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DEVELOPING TEACHERS' EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT SKILLS (TES)
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GATHERING THE NEEDED EXISTING INFORMATION

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A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS FOR BUILDING UP AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

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INTRODUCTION

Summary and analysis from the national reports of the Leonardo da Vinci project “Developing teachers’ evaluation and assessment skills (TES)” No. 2006-FI-06-B-PP-160703 partnership, submitted by the partner countries Finland (Teacher Education college of Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences; Salpaus Further Education); Poland (Torun Teacher Training College of Foreign Languages); Germany (BilSE-Institute for Education and Research); Lithuanian Labor Market Training Authority are presented here.

The **aim of this paper** is to present and analyze the most important policy papers in the field of vocational adult education and to define the situation of assessment practices in the above-mentioned countries.

Limitations of study:

- 1) The vocational adult education system and practices are rather different; there is a variety in the law basis and different countries have various traditions in vocational adult education (as in Germany there are very strong traditions in vocational adult education, while in Lithuania vocational adult education has not yet got prestige)
- 2) All partners of project have different experience, so their reports are quite subjective. Under the influence of this subjectivity some countries accent and are oriented to one object, while the others highlight other points.

1. THE ANALYSIS OF MAIN POLICY PAPERS IN VOCATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION

1.1. The main policy papers in vocational adult education

Partner countries prepared and presented their national reports. In these reports various policy papers are discussed from the Constitution, strategies to the Orders of the Ministries¹:

- The Polish partners look at vocational adult education rather widely, they mark The Constitution of the Republic of Poland, some strategies and reports; there is a strategic planning in the field of continuing adult education in Poland.
- Finnish policy papers are more concrete, closely linked with vocational adult education; there is a big attention to personalisation process in Finland.
- Policy papers from Germany in the field of adult education cover the system and providers of adult education.
- There are two main laws and some orders noted in vocational adult education in Lithuania.

1.2. The main objectives for developing vocational adult education

The main objectives in Finland in adult education are to enhance the knowledge and skills of the adult population and to increase educational opportunities for groups that are under-represented in adult learning, also to promote equality and active citizenship. So there are four main points of vocational adult education in Finland:

- 1) *knowledge and skills*;
- 2) *opportunities* (It is one central goal - to improve the educational opportunities open to the adult population. It is up to the education system to ensure that the whole

¹ The main policy papers (ANNEX II)

working-age population is able to gain solid vocational/ professional skills and constantly enhance their competences);

- 3) *equality*;
- 4) *active citizenship*.

One of the general objectives in Polish education is to raise the level of education of the society and continually raise qualifications of adults, especially vocational and general ones indispensable for their functioning in today's society. It is very important to specify the directions of development of continual adult education in Poland, to define the exact terminology in continual education. In Poland vocational education is oriented to eliminating unemployment, too. It is trying to adopt vocational education to the needs of the labour market. In "A strategy for the computerization of Poland – ePoland" it is claimed that one of the aims is to increase IT vocational preparation, supporting IT training curricula for adults with special reference to training opportunities for the unemployed.

In Germany most objectives are related with all kind of improvement of competences, covering not only the learners but teachers, too. A lot of attention is paid to reassurance of mobility for learners, teachers and scientists by means of consensus and cooperation in the whole of Germany and in among other countries.

In Lithuania the main purpose in vocational adult education is to implement vocational training reform that would tailor the qualifications to labour market needs; it is trying to regulate the formation and administration of Lithuanian qualifications and to manage the system of qualifications.

Findings

- In Finland the main objective in adult education is to enhance and improve the adult education in practice.
- In Finland the main orientation is to a person, trying to ensure education and training for everyone according to the individual's needs.
- In Poland there is quite a theoretical aim – to specify the directions of continual adult education.
- The Polish concentrate in developing knowledge based society.
- In Poland vocational education should help decrease unemployment.
- In Germany adult education is mostly oriented to professional and personal development and cooperation of learners, teachers and scientists and to exchanging the experiences among countries.
- In Lithuania the main objectives for developing vocational adult education are focused on the creation of the National Framework of Qualifications and to provisioning Lifelong Learning opportunities for everyone, making the best conditions for gaining, improving or changing qualifications.

