

# INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE METACOGNITIVE COMPETENCE

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## Abstract

Studying difficulties observed in teenagers do not appear at once, but they are the result of a process that parents and teachers do not perceive immediately. In order to gain good results in the study, teenagers should learn to reflect on the positive influence of self-regulating cognitive, metacognitive, affective and volitional processes within the learning process. If students know how to communicate effectively with their adult partner, this turns out to be a winning goal in the educational process.

The risk of social exclusion and of school failure, for students that feel uncomfortable with standard education parameters, is remarkable. Diversity within the school context represents a challenge that involves all the main agents of change: teachers, school administrators, families and extracurricular educational agencies, each with specific functions. In order to achieve the social inclusion of these students, teachers should adopt new teaching methods, original solutions, tailored to individual pupils and contexts, new educational-pedagogical activities customized for the individual students and the different contexts.

Social exclusion can be overcome by activating learning centred 'educational paths', taking into account all the dimensions of the student's personality (cognitive, metacognitive, practical-operational, affective, motivational, relational and social) in 'authentic' contexts, where communication and social interaction take place with other people, peers and adults (teachers or experts), facilitators, coaches, counsellors or tutors, even through new technologies.

We believe that deep thinking and independent learning are more likely to occur when effective learning and thinking strategies are explicitly discussed and employed by the teacher and students. Reflection and metacognition are key skills used in this process. Students who employ reflection and metacognition know how to approach learning and are aware of/able to evaluate and regulate their own thinking.

The present research-intervention aims at examining the communication process between Sicilian teenagers, their parents and their teachers within the context of the Sicilian territory. The research has been focused on the perception educators have of teenagers' educational needs, in particular those concerning study difficulties. A training methodology has been tested with 454 teenage students, to support and implement individual study and improve communication with their parents.

In particular, the biennial (2011 -2013) research project has been articulated into two actions: a) the exploratory investigation in order to collect data on the educational needs of teenagers; b) the formative intervention on the learning strategies and on the communication in the family in order to promote an effective dialogue between teenagers and their parents.

Keywords: Communication, metacognitive competence, ADVP.

## 1 INTERGENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF METACOGNITIVE SKILLS

The difficulties of studying which explodes during adolescence are not only attributable to the way of teaching or the complexity of the content of the textbooks. There is an upstream problem of intergenerational communication that this article will explore. But sometimes there is also an omission of what is usually called, educational activity for the development of metacognitive competence in adolescents. To this second cause of failure in school was dedicated a remedy that is research-intervention, that has produced a training model which in our opinion, is re-proposable in contexts similar to the one in which it was experimented [1].

Interpersonal communication is, today as in the past, one of the fundamental aspects of the delicate relationship between parents and teenage children, both in reference to the process of identity formation as in reference to the ability to take on a social role.

The view that emerges from the most recent research on the condition of the adolescent psycho-social features, among the problems, emerge a few positive points that illuminate the profound needs of sense that adolescents demonstrate and at the same time their aspirations for a meaningful human life richer in essential content. In fact the family, schools and associations play a very important role when they are able to provide adolescents with the evaluation criteria of behavior, methods of self-analysis and implementation skills. In a disoriented society, where communication channels are often overwhelmed by a lot of information and solicitations that are difficult to decode, if not only for the time you require to complete the metabolic process of the meanings they convey, particular importance acquires the ability to create networks of relationships governed by temporal and intergenerational codes. Intergenerational dialogue finds a privileged sphere of realization in family relationships and informal networks of communication.

The ability to carry out projects for the future for the new generations is closely linked to the creation of a new model of intergenerational dialogue capable of defining the distance, the passages and the solidarity between generations.

The majority of Italian teenagers expresses a clear and obvious tension towards a “present and now” dimension of existence and finds it difficult to envisage their future paths [2].

