

# THE SKILLS ASSESSMENT AT UNIVERSITY: TO BE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE FUTURE EDUCATIONAL CHOICES

Marianna Capo, Rosaria Capobianco

*University Centre SInAPSi (Services for Active and Participated Inclusion of Students  
University of Naples Federico II (ITALY)*

## Abstract

The *assessment of the competences* (or *skills assessment*) wants to be an integrated action of orientation, motivation and support, with the aim of support students into the building of their learning project through the analysis of core competences owned. The assessment of competence is *centered on the subject* because he is considered as the protagonist of his story and the main maker of his own adaptation to the life environment. In the 2012/2013 academic year, a pattern of Assessment of competences, has been offered to the first year's students of some Department of the University in Naples Federico II. The service is developed into a guided auto assessment course of self-competences, formed by different steps through which every student has the possibility to be an active protagonist into an auto consciousness process. The auto assessment is operated by students that, autonomously and free to decide, chose to follow the pattern of his assessment.

Keywords: lifelong learning, orientation, self-guided evaluation, competences for individual empowerment.

## 1 COMPETENCES AT UNIVERSITY

### 1.1 From “*the knowledge era*” to “*the competences era*”

The transition from *the knowledge era* (placed between the 80's and the early 90's) to *the competences era* is finishing [1]. *Competence* notion has originated, in the last decades, a fervid debate, it is without doubt a complicated and quite articulated concept than can be summarized as the ability to know how to use some defined levels of knowledge/learning, both theoretically and operationally, in certain contexts or can be more openly defined as the ability to use a knowledge in a certain context, identifying in it the specific characteristics and choosing all those behaviors useful to reach result.

From an etymological point of view, the term *competence* comes from Late Latin *competentia*, that is a derivation of *competere* that means “*to meet with*”, “*to suit*”, briefly it could be summarized like the subject's ability to *being able to move or direct* in certain contexts. Therefore it is restrictive to consider competence as a synonym of *ability, skill or performance*, because it may give prominence only to the level of explicit performances, of the execution of a determined activity, excluding or simply not taking the various aspects of personality into account and «*a group of elements tied to culture, community, relations that where interaction proves its nature of hybrid phenomenon*» [2].

Frequently, *competence and knowledge* terms are antithetic, because competence is often identified with a pragmatic and operative knowledge, such as something concrete, as opposed to knowledge. The *complication* of the constitutive elements of competence, are not due to this decisive divergence, because also if the ability to know how to use knowledge it refers to a more general *savoir faire* that includes various dimensions.

It is difficult to find an exhaustive definition that can express in its wholeness the concept. It is enough to think that in the different literatures, from the sociological, to the psychological, and the economic-managerial ones, it is possible to find more than 160 different definitions of *competence*. Undoubtedly, the most used definition in literature is by Spencer L.M. and Spencer S.M. (1993), referred to Klemp's one (1980), and subsequently re-edited by Boyatzis (1982). According to Lyle and Signe Spencer (1993), competence is «*an individual intrinsic characteristic that is accidentally linked to an effective or superior performance in a job or situation and that is estimated on a pre-established principle*» [3].

According to Lyle and Signe Spencer, competence is made up of five elements: *motivations* (mental pattern or inner incentive that normally encourage a person to act); *traits* (that are distinguishing features or physical characteristics, associated to a general disposition to conduct in a definite way),

*self-image* (behavior, values or self-ideas), the *knowledge* of subjects or specific topic and *skills* (the capacity/ability to execute a certain intellectual or physical task). This distinction among the various parts is graphically represented by an iceberg where the skill, together with knowledge, are its point, and both represent the parts where it is easier to act by the learning aspects.

To summarize this *multidimensional* nature of competence, Pellerey, represents it through three fundamental dimensions: the first, of *cognitive* nature, interests concepts comprehension and organization; the second, of *operational* nature, concerns the ability that mark it; the third dimension, of *emotional* nature, involves behaviors, beliefs, motivations, emotions, that offer the possibility to give a sense and a personal value to competence [4].

It is clear, therefore, that nobody is born competent, but everyone can become it.

