

Systematic quality assurance in adult learning

Nordic tiles in a mosaic



**NATIONELLT CENTRUM FÖR
FLEXIBELT LÄRANDE**

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The report is based on the work of the Nordic network Quality in Adult Learning (2006 – 2008) and input from to Nordic conferences (2006 and 2008)

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Preface

Both the understanding of and the attitude towards adult learning has undergone a dramatic change during the last decades. Only a few years ago learning was primarily linked to teaching in schools and all learning took place before one became an adult. The remainder of adult life was based on this learning and the availability of further formal education was very limited.

Adult learning was conducted in the evenings and during leisure-time, organised by study- and adult educational organisations and evening schools or as courses or conferences during work-time. The societal need for adult know-how, as well as the availability of learning, had not been defined, and was furthermore primarily considered the responsibility of each individual.

The recognition of the fact that society is continuously in need of new skills in order to develop and sustain its competitive edge as well as welfare provision, has put a new focus on adult learning. This is due to the fact the all learning is beneficial for economic development and welfare; assuming that education is acknowledged, it is recognised and applied. This type of validation leads to increased demand for usefulness and the need for indicators to show that the result is in accordance with aims and needs. In that way the demand for systems and quality assurance becomes evident.

Individuals and employees have to participate in continuous education and competence development in order to maintain their place on the labour market as well as their role as active citizens in a democratic and sustainable society.

In recent years new dimensions have be added to learning as a concept, with respect to both time and space. It is common to talk about life-long learning, learning across educational institutions, leisure-time and work, and learning across borders. There are a number of factors that explain this development, including globalisation and new technologies. Furthermore, new political structures, with the European Union and the OECD as forceful instruments, are, together with newly acquired understanding and new attitudes towards learning, factors that explain this development.

Quality is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. It can be applied objectively with reference to goals and in relation to standards, results, needs and expectations. At the same time it has a more subjective aspect related to the experience of learners and the process they take part in, personal development and quality of life. The application and definition of quality depends on the actual context. Quality assurance is conducted both in the work-place, and in formal and non-formal educational institutions.

There is a political focus on and interest in improving work with quality assurance for education and learning in a Nordic as well as in a broader European context. The Steering Committee for Adult Education (SVL), which operates under the Nordic Council of Ministers, has “quality” as an important and prioritised undertaking in its working programme for further- and continuous education. The Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL) has been established as an operative instrument under the SVL. The NVL has established a Nordic cross-sector working group (Nordic Group on Quality Work/Assurance) that was assigned the task of exchanging information and reporting on relevant national experiences and work with quality, and, not least, furthering the development of quality assurance in this field. In parallel, the NVL has established national cross-sector working-groups in order to register as many national experiences as possible. Perspectives and concrete examples from the national projects will be channelled to the Nordic project.

This report is a result of the work of the Nordic Group on Quality Assurance. The report describes in a concrete and down-to-earth manner examples about work with quality assurance in different sectors and at different levels in organisations and institutions. It is not the aim of the report to give a detailed picture of work with quality in adult learning, but rather to visualise critical factors of importance for the work on quality assurance and how this is perceived by the participants.

Through the discussion of concrete examples from the Nordic Group on Quality Assurance, nuances and differences in quality assurance have become apparent. However, to the same degree it becomes clear that cooperation between different levels and different subjects and sectors, are of significant importance for securing quality.

It is hoped that the discussion in this report can inspire and contribute to the improvement of quality and the further development of work with quality assurance in adult learning.

Ellen Stavlund
Coordinator for NVL



Introduction

The objective of the report is to give some snap-shots of how in a different context and at different levels, work on quality assurance in adult learning is conducted. Consequently, this is not a comprehensive manual on how to work with quality assurance in, for instance, an educational institution. The intention is to give the reader some ideas about how one can work with quality assurance in different learning situations and at different levels. Therefore, the user does not need to read the report from beginning to end to find it useful. Rather, the reader may find the report useful by seeking inspiration from the concrete cases that describe how quality assurance has been applied in institutions and organisations for adult learning. The cases are real-life examples and describe the situation from a practical point of view.

Through this report, the Nordic Network for Adult Education (NVL) would like to invite the reader to join them on a journey through the Nordic quality universe. In the report, with the help of concrete cases, the reader will notice both the scope and the depth of Nordic work on quality assurance in adult education. The reader himself will have to reflect on each of the presented examples. At the end of the report, the authors of the reports present their own reflections, on the basis of the report as a whole, and give some suggestions for concrete action.

Terms of Reference from the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL)

The terms of reference for this work are based on the following elements from the mandate of the Nordic Network for Adult Learning (NVL) work on quality assurance:

- Development and documentation of process- and result- based indicators
- Development of quality indicators for the different aspects of life-long learning: access to education, guidance, validation, further education of teachers and the development of learning methods, etc.
- Measurement of the effect of education (follow-up of international and Nordic studies)

The Nordic Network has worked with the aim of evaluating as well as proposing broad criteria for quality measurements in adult education across formal as well as non-formal educational systems. The point of departure has been the personal experience of the members of the Network as well as work with the development of quality and quality assurance in different educational environments in the five Nordic countries. According to the terms of reference, there is a need to compile a report on the basis of the Network's own definition of the concept of "quality", experiences in working with quality assurance, and active research for accumulating know-how on work with quality assurance in adult learning in the Nordic region. The report will contain descriptions of concrete cases in order to illustrate with practical examples.

- Are there any particular elements that characterise or describe work with quality assurance in the Nordic region?

This way the report throws some light on a number of quality indicators for adult education in the Nordic region. The report provides a summary of needs, wishes and recommendations for further work with quality assurance in adult learning – both within and outside the Network.

Right from the establishment of the NVL, an effort has been made to have all work carried out by groups that represent a broad spectrum of organisations and institutions that work with adult education and quality. In accordance with this policy, representatives from a broad spectrum of educational institutions have been invited to participate. The group that compiled the report had the following members:

Iceland

Sigríður Ágústsdóttir, Iceland Polytechnic

Sweden

Anne-Christine Utterström, The Swedish National Council for Adult Education
Eva Laurelli, The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement

Norway:

Sigrun Røstad, Vox, Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning
Ellen Stavlund, NVL-coordinator

Åland Islands

Ronny Holmström, The Åland Government

Finland

Paula Silfvast, Edupoli Adult Education Centre

Denmark

Lis Boysen, University College, Copenhagen
Kim Faurschou, Faco, International Science Park, Odense, Denmark, the editor of the report.

The Group responsible for this report was established by NVL following broad contact with all-important players in adult education in the Nordic region. The purpose has been to constitute a group reflecting a very wide spectrum of experiences. The authors of this report are convinced that experts in the Group reflect very well all the most important aspects of issues that are at stake.

Interest in adult education and adult learning has grown in line with increased globalisation and international economic competition. There is increasing pressure for continuous competence development of adults. Consequently, today there is a demand for life-long learning for everybody, and through the different periods of individuals' lives. Learning does not only take place through formal institutions, but also through all different aspects of life. In the beginning of the 1970's, the overall objective of life-long learning was to promote humanism and democracy, in accordance with UNESCO's cultural mission. Contrary to this, the current educational mission of the OECD and the EU emphasises qualification for participating in the labour market (employability) and this aspect has dominated the current dialogue on life-long learning¹.

¹ Read for instance Rubenson, Kjell: "Livslångt lärande: Mellan utopi och ekonomi" i: Ellström, Per-Erik mfl. "Livslångt lärande" Studentlitteratur, Lund 1996.

EU's working programme "Education and Vocational Training 2010" identifies explicitly three different learning areas:

- **Formal learning** that takes place in public formal educational institutions.
- **Non-formal learning** that is organised learning which takes place outside the formal educational system, for instance in high-schools, day-high schools, study circles/evening-schools. These institutions are partly financed by public funds.
- **Informal learning** that is an integrated, natural part of daily life and is experienced in private by the respective individual or at work.

In this report it has been decided to address learning processes that take place within a formal framework, including formal learning outside educational institutions, for instance in the work-place, as well as processes that are conducted within the non-formal learning system. It has therefore be decided not to address learning processes that take place in daily life or learning processes offered by private enterprises, for instance by private consultancies. The reason for this selection is that when public funds are use for financing learning, it is a prerequisite that quality is assured.

As a point of departure for the work on quality assurance, it is assumed that the adult is interested in learning and that adults learning are most successful when they find the learning meaningful. One important quality factor is the inclusion of the experiences of participants in the learning process. Another important quality factor is that the participant, as a result of the learning process, improves his/her ability to act either in his private life or at work. Yet another important quality factor is the ability of the participants to have some responsibility in the learning process, i.e. to apply their own personal and qualitative resources in the learning process.

When addressing quality in adult education it is important to observe that work with quality assurance is complex. Therefore, it is necessary to make clear what the objectives or the rationale behind the individual learning processes are, that will be subjected to quality assurance or quality measurement. Frequently, in learning processes that adults participate in, the participant will find elements of an earlier qualifying- or learning process. In this report it is observed that quality is a concept that can have different meanings depending on the context. What is the objective of the learning process? What level of the organisation/institution is being addressed? Is it quality with respect to the result of the process or is it the quality of the process in itself?

This report will include examples of how quality assurance is applied in adult education. It will also give examples of how the quality assessment in itself is assessed. The report contains descriptions of a number of cases that illustrate different levels, processes, contexts, objectives, etc., in order to show that there are a number of different approaches to securing quality.

Methodologically the report has been inspired by the **Quality Assurance Model - The Common Quality Assurance Framework for VET**² . In the Quality Assurance Model, emphasis is put on the following factors:

- Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation and assessment
- Review
- Methodology

These factors compose a whole, but do also impact on each other. For instance, the quality of the evaluation must be viewed in the context of the objectives. The report is structured around these five elements in order to illustrate how it is possible to work with quality assurance within their framework.

Since quality can be viewed from many different angles and levels, and for reasons of clarity, each chapter addresses:

- Structure quality: Including, but not limited to, external organisation and resources available.
- Process quality: Activities related to the learning process itself.
- Result quality: Including, but not limited to, benefits to the participants, and development of competence.

As mentioned above, the aim of this report is to inspire the reader to conduct quality assurance work in his/her own organisation. The intention has been to awaken the interest of the reader to take a look at some parts of the report in order to find out, with the help of the concrete cases described in the report, how he/she can self-develop their own methods for working with quality assurance.

Quality is in itself neither an objective nor an unequivocal concept. The definition of quality depends on the context, i.e. it must be understood in reference to time and place as well as to the expectations and expected action of all the players involved. According to this approach quality is a subjective concept that can entail many different definitions. The fact that quality is a constructed concept is the main prerequisite for how the concept is applied in this report.

At the beginning of each chapter there is a presentation of the selected case. This includes a description of whether the cases are about formal or non-formal learning and whether it deals with result quality, process quality or structure quality. The cases frequently encompass elements of all three aspects, structural-, process- and result quality. For analytical reasons, it was decided to focus on the reality of the situation that the respective cases describe.

The report describes real-life situations illustrating the approach to quality assurance in adult learning. However, as mentioned earlier, it has not been the goal to give a comprehensive overview of how quality assurance is conducted in the Nordic countries.

² The model is described in the next chapter and reference is made to the following web for further information: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/qualitynet_en.html

The authors of the report hope to inspire the reader and, at the same time, to document how quality assurance work in adult education is conducted in the Nordic region.

Through the preparation of this report, the authors have deepened their insight into understanding and applying quality assurance. The insight and understanding of the authors have grown through learning about concrete cases from different areas of the Nordic regions where adult learning takes place. By discussing each case and how it refers to quality and, not the least, how to understand quality and how to make quality assurance concrete, the authors have improved their insight in to this issue.

The work was carried out during 2006 and 2007 and has received financial support from NVL's strategic budget as well as, with respect to content, from the Nordic Council of Ministers. Without this support the work could not have been carried out.

The authors hope that the Nordic Council of Ministers is able to exploit the experiences, challenges and reflections in this report in such a way that practical daily work with adult education and political work are usefully interlinked, thus benefiting people living in the Nordic region.

The authors look forward to sharing their experiences with all those who are interested in quality in adult learning.



I. Nordic tiles in a mosaic

Quality is both unbelievably simple and extremely complex. It has been decided to base the work on a very simple quality model, the Quality Assurance Model, illustrated below. If you subtract the essence of the most widely used quality models and current quality issues, the Quality Assurance Model³ enhances all the essential subjects.

Seen from a holistic view, the process within and between the different phases comprises all of the interests in adult education: the learner/student together with the instructor/teacher makes up the team, and they participate as equals in the process of planning, implementing, evaluating and justifying both the individual and organizational plans and objectives.

All the individual and collective objectives of those interested in participation in education are closely tied to the organizational /institutional general purposes and plans (course description, mission, vision and values) and their ability to integrate each learner's individual plans and objectives into the organizational, educational framework made available. The adult educational organizations are based on and regulated by laws, regulations and national curricula.

If the learner feels that he/she is guided and supported in various ways through the learning process, and if he/she experiences that his/her own plans and objectives are realised step by step and implemented in a constructive way in the education via dialogue and reflection followed by justifications that are clearly valid, one can describe this as a successful attainment of objectives and high quality in the education.

In order to reach a high level of accomplishment, the learner/student, the instructor and the administration have to be subjected to processes which are systematic to ensure quality both on the individual and the organizational level.

3

Based on the CQAF found on:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/qualitynet_en.html



A European Quality Framework

The Quality Assurance Model also comprises the Quality Framework that has been developed on a European level for Vocational Education and Training. This area also involves both the education in the Nordic Countries that is traditionally given in schools of commerce and technical schools (Denmark), vocational and specialised grammar schools (Iceland), vocational courses in grammar schools and qualified vocational education (Sweden) vocational education in upper secondary schools (Norway) and the whole vocational aspect of adult education (both for the unemployed and those employed), further education and continuous education.

The objectives of the Framework are therefore to focus on the quality of certain selected fields. Within each of those fields the Framework provides a number of questions that the individual provider can and has to respond to. The Framework can be applied on all levels, ministries, study- and educational organizations as well as schools, departments, individual holds and lectures. It can also be feasible to apply the Framework to the system as whole, in other words to the provider's total activity. The Framework is designed so it can be used independently of which quality assurance system one has decided to work with.

