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Name of the project: “Development of the Key Competences of Adults by Innovation Program of Consumer Education“

Contract number: 2018-1-SK01-KA204-046393

OUTPUT 5 - Creating an Educational Program and verifying it

Form of verification: Action Research

Research objective: To verify the impact of the consumer education program on the development of key competencies

Research methods: observation, evaluation, data processing methods, method of presentation of results

PREAMBLE

Due to Corona virus pandemic, in Italy it is not yet possible to hold lessons and training courses in presence. The reference law is n. 6 of 21 February 2020 and subsequent amendments until the most recent of 14 July 2020 in which the Prime Minister signed the Dpcm which extends the measures of the Dpcm to 31 July 2020 of 11 June 2020. They are also confirmed and remain in force till 31 July 2020, as the provisions contained in the ordinances of the Minister of Health 30 June 2020 and 9 July 2020 (<http://www.governo.it/it/iorestoacasa-misure-governo>).

For this reason we had to carry out the two verifications of the lessons in the form of distance education.

RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

Two methods were used to recruit participants:

- search through publication of a notice on Facebook on the pages of: Consumer Compentcy, Federconsumatori, Consumer and Consumer Psychology, personal profiles
- sampling of convenience, through contacts of the Federconsumatori (other offices of the association, request to the associates, etc ...)

The recruitment brought 12 participants, while another 4 were identified among young people who perform civil service at the association. For a total of 16 people, divided into 8 for each lesson

DIVISION OF PARTICIPANTS

As it was difficult to establish the connection with 10 people (8 participants + the connection of the conductors), so in both lessons the 2 participants of the civil service were present with the conductors and the two trainers were together. This was possible because being in strength of the association and respecting the directives (which foresees to maintain the distance of one meter from one person and the other and the use of safety devices and an open window) it is possible to be in 4 people in a room if it has certain measures. In this way the link was between 6 participants and the trainers.

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POINTS OF WEAKNESS

Also as a consequence of lack of confidence with online lessons, we have noticed many weaknesses both from a technical and methodological point of view.

We talked to some teachers who held online lessons throughout the school year and confirmed that they themselves had to deal with the problems we encountered. Technology is a great help and a great tool, but you have to know it and take the right measures to use it. We were taken by surprise and everything had to be structured thinking about this tool and not to the frontal lessons.

We have identified two types of weaknesses: 1) of conductors, 2) structural

- 1) there are many platforms that allow you to do online lessons in a structured way and that allow you to have a large number of participants. They are structured to create a virtual classroom and if we had used one of those we would have encountered less problems, but both for the haste (we waited in the hope that the law that prevents the frontal lessons would change) and for lack of knowledge, we did not use the right channel.
- 2) online lessons do not allow participants to be in direct contact with each other and to carry out group activities. This is a very strong gap that affects the conduct of the lessons in the way they were planned. It is true that each group task has been transformed into an individual delivery, but it is not the same thing

STRENGTHS

In case of inability to carry out lessons in the presence this is an excellent solution, but we strongly reiterate that the project must be designed for the online tool from the beginning

The real strength is the very strength of the Consumer issues which, when explained, manage to involve even people who did not know them as they realize the importance they have in their daily lives and which are a matter that involves them in a way transversal: in daily life, in their communication skills, in the world of work as they are an added value to general culture.

LESSONS

Although in the intentions the lessons should have been interactive, in reality they became frontal lessons, in which the conductors took turns to explain the themes.

The first five minutes have passed to give instructions on how to keep in touch, we have had problems with microphones and videos. We then shared the didactic materials of the respective lessons on the e-mails of the participants, we gave the links to the videos they had to view. We moved on to personal presentations and the next ten minutes were devoted to the presentation of the projects.

In practice it was not possible to respect the scheduled times because they were distorted by the online and our inexperience with the method.

After the first moments of impasse, when we got to the heart of the topics, the climate also changed, as can be seen from the following reports

THE FIRST VERIFICATION

THEME: Environmental issues and consumer regulation **Specific objectives:**

1. Learn that even the individual can make a difference if he behaves appropriately and implement behaviors that respect the environment (Social and Civic Key Competencies).
2. Search for, collect and process of information concerning environmental protection (Communication in mother tongue).

Date and time: 07/07/2020 - (9.30/11.00)

Address of the venue: Online training-Name of the researchers: Flavia Cavalero and Fabio Verneti
- Duration of the event: 90 minuts - Number of the respondents: 8

Research sample		Men	Women
Age	16-19 years	1	
	20-24 years		1
	25-29 years	4	2
Level of education	ISCED 1 Primary education		
	ISCED 2 Lower secondary education	2	
	ISCED 3 Upper secondary education	3	3
Unemployment time	1-4 years	5	3
	5-9 years		
	More than 10 years		

Answers to research questions:

1. Was the chosen topic of consumer education attractive and motivating?

The participants found the topic covered interesting; two of them said that initially they were not very interested in the topic, but then they became passionate. The thing that made them change their attitude was to understand that individual behavior has repercussions on the environment.

2. Did experiential teaching stimulate students' activity for learning? Unfortunately, due to the legal restrictions caused by the Corona virus pandemic, the lesson was online, this did not allow for the creation of working groups, and the video was viewed individually.