In the world of teenagers, as it emerges from the research and from the experience of educators, constants are found that provide an interesting key to understanding the current condition of adolescence and to identify possible ways of solving educational problems. The prolongation of adolescence more and more towards the chronological adult age, without being really so, contributes to creating a youthful condition that lives their existence in a dimension of uncertainty. This uncertainty affects not only the future but also the present.

The role of the family and of the school are essential for the growth of the individual, because it is in these contexts that the adolescent learns to discover his own identity and to understand their capabilities.

Teachers should know how to go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and values, to live a dynamic relationship with the student in the learning environment where constant solicitation is generated for the full achievement of the human form [3].

The experiences of teaching / learning are not only valuable in themselves only because they promote the acquisition of important contents, which increases knowledge and culture and therefore the human background of the pupil. They also represent an important driving force able to put reciprocal communication between classmates and teachers, and that call for further maturational processes: self-awareness, personal identity and social reputation.

A positive and effective family and school experience results in solid maturation on the level of identity capable of projecting the teenager to further goals of personal and professional commitment. A continuous negative result is not indifferent to the person but determines emotional crises, existential doubts, hidden anxieties that affect personal maturation. The vision of the self in adolescence is under construction, has a powerful reference to the educational experience and this may impair normal growth process [4].

Learning effectively requires the student to the implementation of skills and processes attributable to the sphere of self-regulation and metacognition.

Self-regulation is a large and complex construct, a consequence of a twist between cognition and attitudes, where strategic, motivational and volitional aspects are involved. Since the process of learning new knowledge and skills and their transfer to new situations is based primarily on skills of self-determination and self-regulation, we need to promote the latter if you want to achieve stable, fruitful and formatively valid results. Zimmermann [5] identifies self-regulation as an essential skill for human adaptation and survival which is the ability to adjust thoughts, feelings and actions and to adapt them in a circular manner to achieve personal goals. SRL (Self-regulation Learning) researches have suggested that students are self-regulated to the degree that they are meta-cognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning processes.

For many years, researchers believed that young children did not have metacognitive knowledge or skills and that metacognitive instruction was not only a waste of time, but quite possibly detrimental to a child's learning [6].

In addition, awareness of one's self-efficacy allows the student to decide whether to give up on a task, deal with it or persevere in it. Some research show how a model of perseverance in completing a complex and challenging task, affects the perseverance of those who observe it [7].

The research that is presented below is part of a strategic plan where the role of the family in personal and professional growth of young generations is proposed, acting both on the pedagogical skills of the parents, the motivations and methods of studying of the adolescents. The project was sustained by the Foundation for the South and has developed in two parallel lines of action: one for parents and one for students of secondary schools in Sicily.

## 2 THE RESEARCH

Education must orientate and guide the teenager to read nodes and difficulties of their own personal experience, in order to build in themselves a new awareness of oneself and one's inner world. Only in this way, the adolescent will develop the skills of planning and intentionality typical of adulthood, the abilities that converge towards the dimension of "know-how" and "know how to be," and which includes the abilities to develop plans for the future [8].

The problem of lack of interest and motivation in adolescents is the real challenge of education for a school that wants to be at the service of all. Despite the daily commitment of many teachers there are still rising cases of pupils who experience a deep unease towards traditional school rhythms, demonstrating a widespread lack of interest towards the activities of study and often enact behaviors and attitudes that are unsuitable for a cohabitation relationship demanded by the educational environment.

With specific educational interventions and providing adolescents with appropriate evaluation and self-assessment valuation tools, the teenager should be helped to make those decisions necessary for the development of a personal study method, because the acquisition of the capacity to choose in a responsible way the method of studying is an important condition for the full achievement of the educational goals of the school curriculum.

From the research of Pellerey [8], [7] it emerges that students who exhibit personality traits associated with a strong sense of commitment to pursue a goal and a strong capacity for perseverance, succeed better not only in study, but also after in their professional activity.

Wolf [10] points out the ability of each one to control and manage personal improvement in studying is a fundamental key for the achievement of personal excellence.

