

ENABLING STRATEGIES THAT INFLUENCE ON EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

In this work we present some of the results of the doctoral thesis: *“Guidance and visual impairment. Factors that influence the adolescent choices*, linked with the investigation: *“Evaluation of inclusion strategies to reduce university dropout and reorientation in other educational-training areas”*.” (Gavilán, 2014-2017 cód. S035). In this regard we investigated factors that guide the educational and occupational choices of adolescents and young people with visual impairment: blind people, deeply and mild visually impaired, who were completing high school. It is a part of the Theoretical Operational Model (Gavilán 2006, 2017), and takes into account the Diversity of Disability Model and the current perspectives about the visual impairment. In this work we'll present some of the results got through 22 visually impaired participants by means of two modalities of the theoretical model adopted: the Specific Individual Process and the Micro-process. Three key findings have been reached. At first place, we've found the influence of the subjective perspective of people themselves in front of their visual impairment as a prevailing factor in their choices, emphasized or moderate, according their family perspective. In second place, the similarity of the source factors of educational/occupational choices among sighted and visually impaired people, but influenced by their disability condition. Finally, we've found the deficiency/unsuitability of the guidance processes.

Introduction

In this work we present some of the results of the doctoral thesis: *“Guidance and visual impairment. Factors that influence the adolescent choices”*. Its purpose was to test the factors that lead the educational and occupational choices of adolescents and young people with visual impairment: blind people, deeply and mild visually impaired who were completing high school.

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The relevance of the subject under investigation deals on the analysis of the international and national backgrounds that shows the deficiency of theoretical developments and their specific interventions on the vocational occupational choices of visually impaired people. Likewise there is a partial knowledge of guidance actions carried out in this regard.

Based on the need of responding to demands coming from the complexity of the current world, characterized by a context which goes through deep political, economic and socio-cultural changes, guidance faces new challenges that have changed and increased the counselor view. Guidance proposals in different global contexts refer to training to work and to qualified training, without neglecting what people desire as a life project. (Gavilán, 2006, 2017).

However, those with some kind of impairment, have not always received the needed guidance interventions, particularly during “significant endings” (Gavilán, 2006, p. 122) that lead to an educational and/or occupational choice, as when high school ends. In this sense, the prevailing focus on the deficit, the ignorance of the psychological situations of visually impaired people and the consultation in specialized centers, as the Vocational and Occupational Guidance Centre of the National University of La Plata, inspire the study of this particular group and demonstrate the importance of the subject under investigation.

It is under these considerations, from the theoretical approach adopted about guidance and disability, particularly about the visual impairment and also taking into account the lack of previous researches, particularly local ones, that the questionings that lead this thesis have arisen.

Questionings about the factors that influence the choices of blind adolescents and young people, deeply and mild visually impaired, related to the study and/or work universe, refers to the *subjective perspective* facing their own disability, their family's perspective, the *conditions* that make possible or difficult their access to educational and labor institutions, the needed *support* to ensure the equity of possibilities, *availability and adjustment* of strategies and/or guidance interventions.

Accordingly, to respond to these questionings, data were collected with a qualitative approach with descriptive narrative design (Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado & Baptista Lucio, 2010) in the frame of the Theoretical Operational Model in Guidance (Gavilán, 2006), according to the perspective of Diversity of Disability Model and the current conceptions on Visually Impairment.

So, participants with visual impairment were included, of both sexes, from 16 to 21 years old, in the transition stage from high school to higher education and/or occupational universe; and on the other hand, key informants: staff of the specialized school (managing, professionals and teachers), parents of visually impaired participants and university students with the same disability that study different careers in the La Plata University.

In the first case, it is about inquiring about those with visually impairment; in the second one, those contextual aspects which complete and widen the data. We have particularly dealt at first with the perspectives of other actors on eventual difficulties

the participants to face, shared or not by their parents and experienced by the students that have already started university studies or the working universe.