A subject *becomes* competent *in something*, in a specific *situation*, when manifests his competence *in a conscious form*. Therefore competence is a personalized and multidimensional knowledge that manifests in a certain contest, a knowledge *endowed with sense* in the interdependence among *feel*, *think* and *act*, but competence is also a *shared* knowledge by a community (a recognized knowledge to social, cultural, professional, academic and scientific level). Competence is a shared knowledge, that becomes *personalized* when subject elaborate and cover it with meanings to express it in a concrete action. That is why competence is at the same time *action* and *reflection*.

Competence, according to this perspective, is a body of various dimensions from the cognitive to the social and behavioral ones, including abilities, attitudes, motivation, values and emotions. It can be learned and developed in different educative contexts, from *formal* ones (school) to the *non-formal* ones (family, place of work, media, cultural and associative organizations, etc...), until the *informal* ones (social life in its complex).

Competence is the hub around which rethinking not only about the learning processes, but either about teaching way and consequently the valuation practices. It is not possible to think that knowledge is a simple execution of a task, but it has to be seen in its dialectic relationship with the different reality context, it is the ability to use knowledge in relation with the various jobs of reality. In this sense the competence concept becomes the most important meaning where setting up the learning process and its valuation.

Universities, together with *basic competences*, and more precisely general competences, transferrable to different works, important for training and general professional background of person and to *technical-professional competences*, rather those extremely specific and specialty competences, they have to reinforce or improve all that *core competences* that allow to link knowledge and abilities in relation with the context and either *personal resources* such as personality traits (perseverance, precision and rationality), psycho-social qualities (working in a group and having an efficient communication), dynamism, multidimensionality, systemic nature, contingency and flexibility.

As a matter of fact the actual "*possibility and uncertainty culture*", that is replacing the "*necessity and uncertainty culture*", hardly requests to the society and to the working world that subject could be able to use all those personal qualities that offer the possibility to manage *uncertainty*, facing without fatigue the various changes that, from time to time, present along the itinerary.

## 1.2 The assessment of Competences

The methodology of the *Assessment of Competences* (from now and then AdC) was born, after the Second World War, in Quèbec and in the United States, when the necessity to recognized various personal competences was shown because of encouraging the engagement into the labour market. From Canada it develops and extends mainly in France, one of the European countries that more than others, tested and improved the assessment process. From France the AdC extends in the whole Europe, even as well as the European Recommendations [5].

AdC definition is still *in progress*. From the second half of the 80's, when the first tests in France were attempted, the definitions have been changed and explained, from time to time.

In the wide outlook of the definitions expressed by the most important AdC French theoreticians show up, because of the originality of their contribution and their elaboration level, the definitions by authors like Jacques Aubret, Michel Joras, Arlette Yatchinovsky and Pierre Michard, Claude Lévy Leboyer and Claude Lemoine. According to Joras, the AdC is the body of actions that have to allow workers to examine their own professional and personal competences, their vocations, to delimit a *professional* or a *learning project* [6].

In line with this interpretation, but in a more complex way, there are Yatchinovsky and Michard. According to them, the *Assessment* is a process that has to allow to subject to elaborate his own *professional project*, not only in a long run, but even in short and medium one. The *AdC* must start from the experience's analysis, history, competences and single subject capacity considering, at the same time, its preferences, its reference values and the personal choices made during the life. This two authors point out also "what is not" an *AdC*, that is not a set of tests, it is not a diagnosis of personality, it is not a psychotherapy, it is not a selection test, it is not a job of valuation and finally, it is not a simple recognition of acquired resources [7].

Claude Lévy Leboyer, placing the *AdC* among tools for the careers developing with conspicuous learning involvements, defines it as the point of juncture among three different fields of resource. The first field believes that the career 's administration has to be made by the subject himself, even if it is necessary to let him free to an obligation to make decisions, that he does not totally share. The second field believes that learning is not limited to the original one, because the adult is able to have a lifelong learning. The third and last field asserts that the lifelong learning is the result of the direct experience at the work place and not just "study session".

Consequently in Lévy Leboyer's opinion, the *AdC* must help subject to raise consciousness of all his acquisitions came from the original learning, from lifelong learning and from professional life in order to make a strong auto assessment of his career's projects [8].