It is generally believed that the effectiveness with which adolescent's face problems and tasks related to their commitment to study is related on one side to their ability of self-regulation and their ability to direct their own learning process, and on the other side to feel understood by their educators. With the research we wanted to explore the type of communication that is established by the Sicilian teenager with his parents and his teachers. On the other hand, the perception that parents and teachers have the same educational needs of their children/pupils, particularly those related to the difficulties in school was revealed. If these are not adequately addressed these can lead to future failure in the social and professional life.

The research project, lasting two years (2011-2013), was divided into two types of actions: an exploratory survey for the detection of the educational needs of adolescents, training intervention on learning strategies and communication in the family in order to promote an effective dialogue between adolescents and parents.

The hypothesis that guided the entire research process was as follows: - curricular educational activities (described below), for adolescents between 14-17 years, which have significantly improved two metacognitive skills in them:

Motivated commitment: the ability to self-regulate one's own learning process. Responsible learning: the ability to effectively control ones will to carry out tasks with perseverance.

With an exploratory survey it was proposed to detect the difficulties of teenagers studying in Sicily, as perceived by both parents and teachers.

With the research-intervention it was proposed to develop in students the ability of self-assessment in learning, the ability of self-valuation in learning, motivation to study and the ability to work cooperatively in solving problems.

The exploratory survey was carried out on a sample of 1011 adults (secondary school teachers and parents of adolescent pupils, through the administration of a questionnaire, which allowed us to detect and compare the perception that parents and teachers had the same educational needs of their children/pupils in the school.

The training involved 454 students aged between 14 and 17 years of eight schools in Sicily. The educational effectiveness of the actions of orientation to the study has been verified through a series of specially designed instruments. Two focus groups were conducted (initial and final), whose results were compared with the answers given by the students to the initial questionnaire (ALM2008) on motivated commitment and on self-regulation of learning strategies.

### **3 THE EXPLORATORY SURVEY**

To reflect on the educational needs of the adolescents a questionnaire was proposed to parents and teachers of secondary schools in the first and second year of different provinces of Sicily (October, 2011). The 1011 questionnaires proved useful information to outline the framework of the perceptions of parents and teachers about the educational needs of the children, so as to be able to design a training program consistent with the findings.

The questionnaire was administered to a group of 609 teachers and 402 parents of schools resident in the provinces of Palermo, Ragusa, Trapani, Agrigento and Siracusa. 56.6% of secondary school teachers and parents of First Instance was interviewed and 43.4% of secondary schools. 65% of parents are aged between 45 and 55 years and the remaining 35% are over 55 years. The major part of parents claim to be employed (68%), 20% self-employed, 12% admit to not having a steady job. 60% of the teachers are aged between 40 and 55 years, 15% were under 40 years. 52% teach linguistic subjects, 38% scientific subjects and 10% physical education.

From the survey it emerges that the educational needs most frequently reported concern: the plan of life (89%), the construction of personal and social identity (85%), learning and academic performance (83%), intergenerational communication (78%), conflict management (74%) and the conscious use of the media (69%).

The educational needs most recognized even by parents include: the plan of life (92%), the construction of personal and social identity (82%), learning and academic performance (81%), communication between generations (74%), conflict management (73%) and the conscious use of the media (64%).

From the answers given by parents and teachers it emerged that adolescents have often an inaccurate and fragmented identity because they welcome all the contemporary solicitations, without discerning between those which favor the growth of their humanity and those that deplete; simply because they have not yet formed a policy. But there is no doubt that they aspire to build authentic relationships and that they are seeking the truth. The heart of the matter lies in a very strong need to confirm their identity. Teenagers want to know who they are, and to find out they need to confront themselves with significant points of reference.

According to the teachers, there is no design orientation independent to personal identity and the perception of how one is in the present. In the same way there is no ability to abstractly plan for the future regardless of the restrictions imposed by the concrete conditions of existence. All this affects the learning process and therefore the academic performance of adolescents.