Each step of the Quality Assurance Model will be briefly represented in the following section in order to provide the reader with an overview of the material in the Quality Assurance Model before each step is described in more detail in later chapters of the report.

Plans and goals

It is a precondition for any discussion on quality that goals have been set and a plan has been made for all educational and learning activities. The degree to which the goals are attained is closely related to the evaluation of perceived quality (that is to say all objectives attained equals' high quality).

The questions include:

- What are the goals?
- Are the goals realistic and measurable?
- Are all of those involved aware of the goals and have they been agreed upon?

Implementation

Here the focus is on day-to-day activities, including teaching and learning. The questions take account of

- How are the plans related to the goals?
- Who, in practice, decides on the quality?

Evaluation

Relates to the different evaluations and assessments.

The questions include:

- What is evaluated?
- When are different phases assessed?
- How is the assessment carried out?
- How does one reach the conclusions of the assessments?

Review

The main issue here is how you proceed after the results of the assessment and continue towards new goals and plans/implementation. The questions include the following:

- How are the conclusions employed?
- Who uses/does not use the results?

Methodology

This part of the Framework is really a part of every focus area mentioned above.

The questions include the following:

- Who participates?
- What instruments and tools are applied?
- How and why is the quality measured?
- How systematic is the work?

The group has chosen to use the Quality Assurance Model as a disposition for this publication, hereunder to describe and illustrate the specified steps with cases exemplifying the daily approach to quality assurance.

The specific Nordic

The Nordic countries have something to share in focusing on quality in adult education. Democracy, dialogue and the integration of individual experience both in teaching and learning processes are very important issues that the inhabitants of the Nordic region (Norden) often point to as a part of our proud heritage.

Culture and education are two sides of the same coin, and this applies to different ways of providing adult education. The organisation of knowledge is partly based on individualisation, where self-confidence is based on the choices a person makes, and partly on a socialisation process, where it is essential to be aware that everyone is part of a bigger learning environment and a bigger democratic context. It is of great importance that both these elements are integrated, both from a quality perspective and also in a social context.

The main objective of the quality assurance system from a humanistic point of view is also to enhance the quality of relationships between the instructor and the student/learner and respectively amongst the students. The quality of the relationships depends among other things on the participants' social intelligence. These social relationships form the potential and the challenge for the quality of the innovation- and knowledge-based society.

Quality of what?

In general, the discussion on quality often focuses on the process of quality assurance itself. Thus the discussions tend to be rather broad and non-specific, just as the context and the area the quality assurance is supposed to cover are set as a background.

But there is also a set goal for quality assurance, an area, and a subject that the quality process is supposed to develop and improve. For adult education the quality of learning itself is the main issue and thereby also provides the focal point for the quality management.

The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement defines the concept of quality on the basis of how well the organization:

- Fulfils the national set of goals
- Lives up to (responds to) national requirements and guidelines
- Fulfils other set goals, requirements and guidelines coherent with the national ones
- Is characterised by striving towards renewal and constant improvement

The cases that have been chosen will illustrate not only the quality process but also the quality of adult learning.

The quality process can, as explained in the introduction, include three main areas:

- Structure
- Process
- Results

This provides a basis for broad and holistic thinking, in order to enable the management of quality from various perspectives. If the most important goal for adult education is that the participants learn something (acquire knowledge, develop competences or change attitudes) it is evident that the quality of results is the overall criterion. The quality of results must on the other hand be viewed from the perspective of quality of structure and processes.

What do we mean by the three areas of quality?

Structural quality

The structural quality includes the organization and resources, prerequisites in a broad context. It may be documents, (laws, regulations, plans) which administer, define and provide a basis for the organisation of learning. It can be the organization of the system at different levels (state, region, communal, local, providers) and it can be

relationships between the resources, the economic resources, teaching resources and the group of participants.

Process quality

Process quality relates to the internal activities, involving the work with learning. It may be content, methodical approach, materials, teachers' use of their own competences, learning environment, possible development of competences and last but not the least the relationship between the instructor and the participant (the shift of the role of teaching towards learning).

Result quality

Result quality lies in what has been "learned", including how and within which areas the participant has developed his/her competences. In formal education the result is connected to the goals in the curriculum and subjects while in non-formal adult education it stands in relation to the course plan and individual learning goals.

The next chapters

In the following five chapters each stage in the Quality Assurance Model will be described step by step. Each chapter includes a number of cases providing examples of the quality process in the Nordic region. Together each chapter will provide an overview of the general context of each stage and also give concrete examples of exactly how this aspect of the quality process is implemented in a number of Nordic countries.



Chapter 1. Plans and objectives

The cases from Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Denmark and Åland cover quality of structure, process and result within formal and non-formal adult education

The learning activities for adults include multiple levels and a broad spectrum of contributors.

It is therefore difficult to generalise on what the quality of adult education is. An evaluation of quality depends on many factors, including the individual who is doing the validation.

The provider's subjective perception of quality is highly dependant on the type of learning, ranging from work with liberal adult education in learning associations and organizations and folk-high schools to formal education within the school system. The perceptions can also be concurrent and they may be prejudiced by political, ideological ideas and values. As a result, something that some people perceive as quality does not necessarily bring quality to others. This makes it an even greater challenge to define quality in adult education.

From a life-long learning perspective it is also necessary for the providers of adult education to communicate with other educational systems, in such a way that adult education will be considered an integrated part of the educational policy. The organisation of education, schools, and on-the-job training in addition to adult education in different ministries has not made it easier to gather a coherent view on learning.

Traditionally the focus has been on input, while discussing the effectiveness and existential value of a learning field. In addition many of the international comparisons have been focusing on input such as "who is the best in the class" or on different types of input - the number of computers or the number of teaching hours, for example.

On the system level the goals can be described in many different ways, including the quality of structure, process and result. As an example of this the ministry of education in Norway works with criteria for quality in vocational education. The criteria they work with are illustrated in the following case.

Case 1. Norway: Quality in vocational education – national guidelines

The main issue for work with quality criteria for vocational education is to ensure high quality learning outcome for all apprentices and students and to make sure that the relevant competences are available for the economy. Vocational and occupational education will be made more attractive through systematic and ongoing quality assurance leading to:

- Young people and adults perceiving that they are successful in learning and in job training and that vocational and occupational education provide a solid foundation for

life-long learning and social participation

- Vocational and occupational education add value to society and thus provide competitive advantage for the economy
- Schools and workplaces providing on the job training develop as a cooperative learning process.

The national guidelines for quality assurance will support coordination between providers of vocational and occupational education. The target group is large and varied. The most important participants are apprentices, students, administrators and persons responsible for learning activities within companies, teachers, school administrators and local governments. Quality assurance is to be carried out in cooperation with educational authorities and partners on the labour market, both centrally and regionally. Dialogue within the industries is of utmost importance for the quality of education

More on <http://www.udir.no>

It is only recently, that greater attention has been paid to the relationship between education and learning, including the outcome of learning. The learning outcome is dependant on various relationships, closely tied to the frameworks for and the people in the learning arena. However, it may seem difficult to point out any single factor of learning that makes it problematic to define general criteria for all forms of learning and any arena. It rather seems as if the focus on the learning outcome makes it easier to approach the complexity and the context of the various factors. The learning outcome and the participant's development can be seen as appropriate criteria by which to measure the quality of organised adult education. It is at the same time necessary to have a general view of what characterises the learning activities that have that lead to a good learning outcome.

Quality assurance can, as already mentioned in the introduction, be seen as consisting of three major areas:

- Structural quality
- Process quality
- Result quality

The structural quality

The case from Sweden illustrates some of the challenges of defining quality and how it is possible to work with the structure in order to improve quality.

Case 2. Sweden: Objectives on national level

The Swedish parliament, Riksdagen, decided the following goals in the year 2001:

All adults should have an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and develop their competences with the aim of promoting individual development, democracy, equality, economic growth and employment in addition to equitable distribution.

An important objective for the municipal governments is to break these national goals down to a regional, respective an organisational level. The structure that characterises the official school system for adults, meaning the municipal adult education, is founded on the principles of controlling the goals and the outcome. This demands that the leader has to outline goals for different levels of municipal management in addition to formulating strategies and actions to achieve these goals.

The whole idea is that on the political level there must be set overall goals for the organisational level that can be broken down and shaped into more precise objectives. The closer to the organisation you get the more concrete the objectives become.

Strategy

Pedagogic and working environment develop to meet the ever changing and growing individual needs to learn, in a knowledge-based society.

Individual needs for learning and knowledge are supported through counselling and guidance based on the validation of factual and existing knowledge.

Outcome-based learning environments in addition to teaching, guiding and net-based education are provided to the greatest possible extent in order to meet all adults' varying needs for and prerequisites of learning.

Economic support for adults is available to stimulate participation in education and competence development.

Society, employers and the individual are responsible for providing basic as well as specialised education for different individuals and groups.

All formal and non-formal learning that benefits from social support should reflect a democratic attitude and a respect for equality.

A profound agreement on the political issues and cooperation between authorities and the social partners.

For more formal education the definition of quality is often more precisely stated. As can be seen from the following case, the structural quality in Finland often reflects, among other things, quality recommendations for vocational education. The quality recommendations come from central administration.

Case 3. Finland: The National Board of Education: Quality recommendations

The minister of education decided on January 21st. 2008 upon recommendations regarding the quality of vocational education. The aim was to support providers of education and encourage them to continuously improve the organization and the outcome. The recommendations are based on the joint EU membership countries' framework for quality management (CQAF) and play an important role in the implementation of the Copenhagen process in Finland. The directorate of education in cooperation with the educational providers, the employers and employees organizations and the student organization put the recommendations forward.

www.oph.fi

Process quality

Process quality is the central issue in a project on flexible and adjusted education based on the validation carried out by Vox in Norway. The case illustrates how two teachers (Fia and Frida) modify their teaching according to the needs of the different participants.

Case 4. Norway: Individual curricula

Some schools' environments have developed individual educational options in cooperation with a local study shop. Fia and Frida have developed such an offer/option and made it available at the schools they work in. They run combined study modules for various occupations in the health and social field and they are able to have participants on all three upper secondary education levels. They begin at the top level, "We start with the final goals and from there we gather what is missing," says Frida. To have students and groups at different levels participating in the same educational process is an enormous challenge for the teachers.

About the work involved in making an individual study Frida says:

"Initially we make an individual study plan in cooperation with every learner where we try to tell them how they are to work and when they are supposed to finish, and how long it may take. It is in a way at contract between us and the individual studying at our institution."

The education tied to the individual study plan is web-based. In addition there are organised study groups, where participants are students at different levels. Cross-sector theme days connected to all study plans are also arranged. In addition, teachers visit learners and often those visits are connected with decentralised guidance for the participants in their home district. Both Fia and Frida are convinced that group guidance combined with individual guidance in the study shop is effective and this method enables them to assist a greater number of people.

Because the education is web-based all participants not familiar with computers are offered a beginners' course in computer technology. All participants must check the web because all messages and projects are placed there. Usually, all participants become familiar with this method of working and are eager to surf the internet for related topics.

The participants that wish to study in depth and get a holistic view on subjects they have been validated on, get an opportunity to take part in theme days and solve problems if they wish to do so. The greatest challenge for the participants is to rely on their own competence and decide on their own which subjects they need to study.

Both Fia and Frida believe that the study shop model is demanding for the teachers. Frida elaborates on their way of working:

"It's a lot of work, doing it the way we have chosen, but it is certainly more fulfilling for the individual learner."

(Report on www.vox.no: "Realkompetanse i praksis")

The involvement of the teachers is also described in the case from Åland. It illustrates how they have established cooperation (Distributed Expertise) with experts, whom the teachers work closely with and learn from. The goal for the cooperation is to develop the students' ability to set strategies for their studies and thereby enable them to finish their education.

Case 5. Åland: Process quality

On Åland, vocational education is a genuine alternative for adults that have been working for some years. Vocational education engages even students that already have a vocational education beforehand. All in all a number of students that have been recruited to vocational studies have different experience of reading and writing than is usually required of students enrolling at university. It seems that some strategies vis-à-vis reading and writing might influence the student's perceived ability to study; it might become rather overwhelming and more difficult to manage. In order to assist students who are expected to run into difficulties during their studies to plan and follow through their studies a four year project was implemented – Distributed Expertise (DE) – where a small group of teachers worked with specialists on developing strategies for learners to succeed in reading, writing and studying. An important aspect of the project during the first phase was to learn how the learners approached different types of written problems. After the initial mapping the learners that might run into difficulties with their studies were invited to take part in the project.

The aim of the project was to develop new methods for teachers to assist learners on the one

hand to understand what form of reading and writing was required for their studies and on the other hand to help them to develop their own strategies to become more successful. This was based on the hypothesis that there was a great gap between the student's perception of what the studies demanded of them and what the high school actually demanded, and this gap could make studying very strenuous.

The project revealed among other things that the students believed that in order to finish the examinations they would have to read the texts and learn them by heart, while the high school expects that students can discern central aspects of the text. In order to be able to take pedagogical responsibility for the students to be successful with their studies the teachers had to find different approaches to make the students understand that working with a text means more than reading and memorising it.

(Berthén, Eriksson & Lindberg 2006 <http://www.ha.ax>).

Process quality can also be tied to decisions on goals as the following Danish case illustrates.

