

Methods for validating competence of people at work – focus on Adult Education Trainers (AET)

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Introduction

Adult learning staff plays a key role in making lifelong learning a reality. Adult learning professionals help learners to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes throughout their lives. Indeed, the professional development of people working in education and training is one of the vital measures to improve quality of learning at all levels. (Buiskool et al, 2010)

Competences needed by adult learning professionals are found described in job descriptions of individual organisations, the learning outcomes of specific educational programmes and where available, in qualification structures at national level. Moreover, there is a vast amount of (academic) research on teacher and management competences available throughout Europe. (Buiskool et al, 2010). This short report will show what is done in some countries within the European Union from a more practical point of view.

Competence can be divided into two parts, *Competence development* and *skills enhancement*. The first is about competence development on an individual and collective level, the second part is about the employers view on learning and competence. You have to have both parts to be able to get the full meaning of competence.

The ways of assessing competence differs according to purpose and here we have chosen to view competence assessment in the labour market, how people already at work, focus on Adult Education Trainers, can be assessed and validated and what the benefits may be.

Competence assessment can define skills depending on what perspective is regarded, either from the individual's point of view or from the point of work, but it is always in its context this will have a meaning and importance.

Since people develop their competence in different ways, and have different purposes with a validation, there are different processes made to interact with the needs of the individual. But the aim of the assessment is always to map, value and document the competence of the individual.

In Sweden, Competence assessments, or validation, have become quite a big issue over the last fifteen years. The concept “validering” was introduced in Sweden in 1996 as a part of the

Adult Education Initiative, but similar phenomena have existed even before that. Much work has been done in various organizations and authorities.

We have had many different approaches to competence assessment, in schools, in the academic world, education providers and from representatives of the labour market, Public Employment Service and employers. The Swedish government stated in 2003 this definition of the term “validation”: “Validation is a process meaning a structured assessment, valuation, documentation and acknowledgement of the knowledge and competence a person have, regardless of how they have been achieved”.

As of today the guidelines from European Guidelines for Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, published by CEDEFOP in 2009, are used as a base in validation and to meet the guidelines of transparency and comparability between different models used in different countries.

In Italy the idea of validating competences at work has been introduced following the indications and requests of the European Union, relative to the Lifelong learning policy and the creation of a European Framework of Qualification. The Validation and eventually certification process of competences is meant to valorise the cultural and professional skills of people at work, in order to improve their possibility of finding a job or as guarantee of competence and high standards of professionalism.

The Decreto Legislativo n. 13 of 16th January 2013, introduces for the first time the National system of Certification of Competences, which includes rules for the validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal contexts

There is no industry standard to become an Adult Education Trainer **in France** but it is assumed that trainers must be professionals highly qualified in their field.

The adult education requires above all a solid professional experience. Some degrees may, however, complete the experience, especially with regard to the acquisition of educational tools. Others, including master level are oriented curriculum design training. There is a competence framework that serves as a reference point for developing a curriculum leading to qualification and for evaluating candidate aptitudes. The framework is not sector specific; it focuses on general competences and pedagogical expertise rather than on technical competence.

In Germany there is a wide variety of staff acting as teachers or trainers. Their formal qualifications range from none to a university diploma, their occupational status retired or unemployed to qualified employees in training institutions. No common standard exists of what constitutes an example of CVET teacher/trainer or adult trainer, also there are no common standards for assessment or validation of competences.

The terminology of validating competencies at work **in Latvia** firstly became widespread with regard to the recruitment practices as a part of human resources management. Both in public and private sector, organizations set predefined competency models to recruit employees who will correspond to the needs and the culture of the organization. Later on, the idea of validating competences has moved to periodical evaluation practices in order to determine long and short term organization and individual development plans for the future in order to maintain competitiveness and increase overall expertise. Since 2000 (Memorandum on lifelong learning) it has been supported in Latvia by the European Union Lifelong learning policy and the creation of a European Framework of Qualification. In order to introduce the informally gained competencies recognition in Latvia according to EU, there has been created a working group for the project in 2007 that will develop methodology for the recognition of non-formal education, knowledge and skills. In addition, there has been assigned a working group in the ministry, who will work on proposition for the changes in legislation with regard to the matter.

In Greece, the national accreditation system for the teaching qualification of Adult Trainers of non-formal education was designed by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (E.O.P.E.P.), it was submitted to public consultation, and it was finalized with the participation of the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and defines, by Ministerial Decision, the terms for recognition, the requirements and the procedure for certification of educational adequacy.

The certification system serves the upgrading the system of non-formal adult education in the context of Lifelong Learning, the quality assurance of the non-formal adult education, upgrading skills of trainers involved in the implementation of programs of non-formal adult education and implementation of the principles and guidelines of the European and particularly the national policy on adult education.

