



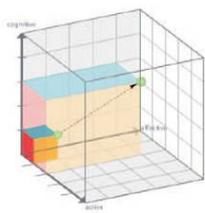
VITA

Validation of Service related Learning Outcomes with an IT based Assessment and Evidencing System

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VITA's rationale and objectives



VITA seeks to fill a gap by providing a system to validate personal and social competences that are mostly neglected by formal validation systems. Therefore VITA makes use of the LEVEL5 system which is specifically designed to assess personal, social and organisational competence developments in rather non- and informal learning settings. Interfaces to formal validation and certification systems will be developed, in order to improve the recognition of these, mostly informally acquired, competences

The VITA Needs Analysis

In the stocktaking phase of the VITA-project a needs analysis investigating the demands of different learners' target groups and educational sectors with regard to validation of service-related learning outcomes was carried out. The study was based on both qualitative and quantitative methodology.

At the beginning a desk research was carried out to outline the meaning of "service oriented competences". The partnership agreed to refer to the EUROPASS categories of social, personal and organisational competences (SPOC) that would comprise the competences necessary to cope with the challenges of the "service economy".

The VITA partnership developed a comprehensive online questionnaire that was filled by 165 experts from different educational sectors of the LLP from 20 European countries. Parallel 20 interviews were carried out with experts who are in charge of learning projects or activities dealing with service-oriented competences in the different sectors.

Generally all respondents of the questionnaire consider SPOC as highly relevant for their learners, both for their career development and for life in general. Asked which competences are considered most important for good performance in the service economy, communication is ranked first.

Indeed communication is a vehicle for interaction and forms the underlying competence to perform in any social context, for instance teamwork, leadership or negotiation. Furthermore, flexibility, self-confidence and self-reflection, problem solving, team competence and learning to learn are highly appreciated. At the same time these competences are also seen as most appreciated by learners and also conveyed in some form in the respondents' learning offers.

Results of the questionnaire indicate that evaluating social and personal competences is considered being increasingly important in many contexts.

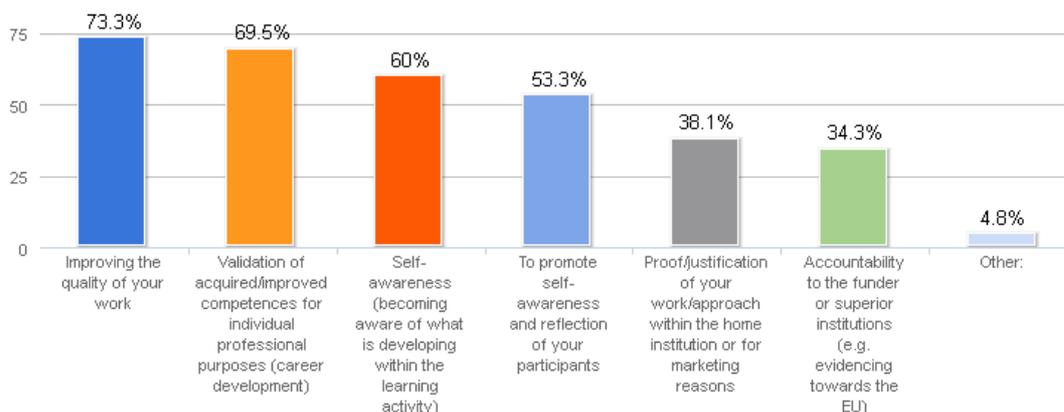




Almost all respondents consider it important to offer evidence of SPOC development to their learners; however, only 40% of the respondents stated that they had evaluated competence development in structured ways before. Most of them used instruments of formal education like test, exams and evaluations. ICT based tools to evaluate competence developments have so far only be used by one quarter of the respondents but the majority of respondents (84%) stated a high interest in using specific tools to assess SPOC.

According to the respondents such a tool should show meaningful results and should offer the opportunity to be customised to different contexts. It should provide detailed competence descriptions and a connection to the learning content. Most often mentioned were the characteristics “easy to use, time effectiveness and at low costs”.

Main purposes of evidencing SPOC development are seen in being able to improve ones own work (73,3%) and to validate the competence development in order to support the learners career development (69,5%). Promoting self-awareness and self-reflection of the participants is also considered a relevant benefit by more than half of the respondents.



Would you be interested in using a standardised tool for assessing social, personal and organisational competence development in your learning offers? If yes, please specify for what purpose ...

The findings of the online questionnaire were substantiated by expert interviews using additional qualitative parameters to the analysis.

Generally there are different views on social, personal and organisational competences, along two main lines of argumentation. One mainly focuses on aspects of employability, the other rather stressing the importance of SPOC for the development of personality and well being.

Working fields that closely relate to the world of labour rather focus on the importance of social, personal and organisational competences for the employability of learners (HE, VET). In adult education the benefit of SPOC for personality development is in the foreground. In the school sector they are also considered as supporting successful learning and as vehicle for peaceful cooperation in the classrooms.

In exceptional cases SPOC are already considered in formal education courses, e.g. in the German higher education sector for degrees in natural sciences.



However, in most sectors and countries SPOC are mainly conveyed informally or in non-formal ways, e.g. through extracurricular school projects, practical exercises in VET or in work- and study-placements.



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