Claude Lemoine, finally, points out the psychological and pedagogical dimensions of *AdC*, because this way associates a psychological analysis of competences to an active pedagogical dimension, able to offer to subject to take possession of knowledge that concern him. According to Lemoine, the pattern of assessment of competence's goal, is to allow to some adult people to know better their own competences, and starting from there, set up a personal or professional project [9].

These definitions explain the most obvious distinctive traits of the assessment as a tool for the professional development of the subject; a method which has on its center the subject; a way to enforce the lifelong learning and finally a tool with a marked planned dimension.

After a fifteen years' experience and a lot of qualified French and Italian studies, it is possible today to define synthetically the *AdC* as a method of analysis and assisted auto- analysis of competences, vocations and subject's potentiality so that he could follow his own learning and professional development project.

### 1.2.1 *The choice of an integrated Assessment model*

The assessment of competence is *centered on the subject* because he is considered as the protagonist of his story and the main maker of his own adaptation to the life environment [10].

The use of chosen and adopted tools for the *AdC*, has a specific sense only if the follow requirements are satisfied: first of all, it is necessary that the *Assessment* beneficiary subject could be able to understand the relevance of his cooperation, that is being an *active subject*; on the other hand it is important that *who* conducts the Assessments, could offer to the subject the possibility to understand the utility of the employment of tools to reach the theorized and prosecutable goals with the *Assessment* action and, at the same time, to help the beneficiary subject to understand how all the collected information are useful to have a clear synthesis of everything is emerged.

In order to the Levy-Leboyer's classification of the 1993, the approaches of the various types of Assessment of competences should be four: *relational approach*, *differential approach*, *ergonomic or expert approach*, the approach based on the *self-image*. The model used into the project "*Entry Assessment of competences for new enrolled*", suggested into the Psycho-pedagogical Services Center of the University SInAPSi (Services for Active and Participated Inclusion of Students) by the Federico II University in Naples, is a model that, starting from the various existing classifications of different theoretical and operative approaches, is *integrated*, that is coming from integration of two approaches: the *relational* and the *self-image* one.

It is a model, then, that examining contributions and potentiality, common and specific elements, various pros and cons of any approach, supports the valorization of the narrative and autobiographical dimension to encourage the subjective experience, to activate that planning dynamic to help subject to define his own life project. But it is also a model that, being *integrated*, does not go a priori for the possibility to have recourse, where necessary, to employ tools that use an objective description of behaviors (for example, assessment questionnaire of the socio-relational and motivational competences, etc...).

Thus, considering the biographical reconstruction of the subject through the report - on himself and of himself – that the subject himself produces, thanks to the operator mediation that guides the assessment, it is possible to assert a specific conception of the competence *«that is not considered just as a static and a punctual description of an amount of “objects” (knowledge, capacity-ability, various resources) “reflected” by executed activities but, therefore, as a dynamic reconstruction, that reflects a quality that is not considered as “given”, but as “emergent”, that is “discovered”, that is thinking as transversal and it is made potentially transferable»* [11].

The *self-image* approach, has been chosen because, working about the possibility to develop an *auto assessment* capacity, subject is able to encourage the integration of new information that can be useful for reorganization and valorization of self-image, an image previously built among a series of experiences and comparison. This *model* permits to subject, to increase his autonomy in knowing how to achieve and tend a life project (professional or not).

The adopted *integrated* model, is based on some fundamental principles: the centrality of the beneficiary students of the assessment, a value-free approach of whom manages the assessment and the necessity of doing a “map” of the competences to transfer them in other contexts.

In the *value-free approach*, it is good to point out how who manages the assessment, must be *neutral* expressing a judgment but, at the same time, it must be ready to support that help relation that links the two parts: who decides to participate to the assessment, such as beneficiary subject, and the operator that manages the assessment. This operator, as Yatchinovsky and Michard say, *«helps to discriminate, to have some connections, to show up important events, to redefined and see things in another way. In any case, he does not close the subject in an apparent preconceived logic of his own way but, on the contrary, simplifies the discover of new hypothesis, the beginning of new tracks of reflection»* [12].

The choice of using an *integrated assessment model* that links different approaches, supposes that who manages the Assessment, could master the different correlated techniques, to avoid to identify as *integrated approach* what is simply expression of *methodological versatility* (that is absence of every consciousness of involvement between theory and technique).

