

The New Profession – Competence Profiles for VNIL Professions

The role of VNIL practitioners is essential for quality and trust in the outcomes of the validation process and important for the long term impact and credibility of validation. In policy statements and policy papers *Competence Development for the practitioners* is in focus. This is highlighted also in the COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS published 20 December 2012. Thus, the issue of strengthening the professionalism of validating practitioners is central to effective validation processes.

Who are the validation practitioners?

In the European Guidelines for Validating non-formal and informal learning (2009), VNIL professionals are named *validation practitioners*. Validation practitioners cover all aspects of validation and are divided in five categories:

- Counsellors that offer information, advice and guidance
- Assessors that carry out assessment
- External observers of the process
- Process managers of assessment centres/procedures
- A range of other stakeholders that have an important but less direct role in the validation process

Studies and analysis tell us that...

Counsellors and assessors play key roles and the systematic development of their professional skills must be given priority. A number of other practitioners are also involved in validation and it is also important to discuss their roles.

There appears to be a lot of educational activity going on in the field of VNIL, but it is mainly organised as short courses and seminars. Competence development for VNIL practitioners so far are characterised as project based, sporadic and informal.

The VNIL profession is more a practice than a profession so far. A new profession (or maybe professions) might be emerging.

Perspectives and challenges:

- One major challenge is to develop and describe the profession(s) as distinct with its own professional standards
- A need for more systematic learning activities and formal educational offers for counsellors and assessors
- A common educational offer across the European countries
- Networks and collaboration between practitioners at local, regional, national and European levels across EU

Be inspired by 3 cases of Best Practice

Savo Consortium for Education, EUedu (FINLAND)

BACKGROUND: Several teacher training colleges in Finland have provided mandatory training for Finnish VET professionals since 1995, focused on Finnish adult VET, a relatively narrow view on VNIL.

ACTION: A 5 module training programme was developed shedding light on European aspects and policy outlines on VNIL arising from future changes in the Finnish legislation (NQF and ECVET) and enabling the Finnish VNIL providers to gain deeper knowledge and understanding.

RESULTS: Over 1000 participants have taken the full course or participated in modules in eight different cities. Two regional organisations have amended their pedagogical strategy. 200 learning outcome based training programmes were developed as assignments, thus making the validation process more transparent. Six regional VET organisations have made an action plan for implementation of ECVET. 90% of the participants reported that the training course was useful for their work. Participants from over 20 VET institutions and companies in Russia have participated in the training proving that transfer to different contexts is possible.

Danish Adult Education Association - DAEA (DENMARK)

BACKGROUND: A web-based tool has been developed by the Danish Ministry of Education for clarifying and documenting VNIL in the third sector, focused on general/personal competences. The use of the tool proved to be difficult for some targeted groups as they are very diverse.

ACTION: The Danish Association of Adult Education (DAEA) initiated training courses for the professionals to work with VNIL in general and more specifically the new tool in experimental ways as it proved hard to use it without extensive facilitation.

RESULTS: A substantial degree of knowledge sharing among the participants in the DAEA's courses and the follow up evaluation seminar. The experimental approaches to using the electronic tool have reached a wider range of professionals via presentations at national and international conferences addressing professionals from formal as well as non-formal learning institutions.

ECAP Foundation R&D Unit and Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, SFIVET (SWITZERLAND)

BACKGROUND: VNIL is managed by people who do not have a specific qualification on the area of Validation. VNIL actors move in a new professional field. Acting in VNIL implies the possession of specific competences, adequately built up, assessed and valued.

ACTION: The VALIDO project focuses at developing a shared approach to VNIL outcomes, in order to improve matching between supply and demand in regional trans-border job market.

RESULTS: The Lombardy Region in Italy is going to develop a comprehensive validation system, valuing amongst others the results of the VALIDO Project in terms of a model and qualification for VNIL specialists. It is a good example of cross-fertilisation between different EU initiatives, considering methods, tools and results of learning.

Project Details

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