3. What were the quality of elaborated tasks that the participants have presented?

The participants were very collaborative despite the distance and, in general, the quality of the work done was good. Especially the video exercise, which was designed as an individual task, was done very well

4. Did the students manage to solve the tasks in the set time?

The activities were carried out regularly on schedule, in some cases even a little in advance

5. Were all members of the group active in solving the tasks? Participants were equally interested and active

6. Were all participants in the communication involved? Participants were equally involved in the communication

7. Have the tools for measuring the development of key competencies been appropriately developed?

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The face-to-face lesson is certainly preferable, the distance dimension does not allow the participants to collaborate with each other and the individual dimension can be penalizing compared to the group dimension

8. Did the indicators measure different levels of development of the participants' key competencies?

In this group, the initial level of knowledge was quite equivalent, and in the end the participants were attested to a good level of development of key competences and the indicators highlighted the differences

9. Has the verification confirmed the development of Social and Civic competencies? What knowledge, skills and attitude were developed and in what quality?

All participants understood that individual behavior has a strong collective impact. Starting from the case study, they identified themselves with the characters and found some of their behaviors. One participant said *"so my mother is right when she tells me that I have to take a shower and not a bath in the tub ... I thought she said it because I stay in the toilet too long"*. The class understood the importance of participating effectively and constructively in social and working life

10. Did the verification confirm the development of Communication in the Mother Tongue? What communication skills were developed and in what quality?

Students learned and understood the meaning of words they didn't know, for example that of "water footprint" and there was confusion about words that were used as synonyms, such as "consumerism / consumerism" - "environmentalism / ecology". Participants actively participates in discussions, they took notes and asked for references to further investigate the topic. Now they know basic daily behaviors to protect the environment and to expresses opinions, experiences and attitudes in a coherent, clear and concise manner. All of them are able to give concrete examples and to indicate correct ways to protect the environment.

11. Was the self-assessment of the participants in the training objective?

No, it wasn't, but I think it's important to include it as it allows participants to evaluate both their actual involvement and the learning achieved

12. Have participants confirmed that consumer education is useful and want to be educated?

Everyone confirmed that intend to participate in other training course

13. Has the Action Research confirmed that the Consumer Education Program has met the objectives of developing of key competencies?

Yes, despite the change in the type of lesson which is certainly not positive compared to the planned one (online lessons versus attendance lessons); all this makes us hope that with face-toface lessons the objectives can always be achieved with a program of this type.

THE SECOND VERIFICATION

THEME: Advertising and consumer behavior **Specific objectives:**

1. Ability to criticize and decode advertising: learn new possibilities (understand how it is possible to learn to perform tasks that are never addressed and how important it is to know how to do it) (Social and Civic Key Competencies).
2. Use language in a positive manner and in a creative way (for example through metaphors to better express oneself), (Communication in mother tongue).

Date and time: 08/07/2020 - (9.30/11.00)

Address of the venue: Online training - Name of the researchers: Flavia Cavalero and Fabio Verneti - Duration of the event: 90 minutes - Number of the respondents: 8

Research sample		Men	women
Age	16-19 years	0	0
	20-24 years	2	2
	25-29 years	1	3
Level of education	ISCED 1 Primary education		
	ISCED 2 Lower secondary education	3	5
	ISCED 3 Upper secondary education	0	0
Unemployment time	1-4 years	3	5
	5-9 years	0	0
	More than 10 years	0	0

Answers to research questions:

1. Was the chosen topic of consumer education attractive and motivating?

Yes, the participants were interested and intrigued by the topic; they wanted to understand how advertising managed to condition consumers during purchases

2. Did experiential teaching stimulate students' activity for learning?

Yes, but presence mode would have been preferable Unfortunately, due to the legal restrictions caused by the Corona virus pandemic, the lesson was online, this did not allow for the creation of working groups, and the video was viewed individually.

3. What were the quality of elaborated tasks, which the participants have presented?

The level of tasks performed was medium, perhaps because the participants cannot collaborate each other, but had to work individually. The task of detecting misleading advertisements in some magazines was deemed difficult to execute

4. Did the students manage to solve the tasks in the set time?

The activities were carried out regularly on schedule

5. Were all members of the group active in solving the tasks?

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Yes, but with differences of involvement depending on the task, in that on misleading advertising, considered complicated, I noticed less involvement, while on what related to advertising communication techniques I noticed a greater participation

6. Were all participants in the communication involved?

Yes, they were. They were all very curious and asked many questions

7. Have the tools for measuring the development of key competencies been appropriately developed?

The face-to-face lesson is certainly preferable, the distance dimension does not allow the participants to collaborate with each other and the individual dimension can be penalizing compared to the group dimension

8. Did the indicators measure different levels of development of the participants' key competencies?

Yes the indicators have been useful to highlight the learning differences in the group

9. Has the verification confirmed the development of Social and Civic competencies? What knowledge, skills and attitude were developed and in what quality?

All actively participated in making personal contributions and were able to associate the issues faced in the classroom with their personal experiences, understood what criticism is and some learned to decode advertising. Everyone understood that it is possible and important to participate effectively and constructively in social and working life

10. Did the verification confirm the development of Communication in the Mother Tongue? What communication skills were developed and in what quality?

All students are able to explain to the colleagues of the course the meaning of a specific advertising message and to understand the manifest message; some have better understood how to decode the message and are able to explain it to others

11. Was the self-assessment of the participants in the training objective?

No, it wasn't, but I think it's important to include it as it allows participants to evaluate both their actual involvement and the learning achieved

12. Have participants confirmed that consumer education is useful and want to be educated?

Everyone confirmed that intend to participate in other training course

13. Has the Action Research confirmed that the Consumer Education Program has met the objectives of developing of key competencies?

Yes, despite the change in the type of lesson which is certainly not positive compared to the planned one (online lessons versus attendance lessons); all this makes us hope that with face-to-face lessons the objectives can always be achieved with a program of this type.