The responses received from the parents confirm the dilemma or conflict of adolescents, the lack of a stance that puts into play their own freedom, especially when it relates to important areas of life. Making an educational or professional choice, join a group or a community, to say yes or no to a new job or career, to leave or to remain, are all situations that involve the person as a whole. Make choices that affects live, for the present and for the future, requires that the adolescent learns to effectively study and take its place within the larger context his plan of life.

The survey of the educational needs of Sicilian adolescents allowed a coherent and appropriate design of the training that is described below.

## **4 THE TRAINING**

The training intervention designed, implemented and evaluated intended to test a new way of training adolescents to improve communication with their parents and the way they face and accomplish their own personal study.

The activities with adolescents involved 454 students from eight schools in the Sicilian territory and consisted of 3 cycles of 4 sessions, lasting three hours each, for a total of 36 hours distributed in 12 weeks (January-June 2012).

Students who at the end of the selection, were involved in the formation training, were 155 males and 299 females from eight secondary schools (5 scientific high schools, two grammar schools, one socio-psycho-pedagogical institute) of the provinces Palermo, Catania and Trapani. Most of the students involved (75%) studies regularly and does not have learning difficulties.

The choice of the students who participated in the training intervention was carried out through the free completion of a purposely built questionnaire for participating in the project.

At the beginning of the questionnaire it was put to evidence the topics of the four meetings, and it was emphasized that these activities were not rehabilitation but were aimed at students who, who though not having a negative educational outcome, wanted to improve their study method. The first part of the questionnaire asked students to evaluate their own way of studying and its relationship with their academic performance. In the second part of the questionnaire the students were asked to consider the mode of communication adopted by their parents and their influence on educational results.

Most of the students surveyed (78%) claim to have a study method that adjusts according to the task and the discipline studied, 48% said that often the academic performance does not depend on the method used to study but by other variables involved during the course of the homework or during interrogation in class. Among the causes of academic achievement students include the ability or inability to control performance anxiety, the type of written assignments or oral questions during interrogations.

Some students (30%) say that their study method is not always effective to accomplish well and in the right time, the tasks set and would like to understand the reason why.

Almost all students (85%) say they have never participated in meetings on communication between parents and children. The reasons given for participation in the meetings are: better communication with parents and control anxiety during oral questions and tasks in the classroom.

### **4.1 The initial assessment**

The assessment tools used at the beginning and during the training have allowed us to observe, describe and evaluate the outcomes of the experience by the pupils involved and to verify the transferability to other contexts.

After defining which aspects of the students are intended to be improved by the educational intervention. A diagnosis of the initial situation of each student was made, which allowed an adequate knowledge of their cognitive strategies and their motivation to study. On the basis of these findings individual training sessions were designed.

For the preliminary acquaintance of the students involved a self-report questionnaire ALM2008 (La Marca, 2010, 67) was filled. A focus group was formed to detect the awareness of the ability to regulate their own cognitive, motivational, volitional and affective processes, in the performance of school tasks. A questionnaire specially constructed to analyze how communication occurs between parents and children was also used.

The areas investigated by the ALM2008 questionnaire and the focus group were: motivated commitment and responsible learning.

The analysis of the average values of the scores of each item and the comments made by students during the focus groups allowed us to highlight what were the difficulties that students perceive more.

The averages achieved by the entire student sample and the data collected in the focus groups are shown below.

The mean value (43) detected in the scale of motivated commitment indicates that substantially students perceive themselves to be able to control, effectively, their willingness to complete tasks with

perseverance, overcoming fatigue and frustration when faced with difficulties . An analysis of the individual items were several critical issues affecting a percentage of students between 44% and 48%. Students with problems are aware of it: not to be sometimes eager and curious to learn, they do not often give meaning to what they learn, that they are not always able to study on their own, not taking pleasure in what they study identifying valid reasons and maintaining a positive attitude towards commitment to the school, to stop working when faced with a boring task, to stop an activity when they are tired of trying to deepen the theme with other materials studied.