Methods to validate competence

In Sweden

In Sweden, vocational education consists of different educations, those that are formalized to a curricula set by the education provider together with the national board of education, hence included in the national education system. Those educations are formalized and uniform throughout the country and consistent regardless of where you choose to study.

The other part of vocational education is less formal, and has been working with competence assessment for a long period of time and in conjunction with the labour market in order to educate to jobs and not to unemployment.

The work with developing methods, structures and models for assessment in Sweden takes its standpoint in the European principles of validation, they must contribute to uniformity, legitimization and transparency, and also protect the rights of the individual.

The principal are:

- Individual rights
- The obligations of the actors
- Trust and confidence
- Trustworthiness and legitimacy

These principals, guidelines, deals with several aspects of assessment, amongst others: national structures, guidance, methods of valuating, quality assurance, organisers, stakeholders and assessment from the individual's point of view.

Although no common uniform validation models have evolved so have validation method has increased in recent years. Two broad types of validation that is often quoted is system-compliant and system-changing validation. Custom System - means that starting is in the requirements contained in the existing system, labour market and education system. Systemic means that the experience held by those who participate in validation is used to change the system. The national efforts with the "Open University" in the lead signalling systems change

while at the Nordic Seminar held in 2003 in Stockholm found that the validation forms which are preferably used in Sweden are systems adapted. This project should be seen as a further contribution to the system-changing validation work.

Methods

To create the conditions for a common systematic evaluation / validation of skills required to common instruments designed to communicate about. Sectors actors have the knowledge required to evaluate a specific and relevant professional experience. Because the industries and branches are different and have different requirements, it becomes necessary to have a flexible approach to how a common instrument would look like.

About 25 branches of trades have developed models to assess competence for about 140 professions, and more are under way. It is the standard of each profession that guides the models regarding qualifications and competence assessment. The models are used for validation of formal education, non-formal education and informal education and hence, not only linked to formal education. The problem faced is that those models are not standardized, but more a result of the people working with them in their own specific environment.

Challenges

- To make existing models available and to increase the use of validation adapted to the needs and purposes of the individual.
- To ensure quality in all the processes of validation, firstly in the process of assessment, to achieve legitimacy both in the context of education and labour market.
- Professionalization and further education of those working with validation, counsellors, vocational teachers and vocational assessors.

The validation in relation to the context

It is important, to use the previously existing knowledge, to emphasize the validation of their various forms is closely linked to the different contexts in which it occurs (Andersson, Sjösten & Ahn, 2002). One aspect is the importance of ensuring those institutions or actors in a specific context, the power of the requirements, i.e., what knowledge or skills that "counts." Michelson (1997) highlights the importance of university departments have, but also the role of employers in the definition of professional skills emphasized.

This is about the importance of being aware of the validation purpose - whether it is primarily meant to be the basis for and shape the future development or primarily a summary of learning that has already occurred. Another difficulty is that while making fair assessments that enable comparisons between individuals and make individual's specific skills justice (Andersson, 2001). This involves efforts to achieving validity and reliability of the assessment (Bjørnåvold, 2000). In addition to these more technical aspects of what is required to establish

a system of validation is also requirement of legality and legitimacy (Bjørnåvold, 2000) - it requires political decisions and social acceptance.

Validation of professional competence

When assessment criteria formulated based on desirable behaviour and skills described in distinct modules, it leads to a more comprehensive assessment, as each individual element should be assessed. This leads to more time spent on assessment, and succession would be that a relatively large amount of work required.

The Portfolio

A collection of assessed materials that demonstrates an individual's achievement is generally termed a 'portfolio'. This evidence may be presented in a number of ways. However, it must always be:

- tracked against an individual;
- in a clearly structured format;
- available at one place and one time.

A mechanism must be in place to ensure the individual has done the work in the portfolio. Work should be signed off by the assessor.

Portfolio as a model for validation

The most common way of documenting experience based knowledge/learning is by using the portfolio model. To create a portfolio for validation/assessment is described as a strict and demanding process. During this process the learners develop not just their self-assessment skills, but also skills in writing and communication.

Those who complete the portfolio usually have a clearer idea about what they really know, what they do not know and what they want to know. The portfolio process is also a way to develop responsibility, hence this process should in itself be regarded as a learning process.

The main aspect of the portfolio is to, by documentation, show that your experiences have led to the knowledge that is needed to be accepted to, or be able to get credit for parts of a specific education.

