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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



3-H project
Head·Heart·Hand

3-H (Head, Heart, Hand)

Erasmus+ KA2

Strategic Partnership
for vocational education
and training

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Project Reference

Project code: 2021-1-IT01-KA220-VET-000034825

CUP: G39J21023570006

Programme

Programme: Erasmus+

Key Action: Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training

Duration

1 year and six months (28/02/2022 – 27/08/2024)

3-H project (Head, Heart, Hand)

The **3-H project (Head, Heart, Hand)** is based on the assumption that VET should provide holistic education, i.e. education that takes into account in the same measure cognitive intelligence (head), social-emotional intelligence (heart) and manual intelligence (hand).

The project focuses on:

- Development of **knowledge and methodologies** to enable **teachers** to work on **social-emotional aspects**;
- Outlining **a strong welcoming model**, dedicated to the first months of pupils' entry into the VET pathways;
- Developing/adopting **good practices that promote pupils' well-being at school** (from welcoming onwards) and motivate students;
- **Developing PBL experiences to develop socio-emotional skills** and learn content in an authentic and contextualized way.

Objectives

The 3-H project aims to help **reduce the number of VET learners who are unmotivated or do not feel well at school** through the adoption of teaching methodologies that value socio-emotional competences.

The specific objectives of the project are

EQUIP teachers and trainers with the skills to:

- **Introduce methodologies for managing student demotivation within the classroom group;**
- **Introduce the social-emotional perspective in daily work with students.**

IMPROVE LEARNING CAPACITY OF PUPILS through

- **Developing skills for managing social-emotional aspects.**



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INTRODUCTION

In every era and in every part of the world where pedagogical knowledge and thinking have been developed, reflection on education has often highlighted the inseparable connection between emotional and cognitive aspects as well as the factors that characterize human development such as knowledge, growth, maturation and learning. Over the centuries, also due to the advancement of scientific knowledge, such a unity of “heart, head and hands” has been confirmed again and again. At the same time, methods that are respectively sensationalist, intellectualistic or still unreflectively operational derive from focusing education on just one of the three dimensions.

Equally consolidated in pedagogical reflection is the call to consider the social dimension of education, a dimension in which the human being develops and lives and which cannot be underestimated either in the mechanisms of learning or in the purposes of education. And it is precisely in the social dimension that the dimensions of action, intellect and emotion mobilized by education are played.

The contemporary trend on "Socio-Emotional Learning" (SEL) has highlighted a serious deficit in modern school systems in terms of attention to the socio-emotional dimensions of teaching, learning and education. Through theoretical models and empirical research, SEL as a field of research has accumulated essential evidence that, on one the hand, confirms the centrality of the socio-emotional sphere as a fundamental dimension of education, and on the other hand, provides indications for improving existing educational systems and for setting up future ones.

In the context of the SEL, different reference frameworks of Socio-Emotional Skills (SES) are specified, a term that we suggest to be used together with other more specific (e.g. character skills) or more comprehensive (e.g. psychosocial resources), but avoiding – for the reasons explained above – expressions that postulate a separation between cognitive and socio-emotional aspects.

The principles outlined below aim to support and guide policymakers, legislators and civil servants engaged in the ongoing challenge of innovating and transforming the education and vocational training system, bearing in mind its structural limitations, growing social risks and emerging needs in our contemporary society.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The socio-emotional dimension is always a fundamental pillar of learning; it must therefore necessarily play a key role in teaching, didactics, training and education.
2. Teachers and school leaders, with their socio-emotional competence, are the essential link that makes socio-emotional care of students possible, in different forms and methodologies depending on their age, as well as through example and indirect teaching.
3. The development of socio-emotional competence among teachers and school leaders should be a central pillar of initial training and Continuing Professional Development. The socio-emotional training of teachers and school leaders can only occur through the logic of transformative and experiential learning.
4. The crucial role played by teachers in social-emotional learning must be supported by school, social and professional policies at all levels, as well as by appropriate organizational forms, in terms of educational spaces, timing, grouping methods, pedagogical and didactic resources.
5. Leadership and governance – in terms of personal qualities and management solutions – are a fundamental element to enable organizational transformations capable of supporting social-emotional learning in the school community.
6. Social-emotional care requires the systematic and systemic exercise of the logic of community building, at every level: within the classroom, in teacher-students and teacher-teacher relations, in school-family and school-territory cooperation, and, where appropriate, also at the broader scales of district, city, region, state and international and global community.
7. Social-emotional care requires that students play a leading role: organizational flexibility must therefore allow the consideration of their voice and their operational proposals in guiding the teaching-learning process in relation to the context.
8. The adoption of a reference framework (curriculum) of Socio-Emotional Skills (SES) is useful for an educational design that makes the socio-emotional aspect a goal and a detectable outcome of the educational work; on the other hand, the assessment of SES should be introduced with caution and attention, allowing it to be interpreted as exquisitely formative assessment, stimulating dialogue and self-evaluation.
9. Focusing the curriculum on social-emotional skills is also essential to enhance the potential of technology and attenuate its risks; the use of learning technologies, including emerging ones based on Artificial Intelligence, is not only a necessity dictated by the context but a source of educational opportunities.
10. Social-emotional learning, in addition to being a transversal attention to the entire curriculum, should be the subject of explicit practices and dedicated time, some involving the whole school community, others directed to subgroups of students and/or phases of the path that require particular attention to re-elaboration and growth.

The principles outlined here derive from a solid pedagogical thought further corroborated and specified by the most recent international research in the SEL field, as well as by specific and innovative recent projects like 3H project.