

Good practice: General Competences Skills

Course

21st Century Skill connected:

Learning skills: critical thinking, collaboration, creative thinking

Literacy skills: numeracy, literacy

Life skills: focus, self-control, communication

Give an explanation of how this good practice works. Examples from websites, videos or other media are necessary.

One of the wards in Płock prison (Poland) is a ward for inmates who have mental disabilities. These are non-psychotic mental disorders and mentally retarded. Just for this particular group of inmates there exists occupational therapeutic workshop. This is an institution which organizes various additional activities during which inmates can not only productively spend their time, learn new skills via therapeutic workshops but alleviate their mental disabilities. This is the most important part and role of this particular institution.

One of the most important parts of the occupational therapeutic workshop is organizing artistic workshops (this will be covered in the third example of good practises).

Another activity that is not part of the mentioned above artistic workshop is a course that has been introduced not that long ago and is an example of a non-formal education event. The head of the department decided that they would introduce a completely new form of education due to the fact that inmates from this ward do not have any chances of taking part in educational activities that look similar to a school-like form. What is very important here and worth mentioning is the fact that a huge majority of all inmates in the ward in question have huge educational deficits. They either left school very early as teenagers and never came back or have never taken on any educational challenges.

Thus, there came an idea of organizing such a course – general competences skills course. The main assumption that we had when implementing the course was that thanks to the workshop and thanks to the involvement of the inmates in this workshop, they will be able to acquire, nourish and/or build up their skills in the field of, i.e. creative writing, writing skills, reading comprehension, etc. This, in our eyes, will not only lead them to being better educated individuals, but may also contribute to lowering the reoffending rate which will be the benefit for the society. Not only will they be occupied while serving their time in prison but also, they will gain or develop new skills. This is the main aim of this idea. Since this workshop is still ongoing, we do not know what the final impact there will be, however we believe that thanks to the participants being better educated we expect to reduce reoffending rate. We believe that this workshop will have an extremely positive and concrete influence on its participants. They will see that one can choose a different path in their lives – different from the one chosen so far, namely felonious.

Explain how this good practice helps solve problems/stimulates social vocational skills in your country. If possible, provide data of how successful the good practice is.

The whole curriculum of the workshop that has been prepared in Płock prison consists of four separate parts that cover certain competences – humanistic, mathematical, scientific (mainly topics connected with geography and the world around us) and the most important from the point of view of the good practice examples – social and personal competences.

Bearing in mind that participants are mentally disabled, this part of the workshop cycle is extremely crucial for them to gain skills that would be helpful in their “outside” life. The curriculum covers, among the others, the following topics in this part of the study event:

1. Safe behaviour on the road.
2. Is it worth to be tolerant?
3. Addictions are dangerous.
4. How to behave in an office, at the post office, in a bank, etc.
5. Shall we segregate and recycle rubbish?
6. The value of keeping your word.
7. Various holidays – national and church related.
8. Where to look for help after you are released free?
9. Is sport important in our lives?
10. Advantages of learning and getting new skills.
11. Savoir vivre in everyday life.

The assumed outcomes of the implemented training are (the focus below is only on the part connected with social and personal competences, excluding these connected with humanistic, math and scientific competences):

1. Being more independent in one's everyday life.

2. Increase of self-belief and social usefulness.
3. Shaping right social behaviours, and increase in social competences.
4. Stimulation of social activity.
5. Creation of educational opportunities.
6. Alleviating psychological tension and learning how to release this tension.
7. Expressing yourself through engagement in educational activity.
8. Enhancing self-discipline, punctuality, responsibility for entrusted tasks, time keeping, etc.
9. Developing soft skills such as group work, proper work ethics, positive attitude, ability to behave properly according to environment around us, ability to communicate with others, ability to think creatively and critically, ability to speak, getting good manners, ability to manage your time, motivation, optimism, etc.
10. Promoting one's propriety.
11. Getting to know with and understanding the role of social tasks.

Summing up, this example of good practises is a relatively new activity in Płock prison. Since the training activity has not finished yet, we cannot provide with some tangible results. However, the paramount result that we expect is a higher level of many skills among participating prisoners and among them – social and personal ones. Another result is a lower level of reoffending rate among those who'll take active part in the project. All activities that inmates will take part in should have a positive, educational impact on them.

Explain in one or two sentences how this good practice matches with the connected 21st Century Skill.

The very main objective of the good practice example in question is to strengthen various skills among prisoners. However, a very important part here is that we want our beneficiaries to acquire also new personal and social skills and competences in informal education settings and in the end to lead them to being better educated individuals. This, however, is an intangible objective. Nevertheless, we believe that thanks to the acquired competences, our beneficiaries will be able to think critically and creatively. They will be equipped in new soft skills and in the end they will become better citizens.

Good Practice 2 Appendix 1 – General competences skills curriculum (pdf)

Good Practice 2 Appendix 2 – “Busola” NGO website – “Art as means to develop low skilled inmates” project

<http://en.busola.edu.pl/project/art-as-means-to-develop-low-skilled-inmates/>