Case 6. Denmark: Process quality

An example on how it is possible to develop co-ownership and engage the student in goal-setting for a process:

In relation to a course in *Learning in own practice* – focusing on the development of competence in pedagogy, the participants, before the course started, were asked to fill out a form stating their expectations for the course. They were asked to answer questions like: *What do I want to improve in relation to my teaching and which resources and experience can I share with the other participants?*

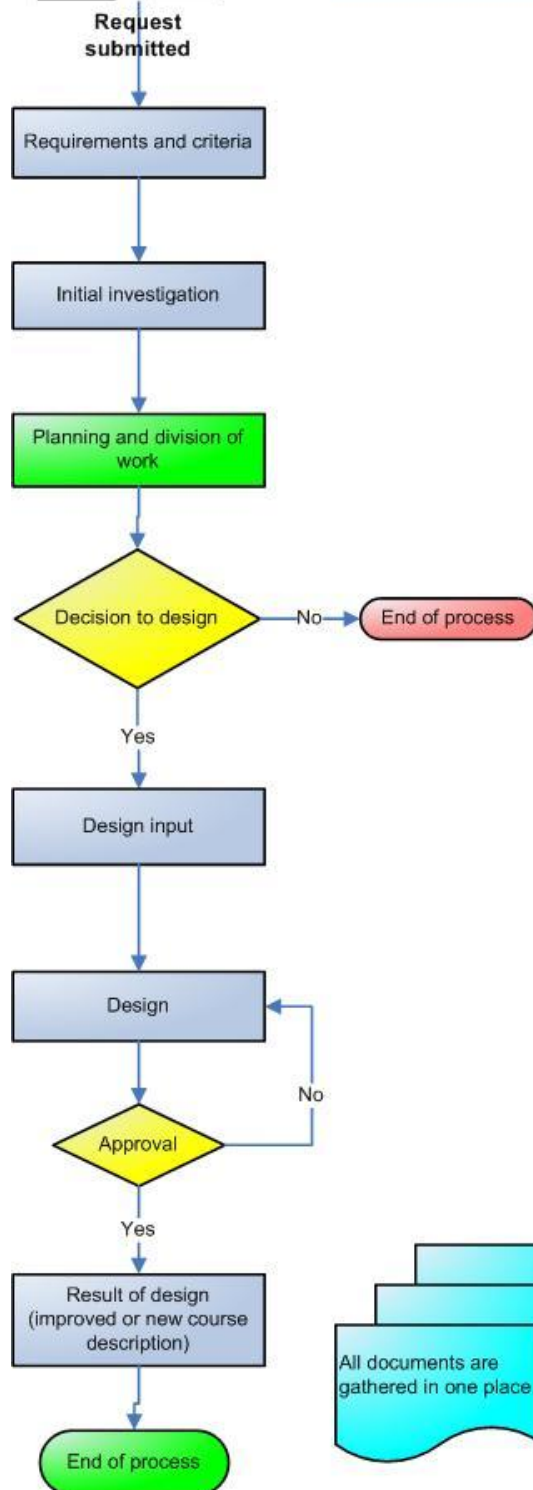
The course teachers were then able to take the answers into consideration before the final planning and thereby include the learner's wishes in the four themes of the course.

The Process Quality may also be described directly as a work process, as can be seen from the Icelandic case. Here the whole process is described, starting with the initial request and ending with the very last part of the working process.

Case 7. Iceland: The quality of Process



There is a written request - or some type of incentive from the school's Icelandic or international work environment for the design of a new course or an improvement of an existing course of study/course. Every course of study consists of a number of courses. Information on different study areas and courses is available on the school website www.fti.is. In order to simplify the flowchart we only refer to courses.



The steering committee discusses the request at its subsequent meeting and appoints a project manager. The project is added to the project manager's list of tasks and is followed up according to procedure VKL-102.

The project manager is responsible in relation to the head of division and the steering committee, performs initial investigation in cooperation with other professionals and applies the appropriate task list and form - GAT-023.

The project manager assigns a work group and provides the group with a plan, containing the delegation of duties, timing and goal for the design.

The project manager files and delivers a report, GAT-023, to the steering committee, which reviews the report and decides on the continuation.

If the steering committee decides that there is no reason for action or further input the head of division sends written rejection with justification to the requestor.

The project manager gathers information for the design from the delivered form GST-023.

The design includes the development of a course description, study goals and evaluation.

The project manager asks the head of division to confirm that all appropriate external requirements are met, documents the outcome and signs the form GAT-023.

The project manager presents the written outcome of the design process to the steering committee for review.

Final approval by the ministry of education validates the design outcome

All documents produced in the process VKL-303 are gathered in a folder by the head of division.

All documents are gathered in one place

These kinds of process descriptions are often registered in educational institutions that have a close relationship with sectors or companies that use quality assurance systems inspired by ISO – systems. According to the ISO systems it is required that all sub-suppliers – including educational institutions – can describe their approach to quality assurance in the very same way as a company or industry does.

Result quality

The case from the Danish day–high schools illustrates how it is possible to work in a strategic way on setting goals, and choosing a framework for developing quality and documentation in addition to applying the result in real live situations.

Case 8. Denmark: Day-High School Association. The EFQM-Excellence model

The Danish Association of Day High Schools carried out a pilot project in the years 2003 and 2004. The aim of the project was to find out whether the EFQM- Model of Excellence was applicable for the member schools as a framework for the development of quality and documentation.

Working towards excellence is a continuous process, applying procedures and methods in order to succeed in the companies'/institutions' objectives. The preconditions are precisely formulated goals, objectives, visions, and values of the company/institution and the challenge is to bring goals and praxis together. Plans and purpose are central concepts in the Excellence Model.

The Process is encompassing, includes all employees and is based on facts. The Model consists of 9 criteria that cover all input (the organization core and tasks) and products (what the organization produces based on objectives and actions). There are 5 input criteria (leadership, employees, policy and strategy, partnership and resources and processes). The Model also contains 4 success criteria (employee, customer, stakeholders in society, and key output)

The principle of the Excellence Model is that by constantly working on the input, success can be achieved. By continuous evaluation of the 9 criteria and their inter-relationship, innovation and learning take place and future input is based on the earlier input and successes.

The process includes: Self-evaluation, ranking of areas for preparation, deciding which success factors should be achieved – planning, developing, implementing initiatives for improvement, supporting the improvement and assessment of methods and usefulness.

On the European level there have been some actions to find a “common currency” and a measurement for qualifications. The aim is to secure a common and accessible statement of qualifications. In Norway people are working with the same challenges in connection to basic skills as is described in a framework in the following example; structural quality in formal education.

Case 9. Norway: Framework for basic skills

In Norway, since the year 2002, adults not having finished elementary school, were by law secured a right to finish elementary school. But the educational offering to strengthen basic skills does not meet the need of adult learners. In 2006 the Norwegian ministry of competences assigned Vox to work out a framework that described different levels and competence goals for adults' basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and information technology. The target group for education according to the framework are adults that need to

strengthen their basic skills and the project is a part of the effort of the Norwegian government to strengthen the basic skills of adults. The education can be applied in various learning arenas: also at the work-place.

The aims for competences are set in relation to the curricula for the elementary school in a way that they can be a useful tool for adults requiring basic education. This makes it easier for adults to acquire the specific competences they need instead of having to finish all curricula together in one package.

Competence goals and levels

Frameworks for the three arenas reading and writing, everyday mathematics and digital competence have already been adopted. A framework for oral competences is under development. Each arena includes competence goals divided on three levels. In addition to the competence goals, some examples on how the goals can be adjusted to the different arenas adults are in – the work-place, society and leisure and education, are provided.

While working on the framework Vox cooperated with numerous professional groups in Norway and the institution also had a dialogue with the Norwegian ministry of competences and the directorate of education. Vox also got some inspiration from other national systems to raise the competence level, for example the Danish FVU's educational guidance for reading and writing.

Counselling and mapping

Currently Vox is working to develop tools for counselling and mapping that can be adjusted to the framework. This is meant to assist teachers and providers offering education to adults who need to strengthen their basic skills.

The framework for basic skills can be downloaded from www.vox.no

Both separately and in relation to the role of providers of non-formal education in the learning and educational system, a structural description of qualifications (learning outcome) can contribute to enhancing the value of this type of learning.

Collective framework of reference

It is a precondition that a set of “descriptors” will be developed for all types of qualifications, acquired both in non-formal and formal adult education and in the work-place. Such a collective framework should be used with the aim of increasing flexibility, enhancing motivation of the participants, being transparent, making the educational system more accessible, serving as a link between work and education and providing a foundation for administrative procedures in addition to providing a basis for official financing.

Description and documentation

In order to operate quality assurance based on a collective framework of reference, the preconditions are that all areas and players in adult learning start working on the description and documentation of the fundamental characteristics of their learning activities taking into consideration the organization, the development of curriculum, teachers' qualifications, influence of participants and so on. (Structure- and process quality on a general level).

For the individual learning institution it is possible to develop a structure for the outlining of study goals and learning outcomes (Result quality in addition to more specific process-related factors).

Curriculum and study goals

At the highest level (this has to be formulated in such a way that it is possible to evaluate learning in relation to goal achievement) it is necessary that for every learning initiative a precise description of learning goals connected to level, content, methodical approach, teachers competence, duration, organization and expectations to the participants and so forth is provided. Usually this is worked out in connection with the requirements of the curriculum and there should be a minimum demand for what this must contain. The curriculum provides a basis for the participant, organizer and the financial supporter/payer to evaluate if the learning outcome is in harmony with their expectations. To measure/evaluate course activity based exclusively on participants' individual satisfaction only provides a limited meaning in a greater context, because these expectations are very diverse and representative only in a limited way.

If learning goals are clearly stated, it is possible for the individual participant to become aware of his/her own expectations and whether the goal is in accordance with individual expectations - likewise whether the outcome is in accordance with expectations. In addition, a good curriculum makes it possible to evaluate whether the learning activities do relate to other learning activities or work and provide merit.

Result quality is subjected to critical testing when a student wants to use the outcome to enter a different area of education. These merit-discussions form a big part of the student's frustration in correlation to the result quality of their education, especially when they wish to proceed in the educational system. The Norwegian case provides an excellent example on how it is possible with limited resources and a little innovation to produce new valuable situations in the interest of both the participants and the institutions.

Case 10. Norway: Merit and result quality

In the laws on adult education it is stated that learning associations are obliged to issue a certificate upon completion of a course. For several years and in many instances, bodies such as the VOFO have been encouraging providers to make certificates display more precise information about learning activities, content and working methods.

Information on certificates

From their experience of such certificates - for example from learning associations -, the leaders of centres and professional advisors have on occasions implied that the documentation does not provide a sufficient basis on which to perform a competence based evaluation in relation to the study plan.

The person conducting the interview perceived that most of the persons that are connected to a centre are quite open-minded when it comes to approving competences achieved from courses and work in a third sector. It is, however, evident that most of the professional advisors do not have much evidence/proof they can refer to when it comes to the contents of the participant's CV or what they have seen documented from courses. One of the advisors (The School Centre) said she had seen a course on first aid listed on the candidate's application form. She implied that this type of course and working experience, for example with the Red Cross, was highly relevant for her profession as a health- and social worker. She had, however, not considered that she could ask for that type of competence during the validation interview. She implied that she was open-minded towards asking more detailed questions during the validating interview if the candidate had listed activities of that kind on the application form. Our impression was that this was an idea she had developed during our interview and she had

not yet performed this in praxis. It was therefore interesting that she concluded the interview by saying:

"Maybe I will do it hereafter?"

Another advisor (The Professional Centre) states that she does take experience from a third sector into account during the education:

"It is clear that if a person that has taken a first aid course with the Red Cross sees that we will be having a first aid day during our course, the same person will not have to participate that day."

From the project Realkompetence in praksis (A case-study on competences from the working place and third sector, and the relationship between real competences and educational offer. Report on www.vox.no). The case is based on interviews with the leaders of, and professional advisors at the centres performing validation of real competences).

The result quality may also be described from another view, namely the possibilities and rights the students have to have their qualifications and competences validated and documented. As illustrated in the following Finnish case, in Finland the authorities have required that the educational institution acknowledge each applicant individually. The aim is to increase the number of applicants that get merit.

Case 11. Finland: Competence-based qualifications: to acknowledge validated competences

The educational institutions in Finland, arranging vocational adult education have since 01.01. 2006 been obliged to acknowledge individual applications for competence-based qualifications or vocational education preparing for competence-based qualifications, carrying out competence-based qualification and acquiring of necessary vocational skills. The regulation of individualisation came into force 01.03. 2007.

According to the regulations the educational provider must acknowledge the applicant's competences and skills. According to the results the applicant is assigned to a suitable examination. The applicant's skills are tested with various methods adjusted to the field.

The applicant may have additional documentation for competences already verified (e.g. certificate of partial examinations relevant for vocational skills, computer certificate, certificate of general language examinations). If that is the case, the jury (foreman for the employers, the employees and for the educational sector) will suggest that the examination commission should validate the applicant's knowledge.

The applicant may, judged on previously acquired knowledge, be referred directly to undertake examinations or parts of the examination. If there is evidence of a lack of vocational skills, the applicant should be referred for additional studies.

(www.oph.fi)

Documentation

If a quality assurance process is to be operational, it is essential to identify any problems within the structures and processes in adult education. How can they be applied? Why are they special?

This requires systematic and solid documentation, which is among the great challenges facing the study and learning associations and to some extent the folk-high

school.

Another important prerequisite is that the adult participant receives documentation of the pursued learning activity. Issuing a certificate or a competence document often does this. The educational provider should be responsible for documentation of this kind. The alternative may be discussed, if the individual is responsible for adding the result to his/her own competence portfolio that includes participation in various courses and other learning activities.

Written documentation – both on goals/plans and achieved results – provides the basis for judging whether learning in one “learning arena” is valid and can be transferred between different systems, operators and levels

To document quality and results is a general condition for financial contribution and projects from the government. But is it possible to measure and weight what takes place for example in adult education in a way that is relevant in connection with a final goal. The traditional way of measuring in the educational system is by examination, but the results of a test only reflect some dimensions of the quality of learning that has taken place.

And for the learning associations, for example, it is crucial to apply different quality criteria. The demands for documentation vary from one educational form to another as is demonstrated in the following case from the Swedish Learning Association

Case 12. Sweden: Documentation on a national level, quality report

According to the Requirement for quality reporting from SFS 1997:702 with changes SFS 2001:649 every institution is obliged to submit a written quality report as a part of a review and evaluation of the institution. Every municipal authority has, at the latest, by 1st of May each year to deliver a written quality report for the prior calendar year. The report is to be based on the schools’ quality reports. On both levels the report should include an evaluation of the degree to which the national goals for education have been reached and of the actions that should be taken if the national goals have not been reached.

The municipal quality report should include the following:

1. Important prerequisites for the institutions
2. Description of the municipal actions for securing and enhancing the achievement of the goals
3. Reporting the achievement in relation to the national goals.

