

Editorial

Since the last newsletter issued in September work has continued on the analysis of national systems and the preparation of a transnational comparative report. It is clear from the findings that there is some considerable diversity in the priorities and the methodologies of evaluating teacher and trainer performance throughout Europe. There is even some diversity on the interpretation of what results are from these evaluations, and what influence they have on the individual or the organisation in which they work.

In a way it seems strange that these two professions (teacher and trainer) have evolved out of the broadly the same activity. We have found that relatively few countries have considered this issue within their national frameworks of occupational profiles and qualifications. This factor reinforces the need for the TEVAL project, and highlights its potential in making a contribution to the development of a flexible workforce of learning and skills development professionals on a European level.

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Technical file

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TEVAL Project 2nd Partnership Meeting at Sèvres

The second meeting of the TEVAL partnership was hosted by Centre National d'Etudes Pédagogiques at Sèvres near Paris on December 5 & 6, 2005

The Participants included representatives from:

- Instituto Politécnico de Beja/ Escola Superior de Educação de Beja - Portugal
- Univation Institut fur Evaluation Cologne, Germany
- Centre National d'Etudes Pédagogiques Sevres, France
- Hellenic Regional Development Centre Patras, Greece
- Pedagogical University - Tallin, Estonia

The TEVAL team were welcomed by Samuel Levy, the CIEP manager for Leonardo da Vinci Projects within CR2i.

There was a general presentation of the current situation with the project focusing on the discussion of TEVAL' objectives. It was stressed that the project involves the conception of an evaluation framework for both teachers and trainers and that all partners should be clear about this aspect and maintain the contracted schedule of work and outcomes

Sandra Saúde (IPB/ESEB) presented the main findings of the Transnational Report which was to be reviewed by all of the partners prior to being made available on-line on the project web-site at the end of January. This report would provide the foundation of all future activities

Ms. Saúde also presented the Evaluation Framework for Teachers and Trainers in European context. This framework was enriched with contributions from Sandra Speer and Katja Harish of Univation Institut fur Evaluation, and also by the partnership working in groups to further develop the concepts

Other proposals to enhance the developing proposals were to be prepared by Univation, ESEB and Tallinn University to be circulated by January 15th for review and improvement by the partnership before the end of January. Furthermore, ENTENTE, WEGRE, CR2i were to work on the respective indicators, and guidelines and evidence examples to be ready for consideration by the partnership in time for the next transnational meeting.



The two key concept areas of the evaluation framework model are to be "Professionalism" and "Performance".

The second day of the meeting was focused on administrative issues, with ESEB presenting a proposal for the Project's Website that was well received by the partnership who have a further opportunity to offer comments and suggestions until the end of January. It was proposed to share the €6000 Euro budget between those partners who had not already made their own arrangements for web-based dissemination, and also to allow access to the restricted areas of the site by the regional networks.

These regional networks already include key influencing bodies in Portugal, Germany France and the UK with representation at policymaking, influencing and practitioner and professional association level. Whilst these regional networks will be crucial in the dissemination and valorisation role, each partner is expected to participate in at least 2 national or EU

events with a teacher/trainer development theme. To this end Univation intends to contribute to the Congress of European Evaluation Society in October 2006 whilst other partners intend to take part in the ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) Spring University in Riga, EERA in Genoa and the Teacher's Education Congress in Paris.

Each partner is to reconsider their budget in the light of expenditure commitments on production, web site maintenances and collaboration with their regional networks. Any proposed changes were to be notified by the end of January 2006

Finally, concern about the British weather led to a change of venue for the next meeting in March 2006 from Birmingham to Patras in Greece

The objectives of the Report are to characterize and analyze the existing systems for teacher and trainer evaluation in the partnership countries; to define segments of critical change in skills and aptitudes approaches to teaching and training practices, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the respective systems in order to highlight best practice.

The report's main structure will include a review of teacher and trainer evaluation and an exploration of the need for a European framework. Also included will be a summary of the national reports on:

- entry requirements and certification
- the role and aims of assessment through time
- the legislative requirements for teacher and trainer evaluation
- continuing voluntary evaluation

As a conclusion, the report aims to present a considered foundation for a common evaluation framework for teachers and trainers

In order to develop this common framework for teacher and trainers evaluation it is important that teachers and trainers are seen as a cohesive professional group of practitioners targeting the personal and social development of others.