- Guidance: The individual gets in contact with a counsellor who supports the process
- The individual identifies levels of acknowledgement in education or work
- The individual gathers evidence on this knowledge
- The individual relates the knowledge to the formal demands
- The material is gathered in a portfolio
- Assessment: One or more professionals assess the application/knowledge (Assessor and counsellor should not be the same person)

- Documentation of results

Authenticity

Evidence must be the result of the individual's own performance activity. Depending on the type of learning, the target learner and the evidence required, appropriate mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that the learner has done the work that is presented. In the case of word processed submissions it may be necessary for tutors or assessors to require at least one piece of handwritten evidence.

The future of competence assessment in Sweden

In December 2009 the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education got an assignment from the Swedish government to make a proposition about new descriptors in a national frame for validation/assessment of competences.

Its standpoint should be the recommendations from the European Parliament and the framework of qualifications within Life Long Learning (EQF) and the result should be adapted to a national framework (NQF).

The framework should be applicable not only to the formal public educational system, but also to actors outside the public educational system, and to make sure this is communicated to all actors to involve all qualifications to the framework.

The establishment of a working group, consisting of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, the Swedish association of Local Authorities and Regions, Trade unions, The Swedish National Agency for Education, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education and the Public Employment Service.

The national framework should be as close to the European framework as possible, and have the same structural base.

To get legitimacy in the working environment for the national framework of assessment it is also regarded as very important to include non-formal education, a great deal of education is taking place in the work life outside the formal education system. Assessment of competences has to be made possible in the frame of vocational education and popular adult education.

Source: Återrapportering av regeringsuppdrag 2010, Förslag till ett svenskt kvalifikationsramverk, YH 2010/YH2042

In Italy

In the XXI society, globalized and strictly connected, the learning contests and opportunities are multiple: formal learning contests (i.e. school and university), working places, Internet

and use of new technologies, everyday life contests, and participation to organizations, voluntary associations or other institutions.

In order to support people and their professional growth, it becomes very important to take into account the human capital represented by the whole set of competences each person has acquired in any learning contest: formal, non-formal and informal.

Adult Education Trainers

The training sector has been crossed since a long time by deep and rapid processes of innovation: new subjects operating in the field, the impact of new learning paradigms and of new technologies, just to remind some of the main factors of change. In such a scenario, a growing attention has been devoted to the outcomes of learning.

Therefore, it has become more and more necessary to reflect upon and implement a model to assess the professionalism of the players acting in the learning processes of adults, especially Trainers.

So far, in Italy there isn't an institutional system of validating competences of Trainers in Adult Education valid and compulsory at national level.

In order to overcome the lack of a national system of validating competences of AET, the Italian Association of Trainers, AIF, has always carefully pursued the issues of professional quality and ethical standards for trainers, specifically developing and establishing a certification process in order to translate those issues into reality.

The process for certification gives all the Italian trainers the possibility to demonstrate their cognitive and educational requirements and the expertise and competencies deemed as crucial for a qualified trainer.

Methods

Following the Decreto Legislativo n. 13 of 16th January 2013, the Validation of competences (acquired through non-formal and informal contests) of people at work can be done by entitled bodies (authorized public entities or accredited private entities, among which schools, universities, accredited training centres, Chamber of Commerce).

The entitled bodies can identify, validate and certify competences of people referring to the **National or Regional Framework of Competences** where the competences are codified and listed basing on the criteria for referencing the Framework itself to the European Qualification Framework. This can help the recognition of learning credits and competences within Europe. The D. L. n. 13/2013 recognises 2 kinds of services:

1. Identification and validation of competences

2. Certification of competence

Both services have to respect the following conditions:

- General principles (art. 3)

- Object: competences
- Referencing criteria: National or Regional framework and EQF
- Standards of the process
- Standards of the document released
- Standards of the system: the entitled bodies must respect

PROCESS OF VALIDATION OF COMPETENCES



1. **IDENTIFICATION**: this phase aims at identifying and highlighting competences of a person referred to one or more qualification (National or Regional Framework or EQF). In case of competences acquired in non-formal or informal contexts, an operator, expert in the field, will support the person in analyzing and documenting the learning experiences or the competences acquired, linking them to the learning outcomes of a qualification.
2. **EVALUATION**: this phase aims at verifying and scrutinizing the possessions of competences referred to one or more qualification. In case of competences acquired in non-formal or informal contexts, an operator, expert in the field, will use specific methodologies for the evaluation and will ask for evidences to demonstrate the competences possessed.
3. **ATTESTATION**: this phase aims at releasing the validation (or certification) document, basing on a standard template, valid all over the national territory (D.L. n. 13/2013): it will list and document the identified competences referred to one or more qualification.
- Any person can require the service of Validation of competences to the entitled bodies. Being a new procedure (the law was approved), not many people has required it yet.