It should be noticed that some of the results are intertwined with the investigation: "*Evaluation of inclusion strategies to reduce university dropout and reorientation in other educational-training areas*". This investigation assesses the inclusion strategies with the purpose of diminish the university dropout, which are implemented in representative careers of different knowledge areas of the National University of La Plata. In this sense, the purpose is to clarify from the perspective of the adopted theoretical frame, issues involved in the diversity matter that seeks to ensure *equitable opportunities for everyone*.

Guidance and consideration of diversity

Currently the word Guidance is defined by some theoretical and applied perspectives which have gone through different terms over time, such as Vocational Guidance, Labor Guidance, Educational and Occupational Guidance, among others. In this thesis we have chosen the term Guidance, considering the increasing agreement among the specialists, without rejecting other names in the analysis of the included backgrounds.

Historical development from its beginning and subsequent development let us to conceive it currently as an interdisciplinary, multiple and complex field, which has produced great progress both from the theoretical perspectives in which it is based, and the possible interventions.

In both cases it is about responding to new demands which come from a context that goes through deep political, economic and socio cultural changes. Guidance proposals in different global contexts refer to preparation for work and skilled training, without neglecting what people desire as a life project (Gavilán, 2006). In this sense, new subjectivities crossed by the current values of consumption and the revolution of social nets, has changed space-time coordinates, appealing to a zapping culture, the logic of the moment and to the need of immediate satisfaction.

The complexity of this context creates continuous challenges to Guidance, changing and widening the counselor view beyond the formal and not formal educational system, to cover the diversity of communitarian programs and to attend the economic, labor, technological and socio cultural systems.

Consequently, an increase of demands to the educational/occupational guidance appears, particularly from adolescents and young people who are completing high school. This means the need to think of a career or a future occupation, in the frame of a wider personal project. Ending high school implies going through a crisis, a re-adjustment that leads to the re-creation of representations related to the present situation and the following one, whose effects strongly influence the subjective construction of the identifying processes. At the same time, it includes a grief process in front of the lost of the high school pupil role, to take a new role which implies new responsibilities and commitments, such as start a superior career or take a job.

On the other hand, the investigation: *Social imaginary – occupational reality* (Gavilán, Cha, Quiles & Neer, 1995-1999) studies the factors that influence choices. It considers the social representations that exist regarding the choices of young people, where it is settled the idea that people choose a career mainly to achieve an economic well-being or influenced by the labor demand level or the status, among others.

However, the results of the above mention investigation show that the 60% of the selected population prioritize in vocational choices, the kind of tasks to be done in the profession. On the other hand, different authors have described adolescence as a stage when people prefer to make their choices according to the peer group, idols or representative characters and the media; and it is noticed that parents play a secondary role in these decisions. However different results have been reached: 56% of the participants said that the main contribution to define their choice was given by their parents; 18% by the Guidance processes; 9% by the media; 7% by school and 4% by other adults.

The issue about the role that family plays in the choice process of young people is related to the way adolescents experience their relationship with their parents. This was considered in some researches performed in other countries during the last 30 years and in our country by Batistuta y Falco (1997), who conclude that: “parents continue being the most important persons in the affective life of adolescents, and they are not replaced by their friends or couple”.

Besides, for a long time, school as an institution has been through multiple problems and demands of a social structure increasingly complex. The globalization of economy, the technological advances and the high labor competitiveness, demand to people an educational/occupational training that consider the development of skills that allow them to carry out different tasks. The proper joint among education, training and work, as proposed by Di Doménico and Amadio (2007) becomes very important to provide a possibility of building a personal and social project to start either, the working universe or higher education.

However, from Guidance one can question about what happens to young people who suffer some disability when they are next to graduate, and which, if there are any, are the strategies implemented from the educational system to accompany them during the transition towards work and/or university and finally how the development of the needed skills to success in one or both paths is promoted.