1.3. The main target groups in adult education pointed out in presented policy papers

A lot of attention is paid on immigrants' in Finland and Finnish vocational education will be developed to cater for immigrants' special needs. Measures will be taken to make better use of the education and training completed by immigrants abroad through more flexible recognition of prior learning and by means of necessary supplementary education.

In Poland there is no attention paid to immigrants. But it is urgent to develop an environment and conditions encouraging a more widespread participation in vocational education of persons who have already left the system of education. The Polish give priority to educating older people and those of low qualifications (supporting their professional activeness) as well as young people,

including university graduates (promoting enterprise and competitiveness); Also it is very important to develop distance learning as a means of supporting for people living in rural areas.

In Germany there is an orientation to overcoming of barriers for further training, especially in rural areas, too. Support is given to gifted pupils, apprentices in dual vocational education and university students / support for young researchers.

Findings

- Even if the main target group in adult education are people, who are over 25, but different countries separate specific groups, for which education is very necessary ;
 - In Finland this group is immigrants;
 - In Poland the main groups are: persons who have already left the system of education, older people (50+years old) and those with low qualifications.
 - In Germany and also in Poland one of the main groups is people who live in rural areas
 - In Germany gifted pupils and researchers are also the main target groups.

1.4. The main points of adult education system

In Finland there is the *system of competence based qualifications*, which was built in 1994 for adults competences assessment. This system, which enabled adults to show their competences whether the competences are obtained by participating in different kinds of courses or whether they are obtained through work experience, has been built.

In Poland in practice there is no possibility to take the exam for candidates who have gained qualifications by attending out-of-school forms of training or through work experience.

In Finland vocational adult education and training is divided into:

- 1) **upper secondary**, which is certificate-oriented and regulated nationally
- 2) **additional vocational education and training**, which may be either certificate-oriented or non-formal. The qualifications in vocational adult and education and training are mainly taken in the form of competence-based qualifications. There are three levels of competence-based qualifications:
 - upper secondary vocational qualifications,
 - further vocational qualifications and
 - specialist vocational qualifications.

In contrast to Finland, there is no clear system of vocational qualifications in Poland. Continual education in the Polish law has an inexact place.

In Lithuania vocational education covers the initial secondary vocational training, higher education and post-graduate education sub-systems. So vocational training can be of different kinds. For adults, who failed to acquire higher education, possibilities to participate in the continuous training or retraining studies at universities, is limited. The system, which would allow transferring credits from one parallel institution to another or from a lower institutional level to a higher one in a smooth way has not been developed yet.

Adult education and training is available at all levels and is largely financed by the government in Finland. The annual number of participants in adult education and training is 1.7 million, which makes half of the working age population. It is a very high figure in international terms.

In Poland state organizations/schools of continual education are underfunded.

In Finland different institutions arrange a great variety of courses and programmes for adults at all levels of formal education, and the provision of liberal adult education is extensive.

In Poland there is a lack of diversity of forms and methods in education. One of the recommendations introducing the concept of “lifelong learning” in practice is to provide a possibility of education and training, full-or part-time, for all age groups. Also another purpose is individualized and module-based education. It would gradually change the dominating class-lesson system of education into individualized forms of training using flexible, module-based curricula.

In Lithuania the training programmes of schools and training centres for adults are not sufficiently flexible, the module training is not developed, the adults are trained according to programmes without considering their needs and experience. The mismatch between the initial vocational training and qualification and qualification development needs and their satisfaction still remains unresolved and the resolution is insufficiently efficient.

There is a specific database for further training contents in Germany. It is the basic instrument for bundling educational offers in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Finnish adult education and training have traditionally been divided into two main areas: **general adult education** (responds to adults' self-development needs, offers learning opportunities catering for mature learners' own interests and preferences, and develops citizenship skills) and **vocational adult education and training** (the purpose is to maintain and enhance competences and promote employment).

