

SESSION

CULTURE, PRACTICE AND FALSE FRIENDS: FINDING OUR WAY IN THE LANGUAGE OF APEL

REFINE PROJECT MEETING EUCEN SYMPOSIUM – ROME, 17-19 NOVEMBER 2005

“Validation”, “accreditation”, “recognition”: there are several terms that are used to mean the process of transforming competences that originate in practical experience into credits or formal certification. Each of these terms has a different meaning, and resonates differently in scientific and, what’s more, everyday language.

In **Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus** (2001)

- To *accredit* means to certify as meeting required standards.
- To *recognize* means to give formal acknowledgement and approval of competences.
- To *validate* means to confirm, corroborate and give official force to competences.

In **Cedefop Glossary** (2004)

Accreditation of prior learning: → **Validation of informal / non-formal learning**

Accreditation of skills and competences: → **Recognition of skills and competences**
→ **Certification of skills and competences**
→ **Validation of informal /non-formal l.**

Certification of skills and competences

The process of formally validating knowledge, know-how and/or skills and competences acquired by and individual, following a standard assessment of procedure. Certificates or diplomas are issued by accredited awarding bodies. *Comment: certification validates the outcome of either formal, or informal non-formal learning.*

Recognition of skills and competences

- A. Formal recognition: The process of granting official status to skills and competences either:
 - through the award of certificates, or
 - through the grant of equivalence, credit units, validation of gained skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders
- B. Social recognition: The acknowledgement of the value of skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders.

Validation of informal / non-formal learning

The process of assessing and recognizing a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences which people develop throughout their lives within different environments

Valuing learning

The process of promoting participation in and outcomes of (formal and non-formal) learning, in order to raise awareness of its intrinsic worth and to reward learning.

Some questions arise in a European, cross-comparative perspective:

1. Are these terms easily translatable in other European languages?
2. Do they have the same meaning?
3. Do you agree with Cedefop definitions?
4. If you don't, what you would use instead, and why?
5. Do you think these terms are clear enough to point to concrete practices, tools, etc.?
6. Do you have some ideas regarding how to make them clearer?
7. Do you think a short, very practical dictionary indicating terms and corresponding meaning as well as practices, is necessary?

CC

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