Adult Education Trainers

The Italian Association of Trainers, AIS has created its own system of certification of competence of Trainers (and other professionals involved in Adult Education, such as the Tutor, the E-Tutor, etc.), together with the adoption of the first code of professional ethics of Italian trainers (“AIF Charter of Values and Behaviours”), aiming at:

- a) improving the quality of training in Italy, also beyond the limits of the formal accreditation systems and processes;
- b) protecting all the targets and stakeholders of training actions from trainers who fail to meet minimum qualitative levels in terms of specialization and experience in learning processes;

- c) formally defining professional models and profiles that can be recognized and assessed;
- d) identifying and promoting strict criteria for an ethical vision of the profession.

The annual publication of a register containing all the AIF certified trainers, together with the renewal of certification requested every five years, aims to guarantee a system of quality control for training professionals, clients and for the whole training market.

The Teaching Trainer is a specialist of the subject and an expert on training processes who can adequately integrate his/her personal/professional skills with the requirements of the training course assigned in order to reach the objectives as defined.

The teaching trainer is familiar with the training process and its systemic variables, the specialist content issues and the principles of organizational management.

He/she has also a good methodological knowledge of planning, delivering, implementing and evaluating the didactical phases and units and of the main variables relative to group dynamics and interpersonal relations in different training settings and contexts.

The teaching trainer is capable of acting independently in order to acquire the information regarding the assigned task and to reach the assigned training objectives through appropriate planning, implementation and monitoring of his/her action.

He/she is also capable of orienting the participants'/target's attention, adequately co-ordinating the climate in the classroom and encouraging participation and interaction. He/she re-elaborates and integrates the contents according to the participants' competencies, using traditional classroom aids and techniques and respecting the training planning variables.

He/she verifies the relevance and coherence of the contents in relation with the course objectives.

Professional qualification indicators	Entry Requirements	Documents
High School - University	A university degree in line with the area of training (or high school level if supplemented by further specialization which will be assessed by the certifying commission).	Copy of degree and certificates proving the studies and specialisation.
Professional experience	At least 5 years' experience in training	Self-certification of activities declared by the applicant with attached at least 5 signed declarations by clients or employers.
Educational competencies	Expertise in meeting training objectives assigned through	At least 5 daily micro-plans (project outlines) articulated

	<p>appropriate planning, implementation and monitoring of activity. A minimum of 500 hours of training in a period from three to five years.</p>	<p>in objectives, contents, exercises, methods, supports and ways of measuring learning.</p>
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This system is agreed on a private basis and a Trainer need to be associated to AIF in order to have the certification and he/she has to pay!

Of course any trainer can ask for validation of his/her training competences through the system ruled by National law (D.L. n. 13/2013) and directly referred and referenced to the European Qualification Framework.

In France

A short introduction or background to the tool used and why this is used

Various paths through various bodies and organizations are opened to those willing to be validated as Adult Trainers. The most regular path is that through the AFPA the French Association for Adult Vocational Training of Adults. They deliver a professional title (Titre Professionnel - TP).

The title of Adult Education Trainer was registered in the Official Journal in 1997 and has been renewed several times, the latest as of 2012. A study was done in 2007 to produce the following year a new profile of competences of the AET, referred in France as REAC - Référentiel d'Emploi, d'Activités et de Compétences.

Other Itineraries include validation of experience largely provide by the GRETAs and also the AFPA, university (the DUFA), the CNAM which is also a public body dedicated to craftsmanship and private institutions which can deliver CQPs (Certificat de Qualification Professionnel – Certificate of Professional Qualification).

Methods

General

There is no industry standard to become an Adult Education Trainer. If a level baccalauréat +2 qualification in a technical discipline is sometimes enough to exercise, most appointments are usually between baccalauréat +3 or +5. Trainers must be professionals highly qualified in their field.

The adult education requires above all a solid professional experience. Some degrees may, however, complete the experience, especially with regard to the acquisition of educational tools. Others, including master level are oriented curriculum design training.

Bac +3 level (EQF level 6): Specialty Bachelor's degree - trainer in the workplace, adult education, trades training.

Bac + 5 (EQF 7): Masters level - specialized engineering training, strategy and engineering training of adults, designer and director of training or consultant, advisor, training manager

Sources : <http://www.onisep.fr/Ressources/Univers-Metier/Metiers/formateur-trice-d-adultes>
http://www.informetiers.info/metiers/fiche_metiers.php?id_fiche=423&id_secteur=2&id_ss_secteur=3

Assessment at AFPA

A candidate prepares a portfolio describing his/her professional experience, activities and acquired competences (dossier de synthèse de pratique professionnelle) and a written report on the specific training scheme that led him/her to develop the competences in question. A jury of professionals in the field then analyses the two and also interviews the candidate.