In Poland there are two approaches to adult education: 1) traditional, which is one of the duties of the state (including local governments) to organize, maintain, monitor and finance the system of adult education and 2) market-oriented, when educational authorities define aims, standards and norms (i.e. requirements concerning acquired skills) as well as ensure appropriate quality of such educational services. The supply of educational services with regard to conditions, forms and number of participants is a function of regional and local demand.

Findings

- In Finland non-formal or informal learning is accepted in competence based qualifications system.
- Adults demonstrate their vocational competences in qualifications that are independent of the manner in which the competences are obtained in Finland.
- In Lithuania there is no possibility for adults to shift from one educational level to another, because prior learning is not recognized.
- There is a big number of participants in adult education and training in Finland
- There is a provision of a wide range of study opportunities for the adults in Finland.
- There is no variety of forms and methods for adult education in Poland
- There is little attention on adults needs in training programmes in Lithuania.
- In Germany there is a special database for further training contents.
- In Finland and in Poland adult education can be of two types: general adult education and vocational adult education and training (in Finland); traditional and market-oriented adult education (in Poland).

1.5. Counselling activities in adult education

One of the objectives in vocational adult education in Finland is to develop counselling activities in adult education. It was found that less than 10 % of counselling personnel have appropriate training in adult education and there was not enough financial contribution put in the counselling activities.

Many institutions lacked the plan or wider strategy for student counselling and counselling activities were usually not included in institutional curricula. In many cases counselling activities solved individual problems of individual students.

In Poland they are trying to develop career guidance by training and employing more counsellors, and providing them with indispensable information and materials.

In Germany there is an educational network which is available in the web www.weiterbildung-mv.de and can be online-administered by the educational institutions. The **main duty** of this database is a direct, result-oriented, neutral information channel towards responsible bodies and confidential consultation of persons interested in further training.

In the Lithuanian Law on Vocational Education and Training development of professional orientation system is foreseen. Vocational counselling and guidance in Lithuania is regulated by Education Act of Lithuanian Republic (1997), Vocational Counselling Strategy (2003), Lifelong Learning Strategy (2004) and other policy papers. Key objective in Vocational Counselling Strategy (2003) is to create environment for vocational counseling system and service development in Lithuania with regard to: perspectives of the country's economic and social development, individual demands of every member of society. Vocational counselling and guidance information system AIKOS is an open information, counselling and guidance system (information system of Lithuanian education, integrating it with information systems of Lithuanian job centers, Lithuanian labour market training offices and department of statistics).

Findings

- Improvement of counselling activities in adult education is very important in Finland; it is particularly oriented to helping the individual.
- In Finland and in Poland training of counsellors is a substantial point.
- In Germany consultation for adults is available in network database.
- In Lithuania there is a lot of attention on developing a vocational counselling system which assists individuals in choosing his/her route in the spheres of education, training and employment, to actively develop his/her professional career.

2. THE ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

2. 1. The main purpose of the assessment activities

In Finland the main purpose of the assessment activities is to find out, what is the quality of one's competences, compared with the assessment criteria. Also one of the main trends in development of assessment procedures during the past twelve years in the system of competence based qualifications has been from ascertainment of competence also towards development of competence.

While in Poland examination assessment criteria focus on assessing "**performing**" an examination task rather than the **quality** of the task's final product. In Poland and in Lithuania assessment process enables finding out what theoretical knowledge and practical skills students have.

Findings

- In Finland assessment of competences is not oriented only to ascertaining but also to developing of competence.
- In Poland the main purpose of the assessment activities is to test students' knowledge and skills.
- Lithuania now is in the process of transition from assessment of knowledge and skills to competence assessment.

2.2. The participants in assessment

In Finland there are 3 sides involved in assessment activities: employers, employees and VET institutions. So in Finland one of the basic principles in assessment of competences is the principle of *triangular cooperation*, i.e. competence assessment is done by a teacher, a representative with employee status and a representative with employer status.

