

**EUCEN SYMPOSIUM – ROME, 17-19 NOVEMBER 2005**  
**REFINE WORKSHOP**

**Self-evaluation: Critical thinking and Autonomy**  
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***Aim:** Better understanding of ones own capacities and skills, emancipation*

***Obstacles and problems:** Time, lack of will, failure to understand self-evaluation usefulness*

***Skills developed:** Critical thinking, introspection skills*

I have been initiated into self-evaluation in Finland and more precisely in the University of Jyväskylä. I did my Bachelor's degree in Modern Languages there as an Erasmus student.

As part of the class "*UN Challenge of Global Citizenship*", I wrote a report on "*Women Issue in Afghanistan*" and it was at this occasion that I was asked to evaluate myself.

Before starting the research and hence the composition, our teacher advised us to hold a kind of **diary** of our readings and thoughts to help us evaluate ourselves. I must say that the self evaluation was considered as a part as a whole and was marked. Our teacher assured us that the diary would help us to judge our work.

Consequently, each time I was working on my report, reading articles and finding information, I was writing down my impressions, what seemed interesting to me, what shocked me, what feelings I had while reading a testimony or an article. This part was not supposed to be well written, therefore, it consisted more in notes than in a real composition.

This task, I must confess, was **sometimes tedious** but it aimed to help me to **see what I managed to do and on the contrary what I failed to achieve**. It is true that when you write a report you are not always satisfied with your own composition. It happens that the documents and the information you used for your research are not always well transcribed, because you did not manage to properly bring out the key data or simply because your prose is not as beautiful as the one of the source article's author.

Therefore, at the end of my composition I could, thanks to the diary, **check** whether I clearly explained the main pieces of information. It also gave me the chance to have a **critical eye** on my work. **Self-criticism and self-evaluation are a way to underline ones own mistakes, to notice what your weak and strong points are**. It is the most effective way to learn from your mistakes, for the critique does not come from outside.

To be sincere, I must say, that **self-evaluation requires persistence and determination**. As I mentioned before, it was not always pleasant to write down all I thought while reading. But it was for sure useful. **Self-evaluation is a mean of emancipation as it represents a way to know yourself better, to discover your skills and consequently to achieve goals.**

Of course, my experience of self-evaluation took place in formal education and you may think that it does not make sense regarding recognition of non-formal and informal learning. But I do believe that it can be related, for the aim is the same. **Self-evaluation is nothing else than the simple fact of looking back and evaluate ones own actions** : *what should I have done better, how could I have done it in an other way, why did I fail, why did I succeed etc.* By answering those questions, your working methods improve and you are able to be even more efficient and skilful whatever the context of self-evaluation is.

Within the context of an application for validation of non-formal and informal learning, people could be encouraged to keep a "learning diary" which would, **then, be assessed** by concerned persons. The learning diary definitely represents a **tool**, it cannot represent in itself a validation. Hence, it means that it should be based on a **standard** composed of different parts : one dedicated to freethinking and another one based of questions and criteria. I don't believe that restrictions would have to be imposed. The diary could also support a portfolio, some letters of reference, annexes etc. as long as they help to judge the non-formal and informal learning.

JG  
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