

Kenniscentrum EVC...

Leonardo da Vinci Thematic Conference

***“Competences, Learning outcomes, Qualifications:
Transparency contributing to Employability”***



Workshop 3

Methods and tools for the assessment of competences

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National quality assurance on APL in the Netherlands

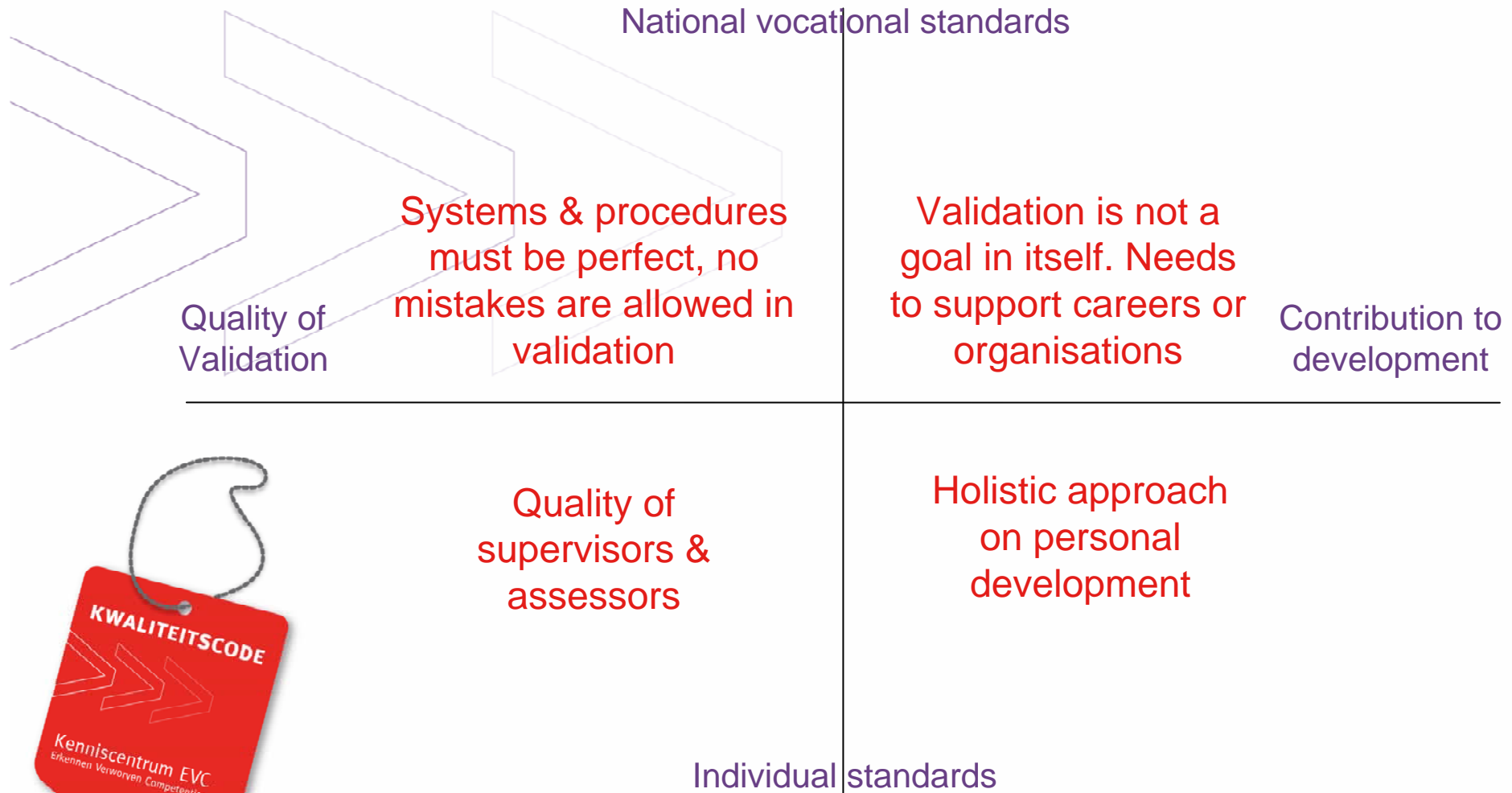
Peer Learning Activity: Quality Assurance in validation of
non-formal and informal learning



