



TRANSFER OF INNOVATIVE METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT OF VET TEACHERS' PRIOR LEARNING

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Source: TIMA-Balt Leonardo da Vinci programme project

http://projects.ambernet.lt/timabalt/sa_files/Suomiu_straipsnis.pdf

The project "Transfer of innovative methodology for assessment of VET teachers' prior learning" (TIMA-Balt) aims to improve and enrich the existing VET teachers' education in Lithuania (Vytautas Magnus University), Latvia (Riga Technical University Humanitarian Institute) and Estonia (Tallinn University) by developing guidelines for Accreditation/Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) system to be included into the VET teacher education programmes.

The main objectives of the project include developing APL methodology, a study module for APL assessors and an introductory APL module for VET teacher education programmes. By fulfilling these objectives, the project enhances more personalised learning possibilities which take into consideration and based on assessment and recognition of prior formal, informal and non-formal learning of VET teachers. According to various research, there are similar needs in all three countries: VET teachers learn considerably through self-education and therefore it is important that the acquired competencies are assessed and recognised as a part of a formal qualification (*TIMABalt project application form, 2007*).

METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSMENT OF VET TEACHERS' PRIOR LEARNING

National report

THE STRUCTURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The framework of questionnaire concentrates on both European, national and institutional levels. The main aspects and questions concern visions, trends, principles, recommendations, prerequisites, assessment methods and challenges of educational policy, especially in Vocational Teacher Education and APL (Assessment of Prior Learning).

TIMA-Balt questionnaire (2008). Available at <http://www.vdu.lt/tima-balt>.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXT

Describe the role and position of your institution in executing VET teacher education in your country

Vytautas Magnus University is one among other six universities in Lithuania, executing VET teacher education programmes (both initial and continuous). Vytautas Magnus University, in cooperation with Sheffield Hallam university (UK) has developed the first modular programme for VET teacher education in Lithuania in 1997 (under the Phare programme).

EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK I. Development policies for education

What are the most important visions and trends that guide the educational policy in today's Europe

The reform of education in Lithuania, as in other European countries is being based on implementation of the principles, listed in Bologna and Lisbon declarations.

EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK II. Development policies for VET teacher education

What are the most important principles and/ or recommendations that guide the European VET teacher education today

- making VET teacher education more attractive and accessible
- making VET teacher education competence-based
- to emphasize the on-job training of VET teachers
- to include stakeholders into designing and development of VET teacher education programmes

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Development policies

What are the main principles of developing educational policy in your country

The political document *The General Concept of Education in Lithuania* sets out fundamental guidelines for the reform of the education system. Following its approval by the government and *Seimas*, it was the basis for a new law in 1991. The document was published in 1992, and has inspired the implementation of reform ever since.

Vocational education and training institutions comprising vocational schools and colleges, are the responsibility of several ministries, including the MoES, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. In counties, there are vocational education and training boards; representatives from all county vocational schools and colleges, county administration, and “social partners”– *i.e.* representatives of trade unions, regional chambers of trade and commerce, and enterprises - take part in their activities.

One of the tasks of the boards is to analyse the demand for different forms of specialist training in their regions. The heads of vocational institutions, under the supervision of the founders, undertake financial management of vocational institutions.

On the restoration of statehood in 1990, Lithuania, like all states previously under the control of the former USSR, inherited a highly centralised vocational education system designed to cater for the specific needs of a planned economy. It comprised vocational schools and *technikums*. Under this system, vocational education was closely linked to major state-owned enterprises and to Lithuania’s agricultural sector in particular. It consisted of a widespread network of relatively small institutions offering very narrow professional (worker) and specialisation training. Its pre-planned intake came from the ranks of the less academically gifted, for some of whom it attempted to provide both professional training and General education. The community held both the system and its graduates in relatively low esteem.

