Certified is not necessarily competent,
Competent is not always certified...

Valuing Prior Learning in Lithuania

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Today:

- Contextual discussion
- Methodological issues
- What has been done
- Where to begin?
CONTEXT OF VPL IN HE
Common EU-wide problems…

- Unemployment
- Participation in grey economy
- Accessibility to education institutions
- Emigration
- Outdated knowledge and skills in formal education
- Adult education system not properly working
- Teachers’ qualifications not up-to-date
- No career counseling linked to individual needs
# “Where are you from?”
## Contexts of learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Non-formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Educational institution (school, college, university, etc)</td>
<td>Educational institution or any other organization offering training services</td>
<td>Accidental, any location Chosen / Not chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational structure</strong></td>
<td>Clear hierarchical structure</td>
<td>Flexible organization</td>
<td>No organized structures Upon learner’s needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study programme</strong></td>
<td>Formal, accredited, leading to qualification / diploma</td>
<td>Issues certification</td>
<td>Learning accidental Learner creates their programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recognition of learning</strong></td>
<td>State recognized diplomas</td>
<td>Certificates for the course, participation in the conference, etc</td>
<td>No recognition Reflections Knowing of own abilities and knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of teacher</strong></td>
<td>Clearly defined, active</td>
<td>Defined, active</td>
<td>Not defined, often - none Consultant – if needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of learner</strong></td>
<td>Clearly defined, often passive</td>
<td>Defined, active</td>
<td>Not defined, open to innovations, active</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two directions of VPL:

**Academic**
(within education system)

- For better access to educational institutions
- Learning outcomes based study programmes
- Credit for prior learning and training plan

**WoW**
(personnel recruitment)

- For selection of employees
- Competence based professional frameworks
- Recognition of prior gained competencies, professional development plan

*Important: VPL - voluntarily chosen route to qualification*
(New) service in HE institutions?

*Promoting participation in LLL activities:*

- Making the invisible learning visible
  - Valuing knowledge and skills, regardless where and how they were acquired
  - Confidence, motivation, self-esteem

- Making routes to qualifications more flexible
  - Opening the gates to educational institutions for mature students
  - More efficient use or training budgets

- Indicating personal learning needs
  - Avoiding double learning
  - Developing career guidance system

- Promoting links with companies
SOME METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
VPL methodology: Main parameters

- Target group and their prior learning context
- Main principles of VPL
- Institutional preconditions for VPL service
- Preparation for VPL:
  - Candidate
  - Consultant
  - Assessor
- Steps of VPL process
- Assessment methods
- QA of VPL
VPL: Target groups and targets

Learners: qualification
Jobseekers: employability
Workers: empowerment
Employers: professionalisation/innovation, personal development

(R. Duvekot)
Principles of VPL

**Directing (not skipping) learning** – assessment results are used for preparing personal study plan. Identifying way to meet skill gaps.

**Voluntarism and consciousness** - VPL is money and time consuming process, therefore to be treated as a choice.

**Integral proces approach** – VPL procedures clearly defined and understood by candidate, consultant and assessor.

**Stakeholder participation**. Stakeholders, providing useful information on VLP process and content.

**Reliability and validity** of assessment results.

**Variety of assessment methods** – triangulation of assessing knowledge and skills in various contexts.

**Mutual trust** - assured competence of assessors.

**Periodic renewal**. VPL procedure is context sensitive and open for development.
Structure of competency: WHAT TO ASSESS?

Values and attitudes

Skills

Knowledge
## Evidence of competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of competency</th>
<th>Evidence of competency in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Assessing parts of competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment method</th>
<th>Parts of competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test of practical skills</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge tests</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of activity</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Fully**
- **Partly**
- **No**
Examining evidence provided in portfolio

Preparation portfolio against requirements of study programme

Learning outcomes (LO) based study programme:
“Should be able to:
✓ explain....
✓ carry out....
✓ produce.....
✓ .... “

Portfolio
“I believe I am able to:
✓ explain.... (+ evidence)
✓ carry out.. (+evidence)
✓ produce.. (+ evidence)
✓ ... “

Assessment procedure
☐ Method 1: e.g. interview
☐ Method 2: e.g. observation
☐ Method 3: e.g. demonstration
☐ Method 4....

Certification stating that person has the following competencies ("is able to"): 
✓ carry out...
✓ produce....
✓...

