Learning Strategies used by Successful and Unsuccessful Vocational Trainees in Algeria

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This research aims to describe the learning strategies used by Algerian trainees and the impact of these strategies on their academic performance. The vocational training is proposed for young people who failed the baccalaureate, which is an Algerian national exam that gives access to the university. These people suffer from cognitive, meta-cognitive, linguistic problems and low motivation, which may explain the high drop-out rate and failure in the vocational training (Zahi, 2004). A total of one hundred twenty two (122) vocational trainees participated voluntary in the present study, by completing a questionnaire developed and adapted from other questionnaires and scales (Dowson & Mc Inerney, 2004; Pintrich, 1991; Samuelstuen & braten, 2007; Boulet et al, 1996; Ruph, 1999, Weinstein & al, 1988). It includes seventy five (75) items, divided into four categories: cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and resource management strategies. Academic performance is here, the results of the training which is the average obtained by the trainees in the last semester (1st 2011).

The survey results showed that a group among the (122) trainees (unsuccessful vocational Trainees) use certain cognitive strategies that do not allow the best information processing; they tend to use rote memory strategies which lead to surface learning. They use the support strategies weakly, especially emotional strategies. The strategic choices of these students affect the results of their training. Indeed, students who have had good results (successful vocational Trainees) have demonstrated better control of learning strategies. This mastery is reflected by the number and type of strategies deployed and their use for the nature of the learning situation. These results lead us to suggest others units to be included in the training program to help trainees self regulated their learning.