With regard to the scale of responsible learning, the average score obtained (45.3) indicates that about half of the students are capable of independently managing their study and, in general, the processes of learning, but not knowing how to identify the causes of their failures at school.

An analysis of the individual items in the scale shows that 44.5% of the students in the classroom or when reading books, when exposed to a theory, don't always try to understand how we got to process it, do not change their way of studying adjusting it to the various disciplines, not linking what studying with what they already know. Only 25.2% of the pupils are asked if what they read is true, linking together the knowledge gained in the study of various disciplines and self-evaluate their learning.

The results of the initial focus groups broadly confirm the findings of the questionnaire ALM2008. In overall, the data collected from the questionnaire ALM2008 and those detected by the focus groups detect a group of students who already possess some metacognitive skills useful for studying effectively but need to be strengthened and reoriented in some cases.

From the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire on communication between parents and children, there was a proper awareness about the motivations that often cause children to have fights with their parents.

An emerging aspect of communication in the family is open to dialogue, in fact, all students agree that it is possible to develop a more harmonious and peaceful environment if there is more confidence with the parents and if you create situations in which it is possible for everyone to tell each other their experiences i.e. what happened to them during the day.

The teenagers mostly (58%) complain about a lack of communication but confess to not being sometimes themselves available to talk and listen even if they believe the advice is useful and necessary. They emphasize that it is important for parents to always find the space and time to be with them. Most of the students surveyed (82%) finds that the advice of their parents about study, friendships, places to hang out are useful and often adapted to their situations though, though they do not always follow them and share them, but at the same time they demand more and more time for listening to their problems, more confidence in their abilities and potential in the actual choices they make, less control in the study and friendships they maintain.

About the easier and difficult topics to deal with together with their parents, the boys say that the easiest are those related to study and the most difficult and complex concern the clarification of their emotional states (especially for girls), their anxieties and their friendship groups.

## **4.2 Activities at school**

Each student participated in a training program of 36 hours. The course consisted of a weekly meeting, lasting 3 hours, for a total of 12 meetings for each of the 25 groups of students. Usually the meetings at the school were held on a fixed day of the week between the months of January and May.

The training was conducted by 15 experts in teaching metacognitive guidance. The meetings were for the purpose of enhancing the learning strategies and the method of studying of the adolescents and the peculiar manner in which they were designed and realized, offered to pupils learning situations that encouraged them to seek continuity between theory-practice through the understanding, the use and the verification of theoretical principles. Every meeting, respecting the learning pace of each student, allowed all participants to self-assess the skills acquired in view of their use in school activities.

Each meeting acquired sense, because it is not standardized, but rather characterized by its operations and projects, in order to activate the knowledge and skills of each individual, his explicit and implicit knowledge.

For each of the 25 groups of students from the eight schools, the meetings covered the following topics:

- motivation to study and how to efficiently study;
- cognitive and metacognitive skills and learning;
- study techniques (take notes, underline, quick read, manage anxiety, etc.);
- family communication: the main difficulties in communicating with their parents.

The activities carried out in the individual meetings were designed as an intervention catered to promote the development of students' skills and attitudes deemed necessary to address and overcome the developmental tasks that they themselves must fulfill to complete their training.

Most of the activities presented to the adolescent a problematic situation to be analyzed: it was important to identify the elements that compose it, to formulate possible solutions and choose the one that feels best.

We tried to make sure that every activity was a useful and effective tool to guide the student to become aware of one's self, one's own ability, their attitudes and their motivation to study.

In designing each activity the dimensions of self-learning was kept in mind as a strategy necessary to help students to reflect on their learning processes.

Answering the questions, resolving the problems and writing short essays offered the students opportunities to learn to deal with complex situations.

In elaborating the activities it was tried to make them directly experiential and tangible at different levels (imaginative, emotional and behavioral). The concepts and principles were intended to make students acquire, from time to time by finding the most appropriate ways to see and better perceive the meaning, to feel inwardly the value, in order to translate the ideas contained in them into consistent behaviors.