Personal learning plan 
“for the full qualification the person should become able to”:
✓ develop....
✓ manage....
✓ compare....
VPL steps and actors

- Identification of competencies to be recognized
- Assessment of learning achievements
- Recognition of competencies
- Certification of recognized competencies
- Modular study program (part of program) for acquiring (developing) competencies

Candidate, counsellor
Assessor, Candidate
Commission, Assessor, Candidate
Concerns/ myths about VPL

- “Losing students from formal educational institutions”
- “Easy way to grab certification / diploma”
- Shortening studies vs. directed professional development
“Mechanisms” to minimize risks

- Agreed principle: Promoting to or Protecting from participation in LLL
- Maximum of programme to be recognised (25, 50 or 75%)
- Minimum experience of candidates
- External assessors
- Exception – Medicine and Aviation
- Other experiences/suggestions?
SOME EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE
Case 1: Bilan de compétences
Competencies audit (since 1980 in France)

☐ For whom?
  ■ Adults, faced with redundancy
  ■ Women wishing to return to work
  ■ Young people without qualifications
  ■ Unemployed adults

☐ Why?
  ■ To identify vocational needs before training
### How?

#### Competences audit (Bilan de compétences)
- All competencies
- Interinstitutional centres for bilan

Result – **portfolio**

- I. Candidate defines and analyses own needs
- II. Listing experiences, knowledge, skills
- III. Concluding with personal interviews

#### Accreditation of competencies
- Competencies, related to certain qualification
- Result – **diploma or credits**

- Occupational plan
- Training plan
Peculiarities

- APL available for those with min 5 years of occupational experience
- Not all qualifications awarded via APL
- Assessment undertaken by “jury” (researchers and practitioners)
- Assessors – specially trained
- Finance: partly by candidate, party by state
Case 2: VPL and Career Center at Vytautas Magnus University (LT)

- For students, having work experience
- Possibility to get recognition for prior learning
- 3 employees
- Providing counseling services
- Management of assessment procedure
- approx. 15-20 candidates per year
- Mainly in: management, informatics, public administration, pedagogy
Case 3: VPL in VET teacher education (LT, LV, EE, donated by FI) *LdV ToI*

- **Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia:**
  - Similar history / context in three Baltic countries – no formal teaching qualification
  - Similar today – formal teaching qualification required by law

- **Finland:**
  - Wanted experience
VET teacher *formal* qualification and *real* teaching experience

**Formal education in didactics (2006)**

- Special professional studies: 33.7%
- BA: 16.8%
- MA: 19.8%
- No degree: 25.4%
- Other: 4.3%

**Pedagogical experience at VET school**

- Over 15 yrs: 47.5%
- 11-15 yrs: 18.8%
- 6-10 yrs: 17.7%
- Up to 5 yrs: 16.1%
What has been done:

**R1**: Context study of VPL in VET TE in LT, LV, EE, FI;

**R2**: Collection of articles on EU experiences: Journal “Quality of Higher Education”

**R3**: Methodology for VPL in VET teachers education;

**R4**: Study module for assessors of VET teachers prior learning: guidebooks for VPL assessors and candidates;
Example: Study programme *Vocational Pedagogy*

**M0 – “make experience count”**

- M2. Introduction to Teacher Profession
- M3. Organization of Teaching and Learning
- M4. Teaching/Learning Methods and Means
- M5. School as Organisation
- M6. World of Work and Vocational Education
- M7. Curriculum Design
- M8. Evaluation of Learning Achievements
- M9. Subject Didactics
- M10. Evaluation of Teaching Quality
- M11. Thesis Work
Case 4: Five actors at RPL
Italy (LdV ToI project PEIRA)

- Candidate
- Assessment Advisor
- Assessor
- RPL Responsible
- RPL Tutor
## Documents (tools) in various stages of RPL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>RPL Responsible</th>
<th>RPL Tutor</th>
<th>RPL Assessor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1) Identification of competencies to be certified | Candidate | ▪ Qualification framework  
▪ Application form  
▪ Professional experience table  
▪ Europass CV | | | |
| 2) Preliminary application form             | Candidate | | Professional experience table  
▪ EQF indicators table linked to description of profession | | |
| 3) Before assessment–Collecting evidences  | Candidate | ▪ Tool on evidence of competencies | | Tool for presenting evidences of competencies | |
| 4) Assessment                               | Candidate | | | ▪ Evidence assessment table  
▪ Final assessment table  
▪ Comparing EQF table to assessment results | |
| 5) Certification                            | Candidate | ▪ Competence certificate | | | |
WHERE TO BEGIN?
5 areas for VPL development:

- **What/Why?** National principles on VPL
- **How?**
  - Assessment methodology
  - Competence based occupational standards
  - Modular, LO based curricula
  - Quality assurance (is validation valid?)
  - “Rules of the game” – Legal basis (national and institutional level)
- **Who?**
  - Actors in VPL? Assessment institutions?
  - Assessor training programmes
  - Developing guidance and counseling service
  - Stakeholder /Ownership approach: (researchers, assessors, potential users, policy makers, employers, etc.) Motivation, open discussions, conferences, user guides, web based portals...
Looking further...

Questions for discussion?

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