Moreover to guarantee the *quality* of the Assessment, that is not absolutely connected to the quantity of the adopted tools, it is fine that the use of every tool happens in the respect of the reference framework it is inserted in. Therefore, it is only in this way that it is possible to justify the use of different inquiry procedures, without running into the mechanical employment of tool [13].

A further consideration, in respect to the use of standardized tools in the practice of the Assessment of competences, interests the modality of restitution of outcomes that represents a relational moment with a strong learning valence, a chance for students, whom decide to take part to the Assessment, to gain a better consciousness about their own possibilities and abilities. The return of outcomes becomes a very important part of the subject way, if whom guides the Assessment encouraged the active presence of him during it.

## **2 AN EXPLORATIVE SURVEY ABOUT UNIVERSITY STUDIES COMPETENCES**

### **2.1 The Skills assessment: a psycho-pedagogical service**

In the 2012/2013 academic year, a pattern of Assessment of competences, has been offered to the first year's students of some Department of the University in Naples Federico II. The psycho-pedagogical service, called *Skills assessment*, was born and developed by the University Centre SInAPSi (Services for Active and Participated Inclusion of Students). The objectives are as follows: 1) to help/to support/to orient students to be more aware of their resources, to support them in a work aimed to the construction/reconstruction of skills and meta-skills; 2) to carry out a "recognition/mapping" of skills (life skills, core competence, etc.) considered as resources for the subject according to the elaboration of a learning support and university inclusion plan.

The Assessment offered to the first years' student of the Federico II University of Naples, is not shown as a service of *hetero-assessment*, but as an activity of *auto assessment* help, in which subject, who decides to take a part in it, must be supported through the active identification on his own knowledge and competences.

The assessment model proposed, about competences, refers to different European Qualification Framework, operating, as we can see later, an integration based on exact planning choices.

The assessment model refers to competences defined by the *European Qualification Framework* (EQF), OMS' Life Skills, the key competences of the DeSeCo project and ISFOL model [18] [19].

Moreover, referring to the competences defined by the *European Qualification Framework* (EQF), talking about fulfillment of obligations of education, Italian rules define eight citizenship keys competences.

They have been bended together in macro-categories (fig.1)

MACRO-CATEGORY	KEY COMPETENCES
<i>Self-construction</i>	Learning to learn
	Planning
<i>Relationship with others</i>	Cooperate and participate
	Act in an autonomous and responsible way
<i>Relation with reality</i>	Communicate
	Problem solving
	Identify link and relations
	Acquire and understand information

Fig.1.Competences and macro-categories

Even the DeSeCo project, one of the most ambitious directed by OCSE from 1997 to 2002, defines exact basic competences: they are linked and are expression of ethical maturity and autonomous and responsible assumption of their own learning. *DeSeCo* project's results add meaning and conceptual depth to the learning notion along the entire life, explaining a reflexive context for the international enquires that have the verification of learning as its own object. The project purposes three macro categories of competences (fig.2).

THE DEFINITION AND SELECTION OF KEY COMPETENCIES
<b>Competency Category 1: Using Tools Interactively</b> 1.A The ability to use language, symbols and text interactively 1.B The ability to use knowledge and information interactively 1.C The ability to use technology interactively
<b>Competency Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups</b> 2.A The ability to relate well to others 2.B The ability to cooperate 2.C The ability to manage and resolve conflicts
<b>Competency Category 3: Acting Autonomously</b> 3.A The ability to act within the big picture 3.B The ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects 3.C The ability to assert rights, interests, limits and needs

Fig. 2 The definition and selection of key competencies

At the same time the fundamental center of *Life Skills*, identified by OMS, defines a set of basic cognitive, emotional and relational abilities that allow to subjects to work with competence on the individual and social plan (fig.3).

<b>LIFE SKILLS</b>	
<i>Selfawareness building skills</i>	<i>Critical thinking</i>
<i>Coping with stress</i>	<i>Decision-making</i>
<i>Coping with emotions</i>	<i>Problem solving</i>
<i>Empathy</i>	<i>Effective communication skills</i>
<i>Creative thinking</i>	<i>Interpersonal relationship skills</i>

Fig. 3. Life Skills

The first important systematic setting, about competences “model” out of the scholastic culture, and for this reason especially connected to the working world, is the Isfol (in Italy is the Institute for professional training develop of workers). In this sense, the assessment of the competences pattern purposed, wants to set up as an integrated action of orientation, motivation and support, with the aim of support students into the building of their learning project through the analysis of core competences owned. The focus is to make clearer individual competences to give them the possibility to be spent into the learning system [14].