In Poland teachers of schools (in-school assessment) or examiners of central and regional Examination Boards (external assessment) are responsible for assessing knowledge and skills specified in the curriculum or specified in the standards of examination requirements. But there is a considerable shortage of examiners for certain professions, and this cannot be balanced soon since there are not enough teachers of profession matching the requirements.

In Lithuania the qualification examinations at vocational schools are arranged by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Trade, the Agriculture Palace or other institutions, authorized by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania according to their competence. These institutions also prepare the questions for the theoretical examination cards or tests and the tasks for assessment of practical skills. For qualification examinations an examination commission is formed at each school, consisting of at least three members: representing employers, vocational trainers and trade unions. Only after 1995 special study programmes for vocational teachers were designed at the level of master and basic studies in Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. These study courses foresee the development of teacher's evaluation and assessment of learning achievement skills (4 modules). In reality the participation of social partners – employers and representatives of trade unions in the qualification examinations is often very formal. The insufficient activity of social partners (employers, professional organizations, other non-governmental organizations) in the vocational training and continuing education processes brings the risk of unemployment and ambiguity of the quality of qualifications.

In Germany there is a lot of attention to teachers, who are the main participants in vocational adult education. There is a problem that the teachers' qualification is not as suitable as it should be with reference to a new view on assessment. Teachers must change their methods, to be openminded for the new ideas. It is necessary to describe which qualification is needed for the teachers in addition to be able to do this job (psychology, methodology, didactics).

Findings

- In Finland there is a triangular cooperation in assessing: employers, employees and VET institutions.
- In Lithuania at each school there is a special commission of assessors, which is composed of three members: representing employers, vocational trainers and trade unions.
- There are special study courses for developing teachers' evaluation and assessment skills in Lithuania.
- In Poland teachers are responsible for assessment in schools and examiners for external assessment.
- In Germany the qualification of teachers, who are involved in assessment, must be definitely improved.

2.3. Competence based assessment versus knowledge and skills assessment

In Finland the narrow and atomistic understanding of competence as a specific skills and knowledge is denied. In this country a wider and holistic view of competence is taken, covering generic competences - such as cooperation and interaction skills, motivational skills, adjustment skills, learning and development skills, and socio-cultural skills, which should be included in competences

in every qualification and thus also be assessed. One of the main challenges in this area is how to make competence “visible”? How to assess competence which is not “visible”, such as people skills? The current trend is to assess the candidate’s competence in relation to the vocational competence requirements of each qualification.

In Germany the process of assessment has been changed in the last year. Not only the measurable qualifications are important to assess, but the soft skills play an important role, too. Among the soft skills you find the following competences: sympathy, knowledge of human nature, self-assurance, fighting spirit, ability to work in a team, reliability, analytical thinking, creativity, motivation, conflict resolution and others.

While in Poland the vocational qualifications exam is a way of assessing a student’s knowledge and skills with regard to a specific profession according to the standards of requirements. Vocational qualifications exam is at the end of an educational stage, taken after 3rd grade of senior-high vocational schools, or after graduating from a post-secondary vocational school.

In Lithuania there is a very similar system of assessing as in Poland. After completion of the vocational training programme students pass qualification examinations and acquire the qualification. Depending on the levels of programme (there are 4 levels), a qualification certificate or qualified worker diplomas are issued.

In Finland assessment is documented over a lengthy period of time. Assessment data is gathered (according to the individual assessment plan) by means of portfolios, written materials such as reports, essays and reviews, self assessment, customer feedback, documented assessment discussion with employer, work samples, photos, videos, research and development projects or plans, observing the student at work and other possible documentation on the candidate’s vocational competence.

In Germany some years ago assessment was very similar to that in Poland, when the main focus during the assessment was to collect data about the current level of knowledge of the participants, of the current level of qualification. But now the main task of assessment is in getting a general view about the person/participant. The best way is a combination of checking/assessing the qualification and methods to get a general view about the person.

In Poland vocational qualifications exam is composed of two parts: written and practical. Examination centres are under-equipped - often the practical exam cannot be video-recorded. So there is lower objectivity of the examination.