- > APL started in the 90ties without national regulations
- > 2002 many practices were developed, 1000 flowers were blooming
- > 2003 research on 'what do stakeholders mean by quality assurance on APL'?
- > 2004 a first model for quality assurance was presented
- > 2005 Dutch Cabinet & Social Partners decided on a covenant for quality assurance.
- > 2006 the covenant 'A quality code for APL' signed by all national stakeholders on our National APL day.
- > 2007 implementation started. 55 APL providers concerning more than 2000 APL procedures (40 different professions per provider)



Research programme in 2002: What do stakeholders mean by quality?



National covenant a quality code for AP^L

parties involved



- > *The Labour Foundation*, trade union federations and employers' associations
- > *The State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science*, on behalf of the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Employment.
- > *The Netherlands Association of Vocational Education and Training Centres*, 53 vocational education and training centres.
- > *Colo*, The Association of Centres of Expertise on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market.
- > *The Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences*, 44 Universities of Applied Sciences,
- > *Paepon*, The Platform of Accredited Private Educational Institutions
- The Centre for Work and Income*, the national organisation for reintegration and temporarily income
- The Open University*, institute for distance learning at university level,



The APL Quality Code & Toolbox



> The APL-code based on:

- > Our own research,
- > the European principles,
- > CH-Q (Swiss model for career counselling)
- > and an existing private APL quality code

> A checklist for APL providers

- > APL providers develop their own procedures, based on the National APL-code.
- > This checklist supports APL providers in developing, describing & check on their APL procedures.



The APL Quality Code & Toolbox



> Evaluating organisations

- > External evaluation of APL providers whether their APL procedure is according to the APL-code.
- > Accreditation/quality organisations evaluate APL providers periodically. Accredited APL providers are registered.
- > A list of evaluating organisations is available

> A standard for assessing APL providers

- > The text of the APL code itself is not measurable. It needed a standardisation so that APL providers can be assessed



Target groups for APL



APL is open to anyone who can raise the funding.
However target groups are:

- > People without any formal qualification for the labour market
- > People with a VET qualification developing to higher education level
- > People who want to change their profession (2nd career option)



National covenant a quality code for APL

most important results



The use of the code is voluntary, signing parties (most umbrella organisations) dedicated themselves on promoting APL and the use of the APL-code

- > APL providers: VET & HE institutes, private education, consultancy organisations, branch organisations and enterprises
- > Recognised APL providers are registered
- > This register is *the* place where CWI and regional learning & working desks seek APL procedures
- > Fiscal measurement (€ 300) for clients from registered APL providers



Challenges: what do we do with the not registered APL providers?

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most important results



An APL procedure is not a standard process that people are going into blind, but an individualized series of arrangements.

- > With every candidate an agreement will be made about the objective associated with the APL procedure
- > If available the employer & workplace are involved in the procedure

Challenge: most APL procedures now are dominated by education, not focussed on individual needs & objectives



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most important results



Every APL procedure ends with an APL report. This report states that the individual has documentation of the competencies he possesses.

- > This APL report is a partly standardised document only distributed by registered APL providers
- > Individual competences against a standard
- > supports transparency, exchange of APL results between providers; can be exchanged for diploma's and certificates
- > Can be used as a document in the labour market underpinning a CV.



Challenge: is a completely new document. Will it become as valuable as we expect it to be? EQF, ECVET.

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most important results



Accredited APL providers are listed in a register so everyone will know where to go for reliable APL procedures.