In structuring the meetings it was essential to the continuously talk with the teachers of the eight schools involved in the project, to remove difficulties, clarify concepts, make further proposals. Moreover, in agreement with the teachers, we tried to tailor activities to deal with the problems of the pupils, trying to clarify and formulate individual questions or reflections with an immediate language.

We prepared activities that would enable the student to approach the study with an attitude aimed at understanding and solving problems. To deal with concrete experiences from which to draw stimuli adequate for personal study, to critically evaluate what they have learned, to collaborate with companions and to confront each other about the way of studying.

At the end of each of the 12 meetings a grill was filled to measure the degree of satisfaction and appreciation of the issues addressed.

The satisfaction questionnaire allowed us to know during the course of the training process, what were the major activities that were liked and disliked, so that it was possible to change methodology or content of an activity.

From the analysis of the answers given at the end of each meeting on the motivation to study, it was found out that, for 79% of the students, the activities were very interesting, while the remaining 21% had average interest. The topics that aroused more curiosity were: the different reasons that one may have to motivate studying, the different perspectives and different points of view of people.

The answers given by the students at the end of 36 hours of training activities showed that they felt actively involved in the issues addressed, because they all claimed that the activities were very interesting. The most interest topics were: their emotional reactions before an oral exam and what provoked it, exam anxiety management (80%) and learning styles.

The results obtained from the meetings on the techniques of study show that 78% of the students found the topics and activities carried out to be very interesting while 10% did not seem interested.

The most compelling arguments were: the concept maps, knowing how to take notes, summarizing techniques, memorizing techniques.

The analysis of the answers given at the end of the meetings on the theme of communication between parents and children showed the high interest of all the teenagers involved in this topic. For 72% of the boys, the topics covered and the activities were defined as "close and consistent with the situation in which they find themselves in the family at this moment." The most engaging topics were: the analysis of the points of views and misunderstandings between parents and children, listening, dialogue, ways of behaving in a conversation with their parents. Regarding communication between parents and

children, the students showed particular interest in the way in which they could improve the manifestation of their own feelings instead of attacking their parents and negotiate with them.

## 5 THE FINAL EVALUATION

For the final assessment of the objectives achieved by the students we made use of two different instruments: the focus group and the questionnaire used to gauge the final satisfaction of the entire training course.

The 25 focus group sessions made it possible to perform a qualitative analysis of the students' perception of the quality of the educational activities performed and also the improvement of their metacognitive competence, with particular reference to the ability of self-regulation in the performance of schoolwork.

The scale with the guiding questions was built on the basis of the objectives of the project following the directions of Krueger (1998) and taking into account the scale of the questionnaire ALM2008 administered in the initial phase of the training.

The lineup, consisting of 6 questions that the moderator had to ask the participants, was conducted to investigate two different areas: motivated commitment and responsible learning.

During the focus group a climate of trust between the conductor and the students surveyed was created, which allowed each participant to be able to express their views in a serene and liberal way.

In most cases, students participated in the focus groups in a conscious and active way although in some schools it was more complex to begin the discussion, but which then turned out to be articulated and complete.

The focus groups with students showed that the learning experience was evaluated positively by most of them. Almost all the students said that the activities allowed them to become more aware of their abilities and their limitations; reflect on the importance of having an adequate method of study, to know how to manage anxiety and improve the way they communicate with their parents.

Most of the students interviewed said that, thanks to the meetings on motivation and metacognitive skills, they significantly improved their ability to resist boredom during the tasks. Some said: "We have learned to compare what we want to do with what we know is our duty to do."

Many students claimed that when they are tired they changed their activities, so as to recover concentration, then returned to the task they were doing or took a short break.

Many students say that they have increased their intrinsic motivation and, therefore, study voluntarily. Some agree that the rise of this type of motivation has allowed them to "not see teachers as judges who give rewards and punishments," "not to give up work just started" and to see in their study a "reason to improve as person."