Candidates usually apply for the full qualification but the two CCP's that comprise it can be awarded independently depending on the candidates' competences. If only one CCP is awarded (the partial validation), it remains valid for five years, during which the candidate can undertake further training needed for the other CCP or can continue to acquire necessary professional experience and get it reassessed later.

The procedure requires a high level of candidate commitment and involvement, as it is based on reflection and self-assessment and is time-consuming. The experience points to the need for more guidance and preparatory meetings with the candidates.

The AFPA regularly monitors developments in the sector through qualitative surveys, interviews and consultation to assess and maintain the relevance of the competence frameworks.

Competences required

The competence framework of the TP FPA serves as a reference point for developing the course curriculum leading to the qualification and for evaluating candidate aptitudes at the final exam or in the VAE process. The framework is not sector specific; it focuses on general competences and pedagogical expertise rather than on technical competence.

Each of the two certificates of professional competences in the TP FPA has requirements specific to one of the main activities. There are also transversal competence requirements common to both.

(a) CCP preparation and facilitation of training:

- devising a training programme based on the demand and context;
- elaborating a pedagogical scenario and preparing necessary materials, equipment and venue for the training;

- evaluating learning outcomes: measuring learner achievements against the objectives; analysing results and developing new actions if needed;
 - Identifying and dealing with individual obstacles to learning; identifying the preferred learning modes of groups and learners and adapting the pedagogy accordingly;
 - assessing and following up on the training;
 - using ICT tools to support learning;
 - teamwork, conflict management, communication.
- (b) CCP contributing to the elaboration of training and supporting learners on their learning paths:
- identifying and mobilising stakeholders in developing a training path (for example, guidance professionals, companies/employers, members of the evaluation jury, experts);
 - contributing to detailing training activities within existing or new training programmes; adapting to the specific requirements, context, resources and/or developing necessary pedagogical materials and tools;
 - guiding learners in their professional integration and projects by identifying skill and competence gaps and devising the means to fill them;
 - following up learner progress by contributing to their assessment and elaboration of learning paths; defining steps in the learning pathways; helping identify difficulties and acting as a mediator if problems are beyond the trainers' responsibilities;
 - identifying the objective of the training; gathering quantitative and qualitative information; evaluating the training against the objectives; preparing reports on the results of the training;
 - awareness of job search techniques.
- (c) Transversal competences common for both CCPs:
- managing logistical aspects of training (material, administrative and pedagogical resources);
 - collecting updated information on pedagogic, technical, commercial, socio-economic and legal aspects related to training and applying it to training strategies and practice;
 - using opportunities to contact companies to clarify training needs;
 - self-assessment of professional practice, continuous development of personal competences;
 - social and professional responsibility: respecting health and safety regulations, encouraging non-discriminatory attitudes, raising awareness of learners about sustainable development, citizenship, consumption.

Link to the validation of non-formal and informal learning

The qualification can be obtained through the validation of non-formal and informal learning and has the same value as those obtained through a training course: about a quarter of candidates qualify this way.

Outcomes

In 2010, 760 candidates obtained the adult trainer qualification, among them 563 through a training programme and 197 through the validation of prior experience. There are no data on the breakdown of participants by categories. However, it is assumed that this opportunity is of interest to in-company trainers who often do not have a qualification in training but have developed relevant skills and competences in their work.

According to the AFPA, and based on the qualitative feedback they receive from participants, in-company trainers undergoing validation benefit by acquiring a recognised qualification, which helps them secure, improve or expand their employment and career prospects, and by reflecting on their professional practice as a trainer and increasing awareness of their skills and competences.

As the AFPA employs trainers of adults, the organisation developed internal plans to ensure that the AFPA 'in-house' trainers had their professional experience recognised, thus, raising the quality of the services provided.

Source: <http://blog.univ-provence.fr/blog/coordination-regionale-paca/formation-continue/2013/04/21/trainers-in-continuing-vet-emerging-competence-profile>

In Germany

A short introduction

Depending on the network organization of trainers, various further trainings for development and assessment of competences are organized (Bavarian Association of Adult Education Centres, BDVT eV - Der Berufsverband für Trainer, Berater und Coaches)

For example in adult education centres (VHSs) the assessment and validation are based on self-assessment, job shadowing / supervision and common discussion according to the EFQM quality management system. This model was introduced in 2007 and is regularly updated, the model of assessment with appropriate tools (templates) is adjusted to the education field offered by adult education centres (languages, vocational education, health, society etc).

Methods

The accreditation system and validation process is based on the EFQM¹ model for excellence and its implementation and quality assurance in further education, quality management system – recognition and licensing of training.