The underlying motive for the demand for quality reports is that the report should act as a tool to develop and improve the institution. The quality report is not intended to replace the local evaluation but rather to add to the local evaluation, to their own checks, and inspections on areas that the school or the municipal authorities regard as especially important from a quality point of view.

There are different demands for documentation between countries and especially between different types of education. This becomes evident when comparing the cases from Sweden and the following case from Norway. As illustrated in the following Norwegian case there has been an attempt to have the various learning associations create a common “toolkit” around documentation, in order to be able to recognise the quality and be meaningful for others.

Case 13. Norway: Common toolkit. Structure quality in non-formal education

Quality standards and study plans in the learning associations (KVASS) 2004-2005

The purpose of the project KVASS (Quality standards and study plans for the learning associations) was to enhance the quality of study plans and certificates and to make reporting easier and safer with regard to establishing common levels/standard levels. KVASS is a project carried out in cooperation between VOFO and six out of twenty learning associations.

According to the laws on adult education (1976) it is a requirement for financial support that education is based on a study plan. It is also demanded of the learning associations that the participants receive a certificate after completing an education. The learning associations have through the years developed their own standards and routines for study plans, certificates and reporting their activities. Internally the organizations also applied different methods and there are also differences between VOFO and the member organizations. Different praxis made it necessary to coordinate and standardize.

Through KVASS, tools for new and common standards and policies were developed, tested and produced. The common electronic "toolkit" contains formats, criteria and templates for study plans and certificates, a new system for placement on levels and a common set of concepts concerning the learning associations' activities. The toolkit should also enable the organizations to obtain and use a common set of models and to ensure the quality of reporting. (www.vofo.no)

This type of documentation for every area of adult learning would serve as a foundation for further development of common points of reference as is illustrated by the Norwegian case.

The connection between goals and activities

The goals for all adult education must be that the participants learn something and develop their competences.

In reality this means that clearly defined criteria must be set, which adult education must fulfil as prerequisites in order to attain significant status and respect both from the participants' and the community's point of view (i.e. with the financial support from the government). These types of criteria must be set by governmental authorities in cooperation with the providers in the area and put forward in laws, regulations and overall plans. The individual operator (i.e. learning and information association or the folk-high school) has to have systems that are able to document that the activities are carried out in compliance with the overall goals and plans, including a description of the controlling actions performed.

One of the essential areas for documentation is the extraordinary factor that some institutions and organizations provide in connection with adult education. The case from Norway demonstrates that it is not enough to declare that you have something special to offer with regard to adult education, it must also be documented.

Case 14. Norway: Documentation of adult educational speciality

It is sometimes difficult to see what it is that makes the learning association extraordinary in relation to group-related learning processes within the educational system. How is the influence of participants organized? How can you document learning outcome? Based on a research (The Minireport 1/2004), Vox surprisingly found out that participants did not experience that their involvement and the inclusion of their experience had any influence on their education to the degree the learning associations emphasize as being their ideological pedagogical foundation. A survey conducted for the Tron commission in 2007 showed that, even if the participants are generally happy with the study plan, they are not so satisfied with the possibilities to exchange experience and engage in dialogue during the course. The survey also revealed that the general applied working method was classroom teaching with only limited use of information technology. These surveys could suggest that praxis does not always comply with the expressed ideal. The case study of Vox, "Real competence in praxis" illustrates that participation in the learning associations' courses cannot always be documented and that the certificates provided do not reflect the education. The survey also shows that the Personal Competence Document (PCD), a tool to document non-formal competences, is only applied to a limited degree. These surveys reveal some enormous challenges facing those who are trying to clarify working methods in learning associations. This applies both to the participant in the learning situation and in relation to the belief that the participant should receive documentation on learning outcome to use in different contexts.
(www.vox.no)

Quality indicators can be a part of the documentation as the following case from Iceland illustrates.

Case 15. Iceland: The use of quality indicators

Many of the Adult Education Centres in Iceland are working to increase the quality of their operation, though there is neither an official quality assurance system nor a demand for control of the quality of adult education. An informal study of a few institutions offering courses in non-formal adult education shows that they emphasize the information pledge. The participants are informed about the content and advancement and the instructors receive information from the institution concerning what is expected of them. It is emphasised that qualified instructors who are experienced within adult education should be employed.

The Adult Education Centres have a respect for the learners' need to be at ease in the institution and that the environment plays an important role in enhancing the learning process. Therefore they make sure that classrooms are equipped to suit adult needs and strive to make the learners feel safe and appreciated. Upon finishing a course the participants, almost without exception, receive a certificate as proof of their participation.

Most of the Adult Education Centres understand the importance of having the participants' estimation/opinion on the course content and the learning process. Therefore most of them apply user surveys, conducted at the end of the educational process. Sometimes the Adult Education Centres also ask an independent advisor to conduct an external evaluation of the course content and progress.

The Education and Training Service Centre's role is to promote the availability of education for individuals in the labour market who have limited formal education and to enhance the quality in adult and further education. In 2006 the Centre published a set of quality indicators which institutions working within the sector can use to assess their quality. Most of the

institutions that cooperate with the Education and Training Service Centre have already started or are about to start implementing these quality indicators. In this process they use the indicators as tools, so they can evaluate whether their implementation and completion fulfils the quality requirement. It is expected that a revised edition of the indicators will be published in 2008.

(The Education and Training Service Centre www.frae.is. Quality indicators <http://www.fraedslumidstod.is/default.asp?Id=573>)

The field 'plans and goals' relates to how the individual institution, in relation to the goals that have been set on a national level, describes what constitutes good problem-solving. What do we want, and how do go about accomplishing it?

For institutions engaged in adult learning, plans and goals are set through laws and regulations – with a very varied degree of detail and independence of action. If plans and goals are supposed to have real power of penetration in order for users and society to experience fair and improving problem-solving, then the people that are to implement the plans and goals have to adapt them and give them their personal design.

The challenges vary for different learning arenas for adults, but in all instances there must be a conscious and expressed focus on the institution's right to existence; goals and plans are a precondition for quality.

Quality in the field of plans and goals, as illustrated by the Swedish cases, specifically the case from the Swedish National Council of Adult Education, is all about ownership, responsibility, leadership and direction. In particular questions like the following become of vital importance: *Who sets the goals? How are the goals set? Who communicates the goals? And how are the many different players managed?*

In Sweden, the government has formulated 7 areas at stake (ex. demographic challenges in a multi-cultural society) that liberal adult education (folkbildning) (study associations and folk high schools) should be evaluated against. Institutions are to work out their own plans and goals in order to reach the set areas. In Denmark and Norway the situation is different, there liberal adult education has very broad and general goals, goals where it is difficult to measure whether they are being reached or not ("to enhance individual, general and professional knowledge and skills to strengthen the ability and desire to be responsible for ones own life and to participate actively and be engaged in society").

Case 16. Sweden: General recommendation on quality reporting of adult education

On the 16th of February 2006 the Swedish government assigned the Swedish National Agency for Education to revise the general recommendations for quality reporting for the school system. This was done against the background of the government's decisions on several changes to the regulations on quality reporting (1997:702), since the National Agency for Education issued the general recommendations in February 1999. The current valid general recommendations have been published in the National Agency's code of statutes. SKOLFS

The case concerning the requirements for the Swedish National Council of Adult Education illustrates the external requirements that were made. In the following case it is illustrated how the National Council of Adult Education has chosen to relate to these requirements.

Case 17. Sweden: The Swedish National Council of Adult Education's reaction to the government requirement

The Swedish National Federation of Study Associations has accepted the guidelines for quality assurance for study associations valid from 2007. From the guidelines it is made clear among other things that:

The Swedish National Federation of Study Associations believes that systematic quality assurance is necessary in order to enable the study associations to achieve their goals simultaneously with the attainment of the goals for broad-based societal support of liberal adult education.

[...] The study associations meet various needs in society. Every study association develops quality indicators, forms its own systems for leadership and support in addition to documenting the processes for developing and enhancing quality. The Swedish National Federation of Study Associations finds it reasonable that every study association has its own policy for quality and concurs with the national demands for quality reporting. The basis for the National Council of Adult Education's work should be to lead a dialogue with the study associations and become familiar with their different management systems and processes for quality assurance. The Swedish National Council of Adult Education should not develop their own quality system as the National Agency for Education and the High School Association have done. The study associations find it natural to cooperate with the Swedish National Council of Adult Education on prerequisites, conditions, participants' surveys and reporting.

[...] The government's starting point for quality is discussed in the decision and of course it shall be included in the reasons for the association's approach to quality assurance:

- *To realize the government's goals with its support*
- *To realize the seven areas at stake*
- *To have the activity pervaded by an ideological profile*
- *To be active throughout the whole country*

[...] The regulation conditions, the criteria from the National Council of Adult Education, the Council's evaluations, analyses, follow-ups and research result constitute further foundations for the study association's approach to quality assurance.

Against the background of the Quality Assurance Model – the first step - along with the setting of plans and purposes, the assumptions for the next step, the implementation, have now been provided. This will be described in the next chapter



Chapter 2

Implementation

The cases from Denmark, Norway, Finland, the Åland Islands, Iceland and Sweden contain a variety of elements in relation to work with quality assurance in adult education. It is natural that the cases primarily address procedures and structure, as they focus on implementation.

The day to day work is at a stage where a substantial part of the learning activities is implemented, and resources are used. Based on the applied Quality Assurance Model, it is at this stage that an effort is made to reach the defined objectives as well as to carry out plans that have been developed.

Adult education embodies the opportunity to use (and validate) the experiences of each individual adult as a point of departure and to apply them to the educational process. By doing this, each adult becomes an important contributor to quality in the educational process and this in itself is both a challenge as well as an opportunity.

In the introductory chapter it is mentioned that an important part of the task to assure quality in adult education is to assure that education is perceived as being meaningful by the learner. This can for instance be achieved during the learning process by drawing on the resources and experiences of the participants, be it from work or from daily life in general.

On the one hand, the experiences of participants can be related to the educational theme. On the other hand, themes and theories can contribute to individual experiences and thus be usefully applied in testing new activities in daily life.

An encouraging learning environment is a precondition for establishing an experience-based and experience-promoting educational process. The adult participant will, through this, have an important role in assuring quality in the learning process and also be responsible for his own and others' learning processes. Again, the teacher must select an organisational form and learning methods that promote this type of development.

The inclusion of adults' experience is described in the following case from Denmark.

Case 18. Denmark: The inclusion of adults' experience

In connection with one particular course in adult learning advice under the Pedagogic Diploma Degree in Adult Pedagogy, a continuous effort is made to include cases that are based on the practical experience of the participants. The participants exchange information about practical experiences and relate the experiences with different theories in order to

explain the experiences. The course also makes an effort to create new experiences by applying theory on new aspects of the practical experiences of the participants.

The quality of educational and occupational guidance in Denmark is being strengthened through a number of ethical guidelines that have been established by The Joint Council of Associations of Study- and Occupational Councillors, (Fællesrådet for foreninger af Uddannelses- og Erhvervsvejledere (FUE). These guidelines focus on the guidance itself, rather than on the counsellor. This raises the question as to whether ethics can be applied to a function or an organisation, or if ethics are a personal aspect for each individual.

Case 19. Denmark: "Ethical guidelines for educational and occupational guidance"

In 1995 Denmark got its first "ethical guidelines for education and occupational guidance". The guidelines were made more concrete in 2006 and formally adopted at the representatives' meeting of the Joint Council of Associations of Study- and Occupational Counsellors on 22 April, 2007. The guidelines are rather plain and contain 5 main points. The ethically based guidelines should be characterised by:

- Respect
- Equality
- Independence
- Openness
- Trust

Respect

All guidance should be based on respect for the individual or citizen and on the recognition of the individual's right to self-determination. The counsellor shall respect personal integrity, dignity and sovereignty in relation to choice and decisions concerning education, occupation and living-conditions. At the same time the counsellor shall stimulate and challenge the citizen to consider his or her opportunities and choices.

Equality

Within the guiding process the citizen shall be met with recognition, equality and without prejudices concerning sex, age, religion, handicap, sexual orientation, ethnicity, social status and education. The counsellor shall both recognise and respect diversity among human beings.

Independence

Guidance shall be based on the citizen's interest – and shall be neutral and independent of political interest, interest of institutions and other particular interests. Guidance will always take place in a context and will therefore always be dependent on time, place, the relationship between the counsellor and the citizen, the institutional context and the social - as well as societal preconditions and opportunities. Full neutrality and independence are consequently impossible. However, there are values that the counsellor shall try to live up to by being aware of how he/she relates to the student and always making an effort to keep focus on the citizen's interest and way of life.

Openness

It shall always be clear to the student under what framework and precondition the guidance is

conducted. The citizen shall be informed if the counsellor is obligated to report from consultations. It shall be made clear if the counsellor has role in controlling or limiting the actions of the citizen. For instance if the counsellor, as an employee at an institution, has a role in examining or recruiting for education or employment.

Trust

The guidance shall be based on mutual trust and rapport between the citizen and the counsellor. If the counsellor feels there is a need to discuss matters concerning the citizen with others, it shall only be done with the citizen's consent. In a case where the counsellor, on the basis of legal requirements, is obliged to forward information to the authorities, the citizen shall be informed about what type of information will be forwarded. The counsellor can only forward concrete information, not his own reflection or opinion of personal matters.

Ethical matters have been on the agenda in Norway, as illustrated by the following case. The first case views ethics from a quality perspective, whereas the second Norwegian case demonstrates an ethical dilemma.

Case 20. Norway: Ethical qualities in occupational and professional education

Structural quality in formal education

Emphasis placed on integrating ethical aspects into the quality concept in the curriculum for occupational and professional education,

The objectives are formulated in the following way:

As value-based subjects, religion and ethics shall give the individual time to reflect on his/her own identity and choice. The learning process shall stimulate each individual student to consider the values that form his/her views. Religion and ethics are subjects that contain both the communication of knowledge and the formulation of values. These subjects focus on religious as well as philosophical traditions in a Norwegian, European and broader international context.

Religious, ethical and philosophical questions affect the individual and society as a whole, both as a source of social cohesion and of social division. Mutual tolerance across differences of religion and outlook are preconditions for peaceful coexistence in a society with cultural and religious diversity.