Lithuania made an early start on the task of revamping its vocational education and training sector in order to prepare its people for the changing labour demands of its emerging market economy. Many important gains have been made in providing a wider range of training programmes with broadened focus, in improving teaching materials, in establishing a labour market training authority, in reducing the number of professions and specialisation and in planning for reform to bring Lithuania in line with EU countries operating on the principles of market economies. Unfortunately, Lithuania’s VET reform efforts have been continually thwarted by severe lack of financial resources. Although reform started in 1990, it has really gathered pace since 1994. While initiatives under the PHARE programme have been especially significant in this respect, several vocational institutions have also been founded. These include the Lithuanian Council of Vocational Training, the Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training, the National Standards Group, the County Vocational Education and Training Boards, the Centre for Vocational Education and Research at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, and the National Resource Centre. The October 1997 Law on Vocational Education and Training sets out a full reform of the system, defining its key institutions, responsibilities and processes. The main institutions are the MoES (responsible for national policy), and the Ministry of Social

Security and Labour (concerned with labour market vocational training policy), as well as other ministries, institutions of local administration, the Lithuanian Vocational Education and Training Council, and social partners.

Vocational education went through three stages of reform during the nineties 1990-1993 was a period of delegation of responsibilities to the school level. Schools became responsible for the development of curricula, teaching and learning material as well as for the organisation of final exams. This meant great freedom to schools that at the same time were, though, left in a vacuum without any real support structures at the central level. MOES nominates the Headmaster who in turn is responsible for selecting teachers 1994-1995 saw the creation of the Register of Studies and Training Programmes and of the Register of Education, Science and Studies Institutions.

Lithuania is now at a stage where it faces a range of further challenges in VET reform policy, the chief of which is to bring together its systems of vocational and labour market vocational training, and the various ministries involved, into a co-operative rather than competitive mode of operation. Moves to modularised curricula are urgent to bring flexibility and mobility to the system. A further urgent need is to create the conditions for a change in attitudes of both its people and industry towards fostering the concept of lifelong learning in order to deal with its huge need for continuing vocational training and retraining. Lithuania also faces the challenge of “harmonising” its VET system and specific national needs with that of the EU. Priorities are to establish a qualifications framework, to set up vocational and training standards.

What are the most important policy reforms at the national level concerning VET teacher education

The *education of VET teachers* has been reformed as part of larger systemic changes started in 1994. Until the VET reform, the employment of VET teachers was not regulated; the most important eligibility criterion was to be a good specialist in the subject field. 2002 statistics show that in 2000, about 75% of VET teachers working in VET institutions for more than 10 years had no formal pedagogical background. Since the reform, the structure of teachers training has been changed from a parallel system (vocational and pedagogical qualifications acquired simultaneously) to a consecutive model (where a vocational qualification is studied first at a specialised university of college followed by a pedagogical qualification as post-graduate studies). Reforming teacher education has also been the subject of various international projects since 1997, for example the Leonardo da Vinci ‘Systematic organization of continuing development of VET personnel’, the European Training Foundation ‘Reshaping the focus and structure on teacher training in Latvia and Lithuania’, the Phare ‘Modular programme for initial pedagogical training of VET teachers’.

There are a number of regulations related to VET teachers’ education and employment requirements mostly introduced since 1998:

- Regulations of VET Teachers Certification (1998) identify the requirements and procedures of the certification process. Regulations define only four qualification categories of VET teachers:
 - vocational teacher;
 - senior vocational teacher;
 - vocational teacher-methodologist; and
 - vocational teacher-expert

The new 2001 Professional standard for VET teacher indicates a further category: junior vocational teachers. Junior vocational teachers are those who have not yet acquired their pedagogical qualification.

- 1998 White Paper on VET clarifies the different ways in which teachers can acquire the necessary qualifications.
- The 2001 Concept for VET teacher education and training in Lithuania aimed to change the training system for VET teachers as regards planning, implementation and evaluation (both pre-service and inservice training). The future model would be a consecutive model where a trainee teacher must obtain a vocational qualification at a higher education institution or at a professional college; and then obtain three years of work experience relevant to the teaching/learning programme field; and

then to begin work in a VET school and acquire a pedagogical qualification during the first two years of work.

