

A research conducted into transversal competences acquires through informal and non formal ways

Abstract

This research takes its origin from the need of starting a process of inquiry about the competences of young people (14-18 years old) to give them the opportunity of:

1. becoming aware of themselves, of their abilities and competences
2. verifying their cultural and vocational condition, while focusing on their formative needs
3. using the results as a means of guidance and as a support to build up a better formative plan of their own

Its main purpose is to put in evidence their educational and formative level, principally considering the specific competences they acquired outside the school, through informal and non formal ways.

A number of 120 students aged 16-19 was involved in the process of inquiry, which was carried out through tests and interviews focused on young people's interests, abilities and competences mainly referred to the relation sphere.

Description

With reference to the general purpose of the research, there have been fixed the following

Objectives

1. to gather significant elements regarding the students' transversal competences, paying attention to the way they acquired them independently from their school career
2. to analyse the relationship between vocational activities and acquired competences, to single out the stimuluses which more significantly influence the learning and emotional development of young people
3. to organize a monitoring process to be integrated in a larger educational process with the purpose of helping it, since it can be considered as a means of observation of the students' aspirations and potentialities and, after all, a means of orientation for them.

Phases/Actions of the research

The whole process of research can be roughly divided into the following phases:

1. Study meetings held by the teachers involved in order to:
 - Learn and examine carefully the main aspects of the project
 - Agree upon the meaning of 'transversal competence' and discover the possible ways of acquisition
 - Recognize the indicators and build up the tools to collect the data
 - Choose a functional way of data collection and analysis
2. Organization and realization of the data collection process
3. Study meetings held by the teachers involved in order to:
 - Analyse the collected data
 - Examine the results critically and put them into relation with the students' maturing development.

Results

During the first phase, it was built a test through which investigate any students' interest or vocational activity, in order to discover the whole of their means (knowledge and abilities) by which they can support their growth. It was also drawn up an interview model through which discover more personal characteristics and points of view, in order to let the students recognize their potentialities and abilities.

In the second phase the collection of the data was carried out involving about 125 students (aged 16-19, as previously stated).

The third phase was devoted to the critical analysis of the data which were used as a basis of a short report focused on the most common competences discovered through the whole process.

Final considerations

This research, far from being exhaustive, can be considered the first step towards a more complex system of competence recognition such as the portfolio or a system of certification such as the balance of competence. What has to be underlined in this occasion is the fact that the students involved in the research seemed to like it very much, since they considered their participation a chance of looking inside themselves and an opportunity to be evaluated as individuals in the whole, not only for their school results.