It is important to notice that Guidance considers that any disable person can have problems when performing an occupation or study, the same that any other young people. But comprehensive measures must be taken because disability should not be decisive in this person's future. On this respect it has to be considered that disability is not a permanent condition, but one that arises from the interaction of functional limitations and a “disabling” environment that doesn't take into account the differences, or doesn't attend them enough.

Disability then is conceived as a social and political category, a condition produced by the interrelation among the economic, social and cultural structures with the disability, that is, it is a way of social oppression that impose limitations to people that suffer some kind of impairment (Angelino, 2009).

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These aspects imply the approaching of new ways to face the Guidance procedures that include all people without exception, so counselors must permanently update to be able to respond to cultural, language, ethnic and social diversity, in the framework of the potentiality of impaired people.

During the first decades of the last century, the education of impaired people wasn't an object of reflection in educational and institutional practices, but on the contrary. A normative-prescriptive and medical model prevailed, which placed the impaired person in the deficit, from what he had to develop individually, - "normalize" - to get the expected achievements. This complicated the choice possibilities of these students, often limiting their vocational choices to the existing access possibilities, according to their individual impairment, forgetting their personal and professional desires and motivations. Guidance practices in our country strengthened this conception, since in the middle of XX century, a psycho technical model of adjustment prevailed. Such is it that on 1949, Guidance was included in the National Constitution. There it was stated that Guidance, conceived as a complement of training and education, is a social role that the State protects and encourages by means of institutions which guide young people to those activities for which they have natural aptitudes, so that the appropriate professional choice will benefit both, person and society. In front of a double disability, supposed to pupils and their parents, the State assumed a tutelary role to improve the productivity and to avoid the waste of personal resources. Then, in this context, in front of the industrial requirement of skill labor, the choice of a profession or occupation shouldn't be an improvised decision, but the result of a process as scientific as possible. And in that framework Guidance and psycho technical acquired their importance. (Gavilán, 2006)

Then, at the beginning, in our country Guidance was related to a professional choice, a psycho-technical approach was proposed associated with the working universe, "adjusting" personal aptitudes to harmonize with the requirements of job conditions.

However these practices, with the contributions of theoretical national authors, as it was Bohoslavsky in the '70s, were turning into a more clinical model, which allows rescuing the singularity of the subject of choices. It should be noted that this also agrees with the development of the Psychology careers in our country, with the resulting inclusion of psychologists to work with the previous counselors. In this way, the first experiences of workgroups with adolescents arose, including the unconscious in vocational choices and the new role of the projective techniques in the guidance process.

On the other hand, disability field changed its conception, understanding it from a social model, which forced to review teaching and institutional practices related to higher education, consequently resulting in changes in Guidance practices.

In this sense currently the guidance practices try to contribute with the democratizing of the public university, starting when recognizing that social, educational, cultural and economical differences and inequities of past and present days among people have a strong impact on their real possibilities towards projects of higher studies (Larramendy, Peryera & Rusler, 2012, p. 33). In this way, guaranteeing and putting

into practice the right to education of impaired people requires a new teacher training that makes possible the understanding and active intervention in academic situations, that demands new positions and pedagogical strategies according, in addition, to the changes of scenarios that are taking place in our university.

With this democratizing intention, the extension and diversification of university students are highly valued and undeniable achievements which present at the same time a new complexity that challenges University to find new answers. So, it is necessary to re-think the politic, institutional, academic and pedagogical conditions to enable, not only the increase of the scope of university and the admission progressively increasing of impaired people, but also to support their permanence and graduation in high quality scientific and professional careers.

The impaired people's difficulties are not only related to the conditions of buildings or technology matters, but worse, noticing a discomfort that their presence produces in some persons in academic areas. This rejection comes from the professional images strongly recorded during the degree course through a lot of implicit messages about the graduate's appearance and his behavior (...). Starting a profession requires something more than an intellectual effort to reach the knowledge of a subject, it also implies a body according to stereotypes. There are skills that seem a kind of summary of a professional knowledge, resulting in an exclusion effect.