The subject shall promote knowledge and respect for different religions, values and ethics from a local, national and global perspective. The learning process shall yield theoretical as well as practical competence in analysing and comparing religions, values and philosophical schools of thought.

For further information: <http://www.udir.no>

Ethical discussions are frequently closely linked to a number of dilemmas as the case below illustrates.

Case 21. Norway: An ethical dilemma

Structural quality in informal learning

Documentation of participation in courses

The Study Association's educational programme is registered and reported in accordance with criteria that are defined on the bases of the Law on Adult Education.

The participants are registered with name, sex, age and address. Their ID-number is only registered in relation to formal education that includes examination. In the light of new and demanding requirements from the Government, this is to some extent a challenging statistical task that includes the request to establish a registration of each individual student's learning process as a whole. The Study Association's statistics cannot be adjusted to the official educational statistics without some amendments. The request to have the ID-number of the participants registered is currently being discussed. The Study Association is reluctant to do this as they consider that many students, for variety of reasons, do not wish to be listed in an official database. This includes courses that can be related to some illnesses or other particular aspects.

The liberal adult education (Folkeoplysningen) has to be modernised, in order to secure quality in the education offered and to give up-to-date learning opportunities. This requires both quality and development in the organisation itself. The case below illustrates how The Study Associations in Norway work with institutional development.

Case 22. Norway: The good circle - selecting the best option

What is the focus of the current liberal educational activities for adults (folkeopplysende virksomheder)? Why are they needed? These questions are not being addressed by the respective educational institutions organisation, NGOs, etc. Instead, they refer to traditions and empathy.

(Johs. Nørregaard Frandsen, Syddansk Universitet)

“The good circle” is a systematic approach for developing an organisation. With the help of this approach, an educational organisation can in the course of one year analyse itself in relation to the current and future situations. It is no news that times change and that something that served a useful purpose yesterday, will not automatically be recognized as a valuable way of modus operandi in modern society. Those who wish to prosper in the future will regularly have to question their own way of working in relation to changes in society. According to this approach, the educational organisations have to hold four meetings before selecting their best options. The meetings are used to take a look at theoretical models and examples and to elaborate on these in working groups. A number of different analyses are conducted, such as internal analyses, analyses of the external environment and analysis of different options. These analyses produce an ideal future scenario; including what opportunities and obstacles one can expect and what strategic actions will be needed. “The good circle” is a tool for and by the adult educational organisation, which serves quality assurance in adult learning.

For further information: www.vofo.no

Another way in which one can receive additional benefits from existing resources through innovative measures is illustrated by a case from Finland.

Case 23. Finland: To take in to account previous experiences in learning - one concrete example

A businessman, who has a company in Östnylnad that specialises in products made from nettles, was looking for a new employee. The businessman, who had heard of a project called “know-how enhancement” that supports adults with little formal education, called the respective counsellor for adult education in the fall of 2005. The potential candidates for the job were examined through individual interviews with the counsellor.

It became clear that a special examination within the textile profession would be a good qualification for the job. The person selected had some knowledge that was relevant for this examination (for instance experience of entrepreneurship, knowledge of fibres and dyeing, product planning, production and work). With respect to other elements of the examination (how to handle pictures, labour conditions working environment, business planning and textile conservation) the person selected was in need of some further training. The only educational institution that could provide this training within the textile industry was located in Mellersta in Finland, some 300 km away from the home of selected person. However, an educational institution close to the selected person’s home was able to organise the training and provide the support that was needed.

An examination was conducted at the company’s premises in the spring of 2007. Representatives conducted the examination for the employee and the employer as well as teachers from the industry that had been selected to examine the candidate.

For further information: www.noste-ohjelma.fi ; Noste tietä avaa –seminaari, Jyväskylä 11.9.2007/L. Sipilä, S.Tammikari

The case below, from the Aland Islands, describes how by drawing on the student's previous experiences, it becomes easier to solve problems related to the planning of his/her education. By taking into account the experiences the student has gained, it becomes easier for the teacher to identify where there are obstacles. The experiences of the students becomes evident through in-depth conversation between the student and the teacher.

Case 24. Aland Islands: The application of the adult’s experiences

Within the framework of the project “Distributed Expertise” (Berthén, Eriksson & Lindberg, 2006 www.ha.ax), which had as its objective the development of teachers’ skills in helping students in vocational schools, it was of the utmost importance to make use of the students' previous experiences and knowledge as a point of departure for how the learning process could be carried out.

Students that are not used to reading and writing in accordance with traditions in vocational schools can experience difficulties in their studies. It is not unusual for the student himself to feel he has a problem. The student experiences lack of progress in his/her studies as an intellectual limitation or as some form of dyslexia. Within the project's theoretical perspective (socio cultural) it has not been meaningful to view the problem as cognitive or dyslexia-related. Instead, with the perspectives that characterised the project, it was natural to accept

that the student's previous experience is important in how he approaches his studies. In concrete terms this means that a student, who can normally read newspapers and/or professional magazines and can write letters without significant problems, can have problems with reading and writing in accordance with what is expected of him in a vocational school. By being aware of how the student reads and writes under other circumstances, it is possible for the teacher to foresee what could create a problem for the student in the vocational school. The teacher has to have an in-depth conversation with the student about what, how and in what context his earlier reading and writing experiences have been and how he is expected to read and write in the vocational school. The aim of this exploratory conversation is to map out what type of problems the differences between the strategies of the student and the writing skill requirements of the vocational school can create. From this perspective, the problems that are identified cannot be viewed as either the student's problem or the school's problem, but rather as a problem of communication.

In the education of health and social workers in Finland an effort has been made, to make the students' existing skills useful, as is explained in the following case.

Case 25. Finland: Teaching methods for training health and social workers in Edupoli

Social constructivism, experience-based learning and reflections, guidance of equals and dialogue are issues that are frequently discussed by health and social workers. The instructors do also make an effort to apply these ideas to the learning process.

At the beginning of the studies much attention is given to building a team and creating a learning environment that students are at ease with. As a support in teaching, the teachers engage the students in discussion and in a number of interactive training sessions that the students can make use of at a later stage in their working relations. The ability to become engaged in open dialogue as well as the ability to reflect on one's own learning process, does not come naturally but requires continuous training. For this reason there is an occasional need to go back to theories on group dynamics, the fundamentals of oral communication and to carry out practical training in different discussion methods.

The instructor makes an effort to have the group make use of the know-how the students have acquired previously. The aim is to have the student share his own know-how with the other members of the group. This improves the learning process of all the students and strengthens the self-esteem of the student who is sharing his know-how. Foot care, computer skills and Indian head massage are examples of skills that individual students can contribute. By sharing their own know-how the students also learn to make use of their fellow student's know-how. The ancient idea that the teacher is the only one that has something worthwhile to share will through this process be gradually forgotten. Know-how sharing does also require the teacher to be positive towards the student's know-how.

Individualism poses a threat to many students. When the studies are divided into segments or modules where each student selects what he or she needs, the traditional study-groups, which were previously stable throughout the whole learning process, disappear. An open dialogue and in-depth interaction requires a feeling of security that very few adult students have with strangers or near-strangers. Consequently, student guidance is conducted in stable groups of about four persons. Students that have relatively similar know-how and social skills make up

the groups. The group members are convened in order to share experiences, talk, listen and be heard. The programme of the group is to a great extent planned before the group convenes and the aim is to improve the ability of group members to interact and to take a lead during the study-time.

Education and vocational guidance have received increased attention after the introduction of the concept of “lifelong learning”. How does one give guidance to an adult in a lifelong learning perspective? And how can one assure the quality of that guidance?

The instructor is of the utmost importance in and closely linked to the adult’s assessment of the quality of their learning. Traditionally, instructors have not been preoccupied with documenting quality, but have been more focused on ensuring that daily educational activities were at a level they themselves have defined as a goal.

The case below illustrates how, with the assistance of an accessible, overall educational counsellor, one can offer a more a holistic form of study and avoid duplication. This benefits both the educational institution and the individual student.

Case 26. Norway: Career guidance

Structural quality in formal and non-formal learning

In educational and vocational guidance one needs both to take a look across different educational levels and to look at the link between education and the availability of work/vocational participation. The OECD and a number of Norwegian studies have identified weaknesses in the Norwegian system for such guidance as follows: The counsellors lack the required skills, the services are badly coordinated across different sectors and quality assurance is lacking. In addition, guidance for adults is lacking.

In view of the fact that a significant part of the guidance is related to moving from one sector to another, the Ministry of Education has stated that a cross-sector approach is needed and the “lifelong learning” perspective must be the basis. Currently, three regions are testing a model called “regional partnership for career guidance” under the auspices of the Directorate for Education. The project is based on a co-operation between the municipal government, the regional government’s labour and welfare office (NAV), universities/community colleges and partners from local businesses. The partnership model is meant to have many beneficial aspects due to the fact that it is flexible in relation to local needs and will co-ordinate support from a number of different sectors.

The cross-sector approach yields a more professional support base and an integrated quality and this “through the door policy” will be user-friendly, especially with respect to assisting people with little education and persons at high risk of unemployment. However, the challenge in the model is the fact that local flexibility can lead to significant differences in services provided in different locations. This implies that it will be more difficult to assure similar quality. In order to explore this potential problem, a working group composed of people from relevant ministries, has addressed the need for a national directive for implementing partnership for career guidance in the whole country. The working group has also explored the need for a new institution that would be responsible for national coordination of career guidance.

For further information: www.vox.no

The case below from Norway, describes how it is possible through guidelines to initiate a process in the institutions where the institutions can develop themselves within an overall guidance framework.

Case 27. Norway. Quality norms in distance learning and flexible learning

Structural quality in formal and non-formal learning

Flexible learning – quality standards

Guidelines for quality and quality assurance in officially recognised independent distance learning institutions have been developed. The responsibility for assuring quality in distance learning rests with the individual official recognised learning institutions.

Norms developed by the Norwegian Association for Distance Education, (NFF, Norsk Forbund for Fjernundervisning og Fleksibel læring) will be applied and they will give each individual institution the freedom to define their own quality requirements on the basis of the local situation and possibilities. At the same time there are some minimum requirements the institution is expected to fulfil if it wants to maintain an acceptable quality standard

The quality norms play both an internal and external role. Internally it renders information to the institutions about what it needs in its own work with quality. The norms shall enable the institution to become aware of what responsibility it has in assuring quality at different levels. They shall serve as a tool for evaluating and defining “sector norms” that recognised institutions are expected to live up to.

The users are also responsible for quality together with the institution. Teaching and learning is a social process where all involved have an impact on the quality of the process and the outcome. The users must be informed about how they can support the learning process with respect to quality. Through an evaluation the institutions shall request users to inform them how they have supported quality in the learning process.

For further information. <http://www.nade-nff.no>

As illustrated by the following case from Finland, overall criteria for quality in internet-based education can improve total quality.

Case 28. Finland: Criteria for quality in internet-based education (teachers and quality in education)

A working group that was coordinated by the Directorate for Education formulated criteria for quality for internet-based education, both for basic education and education on other levels. The working group consulted other groups in Finland and other countries that have worked with quality assurance in internet-based education. Some of the criteria were based on criteria that had previously been published.

The quality criteria are primarily applicable to those who develop educational material as well as those who use it. The former include the whole working group that produces educational material. The material can also partly or as a whole, be produced by the teacher himself. The users are teachers and students. However, publishers, producers, educational decision-makers, those who organise education, researchers and those who are responsible for teacher- training, can also make use of the criteria in their work. All the users can provide a response that can

be useful for the further development of the criteria.

The quality criteria for internet-based education are divided into four segments: pedagogic quality applicability, accessibility and production quality. Each segment has main criteria that are made more concrete through sub-criteria and examples. The quality criteria are to be used both in a flexible manner and selectively. Those who evaluate the quality of internet-based educational material can choose those criteria segments that are most relevant for their own evaluation. It is not practicable to apply all the criteria to all internet-based educational material.

For further information: www.edu.fi

The following case from Iceland illustrates how Icelandic instructors assure quality in education by updating their know-how with the assistance of international contact.

Case 29. Iceland: Instructors and quality in education

The Polytechnic College in Iceland (PCI, www.fti.is) offers studies that yield internationally accepted credentials for sea pilots and mechanical engineers, i.e. those who complete a degree at PCI can work internationally within their field. Some courses / credentials require an update every three to five years, for instance the IMDG course (International Maritime Organization (IMO) Dangerous Goods Code).

The teachers/instructors who conduct the IMDG in accordance with IMO rules courses must be licensed by the Icelandic Maritime Organisation (Siglingastofnun, www.sigling.is). It is not possible to train teachers/instructors for IMDG courses in Iceland. Consequently, the teachers/instructors at PCI must take an IMO ratified course in another country (namely Denmark) in order to be accepted as teachers of the updated courses.

Educational and vocational counsellors and instructors are in many ways decisive for and closely linked to the adult's evaluation of quality in their learning. Traditionally, instructors have not been pre-occupied with documenting quality, but have rather been focused on ensuring that daily educational activities were at a level they themselves had defined as a goal.

When learning, as previously described, takes place in many different forms and contexts, it becomes an important part of the instructor's competence to be able to plan the learning process in such a way that both content and form are meaningful for the student. There is a need to prepare the student, so he is able to compare what he has previously understood to be the content of education and learning and the current learning process. Frequently, it is of particular importance that the teacher can adjust the learning process on a general and specific level in cases where the student is more knowledgeable about a particular subject than the teacher. In such cases, the know-how of the students needs to be related to the content of the teaching in such a way that the professional status of the teacher is not negatively affected.

The required and the provided administration of the learning process can be very variable depending on the form of the adult learning. In more formal learning processes, the administrative aspect plays some role in how the adult experiences and

assesses the quality of the learning process. Administrative quality is in particular focused on routines and procedures for information about different options for learning as well as on information about practical matters such as timetable, locations, changes and cancellation. Furthermore, a number of administrative procedures are linked to registration as well as the issuing of documents and examination certificates. The content and the procedure of daily learning and teaching involve a number of didactic considerations, as well as a number of methods for learning and teaching that can be applied.

The case below from Iceland illustrates how though the use of flexible study models a variety of target groups can be reached that would otherwise be excluded from education.

