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Persone, Educazione e Welfare nella società 5.0

Community Notebook

People, Education, and Welfare
in society 5.0

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TEACHING ENHANCED LEARNING FOR ENGAGING

AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Edited by

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INDICE

1. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING COMPETENCES ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC

by Viviana Capozza[*]

The use of digital technologies can help learners to undertake self-directed learning paths, as it allows students to study school subjects according to their interests. Given the forced use of these tools due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this study aims to understand which competences were developed by high-school (14-19 years old) students in Rome during this period. For this purpose, for the research project of the Sapienza University of Rome on "The Social Impact Assessment of DaD after Covid-19" (a project still in progress) it was constructed a rubric for the self-assessment of self-directed learning competences that has been proposed within focus groups. The rubric therefore has been used as a stimulus to help students reflect on the way their formal and informal learning experiences have changed because of the pandemic.

The construction of this rubric was possible starting from the conceptual model proposed by Song and Hill (2007) that summarises the characteristics necessary for self-directed learning to take place. Literature about competences and learning was useful to identify all the 14 indicators that are shown in Figure 1: Awareness, Initiative, Control, Responsibility and Problem Solving

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(Stockdale & Brockett, 2006; Süleyman & Coşkun, 2016); Recognising, Planning, Assigning, Evaluating and Reflecting (Patterson, 2002; Thornton, 2010; Trinchero, 2014; Cortoni & Lo Presti, 2018), Individual, Collaborative, Digital and Daily (Lubben, Campbell & Dlamini, 1996; Figueiredo, 2005; Biesta, Lawy & Kelly, 2009). Students were asked to assess themselves from 0 to 5 for each of these indicators, explaining the reasons why they provided that score.

Figure 1: Self-assessment rubric of self-directed learning competences
0= no experience/competence; 5= max experience/competence

Personal Attributes	Awareness						
	Initiative						
	Control						
	Responsibility						
	Problem Solving						
Process	Recognizing						
	Planning						
	Assigning						
	Evaluating						
	Reflecting						
Context	Individual						
	Collaborative						
	Digital						
	Daily						

From a first analysis of the focus groups conducted between April and June 2022 it is possible to notice that the lowest scores provided by the students are those relating to *Awareness* and *Reflecting* (Figure 3). The first item refers to the ability to recognize the benefits of formal and informal learning, a competence that several students perceived limited due to the

technical difficulties experienced during the DAD/DDI[1] experience, as well as to didactic and organisational problems. Furthermore, the lock-down periods and the fear of contagion from Covid-19 led to a reduction or in any case to a remodulation of extra-curricular activities, making it difficult for lots of students to even recognize the benefits of informal learning. The item *Reflecting* instead refers to the ability to redesign one's own learning method to correct or to adapt it to other areas of learning. The fact that this competence turned out to be rather difficult for the students appears to be due more to its intrinsic complexity than to the experience lived during the pandemic.

Figure 2: Mean values per competence

Competence	Mean
Awareness	3,26
Initiative	3,40
Control	3,67
Responsibility	3,94
Problem Solving	3,60
Recognizing	3,71
Planning	3,80
Assigning	3,75
Evaluating	3,69
Reflecting	3,25
Individual	3,66
Collaborative	3,57
Digital	4,12
Daily	4,12

It should be emphasised that in some cases students have experienced a positive impact because of DaD/DDI with respect to

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[1] Learning models adopted in Italian schools during Covid-19 pandemic.

these competences. In particular, 19[2] out of 140 students argued that this experience have increased their level of *Awareness* mainly for two reasons: on one hand, because of the effort needed to recognize the importance of school despite the fact that the period easily led them to underestimating school lessons; on the other hand, because they have learned to be more responsible and rediscovered important aspects of life and learning such as human contact and sporting activities. As for the *Reflecting* competence, instead, 6 out of 138 students have increased this competence since they had to change their method of learning because of the need for adaptation that the period in DaD/DDI required.

Another item on which students have tended to provide a low score is the one relating to the *Initiative*. Students reacted in a very diversified way from this point of view, but it is possible to observe a greater number of students who experienced an increase in this competence (45/139 against 37/139 who have perceived a negative impact). In fact, several students declared that curiosity or boredom led them to deepen studies related to school subjects or to their interests. The school experience during the pandemic period has inevitably conditioned habits related to free time, leading to the abandonment of some activities or the resumption of others (Stebbins, 2008), as well as the undertaking of completely new ones or the maintenance of the previous ones in an innovative way (Mokhtarian, Salomon & Handy, 2004). Some students have instead experienced a sort of flattening out, because the difficulty of carrying out leisure activities can cause a further discouragement and sense of boredom (Stebbins, 2020).

