



School Students View-Why Is Non-Formal Education and Informal Learning Important to Us?

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Abstract

OBESSU currently represents 24 school student unions and organisations. School student unions and organisations are one of the best examples of non-formal education, they are student-led, student organised and student-implemented but all within the formal education setting. School student unions are directed exclusively to a population still in formal education and enhance formal education by non formal learning activities

The importance of non-formal (NFE) and informal learning (IL)

OBESSU believes that positive NFE experiences are vital to an individual's experience of school. NFE at its best is creating knowledge, skills and attitude-rather than swallowing readymade facts and opinions without evaluation.

It is within NFE that school students develop the skills vital to active citizenship and successful employment including; teamwork, democratic practice, or foreign language skills. With Europe increasingly competing on a global scale, our education must enable all young people to take up the skills for a changing work place. In the last decade, youth unemployment in the EU 27 was around double that of the total population. Once youth are placed into employment, they are now expected to have numerous jobs in their lifetimes.

The role of formal education in non-formal learning and informal learning

Formal education is ideally placed as the best environment to encourage and develop NFE opportunities; as such formal education must encourage NFE and IL at every turn. The success of NFE relies largely on the willingness and cooperation of the participant. Thus, school students must want to take part and, for the most part, enjoy themselves in both the formal and non-formal aspects of school. To achieve this, students must feel safe and secure within their schools in order to participate fully, this community environment can be created using a variety of NFE methods such as peer mentoring programmes, student councils etc.