The trainers working with adult education centres are obliged to take part in the preparation courses for beginners or those who have working experience they can take part in refresher

¹ EFQM – optimisation and orientation at the customers' needs e.g complaints are collected structurally and evaluated in certain intervals. Slips from the results of these evaluations become concrete improvement measures and new aims.

course (there are various levels of the courses from very beginners to advance). After that they receive certificate confirming attendance in the preparation course.

The competence portfolio is also offered the trainers, this portfolio gives possibility for self-evaluation of competences and skills, and it can be used as a guidance tool for supervision with managers or as guidance for further self-development.

Below is the list of competences to be considered in a portfolio:

- Personal competences: tasks, self – perception and perception of role, raising awareness and reflection of one's learning history
- Social competences: Management of the communication and interaction; Perception, analysis and reflection of group processes (Group dynamics); Constructive dealing with conflicts; awareness and dealing with different social, cultural and gender backgrounds (age, gender etc.).
- Didactic competences: support, counselling and support for individuals and learning groups; development and agreement of learning aims; design of learning process in interaction with the participants; selection and creation of the appropriate working materials.
- Methodological competences: use a variety of forms and methods of work; selection of media, use of media.
- Consulting skills: ability to advice and provide educational guidance;
- Knowledge regarding institutional issues: knowledge of the legal and educational conditions; knowledge of the legal and social status as instructor; knowledge of the institution and organization of adult education centre (VHS); the status, role and function of the instructor and the instructor within the institution.
- Interdisciplinary competences: e.g. language skills, business management, IT skills
- Entrepreneurial skills: acquisition, self-marketing.

The portfolio allows also assessing strengths and weakness together with supervisor and areas for improvement.

Apart self-evaluation the supervision provided by manager or other trainers is carried out. The supervision is based on the 6 criteria:

- General impression from the supervised lesson (knowledge about the participants and composition of the group, preparation of the course (aims, planning), equipment, punctuality)
- Goal, topic of teaching (targeted learning objectives, transparency for the participants, achieved learning objectives)
- Lesson design (transparency, variety, use of various forms of exercise, behaviour, use of the textbooks, use of additional materials and its appropriateness for the participants, timing)
- Use of media (conscious use of media)
- Trainers behaviour (clear, natural pronunciation, adequate speech tempo, use of body language, gestures, facial expressions, consideration of the participant-oriented learning types)
- Group situation (motivation of the group, atmosphere in the group, trainers' attention)

After supervision the common discussion (interview) is carried out, as mentioned before the self-assessment portfolio is used as well. The interview offers possibility to discuss what are the areas of the improvement, what further education courses can be offered to the trainers. The trainers receive also feedback after the end of the course on the basis of questionnaires filled in by the participants.

In Latvia

Introduction

Competence validation has achieved high attention and relevance within organizations and society in the last decades as a form to assign value to diverse practices of learning within job context. Multiple possibilities to gain relevant experience and knowledge for the workplace, informal and formal, for instance, online learning, NGO, courses, networking events, professional experiences, projects and many more, can be taken into consideration in recruitment process as a validation item for relevant competencies. Moreover, during professional experience, validation exercises has measure existing set of competencies as a mean to for future development indications as a crucial process for rapidly changing business and market environments.

The process of competence validation for Adult education trainers in corporate sector has been the responsibility of individual training centres. As what refers to public sector, university professors, lectors and similar has been recruited based on formal education achievements and requirements on predefined work experience, while continuous development has been based on pre-set amount of learning hours which has to be achieved every year. Others, working in government sector, encounter predefined profiles for formal education and work experiences, as well as related competencies. There are, however, no generally predefined entry requirements for Adult education trainers as this field is not regulated.

The characteristic of adult education trainer's work in Latvia is that it is carried out as part time in 90% of cases, so trainers do not carry high professional status as trainers.

Adult Education Trainers

With the development of new technologies, demographic changes, increased life expectancy and rapid changes in the world influencing all the sectors, adult education is gaining increased attention in Europe. People have the necessity to develop new skills and relearn to adapt to the labour market needs. The important stakeholders in this process are adult education trainers as it has been stressed in lifelong adult education policy.

In Latvia, there are no regulations which would guide and define the qualification of adult education trainers. The practice, in Latvia there have been represented many adult education trainers who are very young in comparison with adult learners, especially in IT technology field, who have gained competencies in both informal and formal fashion. On the contrary,

adult education trainers providing soft skills or hard skills (where it requires considerable work experience) training have more rich formal and informal experience portfolio.

Methods to validate competences

Recognition of vocational competencies acquires outside the formal education

In 2008, a decision was made to provide assessment primarily for the acquisition of vocational qualifications. Amendments to the Vocational Education Law were drawn up in 2009 and adopted in 2010, governing the assessment of vocational competencies acquired outside the formal education system.