The service is developed into a guided auto assessment course of self-competences, formed by different steps through which every student has the possibility to be an active protagonist into an auto consciousness process. The auto assessment is operated by students that, autonomously and free to decide, chose to follow the pattern of his assessment. Students have, therefore, an active and responsible role and the outcome of the pattern depends most on their interest. In fact the assessment of competences, as an orientation techniques, is first of all a tool of self-knowledge that has the aim of find acquired abilities, past experiences, interests, vocations and aspirations that are often unexpressed. It is, then, a presumed action for anyone does not have a defined professional goal but who needs to verify a choice already made, as it happens for new enrolled university students. According to a general point of view, the assessment's device tends to focus and improve competences developed by people in their own personal and professional process way, competences that, as pointed out before, represent the basis for starting every development and change process.

The emphasis about competences, characterizes the entire assessment's action and represents the guiding principle of the pattern. The assessment of the competences, in fact, tends to assign to the auto valuating processes a decisive value in respect of production of new meanings for himself and his own history, and respect of the identification of competences that should be developed in relation to his own personal and professional goals.

In summary, the assessment of competences' action purposed to the university students, wants to attend a series of aims that mark the specific function in respect of other entry orientation methodologies and that can be synthesized in this way:

- Identification of competences and potentialities that students can invest into a realization of a learning project into the High learning;
- Acquirement of auto assessment, activation and choice's autonomous ability in respect of a self-learning goals;
- Students implementation of socio-cultural of References Frameworks and emotional registers right to support situations of transition/change and to invest/re-invest on self-planning.

A big consciousness of self-resources can encourage an activity with the aim of build/re-build competences and meta-competences. In these terms, the Service wants to offer to students a way for having a map/reconnaissance of competences considered as resources for subject to elaborate a plan to support learning and for the inclusion into the university context [15].

### 2.1.1 Phases of the skills assessment

Assessment pattern is composed by three phases, each of them characterized by the use of different tools. All meetings are guided by a specialist in pedagogy and a specialist in psychology, with experience in group dynamics and auto biographical narration practices.

During the first phase, called *phase of presentation and welcome*, are shown to students, in collective session, the goals, the steps and the progress of the assessment of competences.

The aim of this first important step is to supply useful and necessary information to allow students to take part to the assessment, explaining possible doubts and even to encourage motivation and participants' autonomy during the administration.

In this phase, to students that want to take part to the project, it is proposed to filling a *presentation form*: it is a data collected tool, with the aim of a right valuation of the speech. It is expedient to put together procedures and data entry through an access form that is the unique for every psychopedagogical service offered by SInAPSi.

The *presentation form* allows, moreover, to divide students depending on some detected and shared in the international literature profile (*nontraditional, underachievement and disadvantage*). This represents the essential tool to record the baseline and objective dimension of performance.

The presentation form differentiates from the *format* that is the same for all SInAPSi's psychopedagogical services only for the addition of a session dedicated to "My story". It is composed by open questions, divided in two analysis areas that want to discover:

1. The most important events and formative steps, possible professional and non-professional experiences, (free time, sport, charity work, political militancy activities or to any other field that requests a type of continuous engagement). Concerning formative experiences, is required to indicate "*formal course*" (school, professional training courses, etc...) and even "*informal course*" that are the personal experiences (such as reading, theatre, cinema, etc...) in which students think to have learned something important, even if they have not been official honors (such as the certification of the status, certificate of attendance, etc...).
2. Actual conditions e future perspectives. Regarding reflections about present, students have to compare with possible satisfactions, discomforts, expectations or hopes linked to their actual university life. They have also to indicate those *events* that they think that changed the "sense" of their life (such as loss of beloved person, the beginning or the end of a very important emotional relationship, the birth of a son, etc...).

The required analysis follows the memories and ideas line that will come to mind of students without the obligation of using a chronological order in the description. The filling of the form is individual and therefore self-managed. Students have to adopt an analytical-descriptive thought about their own life experiences, and they have to descript themselves in first person. This activity will be used again into the device of the smallest group, supporting students through the comparison, to read again in an analytic way their own learning professional and personal experiences, describing and analyzing their own past life story and linking it to the present perceptions.