Case 30. Iceland: Reaching out to selected target groups (seamen)

Due to seamen's special circumstance (mechanical engineers, steersmen and the like), The Polytechnic College in Iceland (PCI, www.fti.is) has developed a flexible education programme for further education in management and economics at college level for the target group.

Diploma in management and economics at the Polytechnic College in Iceland.

Further education at secondary level for mechanical engineers, captains, steersmen and similar professions.

An educational option that delivers service at high level and with great flexibility with respect to time and location.

The study is composed of courses in administration and economics (67 per cent) and courses in vocational subjects (fishing industry) (33 per cent)

The study is a composed of distance learning as well as school attendance.

Each course is 6 weeks long (6 ECTS) and PCI arranges in-school sessions that last for three days every three weeks with lectures, assignments and working groups. These sessions run from Thursday to Saturday during the hours 08:30- 18:00. Grades are based on a combination of results from assignments as well as examination at home (or at sea) at a defined point of time. With respect to examination times, the PCI is quite flexible. Students who cannot complete their home examination at a given time are allowed to do so at a more convenient time.

PCI offers good service and great flexibility with respect to time and location of studies. For instance, the school has information about which students are not linked to the internet (seamen) for logistical reasons. In such cases satellites are used for transferring assignments between the student and the teacher. Some of the assignments are intended for groups. However, when seamen have difficulties in participating in groups, PCI can offer an assignment for individuals.

Technology

DPH uses advanced technology at all levels. All in-school sessions are videotaped and at a later stage made available to those who are unable to attend the sessions. All lectures are published on the school's website - 1 to 2 lectures every week that the students can view at

home. Furthermore, all assignments are published on the website - 3 to 6 assignments for each course.

Access for further education at the university level

The study is at college level, 92 ECTS. Students have continued at university level and achieved a B.Sc. grade.

Iceland has experience in reaching out to what are normally considered inaccessible target groups as is illustrated in the following case.

Case 31. Iceland: Marketing of courses for foremen in the fishery industry

The Polytechnic College in Iceland (PCI, www.fti.is) was assigned the task by the Ministry for Fisheries (www.sjavarutvegsraduneyti.is/) to develop and arrange courses and educational material for foremen in the fishery industry. Foremen work in fish factories that are located along the coast of Iceland. Generally, the foremen have long working experience but no formal secondary education. They work in the local community where they live and have bonds to their home community. There are educational centres in many communities all over the country, but it is difficult to ascertain whether the target group is informed about the courses that are offered. The course for the foremen is highly specialised and it can therefore only be arranged for a large area (in this case the country as a whole).

The Ministry for Fisheries has an updated database with information about all fish factories in Iceland. The PCI had access to the addresses of all fish factories in Iceland (they number about 400) and sent a letter directly to all foremen in the factories with information about the course. The response was good and it was clear that the target group had received the information the PCI intended to communicate.

Quality assurance has come to be more and more prominent in the daily operations of individual educational institutions. In many instances we experience that concepts have been developed and that recent actions are seen in relation to their influence on quality. Resulting changes are occasionally dramatic, while at times the result is only minimal change and increased focus on the quality dimension.

Co-operation on quality development, both internal and external, is a recent trend. The following case from Sweden shows how co-operation can be implemented at national level.

Case 32. Sweden at national level; network for work on quality assurance

All municipalities and companies have been requested to promote quality. A revised report on quality management that provides information on results and the need for further developments shall be published on an annual basis. When the work with quality assurance is at its best, the annually revised report is an excellent instrument for improving operations as well as supporting dynamic development in municipalities and schools. This implies that those involved to higher degree should be responsible for developing operations in such a way, that they meet requirements for quality and flexibility.

In support, the authorities responsible for quality assurance offer school directors the opportunity to participate in a network on quality assurance in adult learning. The purpose is to support the exchange of experience and to distribute knowledge and contacts between the directors from different municipalities and local units with the aim of improving the preconditions for positive development in schools. The network supports the work of municipalities and schools in developing their quality assurance as well as their work with the revised annual report. This way the network provides tools for developing, improving and implementing systematic quality assurance. The network receives support through national and regional meetings on quality assurance as well as through material available on a website.

The cases that have been described above are based on defined objectives and plans, in a Quality Assurance Model perspective. After the activities have been implemented it is possible to compare the results with the objectives and plans. This is the subject of next chapter, which focuses on evaluation.



Chapter 3 Assessment

The cases from Iceland, Finland, Norway, Åland, Sweden and Denmark illustrate a number of considerations concerning both the quality of the assessment as a part of quality management and the quality of the learning evaluation.

The general purpose of assessments – seen from a quality point of view – is to measure whether the implementations and thereby the daily activities around learning have achieved the set goals and accord with the original plans. Thus assessments contain measurement and documentation of the learning activities completed.

Measurement and documentation can include input (the resources used), processes (the way the resources are organized and used) and output/outcome (what resulted from the effort). Accordingly, the assessments and documentations focus on the quality of the structure, the process and the result.

The field of assessments is characterized by a number of concepts, all depending on which type of school is involved and the individual background applied in connection with the different types of assessments. The definitions will not be discussed in more detail in this report but several cases will be described, each of which illustrates concrete examples of the various applicable assessment methods.

The assessments are often divided into two main categories: formative assessment, carried out during the process in order to improve the procedure, and summative assessment applied at the end of the process. The assessments in this chapter will focus on three central aspects, namely:

- The form of the assessment – how is the assessment carried out?
- The assessor – who makes the assessment?
- The timing of the assessment – when is the assessment made?

These questions are central regardless of whether it is the quality of the structure, the process or the result that is being measured.

The form of the assessment

A learning process can be assessed in many different ways. The most traditional approach is probably to use a questionnaire. In this case the educational organization delivers a questionnaire so that the student can answer a number of questions that the organization considers to be important for measuring to what degree the learning process was successful. Paper questionnaires have for the most part been replaced by electronic methods. If the organization applies an electronic method it should be guaranteed that the learners have the knowledge required to use the questionnaire as well as the opportunity to use and complete it.

In addition to the electronic questionnaire the learners should have the option of answering the questionnaire on paper. The educational organization should be aware

of possible problems with reading and writing and should therefore also make it possible to conduct the assessment orally.

The following is an example of a questionnaire. In this instance it is from Iceland.

Case 33. Iceland: Assessment form

Course: _____ Date: _____					
	Very good	Good	Average	Acceptable	Poor
1. How was the organization/plan for the course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did the course live up to the expectations given in the course outline?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. How does the course material look?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. How is the content of the course material?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. How useful is the course for your work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. How well does the instructor convey the course content? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is the course:	Too short <input type="checkbox"/>	A little too short <input type="checkbox"/>	Suitable <input type="checkbox"/>	A little too long <input type="checkbox"/>	Too long <input type="checkbox"/>
8. a) Does it suit you that the course is set for:	Half a day <input type="checkbox"/>	A week-end <input type="checkbox"/>	A whole day <input type="checkbox"/>	Does not matter <input type="checkbox"/>	
8. b) Does it suit you that the course is set to:	8-12 <input type="checkbox"/>	13-16 <input type="checkbox"/>	16-20 <input type="checkbox"/>	20-22 <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____
9. Where did you get information about the course?					
10. What is the greatest plus/minus of the course?					
11. How is the service and equipment in the Polytechnic?					
12. Requests for other courses, suggestions and tips:					

In Finland the focus has been on working towards a more varied collection of responses from the examinees as is illustrated in the following case

Case 34. Finland: Continuing improvement of or competence-based qualifications

During 2005–2007 34 adult educational institutions carried out the project NÄYTTÄVÄ with the aim of reaching a uniform strategy for competence-based qualifications and for the development of models for differentiated education. The project was partly financed by development funds from the Finnish National Board of Education.

The decision on individualization makes it necessary for the providers of education to collect responses on how individualization is carried out and how to develop a differentiated education in cooperation with the participants. The continuing improvement of competence-based qualifications is for the most part carried out as a part of the quality process. A holistic assessment, especially with regard to competence-based qualifications is currently being developed in many educational institutions.

The educational institutions will, starting in year 2008, collect responses from the examinees using the so-called AIPAL – system (see below). The personal interviews carried out with representatives from the work-place and the evaluations are made according to the principles of developing assessment, either complementing or replacing the demand for responses. The institutions perform self-evaluations and use the results from external evaluations (i.e. auditing according to certified quality assurance systems, the Finnish National Board of Education evaluations of the conditions for arranging competence-based qualifications and evaluations carried out by the committee for educational evaluation).

That is to say, the results are used in the planning of the quantity and quality of the evaluations, the plans for supply of courses and guidance services, the development of co-operation with learners' working-lives, the development of personnel and quality assurance and observation and correction of quality divergence.

Assessment and assessors

The maps for planning results and activities, used by the institutions mainly apply to the acquisition of necessary vocational skills and the passing of qualifications and are basically quantitative measurements. Qualitative measurements and indicators to assess how the processes of competence-based qualifications are working are still under development. The Educational Centre Salapaus (www.salapaus.fi) has defined the measures applying to competence-based qualifications from different leadership angles in the following way:

Societal- and customer effectiveness

Inquiry to employers and support groups

A form for responses on differentiation

The number of examinations passed

The number of partial examinations passed

The number of students disrupting their studies

The number of students employed

The number of instructors working in examinations commissions

Processes and structures

A form for responses concerning differentiation

The number of participants in training to become assessors in the work place

The number of examinations arranged

The number of assessment courses conducted

The number of periods with learning in the work-place conducted

The number of web -based courses conducted

Employee development and innovation

A form for responses concerning differentiation

The adult instructors' level of skills, vocational skills and pedagogic skills

The proportion of senior examiners in the total number of adult instructors

The proportion of supervisors in the total number of adult instructors

The proportion of teachers participating in orientation of learners' working-lives in the total number of adult instructors

Further education and continuous education of employees.

The working-life barometer

Resources and economy

I.e. the number of development projects in adult education, examinations places sold externally.

(www.nayttava.fi, NÄYTTÄVÄ näyttötutkintostrategiassa - Vinkkejä näyttötutkintostrategiatyöhön. Loppuraportti 2007)

Self-assessments and group assessments

Group assessments can function as a reflecting dialogue. This method is often called the “rear mirror” and can be carried out weekly, for example, or every other week. It is not always easy to start a constructive dialogue and it demands certain skills from the person holding the rear mirror to engage the students. The aim with the rear mirror is nevertheless to look back at the past week/weeks and reflect on the positive as well as the negative things that have happened.

The aim with a rear mirror is “immediate actions” that might function as a fast health check for study advancement and for the atmosphere within the group.

The case from Finland illustrates how self-assessment can provide one with a better understanding of areas of strength and weakness and thereafter enable one to take positive action.

Case 35. Finland: Self-assessment

The Study Centre of the Public Employees Association is an organization providing education, service and support for the development of skills. The Study Centre has developed a test of organizational skills for its members. The self-assessment is divided into four parts. These are: cooperation and social skills, meeting order and methods, motivation and leadership in addition to the skills required to negotiate and have social influence. Each part contains six questions that the participants rank on a scale of 1 to 5 (never – often). The points are calculated separately for each part. In the interpretation part of the test the points and characteristics of a very capable person are described for each part.

Those taking the test receive information on which skills are necessary within an organization and what their personal strengths and possibilities for development are. Those finishing the test will also experience that the skills needed within an organization can also be applied in many other areas of life, especially in the work-place.

The test was ready in January 2007, and up till now about 900 copies have been distributed. The test is only available in a paper version. The tests have been distributed at various events that leaders of trade unions, secretaries and other active members have participated in. The examples include courses in organizational behaviour, trade union negotiations and vocational trade fairs as well as public meetings before the parliamentary elections.

The Finnish Governmental Program for Active Citizenship financed the development of the self-assessment test. With this funding the Study Centre was able to arrange inspirational meetings throughout Finland. The aim of the test was to support the message from events and to provide individuals with the knowledge that experiences from working with the organizations can be applied in many different ways in life, in society and in the work-place.

The test has been much appreciated. Those who are active in trade unions and have taken the test have been positively surprised that they have knowledge that they were not aware of and have been able to use. Meanwhile they have expressed the view that becoming aware of this knowledge has enhanced their favourable view of trade unions. (www.tjs-opintokeskus.fi)

The following case from Norway demonstrates how self- assessment can be applied to reach an understanding of areas of strength and weakness and thereafter use this understanding to take positive actions.

Case 36. Norway: Quality through a holistic assessment in the folk high school

Quality of structure in non-formal learning

In line with the folk high schools we have worked out a procedure for self assessment and each year we deliver an accessible self-assessment rapport.

It is of great importance to involve as many as possible in the assessment process. Thus all employees participate in the discussion and share the decision. In some instances they can submit valuable information and they can also be incorporated in the process of developing/testing methods for gathering data.

Individual teachers and teacher fora participate in different debates and the design of the review, the determinacy of criteria for achieving the goals, gathering of data in addition to teaching linked to the self-evaluation theme.

Furthermore, we make sure that both students and employees are presented with the results of the assessment during the process and that necessary changes are made according to the outcome of the evaluation.

The self-evaluation process in our school follows a three year plan with regard to choosing the theme, but not a rigid, yearly timetable for the process itself. Flexibility is important in our opinion, especially the ability to take the necessary steps to implement improvements during the process, according to the results emerging. But our goal is that the main questions should be answered before the start of the school year. The most favourable time to make the assessment varies from theme to theme.

Method

For our school this year is the fifth year with formal self-evaluation. It has been exciting throughout these years to test different evaluation methods. Besides the questionnaire we have tried interviews, focus groups and a narrative method. Not all have been successful, but by applying them we have acquired useful experience.

This current year we have applied **three different methods**. The students have, on two occasions, answered a questionnaire and have participated in a controlled discussion in the study direction: focus groups. The two questionnaires were almost identical; they were presented to the students at the beginning and at the end of the school year with the purpose of registration of the eventual development.

Since a part of the goal for the self-evaluation this year was to enhance employee competences in anticipation of the development of students' responsibility, we used an

employee evening to discuss the theme according to the SWA-model: Situation, wants and action.