Responsibility and the ability to learn in the *Digital* and *Daily* contexts instead stand out among the skills for which students provided a higher score: not only students have rarely lived

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[2] 29 students said that they experienced a negative impact.

negative experiences relating to these aspects, but these items are also the ones with the greatest difference between the number of positive and negative impacts perceived: 23 out of 139 students declared that they have benefited from DaD/DDI in terms of *Responsibility,* since being less guided and controlled by teachers allowed them to recognize that the achievement of learning outcomes strongly depended on if they would or would not have attended school lessons. On the contrary, only 6 students perceived a negative impact, since now if they receive a bad mark, they tend to think that it is not their fault: they focus on the learning problems experienced during the pandemic (i.e., teachers' lack of digital competences) instead to focus on if they have studied enough.

As for the learning contexts, the positive impact perceived in the *Digital* (39/135) and in the *Daily* (17/135) ones are mainly explained by the fact that students have understood that the use of the Internet and digital applications can be carried out in a more productive way than they were used to do previously. This has therefore made it possible for them not only to understand how to exploit the potential of the Internet and in general of the programs installed on their PCs (such as *PowerPoint*) for school subjects, but also for a whole series of extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, this have helped them to recognize the importance of learning from all the positive and negative experiences they have lived: only a student perceived a negative impact on his competence regarding the *Digital* context, because being forced to study with digital technologies strengthen the aversion, he already had to them; only three students perceived a negative impact on their competence regarding the *Daily* context, because distance learning made them feel lonely and demotivated.

These findings suggest that the use of digital technologies at schools in non-pandemic times can expand learning opportunities for students inside and outside the formal context, helping them to

develop self-directed learning competences, useful for lifelong learning and therefore for students' success within society. The use of the focus groups and of the self-assessment rubric of self-directed learning competences has therefore been useful for identifying positive elements (Lo Presti, 2020) that could be considered in future planning for a democratic education, capable of offering students the opportunities for becoming aware, responsible and autonomous citizens (Dewey, 1916).

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Appendix

Rubrica di auto-valutazione per le competenze dell'apprendimento auto-diretto
0= nessuna esperienza/competenza maturata; 5= massima esperienza/competenza maturata

Attributi Personali	Consapevolezza[1]						
	Spirito di iniziativa[2]						
	Controllo[3]						
	Responsabilità[4]						
	Problem Solving[5]						
Processo	Riconoscere[6]						
	Pianificare[7]						
	Attribuire[8]						
	Valutare[9]						
	Riflettere[10]						
Contesto	Individuale[11]						
	Collaborativo[12]						
	Digitale[13]						
	Quotidiano[14]						

[1] Capacità di riconoscere i benefici dell'apprendimento formale e informale, con riferimento alle esperienze scolastiche ed extra-scolastiche.
[2] Capacità di interessarsi e intraprendere percorsi di apprendimento/approfondimento senza che sia richiesto da parte di terzi.

[3] Capacità di superare gli ostacoli apprendendo dai fallimenti.

[4] Capacità di assumersi la responsabilità dei propri successi e fallimenti.

[5] Capacità di dedicarsi al proprio benessere psico-fisico e alla realizzazione dei propri interessi/obiettivi nonostante impegni e imprevisti.

[6] Capacità di riconoscere il proprio livello di conoscenza teorico e pratico rispetto a un ambito specifico.

[7] Capacità di raccogliere informazioni utili per identificare un metodo di apprendimento.

[8] Capacità di identificare le priorità e riconoscere le risorse necessarie per raggiungere gli obiettivi di apprendimento.

[9] Capacità di riconoscere i punti di forza e di debolezza del metodo di apprendimento utilizzato.

[10] Capacità di progettare, se necessario, un nuovo metodo di apprendimento e/o capire come applicarlo ad altri ambiti.

[11] Capacità di apprendere in autonomia, senza bisogno di indicazioni da parte di terzi.

[12] Capacità di apprendere in gruppo e in modo partecipativo.

[13] Capacità di apprendere utilizzando internet e gli applicativi digitali.

[14] Capacità di trasformare la propria esperienza (di studio, relazionale e sociale) in un'occasione di apprendimento e di crescita personale.