Another tool used in the first phase, and reused in the end of assessment pattern, is the *Differential Semantic* (DS). This is a tool that attends to get emotional means (*connotative*) that is assigned to a specific object or event. It is defined semantic area and it has a solid structure, while the concept collocation in this area changes among subjects. According to Osgood the emotional meaning of concept is multidimensional [16] [17]. The DS allows to quantify the connotative aspect of meaning attributed to an incentive without making direct questions.

The aim is to compare different emotional answers to a series of objects which form the symbolic universe of students, their own subjective involvement, the role one, the relationship with university context and the service they are using. In its pre-post form this tool allows first of all, to analyze the different emotional arrangement as opposed to previous categories and, after the intervention, to inform us indirectly about the intervention efficacy.

Into the second phase, the *inquired* one, we have the administration of the *auto assessment questionnaire*. The aim is to explore and elaborate knowledge and consciousness that every student has, about his own resources and basic competences, in terms of “strong points” and “vulnerability points” that, according to him could support and/or obstructed him into the university attended course. The questionnaire is formed by forty items and proposes a serious of claims in respect to which students have to be set along a *continuum* from 1 (not in the list) to 5 (too much) (Five answers Likert’ Scale). The questionnaire presents a compact and clear graphic setting, it is developed in auto-filling and auto-explicated way, because *items* are simple and short. The choice and the structure of *items* are referred to key competences that in a planning location have been selected in this way (fig.4)

MACRO- COMPETENCES	COMPETENCES
SELF-CONSTRUCTION	<i>Learning to learn</i>
	<i>Planning</i>
RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS	<i>Cooperate and participate</i>
	<i>Act in an autonomous and responsible way</i>
RELATION WITH REALITY	<i>Communicate</i>
	<i>Problem solving</i>
	<i>Identify link and relations</i>
	<i>Acquire and understand information</i>
LIFE SKILLS	<i>Critical thinking</i>
	<i>Self-awareness building skills</i>
	<i>Coping with emotions</i>
	<i>Coping with stress</i>
	<i>Empathy</i>
	<i>Interpersonal relationship skills</i>

Fig.4. CORE COMPETENCES

In addition to skills indicated in EQF, the Life Skills, established by the WHO, and the skills described in OECD DeSeCo (Definition and Selection of Competence) project, are considered. They are identified as Key Competences. The assessment does not only analyzed cognitive and technical characteristics of skill, but also motivational and values ones. According to the described framework the skills are gathered into four areas: a) Cognitive skills area; b) Functional (ability or know-how) skills area; c) Personal skills area; d) Ethical skills area.

The administration of questionnaire represents a first important moment of reflection about oneself and one’s learning course, and, in this sense, an introductive phase for group experiences.

The assessment project of competences, in fact, is taken as an intervention-research with the aim to promote a guided reflection’s course that contemplate also a moment in restitution to students.

In the third phase, the *conclusive* one, is given to everybody a printed version of the competences profile, where graphically the map of inquiry competences is figured in “strong points” and “weakness points”. The adopted tool is the device of the smallest group and works according to an autobiographical narrative methodology [20]. The goal is to provide students a body of *feedback* to compare each other and extend the way of thinking about one’s action’ space.

In the smallest group's reporting dynamic, leaders take the attitude to an active listening skills and, encouraging exchange and sharing among its members, act as easy maker of the analysis process and of locking on competences. The aim is to start a self-knowledge process, helping students to improve researches and finding critical points.

It is fundamental that students could experiment smallest group's space such as a place where they can be heard, without being judged.

Last reflection pertains to the role that the session of group's work has into the assessment's pattern and that, for some of its characteristics, could be considered as an hetero-valuation moment. This session, managed by two operators of the psychological and pedagogical area, has the aim to offer to beneficiaries the opportunity to enrich, from a different perspective, the process of self-knowledge and self-valuation [21]. Thanks to the active involvement of students in reflection about assessment pattern's outcome, partakers are incited to interact each other operating a comparison among different points of view: the acting subject, his spokesmen in the group and the external observer ones. The comparison comes out from the relation between the final result of the assessment, that is the competences map, and things came out in the first descriptive auto-analysis planning phase about "My story". This work satisfies the belief that, starting from the guided narration, into the semi-structured situations, is possible to introduce into the auto-knowledge and auto-development of every partaker, elements of reflection and comparison about "self-in situation" and in particular about "self-in relation" (fig.5).