Evaluation must enable the professional to develop his/her own work and offer ways to improve their performance and practice by focusing on professional and personal development. The process should not be constrained by quantifiable criteria for achievement or performance ratings.

There are diverse education and certification requirements to enter the teaching and training professions. Most countries retain separate government administrations for academic education and vocational training, and as a consequence there are quite different routes to enter the respective professions. Virtually all teachers, and some trainers achieve this by attending relevant further-or-higher education courses, although there are emerging competence based alternatives in one or two member states. The difference in the influence of national infrastructures is reflected at institutional level in many countries, where the state, or the municipality, controls teacher recruitment. The recruitment of trainers outside the public sector remains an organisational responsibility.

The United Kingdom and Estonia are embarking on a process that will unify their national system for teachers and trainers qualifications, but in general, teachers are quite rigorously controlled in terms of degree level qualification requirements compared to trainers who are not subject to any official intervention in this respect. As a general rule, trainers initially attain their status through experience reinforced with interpersonal skills rather than any qualifications in the training role.

Background to EU teacher-trainer evaluation processes Many countries now in the EU have been subject to regimes where the evaluation of teachers and trainers did little more than check that they were carrying out their social and political duties in the development both hearts and minds in line with national legislation.

More developmental process were seen to be established in (mostly) Northern European states, and over the last 10 years there have many attempts in other states to extend the spirit of democracy into HR evaluation processes generally including those in educational institutions.

Whilst the focus of evaluation is still to a large extent based on performance and achievement of targets, there are now moves towards more developmental processes that evaluate teacher and trainer competences in their role as learning facilitators, and not just their subject knowledge.

The style of evaluation also varies greatly, with centralised processes prescribed by ministries or municipalities being the norm for teachers. Trainer evaluation remains almost exclusively an organisational responsibility. However as the focus of teacher trainer evaluation shifts from performance to competence, so does the ownership of the evaluation process from state to individual in some countries. Nevertheless, for this process to have any credibility and consistency there has to be some National, or at least regional, benchmarking of occupational standards.

The methodologies of the teacher trainer evaluation also vary a great deal, with the process being conducted by ministry, municipality, organisational, trade union or even private sector evaluators. In some instances, teacher trainer evaluation is an integrated part of an organisational quality management system Peer evaluation has also been experimented with in some countries (e.g. UK, Germany). The process itself is subject to the whole range of survey instruments ranging from simple questionnaires to in depth customer (student, parent, employer) reviews. "Voluntary" evaluation is also widespread, although this may only be formally recognised in a few countries

The status of the evaluation may be purely developmental for the individual, but in many countries it also informs the progression and promotional system, as well as organisational "business" planning in schools and private training providers alike.

Considerations for the establishment of a common framework of teacher and trainer evaluation.

Taking into account the diversity of infrastructures, systems and methodologies, the major task would appear to be identifying "best practice" that emerges from the research into teacher-trainer evaluation.

Transversal strengths offering opportunities to reform the evaluation process may include the changing tendency to modular training and education systems and the decentralisation of the evaluation system to school-based models as in Estonia, Greece and UK).

There is also much to be learned form the many examples of personal and professional developmental practices such as the voluntary evaluation strategies in place in Germany.

Transversal weaknesses

Threats to these opportunities will remain if educational practitioners maintain their passive role in the process, and also if the authorities continue to use the evaluation process to control careers and influence the functionality of the learning infrastructure.

Other factors that will inhibit the development of a credible and consistent EU approach to practitioner evaluation include "evaluation at a distance", adherence to a single evaluation methodology, ignoring practitioner development needs and polarization of the occupational profiles.

Common Needs

Primarily, there is a need to develop a set of common evaluation principles as benchmarks for all practitioners and institutions involved in the learning process. These principles must have the flexibility to correspond with contextual national, regional and organisational characteristics. The benefits of a more collaborative evaluation processes also need to be shared with those countries that adhere to less democratic principles, and there is a need to minimize differences in teachers and trainers professional status

We must retain an awareness of the developing European dimension of education and training and acknowledge the contribution that membership of the EU can make to the transformation of Education and Training systems.