- > VET & HE APL providers are 'doomed accredited' on 1 January 2007 until the first visit of their evaluating organisation
- > Branch or private providers choose their own evaluating organisation, registration after accreditation

Challenge: The accreditation procedure & costs are rather complex, the number of providers is growing fast. Is this accreditation system sustainable enough?



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most important results



Only professionals can be supervisors or assessors.

- > Independent & impartial
- > supervisors are able to present procedures and to interview, coach and give feedback to individuals; are professionals in the fields in which their coaching specializes.
- > assessors are able to interview, give feedback to individuals and evaluate competencies; are able to communicate assessment results; professionals in the fields in which they conduct assessments.



Challenge: system of quality assurance

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most important results



The quality of APL procedures is always being improved, both at the level of the providers of APL and at the level of the code itself.

- > APL providers are expected to align APL procedures with their quality management systems. Evaluation of candidates & their employers is needed.
- > Knowledge Centre EVC will evaluate the introduction of the code. Report August 2007. Then parties decide on definitive implementation & follow up.



1. The objective of APL



The objective of APL is to clarify, appraise and recognise present competences in individuals.

The recognition of acquired competences has a value in and of itself and contributes to employability. In many cases, APL leads to further career-related personal development.

Norm: Before the start of the procedure, agreements are made with candidates about the objective associated with the APL procedure for the candidate. This is the broader objective in relation to the candidate's career prospects and/or the objectives of the organisation offering APL. The APL provider is *responsible* for all cooperating parties, so that all activities are coordinated to the candidate's objective. The objective of APL is described for each participant in written quantifiable criteria and is in relation to the candidate's *career prospects*.



2. The competences of the participants



APL answers the needs of the individual. Individual rights and agreements with the organisation offering APL are clearly expressed.

Norm: (Potential) participants are properly and fully informed about the procedure and the results, accessibility is the same for everyone, participants participate voluntarily, privacy is respected and people can lodge complaints, as necessary. Candidates can make use of an appeal procedure.



3. Procedures and instruments



Procedure and instruments are reliable and based on proven standards.

Trust is the key concept. Trust has to do with civil effect, well-defined standards, clear information about how assessments are conducted and the arguments on which conclusions are drawn.

Norm: Instruments are specifically designed to clarify competences that are acquired through formal and non-formal learning.

Data used in the procedure are sufficiently relevant, current, varied and authentic to serve as proof. Criteria are included in the APL procedure. A set of tools is available where these data still have to be tested.

Another assessor with the same materials would have to come to the same conclusion.

Each APL procedure results in an APL report that states the participant's competences in relation to the nationally recognised job or professional standard and in relation to the individual career objectives.



4. Expertise of assessors and supervisors



Assessors and supervisors are competent, independent and unbiased.

Independence and impartiality are critical factors within the assessment and are embedded in the roles and responsibilities of the assessors involved. Unnecessary mixing of roles must be avoided. Impartiality can be reinforced through training and through the use of networks.

Norm: Expertise of assessors (deciders) and supervisors is demonstrated. They are professional and easily assessed on the required competences. Assessors and supervisors continually verify whether the procedure meets and continues to meet the agreed objectives. They determine the quality of the proof, the assessment of the competency profile and the APL report.

The expertise refers to the professional knowledge, assessment knowledge, and the remaining requirements for transparency, relevance, objectivity and validity. The APL provider has organised the procedure so that, in retrospect, it can verify that the assessor and the supervisor also have that expertise ('competences' in the APL code) and that they maintain this expertise.



5. Assurance and improvement of the quality of the procedures



The quality of APL procedures is assured and is continually improved:

the quality of the APL procedure and the set of instruments used with the procedure are assured. Evaluations are made on a regular basis. The results are incorporated into improvement actions.

Norm: Evaluations are prepared for maintaining and improving the total quality of the organised APL procedure. The APL procedure is evaluated by the APL provider on a regular basis and is systematically integrated in procedures and routines. APL providers measure whether the prepared objectives for participants that are linked to the APL procedure are actually implemented through evaluations of participants and cooperating parties.

