Abstracts

Abstract I

Assessment of social competences within formal vocational education and training – experiences of six European countries. Results of the TRACK-VET project

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The presentation focuses on the topic of assessment of social competences within the systems of formal vocational education and training (VET) in six European countries: Austria, France, Latvia, Poland, Norway and Slovakia.

The need for development of social and other transversal competences within VET systems is growing. It stems mostly from the technological, organisational and societal changes. Computers and machines are better suited to replace routinized, repetitive tasks that can be programmed in advance but people today retain the advantage in performing tasks requiring knowledge of what heuristics are used by other people, as well as the creation and selection of heuristics to solve undefined tasks (open ended tasks) that require flexibility, creativity and assessment. Along with the departure from the Fordist economy model, the structure of enterprises flattened. Contemporary forms of work organization are designed to support the multitasking and interdisciplinary nature of employees, primarily to be able to benefit from the complementarity between tasks performed in a given organizational structure. Performing tasks based on interaction and demanding social competences constitute a key area of institution's activity in which machines cannot replace a human being. It is also indicated that in light of societal tensions in Europe, among others related to migration, nationalism and radicalisation of opinions, also VET schools should be more focused on the development of civic competences and competences related to cultural awareness.

However, despite the growing need for development of social and other transversal competences within the VET graduates, EU policy documents and reports point out that the level development of theses competences remains a challenge. Developing and implementing means for support and assessment, as well as improving teacher training and attractiveness of teacher occupation are key factors for developing these competences. As indicated in the literature, assessment methods and requirements might have a greater influence on how and what students learn than any other factor.

Data for the article were drawn from the analysis of six country reports produced by the Erasmus+ Project 'TRACK-VET': *Developing, assessing and validating transversal key competences in the formal initial and continuing VET* in 2019. In the article we discuss how learning outcomes related to social competences are defined in VET curricula; which solutions, methods and techniques are used in the national systems (examinations, portfolios, etc.) in order to assess social competences. We also discuss challenges and barriers in assessment of social competences and opinions of the key stakeholders based on more than 100 interviews in six countries carried out within the project. By presenting solutions used in the VET sector we aim to contribute to discussions on development and assessment of social competences within higher education area and to seek for synergies between DASCHE and TRACK-VET projects.

Abstract II

Introducing PRME Principles at Business Schools. The Challenges for PRME activities in Poland

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The PRME initiative was launched 2007 under the UN Global Compact in order to "*inspire and champion responsible management education, develop a new generation of leaders capable of managing the complex challenges faced by business and society in the 21st century*" as it states in the UNGC document (United Nations Global Compact Office, 2007,p.2). PRME developed six principles to direct implementation of the UN statement mentioned. The discussion now is on both how to implement them into universities life and curricula and whether it makes sense to implement selected ones only or it requires to implement all of them. As the principles relate to strategy, educational paths, stakeholders relations, teaching programs etc. the full transition into the 6 PRME Principles following university demands deep changes and involvement of managerial bodies, faculties and academic staff. What makes the implementation especially challenging and demanding.

The presentation is on embodying the PRME Principles into education, related obstacles and possible ways to overcame them. Referring to the overview of the recent literature on implementing the principles and values of sustainable development to the educational programmes and curricula as well as existing challenges in this issue there will be presented the current and prospective activities of PRME. We are to tackle with the problem of limited and selected education and the development of students capabilities concerning sustainability and missing the whole transformation of business schools and universities to make them develop socially responsible leaders of the future. There will be also outlined the concrete tasks we are to take as a Polish Chapter of PRME in order to put the PRME's goals into practical activities.

Abstract III

Non-formal learning methods in the university setting

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The presentation introduces an international project and its implementation at Eötvös Loránd University. Our aim is to draw attention to the possibilities of non-formal methods in providing social competences in the context of higher education. Through a case study we illustrate how a cooperation of the youth work field and formal education can lead to new approaches in higher education.

The European frameworks, such as the EU Youth Strategy and the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education emphasize the role of education outside the formal settings and provide tools and resources for implementation. The Paris Declaration: Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through

education see the role of non-formal education as essential to support young people's awareness and foster tolerance, solidarity and participation among them.

The main focus of the presentation is introducing an Erasmus+ funded project that brings non-formal methods into a formal environment. The international project of "Among Others" has resulted in university courses, and the experiences, possibilities and challenges of the project will be discussed addressing the questions emerging from reconciling non-formal methods with formal settings. The project has started in 2014 Europe wide and in Hungary courses started in the academic year of 2015-2016 with the involvement of three higher education institutions.

Among others as such is supported by the Youth Chapter of the Erasmus+ and coordinated by National Agencies of Erasmus+ in each country where the courses happen (Czechia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Poland).

The project is strongly focusing on supporting the development of intercultural competence of participants through non-formal learning. This is in line with the above-mentioned documents and with the aim of providing participants with competences that enable successful adaptation to contemporary challenges.