We have experienced that it is useful to test a questionnaire and interview guide on a small group before it is presented to everyone. For various reasons it was only possible for us to test the interview guide for the focus groups on one student. The test resulted in improvements in the questioning but we should have had an identical test of the questionnaire. Even if this is more time-consuming this is the work process we want to apply.

www.folkehogskole.no

The information can be gathered via many different methods, including those growing more and more popular, involving the new technical possibilities, as is illustrated in the cases from Finland.

Case 37. Finland: Response system for competence-based qualifications for adults (AIPAL)

The Finnish National Board of Education is developing a web-based response system for adult students for the Finnish Ministry of Education. The bilingual (Finnish/Swedish) system is expected to be ready in the spring of 2008 and can be applied to vocational upper secondary qualifications, further vocational qualifications, and specialist vocational qualifications. The system will enable the examiners to respond to applications for competence-based qualifications and preparatory education, to examinations and how to acquire necessary vocational competence (preparatory education).

The responses are to be gathered as anonymous statistics and to be used by the educational providers and examiners, the examinations commission, the ministry of education and the Finnish National Board of Education for the development of education. It is possible for the educational providers and the examiners to add their own questions in addition to the national questionnaire. The responses to the additional questions will only be gathered for the organization's internal use.

(www.pulpetti.oph.fi)

In addition to the more traditional Forms of Evaluation as described above some forms of evaluation which are more focused on development are being devised. On the Åland this is called pedagogic review.

Case 38. Åland: Pedagogic review

On Åland the Educational Consulting Living V&I Ab, has developed a system of evaluation that focuses more on development than control – a pedagogic review. The aim with a pedagogic review is to find out what factors of the pedagogic process can be viewed as supporting or hindering the student's ability to acquire the knowledge and competences stated in the objectives for the course. Pedagogic review is intended to improve upon the traditional models for evaluation: Evaluating for control, interest evaluation and self-evaluation. Various forms of self-evaluation are widely used within the educational sector.

An educational programme relying purely on self-evaluation as a means for development runs the risk of only developing within the framework of knowledge of those performing the self-evaluation. In order to provide conditions for a different view and dissimilar recommendations for development the self-evaluations are combined with so-called peer review. Given that the peers asked to carry out the review have a different knowledge store from the self-evaluators it is possible for them to interpret the situation differently and thereby provide different conditions for development.

Under a pedagogic review the same methods are mainly applied as in a self-evaluation, i.e. to

be able to identify the process and state to what degree the set goals for the school are being realized. Reading documents on goals and policy, interviewing management, teachers and students, classroom-observations and the monitoring of projects and exams brings this about. The main difference compared to traditional self-evaluations is that those performing the review apply theories on learning and knowledge to appraise the educational activities in relation to the goals. The aim of a pedagogic review is, by applying actual research on learning and knowledge, to identify what the teachers are trying to achieve and to check in what respect this creates possibilities for the students to succeed in their studies relative to the goals set for their education.

The results of a pedagogic review are presented in alternative development strategies to improve the conditions for successful studies for all students. (www.living.ax).

Assessor

In order to achieve maximum reliability and validity in an evaluation the educational institution should both perform a self-evaluation of its educational activities and be evaluated by an external assessor.

Evaluation of adult learning can be performed on different levels and by a variety of assessors as illustrated by the following case from Finland.

Case 39. Finland: Evaluation levels and forms

Evaluation on adult learning can be performed on many different levels;

Assessment of each individual student learning

- The assessment is performed by an instructor and/or work-place instructor.
- The aim is to "lead and spur the students in their studies and develop their prerequisites to evaluate themselves". (Law on vocational education)

Evaluating vocational skills with competence-based qualification

- "Representatives of the employer, employees and the teachers perform according to the three-part-principle a careful and multi-faceted evaluation. The examinee should be given the possibility to self-evaluate his/her performance... The final evaluation is made by the examination committee." (The Finnish National Board of Education 2007. Handbook on Competence Based Qualification p 25-26)

Evaluating the quality of education:

- The unemployed participating in education provided by the unemployment authorities to improve their chances in the work market in response to the authorities or the educational provider. (OPAL-system).
- Other students responding either via an electronic form or a questionnaire.
- "The educational provider regularly gathers responses from various customer groups; their opinions (e.g. the satisfaction among the students and in their working lives.); the educational provider utilises the comments gathered to develop the educational activities and other services and activities." (The Finnish National Board of Education 2008. Recommendations on quality management in vocational education p. 14)

Evaluating the conditions for providing competence-based qualifications

- The evaluation is performed by the Finnish National Board of Education and is based on the self-evaluation of the organizing institution.
- The examination commission can demand that the organizing institution provides the assessment before an agreement is made with the organizer.

Evaluation of education in an educational institution

"The aim of the evaluation of the education is to support the development and

improve the conditions for learning. The organization providing the education is also responsible for evaluating it and judging the effect of the education in addition to participating in an external evaluation of the activities.” (Law on vocational adult education)

- ”In order to fulfil the obligation to evaluate according to the law, the educational provider must have an organizational system including appropriate and well functioning procedures for quality assurance ... The system may be documented in a quality handbook but it is of utmost importance that the system is functional and encourages systematic activities and development of these activities. (Recommendations on quality management in vocational education. p. 7)

National evaluations

- National evaluations are carried out by the Commission for Educational Evaluation.
- In 2007 the Commission published among other things: “*Funktionaliteten hos systemet med fristående examina*” (The Functionality of the system of Competence Based Qualifications) and “*Effekterna av det fria bildningsarbetet och riktlinjestudierna*” The Effects of liberal education and benchmark studies.

In general it can be stated that the tools for measuring learning and competence development are neither generally accepted nor well developed. This means that to a certain degree most organizations and individuals develop their own methods of measurement and apply those in their assessment. Because the focus in recent years has turned to competences and thereby the ability and will to, in any given situation, apply the acquired knowledge and skills, this has resulted in a wish to focus on the outcome of learning.

Indicators

A consequence of the problems associated with measuring has been the acceptance of the fact that a clear and unambiguous measurement does not exist. Hence the work towards a satisfactory alternative to a single, unambiguous measurement, namely the introduction of indicators. An indicator can be seen as a measurement, stating something relevant about the field/area one had decided to assess. The indicators often contain a number of measurements, which together provide a fair picture of the area under assessment.

Evaluations are performed in various ways and on different levels.

By the establishment of the Danish Evaluation Institution, EVA in 1999, a systemization of the evaluation of education and educational organisations has taken place in Denmark, which also includes adult education.

Case 40. Denmark: Evaluations on system level

Various evaluations in the field of adult education have been conducted during the last five years.

The aim of the evaluations is generally to check if the different educational programs and educational organizations fulfil the goals set by law in the respective field. It is an evaluation of the quality of the education and the performance of the educational organizations.

Based on evaluations that for the most part are founded on evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Institution, self-evaluation from the various educational organizations and questionnaires filled out by the participants, recommendations to be implemented are made, either on fulfilling legislative requirements, complying with national or local frameworks or performing specific institutional actions. The recommendations can be directed at national,

regional or local level.

As an example of areas that can come under assessment, one can refer to an evaluation on the Adult Educational Centres from 2005

- recruiting of participants
- the organisation of teaching
- the role of the placement of the education (in relation to work environment)
- discontinuity, frequency of examinations and absence
- the need for new projects

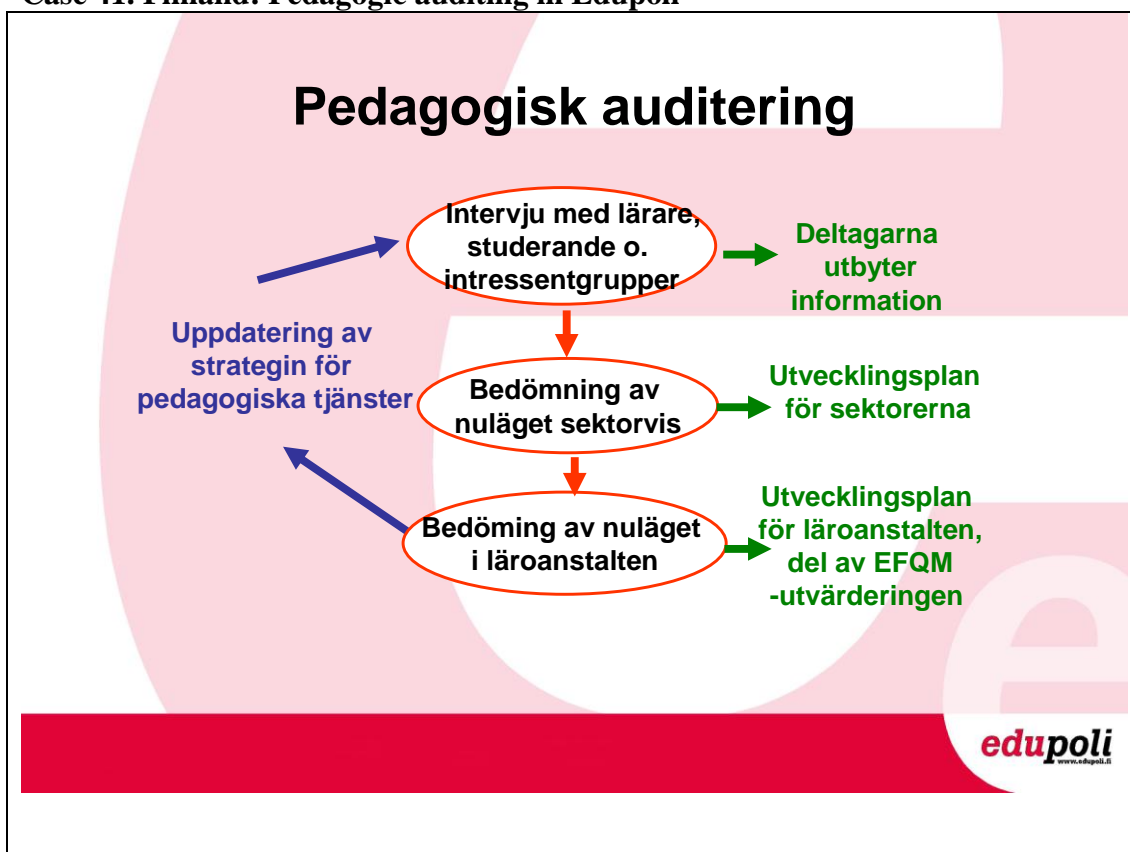
The latest study of the Evaluations Institute (2006) on teaching in the field of science in preparation for higher matriculation (hf):

EVA has studied how 20 courses, including the Funen HF-courses – have put into operation two aspects of the higher matriculation education reforms: in the area of science, consisting of chemistry, geography and biology and, on the other hand, the quality directive, describing requirements for goals and directions on quality assurance in higher secondary education.

The evaluations point out that the teachers should participate in a more constructive way in mutual professional cooperation and that the ministry of education should clarify their objectives in the field of natural sciences.

The following Finnish case provides an excellent example on how it is possible to evaluate and develop pedagogic work methods.

Case 41. Finland: Pedagogic auditing in Edupoli



The Edupoli Centre for Adult Education has conducted pedagogic auditing/pedagogic personal development dialogue since the year 2000. The aim of this auditing is to evaluate and develop organisations' pedagogical activities.

The pedagogic team at Edupoli carries out the auditing once every year, through interviews and discussions held separately for the teaching personnel, the students and other interest groups (e.g. financiers, employers). All groups receive the same questions on pedagogic leadership, pedagogic strategy and organisational policies, cooperation and procedures in addition to processes. The questions are formulated each year according to actual needs.

Based on the interviews an assessment is made on the current situation, both by sectors and on the educational organisation as a whole. The assessment includes a summarized overview of pedagogic activities, good practices and suggestions for improvement. The assessment of the educational organisation also contains precise development measures for the coming year and an inquiry on how last year's development measures have been realised.

The pedagogic auditing is a part of Edupolis quality assurance, carried out according to the EFQM model of excellence. The results of the auditing are also used in connection with the updating of the strategy for pedagogic services.

(www.edupoli.fi)

The Norwegian case below shows how superior evaluations can provide a basis for improving the quality of adult education.

Case 42. Norway: Official evaluation of learning associations

Level of systems – non-formal learning

The Norwegian Government wishes to strengthen the position of the learning associations and their role as educational operators. In year 2007 an official commission published an evaluation of the learning associations' role for the individual, society and working life from a broad perspective and in relation to official education for adults. The Tron commission, headed by regional leader Audun Tron, had a broad selection of delegates from different parts of the country, a variety of environments and diverse political platforms. The twenty Norwegian learning associations are very unlike/dissimilar, both with regard to size, profile, organisation and working form/working methods. The commission confirmed that the goals might seem unclear as a foundation for management and that both the knowledge base on and the documentation of the effects of the learning associations are vulnerable. The commission conducted three reviews that provided knowledge about the learning associations' economy, organization and leadership, in addition to the participants' and providers' experiences. The commission was inspired by the Swedish model and the situation in Denmark.

The commission recommends e.g. that the laws on adult education should be revoked and be replaced by laws on education outside the formal educational system, which could also incorporate other non-formal educational providers in the third sector. The commission also proposed that the regional authorities should have a more holistic responsibility for adult education whereby cooperation with the learning associations is strengthened through dedicated partnership agreements.

(NOU 2007:11 www.kd.dep.no)

The following case from Finland illustrates how the educational institutions' self-evaluations can be used to evaluate the content of the institutions' examinations activities.

Case 43. Finland: Evaluation of the systems level

An organisation wishing to arrange competence-based qualifications must write an application to the respective examination commission for an agreement on the provision of competence-based qualification. The examination commission may presuppose that the organisation appends an evaluation from the Finnish Board of Education on the prerequisites for arranging competence-based qualifications. The assessment is based on the provider's self-evaluation. The intention with the assessment is, in addition to aiding the examination commission, also to support the educational institution's qualifications activities.

The assessment contains five main areas; cooperation with working-life and networking, personal application, the application of the basis for examinations while organising examinations, the self-evaluation of the institution arranging the examinations and quality management in addition to the professionalism of the personnel at the organising institution. The result of the evaluation is expressed on a three step scale (precise, good, excellent conditions). Furthermore every area gets points in relation to the maximum sum of points. The assessment contains detailed motivation for every area.
(www.oph.fi)

The timing of the evaluation

Generally evaluations are made at the end of a course, but some interim assessments are also carried out during the course of the education. Interim assessments are carried out in order to be able to implement some improvements as quickly as possible.