In 2011 there have been introduced changes with regard to the recognition of professional competencies. The Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 146 'Procedures for the assessment of vocational competencies acquired outside the formal education system' were adopted on 22 February 2011, laying down procedures, by which vocational qualifications corresponding to the first, second or third level may be acquired by individuals who have acquired vocational competencies outside the formal education system. This system ensures that everyone, who wants to validate his/her professional competencies, can apply for the examination in the education institution in order to validate the competencies. The expenses (around 32-350 EUR) of validation are carried by the professional who aims to validate competencies.

In accordance with the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers, assessment of vocational competencies acquired outside the formal education system is coordinated by the State Education Quality Service, a subordinate body of the Ministry. Vocational competencies are assessed through vocational quality examinations in accordance with the procedures for centralized vocational qualification examinations stated in laws and regulations.

Practices used in corporate sector

As stated above, competence validation in corporate sector closely relates to recruitment processes and training and development practices. This practice applies as well on recruitment and evaluation process of adult education trainers in corporate and public institutions.

Nowadays, competence based recruitment interviews are widely used aiming with each question to test one or more specific skills and competencies. The answer is then matched against pre-decided criteria and marked accordingly. Candidates are asked questions relating to their behaviour in specific circumstances, which they then need to back up with concrete examples from experience. The interviewers will then dig further into the examples by asking for specific explanations about the candidate's behaviour or skills. This approach allows using examples from diverse learning contexts and experiences, moving beyond the formal qualifications. As competencies relates to personality, then in combination to competence interviews, personality tests are used in order to forecast possible models of reactions and attitudes in certain situations.

Competency validation practices throughout the career relates to the development and performance appraisals. The competence evaluation for subordinates relates to individual learning plans and performance appraisals that are reviewed annually. They indicate individual areas of improvement, where performance needs to be increased in a certain set of time by setting learning plans and actions which include training activities. Sometimes, this approach is called as 180 degrees evaluation. Described competence validation is often carried out by line manager or human resource manager in organization.

For managers the performance appraisal and competence development, 360 degrees feedback has been applied, which includes not only personal and manager feedback about work performance and competencies, but includes as well appraisal of colleagues and customers.

For adult education trainers, the on-going evaluation has been influenced by training evaluation done by training participants both in formal and non-formal way, which is, however, influenced by many factors aside from performance of trainer.



Image 1. 360 degrees evaluation. Fleenor, J. W., & Prince, J. M.

Those practices cover both formal and informal activities related to job context. They are, however, diverse from organization to organization.

To conclude, there is no adult training competencies validation model implemented in Latvia and there are no supporting regulations with regard to recruitment and validation of adult trainer's competencies which would set the ground for the profession. With regard to competence validation models at work, there exist many approaches and forms for competence validation in corporate and public sector, however, they are customized to particular organization, company and industry needs.

In Greece

Methods

EOPPEP (National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance) accredits occupational profiles with the active contribution of the social partners in the process of their development. An occupational profile is defined as the job functions and the required knowledge, skills and competencies for exercising an occupation or speciality. Based upon accredited occupational profiles, EOPPEP is planning to develop standards and specifications for modularised curricula with credits.

Fifty occupational profiles have been developed so far. Adult Trainer is one among them.

Learning itineraries for accreditation as Adult Trainer

1st itinerary:

Formal learning: Degree on Adult Education / Open or e-learning education/ Adult training and specifically PhD (ISCED 6) or/and Master or University Degree (ISCED 5A, 5B)

Experience: 2 years on Adult Education / Open or e-learning education/ Adult training

Certification: Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "proficiency"

2nd itinerary:

Formal learning: PhD (ISCED 6) or/and Master or University Degree (ISCED 5A, 5B) in any field

Experience: 2 years in their field of education

Certification:

- 1.1. Basic level: Attendance of certified training program on aspects of professional activity of the adult educator. Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "basic"
- 1.2. Proficiency level: 150 hours teaching experience in vocational education and / or training and adult education that will be obtained in 5 years + attendance of certified training program on aspects of professional activity of the adult educator OR 750 hours teaching experience in vocational education and / or training and adult education that will be obtained in 5 years. Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "proficiency"

3rd itinerary:

Formal learning: ISCED 4

Experience: 3 years in their field of education

Certification:

- a) Basic level: Attendance of certified training program on aspects of professional activity of the adult educator. Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "basic"
- b) Proficiency level: 150 hours teaching experience in vocational education and / or training and adult education that will be obtained in 5 years + attendance of certified training program on

aspects of professional activity of the adult educator. Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "proficiency"

4th itinerary:

Formal learning: ISCED 3A, 3B, 3C

Experience: 5 years in their field of education

Certification:

