Editorial. Technology Enhanced Learning for healthcare professionals

Editoriale. Tecnologie per l'apprendimento per i professionisti sanitari

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In the last years a number of transformations in the health care systems in Europe and beyond has occurred, which result in new demands and ways of working for health care professionals; roles in health professions have been subject to substantial changes and in some cases new categories of health professionals have been defined (Goldfield, 2017).

As a consequence, new and multi-faceted needs are emerging in terms of education and training, calling for comprehensive, multidisciplinary and problem-based approaches. Higher Education institutions and Vocational & Training providers need to guarantee access to up-to-date, evidence-based medical and nursing knowledge and clinical practice, as well as the capacity to develop key abilities, competences and critical thinking skills and dispositions, so that health care professionals are able to plan and implement individualized heath care, to understand and manage complex health issues and conditions, to collaborate with fellow professional, and to interact with patients, in the effort to help improve their health status and quality of life.

As a response to these changes and needs, in recent years the field of "Medical Humanities" has started attracting attention, by advocating positive impact of introducing humanistic elements, such as art, literature and storytelling in health education and training.

In this evolving scenario, new technologies - as part of a digitalized society and e-health services - offer affordances that seem to fit well with the new needs of the healthcare training context; they can pave the way for adoption of innovative methods and approaches and can support meaningful and effective learning in such a challenging sector. The learning environments, if featured with high-tech devices and solutions, can support collaborative and active learning approaches, thus contributing to better prepare the future health care professionals. In this line, institutions offering education and training for healthcare professionals are increasingly adopting e-learning or blended learning approaches.

Nonetheless, it seems the adoption of technological solutions does not necessarily imply innovation in terms of methods. This has emerged even more clearly during the recent Covid-19 pandemic, when most

institutions were forced to suddenly move to online training; in those exceptional circumstances, it came out most of the training offer was primarily transmissive in nature, as most of the providers turned out to be unprepared to harness the strengths of online learning, nor deal with its limitations (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020).

For these reasons, sharing research findings and experiences about how technologies are actually affecting teaching and learning methods in the healthcare professionals' training, seems useful.

In this special issue we have collected a number of papers, in an attempt to contribute to this debate.

The first paper, by Petrucco and Zardinoni, proposes the use of the Digital Storytelling method in the context of a professional training course for Multidisciplinary Day Surgery Nurses. Storytelling in this experience is aimed at supporting practice sharing among professionals. The evaluation data presented in the paper proves Digital Storytelling brought out the emotional, participatory and collaborative dimensions.

Poce et al. propose the use of cultural heritage education associated with active teaching methodologies (such as Visual Thinking Strategies, Reflective Questioning, Storytelling and Object-Based Learning) to trigger empathic attitudes and critical skills in medical science students and doctors, as recommended in the Medical Humanities research field. The data coming from the trial provide evidence of improvements in the participants' critical thinking levels and empathy.

The narrative approach, which is an essential aspect of humanization of care, is proposed by Bresadola et al., as a way to develop health professionals' skills to rethink their role and motivation in a new system of interdependence with patients. The proposed healthcare training delivered through an e-learning platform, developed a highly interactive environment between teachers and professionals.

Manganello et al. report the data coming from the evaluation of an innovative e-learning platform adopted in the context of nurse professional training in Greece. Thanks to bespoke functionalities of the platform, in the course it was possible to promote practice sharing and collaboration among learners, to support formal, as well as non-formal learning processes, and to sustain self-regulated learning. The platform was also featured with gamified elements.

Collaboration and more specifically Team-Based Learning (TBL) is also at the heart of the paper by Mortari et al., where the authors share the results of a teaching innovation in medical education based on TBL, which was implemented within an elective course in the Master's Degree Course in Medicine and Surgery. The reported data show that TBL, if introduced progressively and implemented with appropriate scaffolding actions, can lead to positive results, such as facilitating participants' engagement, triggering knowledge acquisition and leading to the development of "learning to learn" skills.

In the last paper Saaranen et al. focus on health sciences educators and describe the implementation of an online course, as well its development and implementation, aimed at developing their digi-pedagogical competences.

1. REFERENCES

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