



Social Skills for Good Mood and Better Learning

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Social skills, collaboration, the sharing of experiences and responsibilities, a living atmosphere are pre-conditions for a good learning. This awareness has led the coordinators of a Comenius project based on the partnership of seven schools with 12-16 years old students having an heterogeneous socio-economical and cultural background belonging to Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal to better the students' approach to school and school-life. Through the analysis of expectancies and the experiences of students, parents, teachers according to the presence, the use, the lack of social skills in the student-student, student-teacher, teacher-teacher, teacher-parents, teacher-head relationship it has been possible to start knowing the strength and weakness points not only inside the own school but also in the partners' schools very far from a geographical point of view but close for problems. The work has given the opportunity to compare the different experiences inside the European partner schools and from the analysis of successful projects in each school a network for mutual help and a market of ideas have been built, these elements have contributed to better some communicative techniques and above all to lay the basis not only for an integration of new pedagogical approaches in schools but also for the use of a creative methodology of learning and teaching. Project work has been widely used: the students have prepared a virtual tour in PP form to present their region, have analyzed the result of the survey about the use of social skills, have written a collection of short stories in collaboration with their European friends and have illustrated it, have published a recipes book with information about country eating habits. The ICT has helped the school community to shorten the distance among partners; students and teachers have used mails, a FB group, Skype contacts to exchange opinion, results and experiences, all the experiences are present in the schools websites. The students have had the opportunity to use a foreign language in real situations to communicate with other people during the meetings, to improve their 'key competences' and communication skills and above all their interpersonal skills. The Comenius project has proved that promoting the involvement of students in team work allows the positive experience of personal contribution to the growth of school community and also to the knowledge of the European reality. Moreover the experience has strengthened the necessity to use creative methodology of teaching and to give space to the students' creativity in order to make them propose the acquired and self elaborated contents in new forms. The project has stressed that the success of an experience lies in the disposition to understand the strength and weakness points in a school life together with the adoption of new approaches to personal and interpersonal relationships. Last but not least: the sharing of information and experiences among the partners has allowed a vision of Europe not as a geographical reality but as a reality made up of human beings and friends.