

MONITORING TEACHERS FROM IES N° 5, Avilés

The Public Secondary School IES N° 5 in Avilés (Asturias) is a 15 years old school with 646 students and 76 teachers during this school year 2007/2008. The school has recently had particularly positive academic results as regards qualification and promotion in ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education), perhaps due to the school organisation focused in cooperation and coexistence and to a group of measures paying attention to diversity implemented especially in the last years. Along this school year 7.43% of students have had some kind of admonishment because of behaviour problems, most of them disruptive conduct in class. But, for example, no disciplinary record has been filled in the last five school years. Some of the above mentioned measures have been promoted by the educative administration, others have been imported from other schools or regions and a few are the result of a critical and concerned teaching. Among the last ones, we could mention something that began as an innovative experience and has nowadays been integrated into everyday school life: monitoring teachers.

At the moment 14 people with different training and professional background make up this group of Monitoring Teachers. In it they share their interest in helping students who have problems to integrate or take part in the school systems and / or who have little success in their long and slow educative process. The group of teachers meets weekly to study and analyse the situation of these students. They collect proposals and suggestions from the teachers' boards, they analyse each case individually, they plan together a strategy for intervention in each particular case, they decide who is going to be the right person to work with that specific student, they monitor the process throughout time and at the end, they evaluate the results obtained in the emotional, social and academic levels. They always plan and organize the work as a group, so everything is done after discussion and agreement.

The focal point of our task is the individual interview of a teacher with a student out of the school timetable (during the break, when classes finish, in the afternoon...) in order to help him/her to understand and solve the fundamental problems that have an influence on his/her school adjustment problems and that explain his/her bad academic results. Thus, the same teacher (voluntarily and coming from any school department) is in charge of one, two or three students, at the most, with objective academic problems (more than four fails at the end of the first term in 1st ESO¹) as long as it is necessary, providing that they are not already been supervised by any other specialized professionals (doctors, psychologists, school counsellors...) and that they accept willingly in agreement with their families. The relationship with every student is done individually, so every monitoring teacher becomes a reference person, a kind of “tutor” in the old sense of the word and he/she gets in charge of everything related with the student and his/her environment: friends, family, school and after school activities.

From the beginning we became aware that in our work it was essential to count on the active, continuous and collaborating support in the different phases of the process of the families and each person concerned in this individual monitoring plan. But we also believed it was necessary to speak to all the families in general at the beginning of the course in order to involve parents in the educative process of their children and to provide them with help and guidance when they are not at school. We think the contact with teachers and other parents can be very enriching for families, independently of their child’s school achievement, since, on the one hand, this can always be improved and, on the other hand, the knowledge of different relationships parents-children can be a great help.

For that reason, around October or November we organize a Teachers-Families Conference that consists of four 3 hour-sessions aimed mainly at the families of the students who have recently joined the school (1st ESO). The first part of this Conference is developed in the

¹ 1st ESO = First year of Compulsory Secondary Education. 12 year-old-students

two first sessions with the title *“My child is a 1st ESO student. How can I help?”* dealing with the students’ motivation, planning and study conditions. However, in the two last sessions the second part of the plan is carried out with the title *“Characteristics of adolescence, behaviour problems and training on the skills that help to solve them”*, given by a psychologist specialized in adolescence. In all the sessions a communicative approach is followed and the families’ involvement is searched through debate, case study, role plays... This conference complements our performance plan for every course and five editions have already been developed up to now. In all of them the different parts and activities have been very well accepted by the families, whose number has increased from 21 participants the first time the conference was organized (2003-2004) to 40 participants this course (2007-2008). In fact, those who take part show a greater and greater interest in doing so in a continuous way and, for example, they demand the organization of this conference in other school years. At the moment, we have enough work and learning to do with our daily cooperation with the families who are more directly involved in the project and with the Teachers-Families Conference opened to all the families.



Socrates

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.