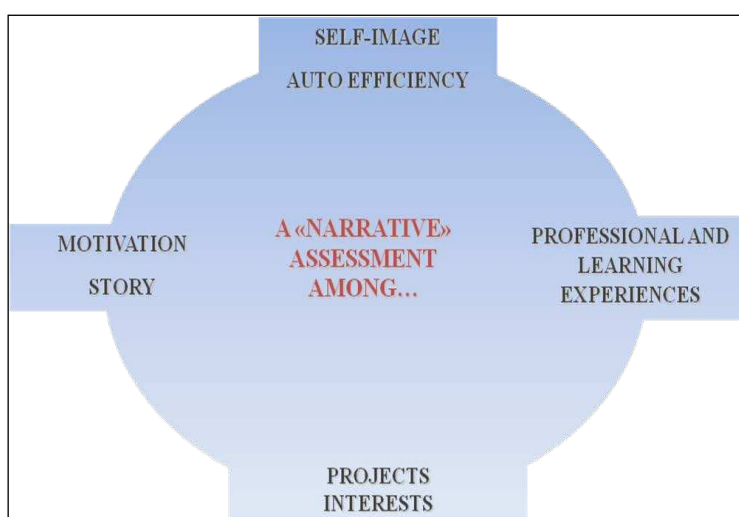


Figure 5. A narrative assessment

The auto-analysis dimensions, that are clear into the answers given by auto-valuation questionnaire and by the descriptions about "My story" concern:

- Formative and professional experiences
- Motivations/story
- Self-image/auto efficiency
- Projects/interests.

Finally, it is introduced to the group the *satisfaction questionnaire*: it is a tool *ad hoc* with multiple answering questions. The variables are articulated according to the following schemes:

- a) Six points *Likert*' Scale (to avoid intermediate choices) with anchor points defined in a global manner ("extremely", "very much" "enough");
- b) Choice among answering *set* that have an opposition structure : in this way the questionnaire purposes answers that compare with the task to take a stand in respect to alternative position.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

In the second year of experimentation, more than 250 first year' students of different courses of the "Federico II" University in Naples, have been contacted. A large amount, 144 students, have joined the assessment pattern. Thanks to an introductive analysis of data collected, is possible to trace a competences map of attended students.

The examined students come from the following university courses: *Agricultural Technologies and Environmental and Forest Sciences, Social Service and Modern Studies*.

Depending on the students' answer to the 44 *items* purposed by auto assessment questionnaire, it has been possible to identify their competences that could be defined, by and large, as "weakness" points and "strong" points and that are a very important part of entry basic competences baggage owned by the student. Data, clearly, change substantially in relation to the examined College (fig. 6).

Table 6. LEVELS OF COMPETENCE

MACRO-CATEGORY	COMPETENCES		
	LOW LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	HIGH LEVEL
<i>Self-construction</i>	Planning	Learning to learn	
<i>Relationship with others</i>			Cooperate and participate
			Act indipendently and responsibly
			To interact into a group
<i>Relation with reality</i>	Problem solving	Identify links	
		To communicate	
		To interpret information	
<i>Life Skills</i>		Stress management	Critical thinking
			Emotions Administration
			Management of interpersonal relationships
			Empathy
			self – awareness

The chart points out that, in general, an high number of students has given low scores to some competences referred to the two macro-categories *Self-construction* and *Relationship with reality*. In particular, the following competences are part of a *weakness level of competences*: *Planning* (form *Self-construction* macro-category) and *Problem solving* (from *Relationship with reality* macro-category). Between a *low level* of competence and an *high* one, there are a series of competences with scores that swing between 3 and 3,09, there is an *intermediate category* that cannot be underestimated because the values are not so far from the weakness category.

Three of these five competences that belong to a *medium level*, are part of the *Relationship with reality* macro-category: these are *Identify links*, *To communicate*, *To interpret information*. Into the intermediate level we also find the *Learning to learn* (from *Self-construction* macro-category) and *Stress management* (from *Life Skills* macro-category).