- 2001 Professional standard for VET teacher was agreed by the Collegium of the Ministry of Education and Science and describes the competency-based requirements for VET teachers building upon the 1998 regulations described above. The standard has been drawn up following not just current regulations but also according to research outcomes (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci programme project). The Standard describes the objectives of the VET teacher profession and distinguishes five VET teacher qualification categories that reflect the direction and sequence of their career. Each category defines requirements for the quality expectations of vocational teaching. It describes the type of competencies that teachers must have to teach in VET schools and outlines the objectives of the profession as well as the main work areas. Competencies are listed basing on five qualification categories of VET teacher: junior vocational teacher; vocational teacher; senior vocational teacher; vocational teacher-methodologist; and vocational teacher-expert. The standard defines concrete requirements for each qualification category of VET teachers.

Minister of Education and Science (2005) decree regarding the qualification requirements for teachers in preschool, primary, general, secondary, special and vocational education programmes defines the main regulations and requirements for VET teacher education and qualification.

Legislation

In your national legislation: what is said (if anything) about (VET teacher education programmes, as well as other consecutive programmes of Higher education are being adjusted by Regulations of Consecutive studies (approved in 2000 by Minister decree No. 27-715).

The admission requirements for VET teacher education programme

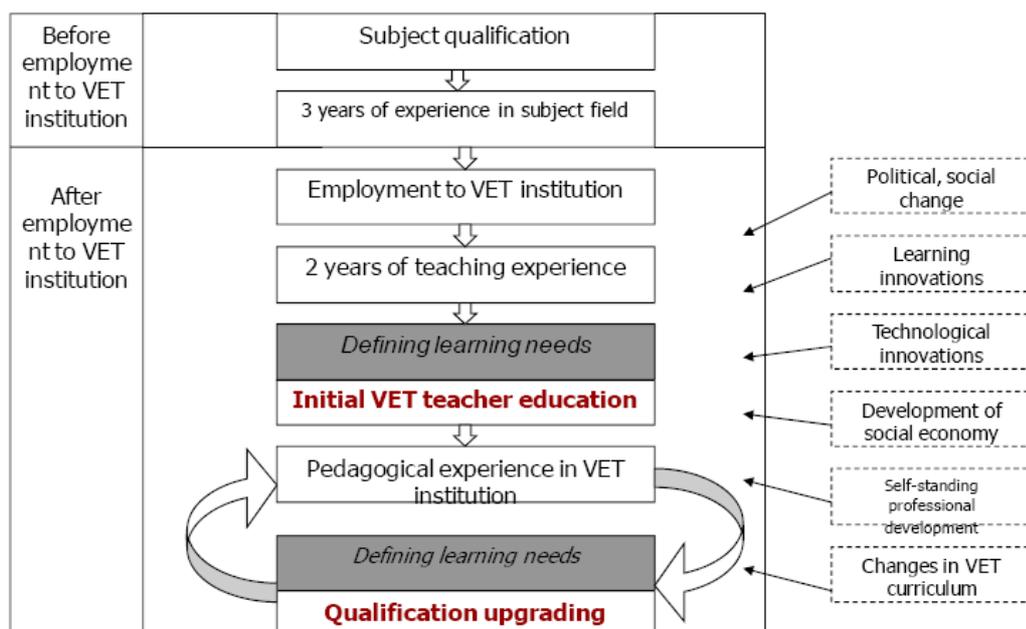
The entry requirements for those aiming to become VET teachers are outlined in the Ministry of Education and Science (2005) decree regarding the qualification requirements for teachers in pre-school, primary, general, secondary, special and vocational education programmes.

