



**Tool for self-assessment of competencies:
biographical method**



Original language:
Slovene

Country:
Slovenia

Source:
National Institute for Adults
education

Link:
http://www.mizs.gov.si/fileadmin/mizs.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/odrasli/Gradiva_ESS/ACS_Razvoj_pi_smenosti/RAZVOJ_PISMENOSTI_38P_ripomocek_za_samoevalvacijo_kom_petenc.pdf

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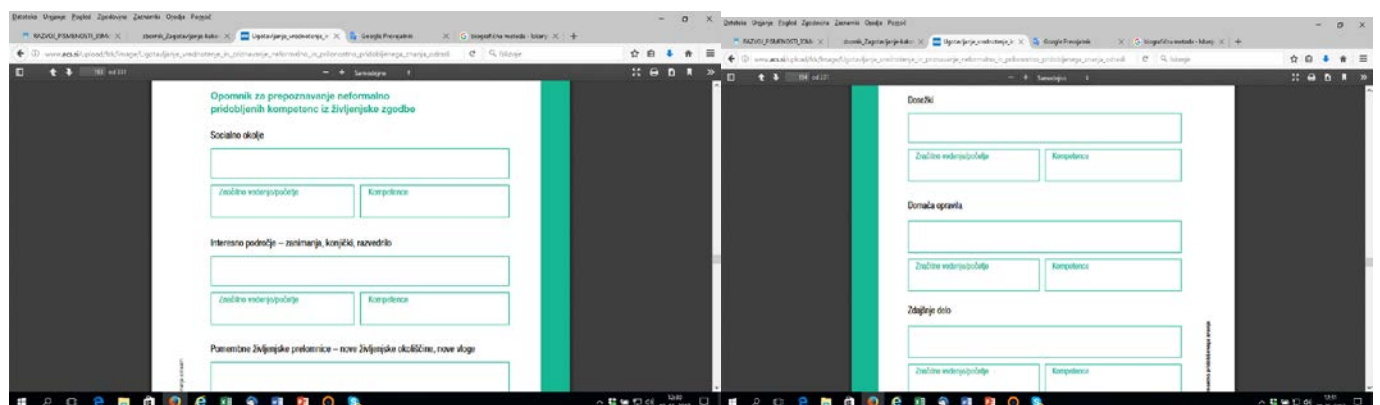
Target group
 Teacher / trainer
 Counsellor
 Social worker
 Youth worker
 future employer
 other:

Type of best practice
 tool
 initiative/campaign
 project
 website only
 programme
 model
 training
 learning material
 other: method

Experiences
 available for more than 5 years
 available for less than 5 years
 pilot phase / testing
 in development
 unknown

Summary:

It is a systematic and chronological display of an individual educational path. The educational biography collects and analyses the different ways of acquiring knowledge and competence development in different life circumstances. This method has a special value in the detection of hidden knowledge and it is suggested to be used in the initial phase of the evaluation process – diagnosis or CV preparation. It could be drawn in the form of a structured essay, guided interview or preferably a combination of both. Use of biographical method is particularly suitable in situations where individuals find themselves in a completely new and unpredictable situation, such as new job, transition from public to private sector and many others.



Description:

Biographical method consists of several steps:

Step 1: Preparation of instructions for writing biography and motivation of the candidate to participate
Instructions need to be short and should not ask about the details, but merely draw attention to certain situations and life events. There is no prescribed form or the scope of the narrative. When candidate writes his/her biography s/he must have sufficient space to be able to express freely in accordance with inner emotions and own views. If the

candidate refuses to write his/her life story, then the adviser can decide to use an open interview. If it is possible, the adviser records each conversation or writes a short note to remember information, which can be otherwise overlooked later. The adviser's role in this part is only active listening and unobtrusive guidance with short questions.

Step 2: In-depth reading life stories

In the second part the adviser analyses the written story or his/her notes and prepares questions for a guided interview of areas that in his/her opinion are still necessary to discuss for reliable determination of the candidate's knowledge, skills and competences.

Step 3: Guided Interview

In dialogue the adviser tries to find out more about details that are important for an explanation and description of non-formal knowledge and competencies of the candidate. The reflective analysis of the living situation, working history with accompanying learning are important for diagnosing of the competences that later can be edited and, if necessary, evaluated.

Step 4: The collection of additional evidence

Many of the competences that advisers together with the candidates identified may be supported by additional evidence such as various certificates, recommendations, photo documentation, etc.

Step 5: Writing identified candidate's competence

In the fifth part, the adviser prepares and writes an analysis on the identified competencies derived from individual behaviour or described in the story of life. The analysis on the achieved competences can be presented to the candidate in different ways: descriptively or in tabular form, which shows the links which competences achieved through such action or behaviour of the candidate, as a basis for the conclusion of achieved competences.

Here are some suggestions for questions for interviews or the biographic essay:

a) Title:

“What title would you like to give to your personal story?” or

“It can be a single word or more. Choose the title, that will summarize your life the most.”

b) Your family and childhood

“In the introduction, write down:

- who you are, when and where you were born, how big was the family you grew up, where were you located (city or village),
- what kind of life you were having as a child;
- what did you like to do and what did you dislike, but obeyed to do?

c) High school and first working experiences:

Describe in adolescence:

- in what school you went;
- which subjects and teachers you liked;
- how successful were you;
- what were your hobbies;
- what did you want to become and how it really turned out in your life;
- describe a first job and other working experience;
- what has changed when you became an adult?

d) Adulthood:

Describe the adulthood:

- what were important milestones in your life;
- how is your professional career;
- have you got a family, partner or you live alone?
- what problems did you encounter most often?

- what do you like to do?

e) Future plans:

Finish story with what you want in the future and what you think, how in fact it will be.

Contributing partner: INTEGRA