These prefigures of the skills required to a graduate are present among teachers, students and administration area of Argentinean universities and represent a greater obstacle than the building and technological barriers (Seda, quoted by Larramendy, Peryera & Rusler, 2012, p. 42)

Katz and Larroca (2009) consider that only a few impaired persons reach basic and intermediate regular education, and it is even fewer in case of higher education.

One of the greatest obstacles that an impaired person faces in Argentina to be admitted, stay and complete higher education is related to negative attitudes, to the social perception about disability, since there still exist serious prejudices related to disability that cause conflicts in interpersonal relationships.

Today Guidance problem demands to be re-conceptualized as an inter-trans-disciplinary issue, in which theory focus its complex relations harmonized with the empirical investigation, so guidance interventions can discover appropriate and effective strategies through experience. (Gavilán, 2012, p. 11).

The Guidance Theoretical Operational Model (Gavilán, 2006) works as a link between theory and practice, making an articulation and intervention tool, especially related to the choice issue of people throughout life. So, Guidance is defined as: the strategies and methods used by the psychologist and / or the educational psychologist specialized in Guidance, so that the subject of Guidance, individually or collectively, through an understanding, sensible and committed attitude, can develop an educational, labor, personal and / or social project throughout life (Gavilán, 2006, p.194).

It is considered as a continuous process throughout people life, dividing it into different moments of the vital cycle: puberty, adolescence, youth, adulthood and old age.

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As regards on the guidance interventions in impaired people, Rocha and Perrilli (2008) propose three theoretical lines that give another point of view on the ways to work with this population. They are:

- 1) Analyze the meanings of labeling.
- 2) Make visible those who are invisible.
- 3) Move aside from Guidance to question oneself about it.

From the Guidance field it is essential to carry out new ways of dealing with the intervention processes and to count with a school (and an University) capable of making horizontal links, with diversity of institutions and social actors to analyze and review different and important aspects such as adjustments, performance of specific projects and, especially, with the counselor's permanent and dedicated action.

In this sense, the proposals of Guidance interventions have to lead towards what the International Convention about Disable People Rights proposes, and its protocol (UN, 2006), in its 27th article, parts d and k, which point out:

- d) Allow disabled people to have effective Access to general programs of technical and vocational guidance, employment services and professional and continuous training.
- k) Promote programs of vocational and professional rehabilitation, keeping employs and reincorporating jobs of disabled people (ONU, 2006).

Factors that influence the educational and occupational choices of visually impaired adolescents and young people

We present below some of the results obtained about the factors that lead the educational and occupational choices of visually impaired adolescent and young people: blind people, deeply and mild visually impaired, who were completing high school.

The selected participants were 22 visually impaired pupils, with different intensity of disability, from 16 to 21 years old. They received support from a school of specialized education for blind and visually impaired people. The participants were finishing high school in regular institutions during 2010-2013. Table 1 displays data relative to the kind of disability and the years when they were included.

Table 1
Participants: high school pupils according year, sex and kind of disability

Year	Blind		Deep visually impairment		Mild visually impairment		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2010	-	-	1	2	2	-	5
2011	-	-	2	-	2	1	5
2012	-	1	2	-	-	-	6
2013	1	2	-	-	1	-	6
Total	2	3	6	3	6	2	22

Regarding the factors that lead their educational and occupational choices, at first we could find intrinsic and extrinsic factors, according to Graves y Lyon (1985) whose limits can't be precise because they are both linked each other. The intrinsic ones are in the subject himself and are about the position he takes in front of his disability, which is referred to his interests, motivations and prevailing preferences. The extrinsic factors are about the characteristics of the educational, labor and social contexts, which can ease or block their projects that can arise from the articulation with the intrinsic ones.