The Decree states that if a person wishes to become a teacher of VET school, he/she must:

- have higher education plus a pedagogical qualification, or
- have higher education and have attended the pedagogical minimum programme at the teacher professional development centre, or
- have vocational education, three years of working practice in subject field, and having attended the pedagogical

minimum programme at the teacher professional development centre.

The training model for all VET teachers (irrespective of whether they are teaching IVET or CVET courses) follows the order, outlined in the Ministry of Education and Science (2005) decree regarding the qualification requirements for teachers in pre-school, primary, general, secondary, special and vocational education programmes. The Decree states that if a person wishes to become a teacher of VET school, they must have higher education or vocational education plus working experience. In all cases, they must have completed a pedagogical qualification commit to completing such a qualification within two years of working at a VET school or labour market training centre. The picture below illustrates the initial education and qualification upgrading of VET teacher in Lithuania.



The curriculum

As it is stated in Regulations of Consecutive studies (approved in 2000 by Minister decree No. 27-715), the curriculum of Higher education study programmes must be oriented towards gaining certain competencies, which are listed in occupational standards or regulations of certain study branch. Regulations of Educology does not exist in Lithuania yet, therefore VET teacher education is based on occupational standard of VET teacher.

The aims of VET teacher education programme

As it is stated in the 2007 Minister decree regarding VET teachers qualification upgrading (ISAK-591), there are the following formal requirements for VET teacher qualification upgrading programmes:

- Study programmes for VET teacher qualification upgrading are devoted for acquiring and developing vocational, intercultural, core and special competencies.
- The study programme for qualification upgrading must have the description, indicating the length, purpose, list of competencies (as learning outcomes), curriculum and study plan (lectures and practical classes and their chronology), necessary material and methodical resources, as well as the tasks and criterias for assessment of learning achievements.
- The study programmes must consist of study modules. A study module is devoted for acquiring one or more competencies.

The length of the study module (in the context of the whole study programme) has to be indicated in study credits.

The length (in study weeks or credits) of the teacher education programme

There are 6 universities in Lithuania, which provide programmes for pedagogical VET teacher education. There are 6 programmes for special professional studies (the participants get the qualification of a teacher) and 3 programmes for Master studies in Education (the participants acquire Master degree). Additionally, the Teacher Professional Development Centre offers the pedagogical minimum programme which must be pursued by teachers who are recruited without a pedagogical qualification (those recruited pre-2005 only could fall into this category). The table below informs of the range of study programmes offered for VET teachers in Lithuania. Providers of education for VET teachers prepare training curricula based on the qualification requirements listed in 2001 Professional standard for VET teacher. The study length is determined by study credits (SC). One study credit corresponds to 40 hours of work (1 SC=1.5 European Credit Transfer System – ECTS).

Study programme and provider	Qualification or degree obtained	Length and form of studies	Admission requirements
Pedagogical minimum Teacher Professional Development Centre	Certificate proving course participation (obligatory for those not having a pedagogical qualification yet or having less than 5 years left until retirement)	120 hours	University degree
Vocational Pedagogic Vytautas Magnus University	VET teacher	(60 study credits(SC)/90 ECTS) 1 year full time or 1.5 part time	University degree in subject field
Pedagogy Vytautas Magnus University	VET teacher	(58 SC /87 ECTS) 1.5 year full time or part time	University degree and BA in Education (if not – the applicant has to go through equalizing subjects in education field)
Pedagogy Kaunas University of Technology	VET teacher	(48 SC/72 ECTS) 1 year full time or part time	University degree
Teaching a Subject Klaipeda University and Siauliai University	VET teacher	(40 SC/60 ECTS) 1 year full time or part time	University degree
Vocational Education and Training Lithuanian University of agriculture	VET teacher	(40 SC/60 ECTS) 1 year full time or part time	University degree
Vocational Education Vilnius Gediminas University of Technology and Lithuanian University of Agriculture	MA of Education	(80 SC/120 ECTS) 2 years part time	BA degree and pedagogical experience
Professional Training Management Vytautas Magnus University	MA of Education	(80 SC/120 ECTS) 2 years part time	BA degree

Study credit (SC) in Lithuania is equal to 40 working hours of a student.

