Leonardo da Vinci project Quality Assurance and Practice-Oriented Assessment in Vocational Education and Training (QUAL-PRAXIS) ran from 2003 to 2006. The project was coordinated by the Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, Finland and funded by the European Commission. The main objective of the project was to discuss and examine practice-oriented models of assessment from the perspective of different national VET traditions. The aim of assessing practice-oriented learning is to guarantee the quality of students’ skills and competencies in working life. The reason for focusing the QUAL-PRAXIS project on practice-oriented assessment was that modes of assessment have proved to be resistant to change, although new concepts of teaching and learning have been adopted to meet the demands facing teaching and learning in the labour market.

The QUAL-PRAXIS project focused on identifying current innovations and future developments in practices and approaches to the assessment of work-related learning in European countries. The project also launched the term practice-oriented assessment, with reference to performance- and competence-based assessment and to authentic assessment in work-related learning. Particular attention was paid to models and good practices of practice-oriented assessment.

More information on QUAL-PRAXIS project: www.peda.net/veraja/qualpraxis

ABOUT PUBLICATIONS

The QUAL-PRAXIS project has produced three reports. The first one, a background report titled Quality Assurance and Practice-Oriented Assessment in Vocational Education and Training: Country Studies, has been published by the Institute Technology and Education, University of Bremen. The second publication titled Towards Good Practices for Practice-Oriented Assessment in European Vocational Education introduces elements of good practices for practice-oriented assessment. Furthermore, the project’s final publication, Quality and Practice in Assessment: New Approaches in Work-Related Learning, describes the central features of practice-oriented assessment in different contexts and levels of European vocational education. The two latest volumes have been published by the Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä. In addition, translations of the project reports and other project-related volumes are planned to be published in German, Finnish and in Estonian.

PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER 2006
Marja-Leena Stenström and Kati Laine (Eds.)
Quality and Practice in Assessment: New Approaches in Work-Related Learning

The subject of assessment has become an increasingly crucial factor in both vocational and higher education. The most important reason for its increasingly prominent role is the emphasis currently placed on lifelong learning. The book Quality and Practice in Assessment: New Approaches in Work-Related Learning introduces new approaches to the assessment of work-related learning and methods for guaranteeing its quality. The book launches the term practice-oriented assessment, with reference to performance- and competence-based assessment and to authentic assessment in work-related learning. Practice-oriented assessment reflects various theoretical positions. These are embedded in work-related and work-based learning, which can be described, for example, under the concepts of reflective, transformative, contextual and situated learning.

In this volume, the central features (focus, methods, assessors, context and quality) of practice-oriented assessment are described in different contexts and at different levels of European vocational education within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci project Quality Assurance and Practice-Oriented Assessment in VET. The articles in this volume are based on case studies implemented in the Austrian, Irish, German, Estonian and Finnish contexts.

PUBLISHED IN APRIL 2006
Marja-Leena Stenström and Kati Laine (Eds.)
Towards Good Practices for European Vocational Education

This report introduces elements of good practices on the practice-oriented assessment within the Leonardo da Vinci project Quality Assurance and Practice-Oriented Assessment in VET. The focus of the QUAL-PRAXIS project is to identify current innovations and future developments in practices of and approaches to the assessment of work-based learning in European countries. The findings in this report are based on the case studies of each partner country: Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, and Ireland. Some common elements have been seen in the partner countries, although the targeted educational systems and the educational levels do vary from secondary to higher education.

The elements of good practices of practice-oriented assessment can be divided into two categories: learning and quality assurance. The elements concerning learning are assessment as a part of learning, reflection, self-assessment and feedback. The elements of quality assurance include an authentic context, training for assessors, transparent assessment, joint assessment and a multiplicity of methods. The common elements established in the project are similar to the elements of authentic assessment.
THE FOCUS OF practice-oriented assessment is vocational competence and the viewpoint of working life is taken into account. Assessment is performed by various assessors (e.g. teachers, workplace instructors, students) in as authentic an assessment context as possible. The most common methods used are observation, discussion and written assignments.