1. Intrinsic factors

a. Factors related to the position the subject takes facing his disability

The selected young people were going through adolescence, usually in this stage this group needs to re-elaborate their disable situation, as González Fernández (2003) points out. In our work there are two different perspectives. Particularly in the case of mild visually impaired young people, there is a subjective perspective that denies and rejects the disability, so the factors that often lead their choices aren't too different from those of sighted adolescents. Having only a rest of vision usually impels them to behave the same way as the rest of adolescents, which shows the need of belonging to the peer group, characteristic of this period of life. As a consequence, they usually resist and reject to use texts expansions, their glasses or to receive a different treatment. That is why it is important to consider that adolescence of disabled people must be understood and attended, studying and emphasizing what they have in common with other adolescents as well as what is typical of their condition. This situation can be reinforced when it is shared by parents and can imply an over demand related to what they can do.

When it deals on blind people or deep visually impaired, the participants' perspective changes. There is a bigger acceptance of their conditions and their parents' too, that can block the development of a self-sufficient life.

b. Factors related to expectations on the educational and/or occupational future

Visually impaired adolescents usually have expectations facing future the same as the rest of adolescents. However, related to the before mentioned, some particular characteristics are found.

Information distortions. They have information distortions as all adolescents have, but these distortions are emphasized by the few or even lack of consideration of their possibilities, increased when the subjective perspective is of denying or rejecting the disability. Additionally, at the beginning there are also fantasized choices related to the identification with the "significant other", expressing their wishes to get occupations done by people close to their familiar and/or social scope (for instance, brothers' or parents' profession), or the institutional scope (for instance, teachers, professionals,

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etc.). In many cases it is about careers socially and familiarly overvalued, as medicine, law, frequently associated with the own family's story.

It is meaningful noticing that among the knowledge areas that young people chose according to their interests, the artistic area prevails. It is related to music, dance, singing, acting and musical comedy, among others. It is possible that this interest refers to the difficulties that they attribute to other areas of basic, technological or natural sciences.

In consequence "unrealistic" choices take place, beyond what they have considered in specific guidance processes (generally absent), which require interventions that exceed those of guidance.

Concerns/fears. Even when concerns and fears in front of future are observed the same as any adolescent, they are marked by their disability condition, in case they haven't a complete recognition of their situation. Fears are many times provoked by problems of movement to the study or job places, the movement within the institutions, the recognition of the building, among others, which are all linked to the development of self-sufficiency. At the same time these aspects are related on one side with the parents' perspective and behavior, on the other side with the characteristics of institutions and their necessary adaptation.

Interrelationship with peers and teachers. The obstacles in this interrelationship are caused by both, the impaired subjects themselves, peers and teachers. In the first case, there are often problems to say what they need related to the disability, and these issues increase when the subjective perspective is denying or rejecting. In the second case, the problem is the teacher's ignorance about such needs and consequently the appropriate adaptations to attend them. We agree with Grzona (2009), when he points out the different obstacles that young people find in the higher studies scope. About peers, they also ignore the specific needs of their visually impaired schoolmates.

2. Extrinsic factors

a. Factors related to the availability of guidance processes

The possibility of counting with guidance processes gains relevance; these can coordinate with intrinsic factors to ease choices that better adapt to the particular characteristics of the educational/occupational specific needs of this particular group.

We have noticed that most of regular schools lack of this type of programs, or what they do is not enough, or it is inappropriate to the specific needs of visually impaired people.

b. Factors relative to academic adaptations

Academic adaptation is understood as those changes or adjustments needed to ease visually impaired people study, allowing them to reach the educational universe with equal opportunities. As Abejón Mendoza, Martínez Solana, and Terrón López (2001) point out, in Spanish case and in our environment, even when specific services

considering diversity have been included, there are still not enough. In the National University of La Plata the creation of the Department of Inclusion, Disability and Human Rights and the University Commission of Disability imply an advance in this matter that has continued with the inclusion of specific commissions in some academic units. However, all aspects of student life haven't yet been considered, as:

b.1. Teachers' cooperation.

