

Reflection as core transferable competence in higher education and adult education (REFLECT)

Cooperation between the formal and informal educational sector.

PI: VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS

Lithuania: Vilnius University and VIESOJI ISTAIGA KITOKIE PROJEKTAI

Iceland: Áskorun ehf and University of Iceland

Italy: A.S.D. Kamaleonte and University of Padova (UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA)

Belgium: Landelijke organisatie Outward Bound België and LUCA SCHOOL OF ARTS VZW

Description of the project:

Reflection is recognized as one of the most important transferable competences in learning processes, especially for personal and professional lifelong learning (Buiskool a.o. 2010). In formal education reflective practices even became a real hype since the turn of the century. At the same time research paradoxically shows that the quality of most reflection by students in formal education is moderate to bad (Pauw 2007, Kinkhorst 2002) and it doesn't necessarily bring forth the expected learning outcomes (Luken 2010). Indeed, it seems that reflection as such is not yet even fully understood in its essential aspects nor adequately applied by lecturers themselves (Stokking 2004). So, although higher education is successful in transmitting knowledge and developing certain skills, it doesn't succeed (enough) in developing 'reflection-in-action' as a core transferable competence (using Donald Schön's concept, first mentioned in his cardinal 'The Reflective Practitioner. How professionals think in action', 1983). Strikingly, a similar problem analysis can be made within the fields of teacher and adult education (Buiskool a.o 2010).

What's the consequence of this deficit? After graduating students are not successful (enough) in transferring their knowledge and skills acquired in higher education into specific labour situations. According to Kitokie projektai®, one of the partner organizations within this project, this is due to the absence of 'inner readiness', a concept they have recently developed. They state that knowledge and skill are only two elements of competences to be operational. Proper 'inner readiness' is needed as a third element in order for knowledge and skill to be fully integrated into an individual's state of being and leading to effective action. When missing 'inner readiness', people mostly get into low quality action or sometimes even don't get into action at all. So, from an educational point of view, it's essential to address all different elements of competences development in the right according ways: one can 'inform' people to transmit knowledge and 'train' people to develop skills, but 'inner readiness' cannot be 'taught' or 'trained' (knowledge and skills are more objective, inner readiness is more subjective). Change in inner readiness (so also in one's ability to act and to express personal potential in specific labour situations) happens through the building of a person's awareness by reflecting about personal experience in an equal and respectful educational relationship.

So the major topic of this project is: how can a lecturer or trainer help learners to reflect more appropriately in both formal and informal education? As research indicated, there is a clear need in both fields for better understanding how reflection works (and how not), how it relates to inner readiness and how one can change by means of reflection a person's awareness and his ability to act.

Moreover there's a clear methodological need how to integrate all this understanding in ways to assist and stimulate good quality reflective practices (both classical and ICT-based methods). Therefore project REFLECT aims to develop an adequate problem and need analysis why reflection often does not work in higher and adult education (in order to know what to avoid), an on-line learning platform for lecturers and trainers about the 'why & how & when to reflect properly', including the guidelines, methods and materials for using individual and group reflections, and an adequate assessment guidelines for reflection as a core transferable competence. The main target groups of project REFLECT will be lecturers in higher and teacher education and adult educators in non-formal education.

In this way, project REFLECT fits to the 2011 EU Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education, stating that higher education should equip graduates with the knowledge and core transferable competences they need to succeed in high-skill occupations. It also fits to the demand for better initial and continuing professional development of teachers and lecturers.

By developing ICT-methods for reflective practices, the project also fits to the EU 2010 Digital Agenda demand to exploit the transformational benefits of ICTs and other new technologies to enrich teaching, improve learning experiences and support personalised learning. Lastly the project also fits to the Erasmus+ demand for appropriate assessment.

<http://www.reflecting.eu/>

http://menntavisindastofnun.hi.is/sites/menntavisindastofnun.hi.is/files/reflect_report_0.pdf