Having graduated one or more of above mentioned study programmes, teachers of VET schools acquire new knowledge and competencies and may go to certification for a higher qualification category (vocational teacher, senior vocational teacher, vocational teacher methodologist, vocational teacher expert).

The first study programme, emphasizing learning on the job for VET teachers called Vocational pedagogic was introduced in 2002 at the Centre for Vocational Education and Research at Vytautas Magnus University. It is a modular, competency-based initial VET teacher pedagogical training programme and was prepared under the Phare programme in cooperation with scientists from Sheffield Hallam University (UK). The programme duration is 1-1.5 years and the content of every module matches the acquisition of a particular pedagogical competencies. Studies combine theoretical teaching with practical experience and trainee teachers study with the help of mentors. Each module is concluded with an evaluation to improve future content. The programme is targeted at junior vocational teachers. It has been piloted in various regions and improved over time.

The contents of VET teacher education programme

Legislative acts in Lithuania does not indicate about the contents of VET teacher education programme. But it is stated in Regulations of Consecutive studies (approved in 2000 by Minister decree No. 27-715), the curriculum of Higher education study programmes must be oriented towards gaining certain competencies, which are listed in occupational standards or regulations of certain study branch.

The assessment of learning and the assessment of competences in VET teacher education programme

Regulations of Consecutive studies (approved in 2000 by Minister decree No. 27-715), state, that the study programme gradulators' knowledge and abilities have to be evaluated in means of final examinations or preparing final thesis.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

What are the aims of VET teacher education programme

VET teacher education programme is aimed at acquisition of competencies, which are listed in the occupational standard for VET teacher. The studies of VET teachers closely combine contact studies at the university as well as implementing the practical home assignments while on-job.

What kind of structure do you have in your curriculum (is it i.e. subject-based, competence-based, theme-based or project-based)

The curriculum of VET teacher education in Vytautas Magnus University is competence-based. The programme includes modules, and each of them is oriented towards gaining certain competencies. Each module consists of two parts – studies at university (three working days) and the assignment to be carried out on-job, at VET school (about 1,5 months).

Which are the partners involved in defining the curriculum

VET teacher education consists of two parts – subject education and didactical education. Curriculum of didactical education is being decided by the experts of VET education, VET teacher educators as well as VET teachers themselves. The curriculum of subject education depends on decision of experts from a certain economy branch.

Assessment and APL

What are the main assessment methods for assessing learning and competences are the learning needs assessed? how?