Educational inclusion of visually impaired pupils requires that all the educational community to be sensible and commits with diversity, encouraging a fluid communication, continued and bi-directional, based on cooperative and respectful relationships.

However, the lack of training and knowledge often affect all agents involved in the educational process of these pupils. On one side, professors of regular high schools are skilled in their subjects, but they are seldom ready to face the particular educational needs of a visually impaired student. This pupil needs an efficient and trained staff that is capable of responding and adapting to all his necessities arisen in class. Besides, the lack of involvement of teachers, is often reflected in the lack of flexibility when adapting materials and contents and pupils themselves must advice them about the adaptations they need to be able to learn the subjects.

However we consider that students during high school have the specialized teachers' support, but this situation isn't repeated in higher and university studies. When we work in the transition towards higher studies, it is observed that the university professors are sometimes less involved, and that doesn't make it easy for the impaired student to show their needs and demand their rights.

On the other hand, disabled students mustn't be despised with paternalistic positions that only reflect the lack of expectations regarding their real skills. Neither should they be forced to an equality that ignores their specific needs. That is why it is essential that the communication between students and those who make the necessary adjustment is carried out in a respectful and equal perspective. Even when most of the young participants say they are pleased with the specific support provided by teachers and schoolmates in regular high school, they also say that sometimes this support is excessive and hinders their potentialities to do some tasks by themselves.

b.2. Adaptations to access to teaching contents.

According to the before mentioned in first place it is about *methodological adaptations*, for instance oral transmission in class must be privileged, and the same in the exam systems, which besides should require more time. In second place it is about the necessary materials, as the availability of specific texts, texts expansions or Braille writing system and other possible digital resources.

In the studied cases there is a meaningful difference between the available resources that the Special Education School has, respect to the regular high schools. This

situation is controlled at this educational level by means of the integration support, which is absent in higher studies.

b.3. Physical adaptations.

They include on one side, the environment characteristics, taking away barriers, counting with appropriate furniture and accessible classrooms with proper lighting. On the other side, they refer to the support of teachers and school mates to ease their mobility. Many fears of high school and university students interviewed refer precisely to the possibility of going to the institution as well as the mobility inside the institution. The same happens with the obstacles before mentioned.

b.4. Adaptations of communication access, study and work performance.

They consist on technical assistance, such as extended communication systems, materials, accessories and specific elements (among others, availability of digitalized Braille writing system, magnifying glasses, computers and recorders).

Among them, the Braille system and / or the technological resources are relevant. It should be noticed that the current society has been described as an information and knowledge society, mostly supported in the so-called Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). In this context, the personal and social people development will be determined to a large degree, by their qualification of these technologies. However, not all the existing technological devices are easy to use for everyone. The situation of the visual content of these technologies mainly affects blind or visually impaired people. That is why their improvement or adaptation is required, since the very moment of its design and production, to avoid another factor of disadvantage or segregation. The application of technology implies a constant source of solutions for visually impaired people in their autonomy and well-being: everyday life, mobility, education, employment, leisure, culture, etc.

In this context computers and auxiliary software are also very useful for teachers who work with this issue, but they have not always the knowledge enough. In other words, these subjects have to be trained to use these technologies, as well as teachers in charge.

These technologies provide disable children/young people of educational experiences that allow them to “get close” to a multi-sensitive world, and let the pedagogue to provide students with alternatives which promote their development, in an attractive and motivating way. (Ferreyra; Méndez y Rodrigo, 2009, p.56)

Using a computer allows to independently achieve some purposes, resulting a sense of equality, with a better attitude towards themselves and others (Ferreyra; Méndez y Rodrigo, 2009).

One of the main obstacles that we have found with the young people that are admitted to our University (National University of La Plata) is the ignorance or lack of

training in the software tools that assist them to use a computer, which could provide them a better access to information.