The student's stated that the meetings on strategies and study techniques have allowed them to use better the available material, to self-regulate and manage their time more effectively their own learning environment, all of which gives them a physical space and proper mental concentration in the study better. Here are some examples of responses: "knowing how to use the materials as well as a schedule of study helps to perform all tasks in a single afternoon," "I can also happily go to the gym because I have learned to better manage study time."

The students interviewed claim that the meetings on metacognitive skills have enabled them to think more about what they learn in different subjects can apply to their personal situations, declare that this new attitude towards study also makes them appreciate the subjects which they enjoyed less. Someone said: "I learned to see if what I read in books are true or not."

All this has helped the students to feel responsible when looking for a personal study method and, more generally, to work understanding better the contents of the various subjects.

Most of the students stated with great conviction that training activities on motivation, memory and self-regulation strategies in studying helped them to maintain their commitment to better recognize their own abilities and limitations.

Many students begun to give the reasons for his failure to controllable causes (lack of effort, wrong method of study,) rather than to external uncontrollable causes. The quite frequent phrases are like these: "before, when I took a bad grade I thought it was the fault of the teacher or bad luck, I guess



now it depends on my commitment," "Now when I make a mistake I reflect and try to improve in the next task."

Several students pointed out that they are more autonomous in some subjects than in others: "in mathematics I'm very autonomous but in Latin I often need help." Others argue that they increased their degree of autonomy: "I give myself the time and I plan to study in the afternoon but I also leave some free time for contingencies and other activities", "I give myself time because even playing with a pencil can be a cause of distraction."

Making the students more aware of their own cognitive processes, helping them to effectively manage their own learning, has given them the ability to process information at a higher level and to understand how to be autonomous in the formulation and conduction of their personal study.

After the final focus group, a final satisfaction questionnaire was administered to the adolescents, written in anonymity allowed us to detect the degree of satisfaction for all the meetings held and to identify issues and areas of interest for similar experiments like the one just ended.

From the analysis of the responses it emerged that 80% of students were satisfied with the quality of the training sessions so much that they wanted to repeat the experience the following year and they also proposed topics.

The issues that the interviewed teenagers would like to know more about are: parent-child relationship, methods of learning, friendship, the pupil-teacher relationship, dialogue between parents and children, relationships with peers.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

At the conclusion of the two-year project which has seen the participation of eight secondary schools of Sicily it's possible to say that the proven training methodology has improved the metacognitive competence of the student's, while it's also possible to verify whether or not there was improvement in the communication skills with parents.

The training methodology used has proved itself capable of capturing the interest of the student's and to get them to reflect on the importance of discovering a new way to study and communicate with their parents.

The best result that we can reveal at the end of the activities with the students is the reinterpretation of their own personal learning experience and the acquisition of strategies and techniques to study, the awareness of having to build an effective and flexible method of study, so that it can be adapted to different disciplines and the content that are being learned.

The training experience was a very positive turning point for the students and allowed them to mature and grow as people.

Since the factors taken into account in the research do not exhaust the possibilities for exploration of metacognitive processes, decision-making and motivation of the students, it is not possible to generalize the positive results obtained. However, it can be said that the training methodology adopted was valid for adolescents with the characteristics described initially, because they declared, in various forms and ways, which significantly improved their ability to self-regulation in the performance of their of school learning activities.

The student capable of self-regulation considers learning as a process which is systematic and controllable and assumes responsibility for their results. It is a student who has a high sense of self-efficacy, has the causal attributions related to themselves and an inherent interest directly focused on the task. Initiates autonomously and responsibly in their own learning process which they carry out with commitment and perseverance. They ask for advice and information, are capable of encouraging themselves during a task, activates strategies to remember the information required for solving a problem, mobilizes knowledge to structure a pattern of resolution, monitors the process of solution, they control the strategies and any necessary correction, thus obtaining better results.

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