In Lithuania the acquired qualification is assessed by means of qualification examinations, too, which also consist of two parts – the theoretical examination and practical examination.

In Finland the structure of examinations is different from Lithuania and Poland. It has developed from simple “theory exam / practical test” –structure to more versatile assessment procedures. In many cases the examinations are integrated in the normal work day by giving the students the assessment tasks which consist of planning certain work process, and implementing as well as assessing it. In Finland a variety of methods: portfolios, observations, discussions, self-assessments are nowadays quite widely used. Self-assessment is recognised widely as a significant and as a natural part of assessment process in Finland and one of the trends is that the emphasis is shifting from external assessment towards self-assessment.

Findings

- In Finland and Germany assessment is based on competence assessment.
- In Poland and in Lithuania knowledge and skills are still the main objects of assessment.

- The process of competence assessment lasts quite a long period in Finland, involving different methods of assessment.
- Self assessment is essential in Finland.
- In Poland learners take vocational qualifications exam in written and in practical forms; practical exams are of low quality in Poland.
- In Lithuania qualification examination is divided into two parts as in Poland – the theoretical examination and practical examination.
- According to the level of vocational training programme students can acquire two types of qualification (qualification certificate or qualified worker diplomas) in Lithuania.

2.4. Assessment of non-formal and informal learning

In Finland there is a customer-focused approach in competence-based qualifications activities and acquisition of vocational skills. Personalisation process is very meaningful. It starts as soon as a prospective candidate makes the first contact and ends once the candidate has completed a qualification or an individual qualification module. Personalisation means taking the guidance, counselling and instruction needs of each individual candidate and/or student into account and using any personal support measures that they may need when taking competence tests and/or acquiring the vocational skills required for the tests in compliance with the Requirements of the Competence-based Qualification.

Personalisation is defined in terms of three concrete working phases:

- 1) .personalisation when applying as a candidate/student;
- 2) personalisation when planning and implementing competence tests; and
- 3) personalisation during preparatory training to acquire the required vocational skills.

In addition to the traditional teacher/student relationship, the competence test system includes many different relationships, such as those between the educational institution and the workplace, the candidate and assessors from the world of work and the educational institution. In Finland the main challenges in adult education at present are concerned with the personalisation process, i.e. how we can identify competences of adult learners which have been acquired non-formally or informally and how assessment of these competences can be done and what criteria is being used. First of all it is very necessary to have tools and methods of recognising the competence/skill and then a tool for assessing it. Assessment of candidates/students with learning difficulties, immigrant students is rather difficult, so it needs more information on cultural issues and the education system of each country.

Germans are also very oriented to personalisation process. In Germany the content of assessment consists of four stages:

- 1) Position-fixing; participant informs about his/her strengths and weaknesses, aims and plans, possibilities and positive or negative sides in his/her behavior.
- 2) Probation/aptitude test; different tests are applied to access the participants
- 3) Assessment; different practical exercises inform about typical criteria of the participants
- 4) Planning period; planning of the next steps to improve competences, individual career plan.

Talking about non-formal or informal learning a system of recognition of vocational qualifications gain outside the system through certification (formal recognition) and recognition in practice (by employers) under development in Poland.

In Lithuania the development of the system and methods for recognition of non-formal and in-formal learning is in its initial stage. The system of preparation of professional and vocational educational standards is not finalized. The official institutional education is too closed for assessment and recognition of the unofficially acquired competences. Students, employers or the state (in case of assessment of the competence of the unemployed) pay for the assessment. It does not encourage the persons receiving low income to learn and strive for assessment of their competences; it also lessens

the employers' initiative to strive for assessment of competences of their employees. The legal framework existing at present does not foresee the possibility of co-financing of assessment of competences, acquired by non-formal and self-contained ways.

Findings

- Assessment of non-formal and informal learning is very individual, based on personalisation process in Finland.
- Personalisation of the competence-based qualification process requires development of interactive relationships between different parties in Finland
- In Germany there is a specific system of competence based assessment, which also gives a lot of attention on the person.
- There are certain typical stages of assessment in Germany and in Finland.
- The position of non-formal or informal learning and its assessment is not developed in Poland, because there is no clear system in this field.
- In Lithuania the assessment and recognition of competences, acquired by the way of non-formal and in-formal learning is in its initial stage.