It should be mentioned that among the participants of this investigation we've found differences related to the use of the Braille writing system and/or technological tools. Blind or deep visually impaired young people use these tools due to they ease reading and using the computer, unlike what happens with texts on paper. Using tools let them think of careers related to artistic areas and design areas, unlike what happened years ago, when they prioritized careers which count with adapted bibliography.

Even when the use of these technologies requires a specific training, they learn it naturally as a part of their learning process. This knowledge should be completed with teachers' knowledge from regular schooling, as we have mentioned before; but they seldom know their importance and waste learning alternatives that go beyond the traditional ones, designed to the "ideal" pupil.

The rest of the selected young people who suffers mild visual impairment doesn't use technological specific tools and handle generic software, such as e-mail, social nets, messenger, etc.

It should be noticed that the mentioned adaptations have a particular character, that is to say, they have to be done attending to the specific needs of each pupil. In this sense they have to become an open and flexible process, which includes not only the professor, but also the pupil who must have an active role in this process of co-building the "reasonable adjustments". In the studied participants we have noticed the importance of the intervention of integration teachers who provide elements that aren't available in regular school.

c. Factors regarding the knowledge of the obstacles in university careers related to the absence/decrease of vision.

There is an agreement among specialists that educational and / or labor choice is one of the bases that contribute to achieve an identity. We have often found that young people with visual disabilities idealize the professions and / or occupations of their closest area, as schooling and / or family, ignoring their abilities and limitations.

Even when as Rocha mentions (2013) "desire isn't disabled", guidance interventions with visually impaired people from a preventive perspective, must be double: at first place, as in any Guidance process, to get the subject learning how to choose, developing a life project educational, work, social, personal or others. On the other hand, it is necessary to work so that the subject can elaborate personal conflicts to learn to choose and make a possible option, taking into account both the possibilities and the limitations that their visual impairment involves in order to reach their project.

So, our role as guiders is to accompany during the development of their self-knowledge, especially in those paths that lead to professions or occupations that sight is essential. In the work done with those participants close to complete high school, choices don't always consider the possible obstacles related to their disability

condition which could block their admission in higher studies. Sometimes we've noticed, as above mentioned, that obstacles are denied due to the lack of involvement with what their disability implies, so they can make unrealistic choices.

d. Factors related to the presence/absence of self-determination. Induced decisions

The self-determination refers to the possibility to be the motor of your own life. Reaching self-determination in disabled people is inescapable in Guidance because this will let them take decisions being aware of their skills and limitations to think about personal, educational or working purposes, as Aznar and Gonzales Castañón points out (2009).

Regarding *choices*, they seldom count with the necessary information to reach real options, particularly related with their situation, that let them try their choices, the gains and losses that take place in each decision. In many cases we've noticed that those elections are determined by their families or through identifications with people of their close environment, which is necessary to clarify regarding their real possibilities, as we've noticed in some participants.

The *Personal Initiatives* that allow putting into words what they need and wish often appear damaged. The examples of data we've collected during the workshops reveal the enabling role of the team work.

Regarding *Freedom* it implies being able to move away from others' opinion and take autonomous decisions, which sometimes requires rejecting what others suggest if it isn't according one's own wishes. In some of our cases we've noticed, on the contrary, a sort of approval to what comes from others.

Responsibility implies not only taking decisions consciously, but also assuming its consequences. Sometimes we notice that only the experience let us be aware of the consequences of a decision that is not in accordance with the possibilities, either because of the possibilities themselves or the lack of institutional resources.

At last, considering the *Interrelation Context* is essential to the self-determination in choices, which are harmonized with factors related to families and the institutions where disabled people are.

We have found that at the time of decision making regarding the life project of visually impaired young people, parents' information about their children's disability affects their confidence in possibilities and their expectations towards future. Disinformation generates prejudices, and inappropriate information is usually greater the higher the parents' educational level, although interest and motivation also influence. We've found that some parents hadn't a real awareness about their sons' possibilities and skills. This usually deepens over demands and exposes them to situations which don't recognize their real limitations. Something to notice in this regard is their wish that their sons persist with some relative's professions or occupations, without taking into account their real possibilities, implying consequences in their subjectivity.