Focusing on "Learning to Learn" as an EU defined key competence, and applying this to the practitioner as well as the student is essential, as is enhancing the importance of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for professionals in the vanguard of the information society.

As part of this continuous development, evaluation must be acknowledged as a learning process which must be owned by the individual with a commitment to the benefit of themselves, their organisation, the authorities and their community. There is a general need to improve the consultative and evaluation mechanisms that can contribute to the reform of education and training systems. Most importantly, a common European evaluation framework will provide continuity to the recently developed European Qualification Framework (EQF) and Common European Principles for Teachers and Trainers Competences and Qualifications.



UK MOVES TOWARDS A COMMON FRAMEWORK of STANDARDS for TEACHERS and TRAINERS

Whilst Vocational Standards for training practitioners were among the first to be established with the UK's National Vocational Qualification system, the concept has met with some resistance from the teaching profession. Nevertheless, standards were devised for teaching assistants in about 1990 leading to the formal validation of the skills of what has traditionally been a volunteer role in most schools.

Although some of the performance criteria for classroom assistants look appropriate to teaching practitioners, they stopped short of acknowledging that the assistant did anything other than support or contribute to the teaching (or learning) process.

There were a number of factors inhibiting the integration of teaching and training competence frameworks, but (and this is a personal perception) it is perceived by the teaching profession that they teach whereas trainers facilitate the learning process. Maybe this is an over simplification, but if it is true, then it comes very close to splitting hairs. Common sense would dictate that there are many overlapping areas in the teaching and training processes in fact, is there a difference at all?

A further unpopular (with teachers) possibility is that, in theory, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in Teaching could mean that candidates who had come up through the ranks of teaching assistant, could enter the teaching profession without putting in the time on a formal course of teacher training. And people who had become trainers in their workplace - and this often happens by accident rather than design - could become teachers. Note: NVQ assessment takes account of demonstrated and attested competence, and not the means by which skills and knowledge have been acquired.

The final barbed wire fence was that teaching and training competences were until recently developed, reviewed and controlled by lead organisations in two different sectors. Municipalities are the chief employer of teachers in the UK, and teaching occupations were seen as belonging within the local government domain whilst training competences were overseen by a Learning and Development (now Learning and Skills) sector skills body. Until a common building site that was acceptable to both sides could be found, the future for common standards seemed bleak.

The creation of Lifelong Learning UK as a sector lead body ("Sector Skills Council") for both professions was at least an acknowledgment of the close relationship between the two professions. Lifelong Learning UK ("LLLUK") is now charged with the task of consulting with all interested parties on the development of New Professional Standards for Teachers in the Learning and Skills Sector. Their "Key purpose statement" describes what this means:

"The key purpose of the Learning and Skills teacher, trainer or tutor is to provide high-quality teaching, to create effective opportunities for learning and to enable all learners to achieve to the best of their ability."

Their draft presentation addressed the two main domains of "ENTRY AWARD" (Passport) and QTLS (Qualified Teacher of Learning and Skills)

Within each of these domains the following "units" are under consideration at appropriate levels as the

baseline for the establishment of a framework of common competences

- A Professional Values and practice
- B Knowledge and Understanding
- C Teaching planning expectations and targets
- D Teaching- Monitoring and assessment
- E Teaching individuals and groups
- F Access and support

By the end of 2005, Lifelong Learning UK had completed the first part of the consultative process during which anyone with an interest could contribute views on the first draft of proposals

The initial feedback indicates that UK practitioners are more or less in agreement that Lifelong Learning UK are on the right track with this framework although there were many suggestions for improving the detail of the proposed elements of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities that had been described for each "domain". The feedback from the first draft, and information about the next steps are very relevant to the TEVAL project, and can be visited at:
http://www.lifelonglearninguk.org/currentactivity/newdevelopments/results_first_consult.html

TEVAL PARTNERS:

You may also be interested in the process of consultation. This is a good demonstration of how UK National Occupational Standards and Qualifications are agreed in partnership with the industry sector, practitioners and even beneficiaries. It can take at least two years to develop a new occupational profile and qualifications at appropriate levels. The results must be presented to the UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority approval for inclusion in the national frameworks. Everything then becomes subject to a review and evaluation process resulting in amendments approximately every 3-5 years.