In the national reports partner countries raised the key questions for developing vocational adult education and assessment.²

² Key questions for developing education and assessment (ANNEX I)

ANNEX I

1. How to make competence “visible”? How to assess competence which is not “visible”, such as people skills?
2. Who can assess competence? How to train assessors? How to involve the working life more in the assessment process? The competences of an assessor whether they are teachers or workplace assessors must be determined and they must all be aware of criteria, resources and methods of assessment and they must build a common understanding of key competences (must know, good to know, nice to know).
3. Assessment targets and criteria: transparency of the criteria
4. Development of self assessment methods and of training in self assessment skills
5. Personalisation process: assessment of candidates/students with learning difficulties, immigrant students
6. Documentation: Does documentation serve assessment or vice versa?
7. Validation of assessment; development of qualitative methods
8. Informing the working life of the qualification system
9. Development of cooperation with qualification committees
10. How can we use new ideas or results from our project to improve the teaching level?
11. How can we motivate the different groups of learners to achieve a good results?
12. How it is possible to find such indicators in the assessment process to compare equal courses at different institutions of further education?
13. Are there any certified checklists or other material, which the teachers can use for their own work?
14. How can the teachers find the individual access to the participants of the course? Which qualification do the teachers need in addition to be able to do this job (psychology, methodology, didactics)
15. Are the teachers ready to change their methods, to be open minded for new ideas?

ANNEX II

Four main vocational adult education documents in Finland and eight documents in Poland are presented here. The main policy papers on Finnish vocational adult education are:

- **Education and Research 2003-2008. Development Plan.** Publications of Ministry of Education 2004: 8.
- **Action and Economic Plan of the Ministry of Education 2008-2011.** Publications of Ministry of Education 2007: 3.
- **A decree on personalisation** 28.11.2006
- **The guidelines and recommendations for the development of student counselling in adult education.**

In Poland vocational adult education is defined as a continual vocational adult education. The documents on continual vocational adult education in Poland are:

- **Constitution of the Republic of Poland.**
- **Act of 7 September 1991 on the system of education.**
- **National Development Plan for 2004-2006:** a Sector Operational Programme – Developing Human Resources.
- **“A strategy for the computerization of Poland – ePoland”.**
- **Modernising continual and adult education in Poland as an integral part of lifelong learning”** – a report commissioned by Polish Ministry of Education from the Institute of International Education, Stockholm University, 2003.
- **“A strategy for the development of continual education until 2010”** – passed by the Government of the Republic of Poland on 8 July 2003.
- **“A strategy for the development of education 2007-2013”.**
- **A Report on Continual Education in Poland** – by the Ministry of Education 2005.

These policy papers are noted in Germany:

Responsibility: Ministry of Education, science and culture

- department 2: school and adult education
 - ✓ **German Adult Education Association**
 - ✓ **law of further training**
 - ✓ **Law for exemption of education in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania**
 - ✓ **Law of teaching teachers**
 - ✓ **database for further training contents**
 - ✓ **Projects and programmes in the fields of Life Long Learning**
- department 3: science and research, universities

In Lithuania these documents are decreed:

- **Law on Vocational Education and Training (1997)**
- **Law on Nonformal Education of Adults (1998)**
- Order No. 1353 of the Minister of Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania of 1 October of 2001 **“On the Approval of the Temporary Procedure for Assessment of the Knowledge, Acquired within the Non formal Adults Education System or in a Self-Contained Manner and for Obtaining of Qualifications and Documents of Completion of Further Education and Vocational Education or Certain Degree of Module of Further Education or Vocational Education, Recognized by the State”**

- Order No. 70 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of 31 May 2002 **“On the Approval of the Procedure for Selection of Labour Market Vocational Training Institutions and Enterprises for Equivalency Examinations.**