Among competences identified as "strong" points, that are a part of an high level of competence, there are *Cooperate and participate*, *Act indipendently and responsibly* and *Group interaction*. All of three competences are part of *Relationship with reality* macro-category, that is why students think to be able to stay into the social life in an active and conscious way (fig.7).

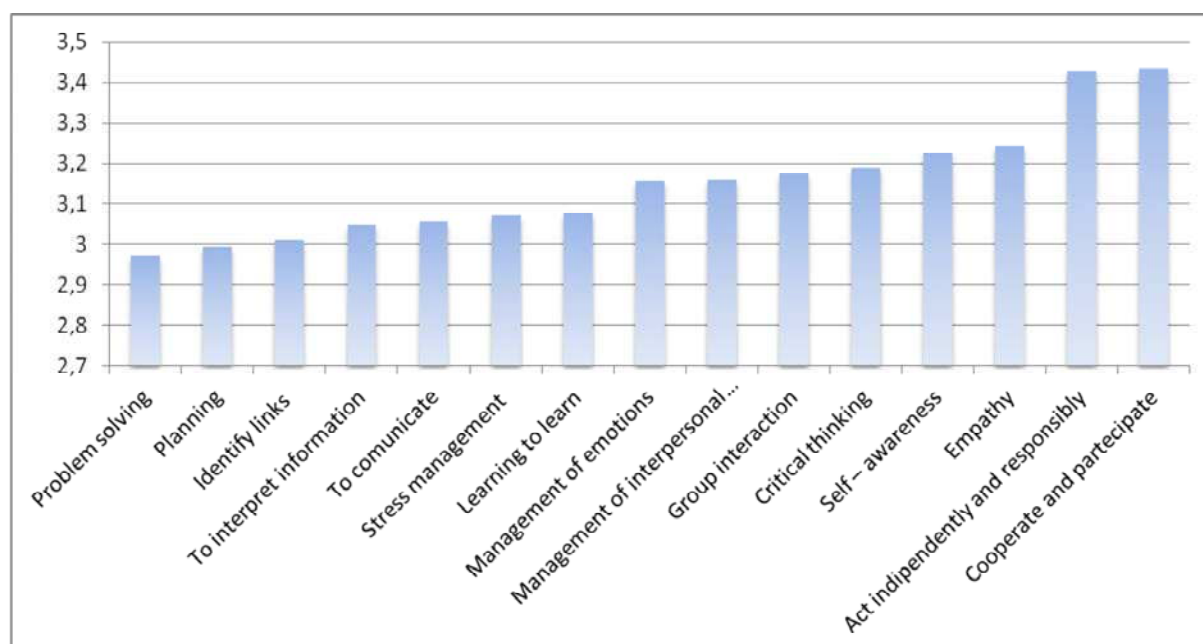


Fig. 7. Graphic of the competences

Among Life Skills, if we keep out the Stress management, a medium level competence, the first year' students demonstrate to have real competences such as Management of emotions, Management of interpersonal relationships, Empathy, Critical thinking and Self-awareness, to demonstrate how much students think to be able to recognize themselves, their behavior, their strength and weakness, their desires and their disregards.

Defining a map of competences, to first year' students, that participated to the Assessment of the Competences offered by the "Federico II" university, the possibility to know all that potentiality to invest into the realization on their own learning project.

The orientation function predicted by the Assessment allowed to every student to acquire that consciousness – cognitive, emotional and social ones – to face toward decisional situations. Furthermore the Assessment itself is configured as a course of flexible consultation but, most of all, it has been a very important tool thanks to which, could help students in this so delicate moment of passage (from the last school's year to the first university's one).

At the beginning of the university career, the analysis and the identification of competences facilitates the recognition of the acquired skills during the educational path of the student. At the same time it facilitates the awareness of needs and results that the formative system can satisfy.

The skills assessment allows the students to understand if the current competences (key, specific and cross competences) can cross in a synergistic growth path with the knowledge, the competences and the abilities offered by the educational path of university, or if is necessary to consider actions to realign the input and output skills.

The skills assessment can be an useful vehicle to guide the student in the dynamic plan of his future, helping him to have an active part in his future educational choices.

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