- a) Basic level: Attendance of certified training program on aspects of professional activity of the adult educator. Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "basic"
- b) Proficiency level: 150 hours teaching experience in vocational education and / or training and adult education that will be obtained in 5 years + attendance of certified training program on aspects of professional activity of the adult educator. Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "proficiency"

5th itinerary:

Formal learning: ISCED 2

Experience: 6 years in their field of education

Certification:

- a) Basic level: Attendance of certified training program on aspects of professional activity of the adult educator. Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "basic"
- b) Proficiency level: 150 hours teaching experience in vocational education and / or training and adult education that will be obtained in 5 years + attendance of certified training program on aspects of professional activity of the adult educator. Participation in evaluation process of knowledge, skills, abilities level "proficiency"

Indicative assessment methods

- **Portfolio AET (proposed as an assessment tool for all itineraries)**
is the appropriate way to reflect accurately the ability of the instructor to:
 - a) self-guided and autonomous learning
 - b) critical reflection and transformation
 - c) development of a capacity for critical awareness of social and cultural inequalities
- **Assessment procedures based on Regulatory Written Exam (proposed as an assessment tool for itineraries (1) and (2))**
Knowledge
 - Theoretical competence in the field of adult education and training subject
 - Development of human resources
 - New information and communication technologies (ICT)

Skills

- Distinguishes the relevance of theories, methodologies and models to solve a problem
- Organizes the tangible version of a theory
- Incorporates the texts he/she reads on own rephrasing
- Highlights and substantiates own interpretive approach

Abilities

- Critic analysis of knowledge
- Creative intervention in the knowledge systems that processes
- Reflection and linking theory with practice

- **Performance Assessment and Simulations (proposed as an assessment tool for all itineraries)**

Knowledge

- Adult education
- Knowledge of the field / subject of training
- ICT

Skills

- Identifies means and sources
- Implements the already known with new approaches
- Adjusts the original design during implementation
- Risks solutions to unpredictable / emerging issues during implementation
- Customizes the performance, taking into account the socio-cultural diversity of the target group

Abilities

- Adaptation of the familiar to the unfamiliar environments
- Jeopardy
- New approaches
- Cultural competence

- **Professional Development Plan (proposed as an assessment tool for itineraries (2)- (5))**

Knowledge

- Adult education
- Knowledge of the field / subject of training (with emphasis on specific knowledge on social, scientific and / or technical developments in the profession / professional knowledge of specific training)
- ICT

Skills

- Exploits the characteristics of the field of adult education
- Seeks and incorporates information
- Links individual choices and attitudes to broader developments in professional field
- Implements methodologies of organized actions
- Collaborates with others to check conformational choices
- Acts as a citizen of lifelong learning

Abilities

- Self - awareness
- Accountability
- Management of new and unfamiliar sources of knowledge or incomplete information
- Cultural competence

- **Production of electronic and printed sample views of his/her work (educational material, videotaped lectures, etc.) (proposed as an assessment tool for itineraries (1)- (3))**

Knowledge

- Adult education
- Development of human resources
- ICT with emphasis on multimodality (use of language, images, charts, colors, etc.) when creating printed and electronic educational materials for a course of vocational education and training

Skills

- Exploits the characteristics of the field of adult education
- Implements pedagogical methodologies
- Highlights the content of training at multiple levels
- Takes into account the characteristics of the target group in order to create the materials
- Manages semiotic resources available both in print and in electronic educational materials (multimodality)

Abilities

- Knowledge Management
- Negotiation
- Adaptation of training methodologies

Conclusion

To get legitimacy in the working environment for the national framework of assessment it is also regarded as very important to include non-formal education, a great deal of education is taking place in the work life outside the formal education system. Assessment of competences has to be made possible in the frame of vocational education and popular adult education.

The competence portfolio is also offered the trainers, this portfolio gives possibility for self-evaluation of competences and skills, and it can be used as a guidance tool for supervision with managers or as guidance for further self-development.

There are various standards regarding the occupational profile of an Adult Trainers and various models of assessment and validation of competences. The existing profiles are mostly based on the requirements / rules set up by some establishments (trades, associations) and the criteria laid down in the relevant legislation for teaching staff where legislation is present. Competency validation practices throughout the career relates to the development and performance appraisals. The competence evaluation for subordinates relates to individual learning plans and performance appraisals that are reviewed annually. They indicate individual areas of improvement, where performance needs to be increased in a certain set of time by setting learning plans and actions which include training activities. Described competence validation is often carried out by line manager or human resource manager in the organization performing the assessment.

It is not evident that models regarding adult training competencies are implemented on a national level, even though we can see efforts to implement supporting standards with regard to recruitment and validation of adult trainer's competencies which would set the ground for the profession. With regard to competence validation models at work, there exist many approaches and forms for competence validation in corporate and public sector, however, they are customized to particular organization, company and industry needs.

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