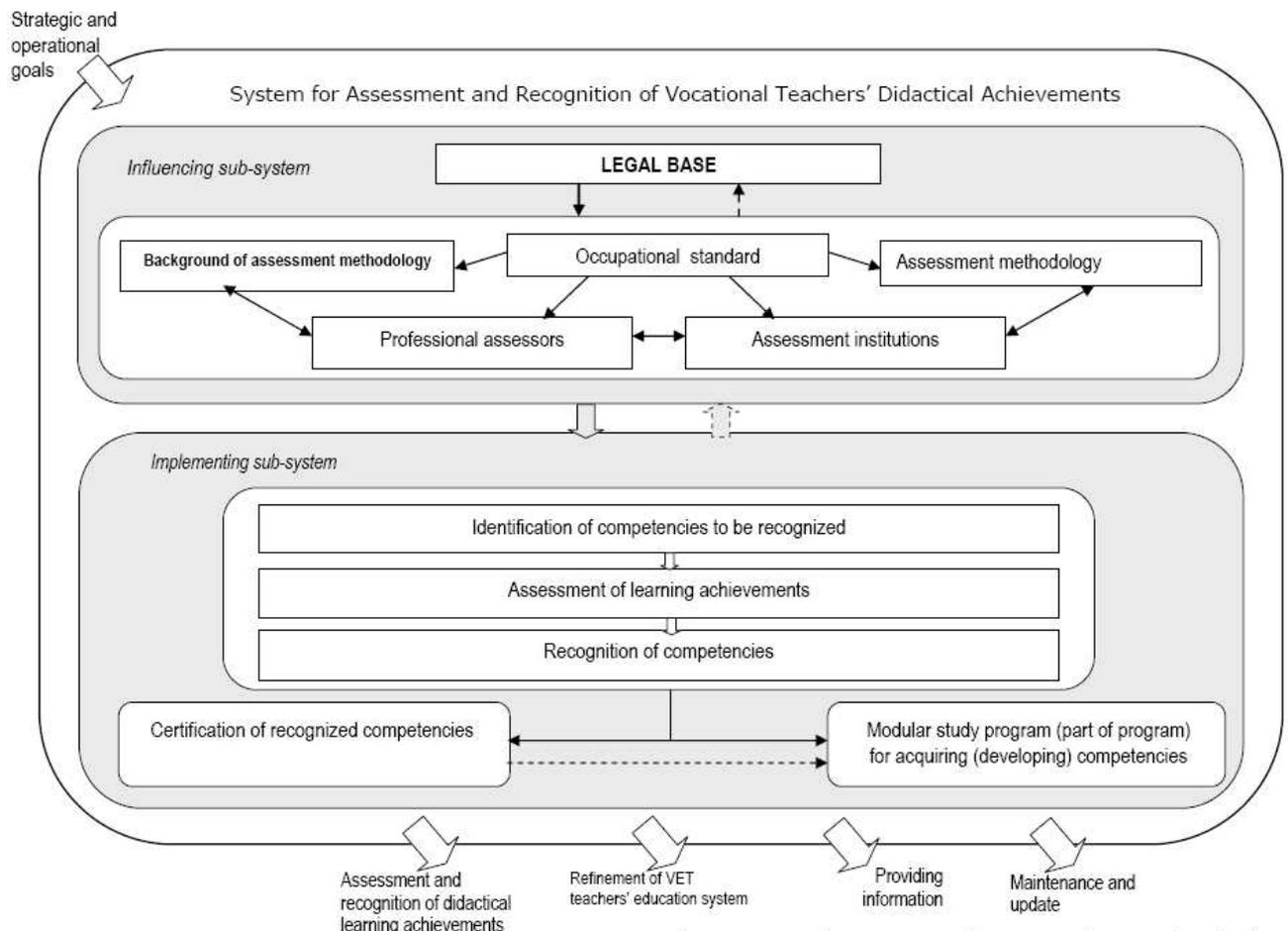
The evaluation of achievements of initial pedagogical training of VET teachers is based on the principle of *portfolio*, which allows to determine flexible term and process of studies taking into account the acquired pedagogical competencies, abilities and time resources of an individual student and creating prerequisites for accreditation of already possessed competencies. The final assessment of the achievements of an individual student is accomplished by summarising the results of "portfolio", an experimental lesson (lecture) and final work.

What kind of credit transfer system do you have in your VET teacher education programme

The system of credit transfer does not exist in VET teacher education in Lithuania.

Is there a shared vision for future APL philosophy and methodology in your institution

The vision for future APL methodology is based on the results of research, where VET teachers, VET teacher educators and leaders of VET schools expressed their opinion on the need and parameters.



What kind of procedures are planned for the APL in your institution

It is foreseen to enrich the existing VET teacher education programme with an introductory module for APL, and preparation of individual learning plan. This way candidates to the programme would be able to study according to individual learning

What are the main challenges in developing competence-based curriculum and the methodology for the APL in your institution

1 there are no assessors, therefore they should be prepared to implement and to develop the APL methodology.

2 the target group (VET teachers) are not enough informed about the possibilities of APL, and they express the distrust in all kinds of assessment procedures. Therefore it is essential to inform VET teachers about the advantages and possibilities of APL procedure.