood as a "space of action" designed to stimulate and support the construction of knowledge, skills, motivations, and attitudes. It is a space where interactions and exchanges between pupils, knowledge objects and teachers occur, on the basis of common aims and interests, and pupils have the opportunity to make meaningful experiences on the cognitive, emotional / emotional, interpersonal / social level.

Therefore, the learning environment can be defined as a structured context of activities, "intentionally" prepared by the teacher, in which the teaching is organized so that the learning process to be promoted is carried out according to the objectives set.

This change of perspective is particularly useful for responding to the demands and challenges of special education

Structuring school environment

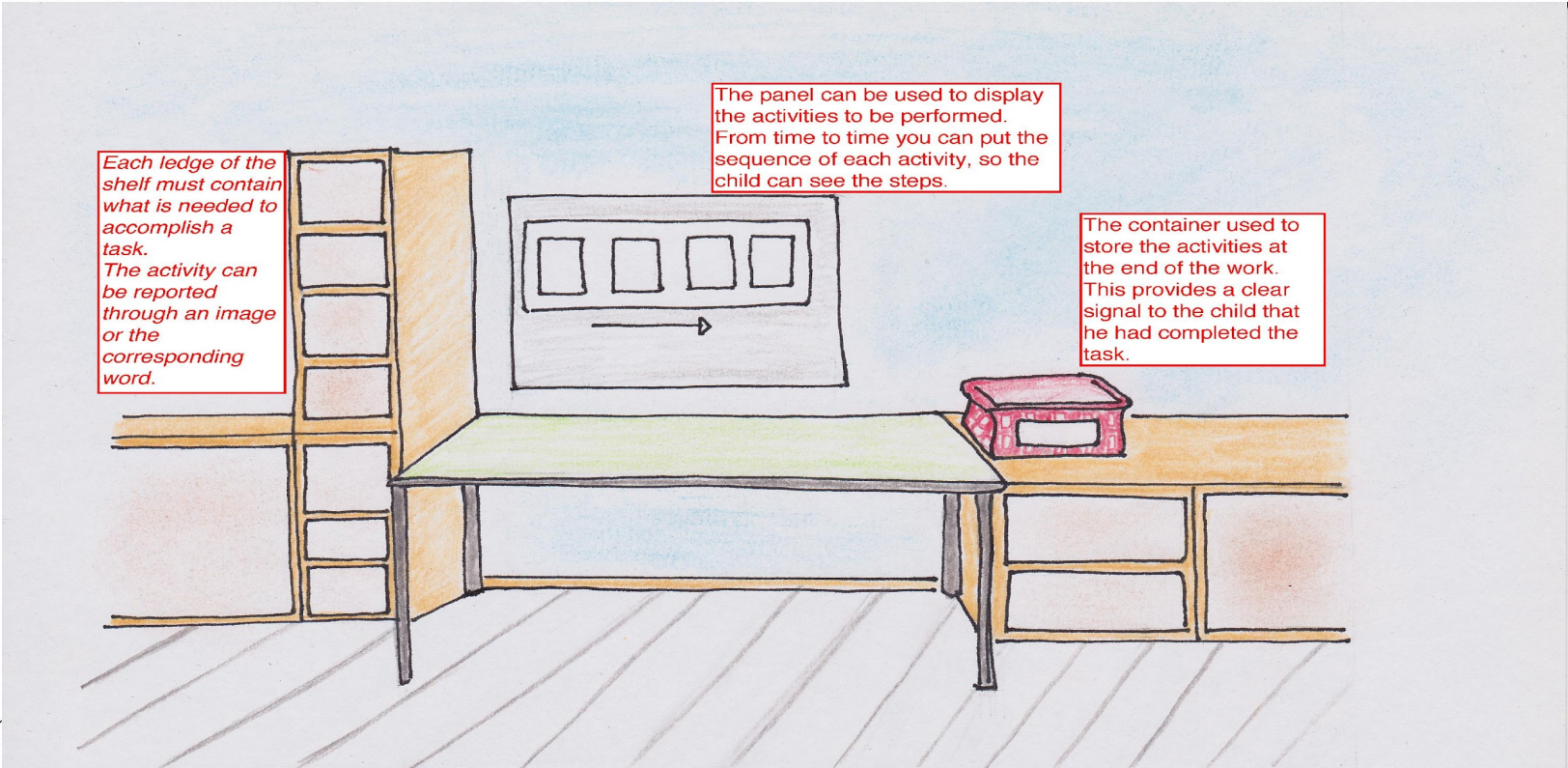
The organization of space always starts from the assessment of the child's characteristics.

It must be considered that many children with autism present difficulties of attention and concentration. Other children have sensory problems, which are not always easy to detect.

In order to facilitate the learning it is necessary to provide a space in which eliminate or reduce as much as possible the distracting stimuli, and then arrange a space within the class or, if necessary classroom outside, where it can be taken advantage of didactic moment and carry out the activities better.

The room must have adequate lighting, must be silent and must be ordered, that is not crowded with objects arranged randomly and disorderly.

Workstation



Worksta
material

show



The work station must be organized in such a way that the activity to be carried out is positioned to the left of the pupil with a space on the right where the work already done is placed, which allows a good working autonomy.

The "left / right organization" is only a rule that promotes left-right orientation to favor the writing and alphabetic reading of Western countries, and allows the various adults to always prepare the work in the same way, without excessive changes that could destabilize the child with ASD.

Structuring classroom

Each class should provides:

- Neat and recognizable spaces. It would be useful to make some places within the class recognizable by labelling (image and / or corresponding word).
- Panel next to the child's desk with the organization of weekly/daily activities and rules.
- Individual workstation for the child.
- Possibility to organize work desks in small groups
- Shelves for children to store items for various activities.

The task of the school is to teach children and young people with autism to relate to other people in different life contexts and in different situations since they are not able to acquire these skills on their own.

The possibility to enjoy of a proper space out of the class must be understood as a resource, i.e. a space where it is possible to learn what they need:

- Protected learning environment
- Introduction to social rules and communication
- Blow off steam

Structuring displacements

Structuring visual sequences in which prepares the child to transition from one place to another. Prepare the child for time and adequately to the various movements. A sudden change of situation could destabilize and trigger problematic behavior in response.

Relaxing space

It would be useful to provide a space outside the classroom or within the classroom (if there are no alternative spaces) in which the child can relax, relieve tensions.

Organization of the class

The child who needs special education must stay in a place that allows him to move easily, to stay at the right distance between things and people.

Other school environments

The presence of children with special educational needs requires not only to organize the working corner or the pupil's room, but the whole school environment (canteen, gym, corridors, etc.) to make all the spaces accessible and accessible in order to promote inclusion and autonomy.

This requires sometimes significant but not necessarily expensive or specialist interventions.

Also in this case it is necessary to resort to planning and organize the spaces that will welcome the students first.