The target group of the courses are students who will work with children and young people in their future positions either as teachers, educators or policy officers of municipalities to carry out youth work at local level. Their readiness is key for situations where a sensibility to understand differences and accept ambiguity is necessary, to foster mutual understanding among different actors.

The course is intensively focusing on creating a learning space where students can develop their competences on their own and can reflect upon their learning processes (in accordance with and supported by the Erasmus+ Youthpass framework).

Our case study will address how the blend of methodologies may strengthen the cooperation of NGOs and universities and how a cross-sectoral partnership may lead to a better recognition of youth work and non-formal learning.

Abstract IV

Social Competence cannot be achieved Language-Free

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Empirical findings, provided by an ever-growing number of research projects on the world-wide use of English, underline the fact that English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) should play an important role in intercultural training today. Aspects of politeness and relationship-building should be in the foreground of both intercultural and English language teaching. Accuracy in terms of grammar, pronunciation etc. should come second. Although there are certain exceptions to this rule, e.g. in formal speech or in formal written communication or where serious misunderstandings may occur, in most cases it is politeness, which is the first and foremost prerequisite for effective communication in intercultural contexts. Politeness, however, is not a universal code. British-American politeness conventions may well be adequate and effective when dealing with people from those part of the world. What is equally certain, however, is that they will often be inappropriate when communicating

with people from different cultural backgrounds (by far the majority) – regardless of the fact that the language used by all concerned is English.

Teaching social competence should therefore include how you show respect to those with whom you are communicating and how you attempt to establish credibility. It should also include to look into if it is polite to answer a question when you asked directly and if you should discuss a conflict with the person with whom you disagree (see Dianne Hofner Saphiere, Barbara Kappler Mikk, and Basma Ibrahim DeVries. Communication high wire: leveraging the power of diverse communication styles. 2005: 5f.).

All these relate to how we communicate in intercultural encounters - using English. Here is an example: How many native speakers of English are aware of the fact that the level of assertiveness expressed in much of their every-day communication, although absolutely normal to them, may appear offensive to people from other parts of the world? Similar questions may be asked concerning the level of enthusiasm, self-promotion, personal disclosure, directness, formality, indulgence and others (see A. Molinsky (2013). Global Dexterity. 49f.).

I believe that social competence cannot be achieved language-free. For it is in practical communication and interaction that our identities, roles and relationships are established. What counts is what we do and what we say, and how, when and where we do it and say it. Social competence teaching as well as the teaching of English (as a Lingua Franca) should, therefore, go along with the raising of self-awareness, the teaching of cultural differences, of practical ways of dealing with otherness, and, most of all, of ways of dealing appropriately with unexpected, ambiguous or generally difficult situations, behaviour or utterances.

Abstract V

Evaluation of social competency development during business university education by graduates

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The level of social competencies after university graduation is the necessity for today's competitive environment in university education and indication of quality study program and its design. It is necessary to place emphasis to develop and measure social competencies of students during and after their studies. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and present perceptions of students towards gained social competencies gained through their studies at business university. The data were collected by questionnaire survey of graduates in 2017-2018. Two dimensional statistical methods were used to evaluate the results. Examination of graduates' interest in specific areas and competences leads to identification of factors affecting preferences in higher education to fill expectation of current society and labor market. Specific factors impacting evaluation of business education and its development are further discussed. The results shows practice how to identify current approaches towards social competency development in higher education. Limit of the study is a narrow focus on one private business university. It may be taken as case study and a base for further research and benchmarking between universities. This study may encourage other researchers to develop and test further the impact of competency development within university education on students' and graduates´ measurable improvements.

Abstract VI

Indirect recognition of social competences. Case studies of University of Warsaw

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Main thesis: Verification of social competences can be an indirect approach to recognition of learning outcomes gained outside the formal education as proved by the examples from University of Warsaw.

The Polish Higher Education Act grants the direct possibility of recognition of the prior learning only at the level of the recruitment procedures. It is however not possible to directly include the learning outcomes, including the area of social competences, acquired during the studies in the whole learning process.

The University of Warsaw attempted to indirectly recognise students' social competences gained through certain activities within the University. Special courses for member of scholarship committees, theatre group and the University's choir were designed to include the knowledge, skills and social competences achieved through these activities into the students' course of studies.

First of the case studies courses was aimed at the students working as volunteers in the scholarship committees where they were tasked with granting social scholarships for other students. Course introduced in 2008 helped to give the students ECTS for their work, and put the knowledge of students from different departments on the same level. It was also a way of verifying social competences which were the basic principle of working in the committees.

Similarly, a course for member of one of the University's theatre groups was designed in such a way that the knowledge, skills and social competences from the group's work could be verified and helped students to minimise the amount of additional courses they have to pass.

The same can be told about the courses designed for members of the University's choir. The work of the choir is much more advanced than the course itself, and it is only designed to verify part of the learning outcomes achieved by students participating in the course.

The presentation will include the analysis of the syllabi of the mentioned courses and the methods of the verification of the learning outcomes including the area of social competences.