Sometimes it has been noticed that the Guidance process became the first opportunity to talk about their interests and wishes, moving aside from the “others’ desires”, as arises from the interviews and workshops carried out by participants.

At this point we agree with the concept of “Deuteroelection” proposed by Bohoslavsky (1985), that is to say, how adolescents *choose to choose*. Particularly in case of visually impaired young people, we’ve found that many times they haven’t got the chance to choose. In this way, decisions making comes through the others’ point of view, resulting in some sort of “passivity” when deciding a life project. We’ve found, for instance, that when searching information, an inactivity behavior arises, waiting to be provided by the others.

What we’ve pointed out about the self-determination factors have been especially sensitive in those mild visually impaired, who themselves and their family tend to make unrealistic choices, whether self-determined or induced by others.

e. Factors related to problems faced in the last educational path.

The selected pupils in this study don’t present great learning problems, except in some subjects that require using the blackboard, such as mathematics and chemistry. In those cases they say that they *get lost*, resulting in disinterest at this knowledge area, precisely due to the problems to access. This is noticed in the participants’ choices which are often about careers with other contents.

f. Factors related to the availability of Guidance teams. Transition towards higher education and working universe.

This category is about exploring the availability of Guidance teams in high school, or of any sort of support or advice to be provided by the institution related to life projects, after graduation.

We’ve found that there are only a few schools which the selected pupils attend that have Guidance Teams (however, some of the selected pupils attended to the same school). Those who counted with guidance teams carried out the following activities:

They are focused to the urgent situations that appear daily.

Formal guidance interventions aren’t performed, but informal ones, such as talks or comments with teachers or professionals, etc. As they aren’t planned interventions, we find that generally professionals don’t consider the specific needs of visually impaired pupils.

Proposals offered on Guidance aren’t about exploring the vocational aspects in students. We didn’t find stimulation of an active search of interests and of skills training to reach desired results.

Regular schools don’t work including Guidance groups. Special education schools make workshops including all the students that attend to the institution, so they often deal with issues about graduation.

Estrategias favorecedoras que inciden en las elecciones educativas y ocupacionales de los adolescentes con discapacidad visual

Institutional actors conceive Guidance as a punctual intervention at the end of schooling, not as a process throughout people life.

This is noticed by means of the collected data given by the participants themselves and the interviews with key informants who also observe the absence / lack of Guidance teams. In the few cases which there are guidance teams, they consider Guidance as a punctual intervention or as an adjustment process to individual skills, concept that contrasts with the theoretical model that leads this research.

Conclusions

In developing this thesis, three key findings have been got. At first place, we've found the influence of the subjective perspective of people themselves in front of their visual impairment as a prevailing factor in their choices, emphasized or moderate, according their family perspective. In second place, the similarity of the source factors of educational/occupational choices among sighted and visually impaired people, but influenced by their disability condition. In such a sense, the wrong information about the requirements of higher education and/or work as well as fears, concerns and their relationship among peers and teachers are emphasized by the need of a more exhaustive information, a proper training on the necessary resources and the availability of adjustments according the special educational needs. Finally, the deficiency/unsuitability of guidance processes, or the intervention according to the model we sustain, arises as one of the relevant factors in decisions making. The conclusions achieved can't forget that a limited quantity of visually impaired students completing high school have been included. This fact speaks secondarily of a particular socioeconomic level. Repeating this study with more participants and from different environments would enrich our understanding of the factors that influence their educational and/or occupational choices.

Besides, in future investigations, higher educational paths of visually impaired or any other disabled pupils must be analyzed, as well as the necessary human and material resources to respond to the specific needs they have.

We highlight the availability of guidance processes among such resources. Our theoretical framework has allowed us to think about its potential to clarify these issues with the purpose of *ensuring equitable opportunities for everyone*