Assessments, carried out during the education may appear different from the so-called posterior assessments. An interim evaluation is usually focused on how the organisations and implementation of the education are functioning, and what improvements can be made to ease/support the learning. In a posterior evaluation the focus is more on the degree to which the learning goals set for the education are reached and whether the education has met learners' expectations.

The timing of the evaluation varies greatly between the different types of assessments just as the timing is usually a balancing act between the time when it is assumed the students have sufficient background to be able to evaluate and a time when it is still possible to implement the result of the assessment as improvements. The following case from Denmark illustrates some of the considerations in question.

Case 44. Denmark: The timing of an Evaluation

In connection with a continuing education course on thinking styles for teachers in the upper secondary schools the instructors chose to implement a posterior assessment 14 months after the course. The goal with the posterior assessment was to examine the long-term effect of the teaching progress. The participants were asked to reflect on what they had learned and later implemented in their daily teaching. As can be seen from the examples some participants stated that they applied what they had learned in their daily work.

As one of the teachers put it; not only did the process in the workshops provide the teachers with some tools they could use in their discussions on teaching situations/learning methods

but also with a reflective focus on both teaching and learning styles in the planning and implementation of teaching. As stated by another teacher the workshop and the period thereafter enhanced her awareness about her own teaching styles and educational practice, where she tried out some less popular methods as a deliberate strategy for the sake of comparison. This particular teacher had also worked on expanding this awareness to incorporate the students, while she made the students conscious of differences between learning and teaching styles on class levels in addition to elaborating on this general involvement by conducting individual mentor interviews with the students about “learning something” - with the result that some of the students became more aware about their learning styles.

In many areas, international and national studies and research have influenced development in the Nordic countries. In spite of uncertainty with regard to the measurements the conclusions of these studies often have a great impact on the discussions at a national level.

As can be seen from the Norwegian case, it is important to focus on central problems that may hinder adult learning. The results from the ALL-study, suggest that the reading and numeric skills of more than 400.000 individuals of the Norwegian adult population are in such a weak state that they will have difficulties functioning in their working life. The program of basic competences in working life (Program for Basiskompetanse i Arbeidslivet, BKA) is an initiative to meet this need. Focusing in this way may reduce the problem.

Case 45. Norway: From ALL to BKA

ALL (Accreditation of Lifelong Learning) has been an important basis for work on the basic competences of the adult population in Norway, focusing strongly on working life competences. The ” Basic Competence in Working-life Programme? ” (BKA) was established in the year 2006. The program is intended to strengthen the educational offer, by partly financing educational initiatives taken by private and official enterprises to provide basic competences to employees or to the unemployed. From the year 2007 it is also possible to finance mapping- and motivation initiatives, but only if some connected educational initiatives are completed. The Programme is especially intended to support educational initiatives enhancing the participant’s motivation to learn.

During 2007, the total number of applications was 208 and the sum applied for was almost 80 million NOK. The greatest number of applicants came from municipalities and food producers, but industry and social services were also among those applying. For the programme year, 20 million NOK were allocated to 70 enterprises. All types of providers are represented in the programme, official bodies, study organisations, private businesses and enterprises involved in organising education. AOF (The workers’ study association) and the Folk University are significant players providing education in basic competences within the BKA programme. The majority of the participants are between the ages of 30 and 60 years and women constitute two thirds. The fact that the greater number of participants are working within social services shows that the programme is reaching out to a target group that was identified as a very important one in the ALL-report. Most of the participants have finished their secondary or upper secondary vocational education.
(www.vox.no).

Another dimension of the international scene is, as the case from Iceland shows, working within an international framework of laws and regulations.

Case 46. Iceland: International rules

International rules are reflected in the education and continuous education of, e.g. ships' captains and mechanics. At the Iceland Polytechnic (www.fti.is) the students receive international rights upon completing examinations. The qualifying course for commanding a 30 all-up weight vessel and smaller in national waters applies to rules governing sailing in Icelandic waters and these same rules apply in many other countries.
NB. As of 1st. January 2008 the regulations were changed so that those using their rights in their work, (small boat fishing) need a longer course of study.

At IDAN, the Vocational Education and Training Centre in Iceland, international standards are followed in the creation of new courses and curricula for cooling and freezing mechanics/refrigeration and deep-freeze engineers as illustrated in the following cases.

Case 47. Iceland: IDANs new curriculum for refrigeration and deep-freeze engineers

IDAN, the Vocational Education and Training Centre, has recently published a new curriculum and designed courses in refrigeration and deep-freeze engineering. The education has to meet various requirements on quality, competences and knowledge. The requirements in question are based on among other things, EU regulations and various international standards governing how refrigeration and deep-freezing systems should be built with regard to quality, knowledge and competences. On the basis of these requirements, enterprises, employees and students have to pass a competence test in order to receive a certification of competences. The certification is a necessary prerequisite for Icelandic companies to take part in competitive bidding within the EU area. The institution performing the inspection in Iceland will be The Environmental Agency of Iceland.
(www.idan.is)

At IDAN, the Vocational Education and Training Centre, international standards are followed when testing the knowledge and competences of the employee in the areas of welding and metals.

Case 48. Iceland: IDAN's Competence certificate for the metal industry according to EN 287

Competence certificate/control certificate for employees in the metal industry is verification from acknowledged partners that the employee concerned actually has the knowledge and competences to do what he says he knows and is capable of doing. Therefore the metal industry employee concerned has to pass a competence test following acknowledged standards EN 287 – ISO 9606 and thereby testifies to the knowledge and competence of the employee concerned. The person concerned receives a competence certificate and is permitted to weld where there are set requirements from the buyer/client or official party for competence certification.

The competence certification is aimed at a particular welding method and a definition of welding technique. A description of a welding process (e. *Welding Procedure Specification/WPS*) informs how the welding should be performed. A description of jointing/welds, thickness, welding cuts and machinery specifications are provided. When working according to welding descriptions one has to use materials and apply the experience of acknowledged producers of welding wire and standardized processes tested by recognized partners. Not least it is important to apply experience acquired in previous work if recognized processes have been followed.

Requirements for smelting/welding and employee competences are described in standards.

The competence certification has to be renewed every other year.

More and more companies and official organisations require proof of competences from the metal industry in their terms and conditions of delivery. Different regulations within the EU are set as requirements, such as the so called PED – requirement, which clearly states the set requirements for welds under stress.

IDAN's Metal and Mechanics Department is ready to assist companies and advise on choosing standards, assisting in conducting welding processes in addition to training and preparing employees for competence testing according to these processes. IDAN's Metal and Mechanics Department examines welders and provides standardised inspections on welding work in cooperation with acknowledged companies in Denmark.

(www.idan.is)

Assessment is one of the areas where there is a great deal of experience in developing the tools for evaluation and to a lesser degree in applying the assessments to enhance quality.

In Sweden a new tool has been produced for quality development as is illustrated in the following case.

Case 49. Sweden national: A new tool for quality development

BRUK stands for

Bedömning (Assessment)

Reflektion (Reflection)

Utveckling (Development)

Kvalitet (Quality)

BRUK can be used so that companies themselves can evaluate their activities and assess and develop the quality of adult education. It is a self-evaluation tool, designed to assist employees, the company and the municipality. The idea of BRUK is as follows, the clear awareness of how it should be, and how it really is leads to continuous improvements.

It provides information on both where you are and in what direction you should go. The persons using BRUK to evaluate their business develop this kind of awareness. It generates motivation and inspires those concerned to improve the quality of their businesses.

BRUK has three main areas: Process, Goal Attainment and Background Factors.

Each main area is divided into indicating areas, part areas and indicators. For every indicator a number of desirable characteristics are provided.

BRUK encompasses large areas of the business. Therefore the material is extensive. The aim is to apply it to smaller areas and for each business to choose which parts to work on.

BRUK is recently published and is designed especially to meet adult education needs.

BRUK is based on national measuring documents.

BRUK can function as an aid in working with quality reports.

BRUK is not a ranking system, but rather an aid for local quality assessment.

www.skolutveckling.se/BRUK

Seen from the standpoint of the Quality Assurance Model, the most important role of evaluation is to document the implementation activities according to the set goals and plans. The evaluations also provide the connection between the review and the improvements as described in the next chapter.



Chapter 4

Review

The cases from Finland, Norway, Iceland, Sweden and Denmark in this chapter primarily cover the quality of quality management, because the focus here is mainly on the review as a part of the quality process.

Traditionally the review is made upon the completion of an assessment that is based on the implementation of plans and goals, an area that in most organisations can be improved.

The outcome of the evaluations can be interpreted in many different ways, and therefore it can be problematic to reach agreement on which interpretation is “the correct one”. In some instances the conclusions were neither presented nor put into practice.

As a benchmark, the assessments should contribute to both the documentation of what happened and to forming a basis on which to make future decisions. The consequences can have behavioural, economic, structural, and political characteristics and should be clearly and unambiguously stated before the assessment is made.

In Denmark it is usually the Ministry of Education or the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) who perform assessments on the system level and who make a number of proposals on how the assessment reports can be followed up.

Case 50. Denmark: Evaluation review on system level

The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) is an independent institution and their primary task is to initiate and conduct quality assurance of education at all levels – from primary school up to higher education. It is EVA’s mandate to analyse, create and communicate national and international information on best practices and on evaluation and quality, and to regularly develop new methods.

EVA will apply their thorough knowledge on education and primary schools, and their cross-sectorial mandate to develop effective evaluations, recommendations and development processes.

EVA aims at ensuring strategic coherence between public educational establishments and private institutions in receipt of state subsidy and acting upon the market demand.

In this way EVA seeks to influence decision makers and primarily the Ministry of Education to follow up on the evaluations conducted. A part of the review lies in the proposed improvements that form part of the conclusion in the assessment reports.

Likewise publication of the assessments results in direct pressure on the individual educational establishment, because information about the plan of action and the completed activities should be officially accessible on the Web or in the school.

EVA has compiled and produced more than ten publications in the area of adult- and continuous education.

The assessments should be constructive. The following case illustrates how an assessment of quality systems can be an important element in maintaining quality of education.

Case 51. Norway: Assessing systems for quality assurance

All Norwegian universities and high schools must have internal systems for quality assurance of their education. The quality assurance systems are to identify possible failures and shortcomings.

A national body for quality in education, NOKUT is an independent public agency, with the task of carrying out external quality assurance of universities, high schools and tertiary vocational education in Norway.

All evaluations, approvals and accreditations made by NOKUT are official. NOKUTS aim is to complete their mission with high quality and effective work and to maintain their agency as un-bureaucratic, flexible and willing to change while maintaining a good dialogue between the sector and society. NOKUT lays emphasis on communicating their decisions.

By law, the organisations themselves bear the responsibility for the quality of education. The role of NOKUT is to oversee quality, inform society about quality and to support organisations in developing quality systems.

NOKUTS evaluations should involve both the structure of the system, the documentation generated and the self-evaluation of the quality of education performed by the organisation. Committees of external experts conduct the evaluations. No more than six years should pass between each evaluation. Should the organisation not be approved they are given six months to implement improvements. <http://www.nokut.no/>

The procedures for changes and/or adherence to decisions vary greatly between organisations. Viewed from the Quality Assurance Model it is of outmost importance that such procedures exist and are applied.

The process of review can be illustrated in many ways as can be seen from the following cases from Finland and Denmark.

Case 52. Finland: The review process

In a so-called balance scorecard evaluation where some kind of questions defined in advance are used, there should be a routine for conducting the evaluation, and actions should be taken based on the evaluation. A widely used approach is to have the teacher/teachers together with a supervisor go through the assessment and reflect on it, with the aim of setting goals for the organisation and performance of the education. The set goals should be clear and unambiguous and even measurable, in other words it should be clear when the goal is accomplished. One person should be appointed to bear the responsibility for implementing the set developmental goals, and a concrete plan should be worked out and followed during the process, according to a scheme set out in advance. The teacher responsible makes sure that the improvements are implemented in the education. The teacher should also be able to document and demonstrate how the improvements have been carried out.

The case from Denmark demonstrates how the work with both formative and summative evaluations has already been incorporated into a greater context.

Case 53. Denmark: Review on the evaluations

In connection with the “Uddannelse til voksenunderviser” (*Education for adult instructors*) The education spans two years, divided into 10 one-week modules, each with a distinctive theme. Every theme is concluded with an assessment both evaluating the past week with regard to content – what did we learn, what did we want to learn more about – and with regard to structure and method: how at best do we learn? The evaluation had both a summative and a formative characteristic because it was also used as a basis for the planning of the next theme’s/week’s module with regard to content, reflections on teaching methods and variation of methods.

Source: CVUSTORKØBENHAVN

The next case from Finland provides an insight into how it is possible, by applied feedback mechanisms, to improve the educational process.

Case 54. Finland: Unemployment authorities response system, OPAL

Persons who undergo labour market training in Finland give feedback on the internet to the unemployment administration and to the establishment organising the education. The students are asked to respond during the education (interim response) as well as after the education has come to an end (posterior response). In the posterior response there are, in addition to questions on the education, also questions on the outcome of the education (how the knowledge is used in working life, whether studying skills have improved, whether the motivation to study has increased and whether the career planning and current life situation have become clearer). The educational provider can also add his own questions in the posterior questionnaire.

The outcomes are accessible to both the unemployment authorities and to the educational organisers. The system includes possibilities to express alarm and thanks for the interim feedback. If some special alarm or thanks criteria are fulfilled for both the educational organiser and the unemployment office, representatives receive an e-mail about the instance. In such situations it is presumed that the educational organiser and the unemployment office negotiate and reach agreement on what actions are needed to bring about improvements.

(<http://asiointi.mol.fi/opal/>)

Systematic audits and self-evaluations on information processes help to improve quality of work. This results, among other things, in a strategic evaluation of the learning process - an advantage for the student, as revealed in the following case from Iceland.

Case 55. Iceland: Continuous assessment of the learning process

Enskuskólinn, (a private English language service), the biggest private language school in Iceland, participated in the project, ALL - Accrediation of Lifelong Learning. The aim of the project was to develop criteria, guidelines, and forms for internal evaluations of non formal-education.

According to Julie Ingham, the founder and director of the Enskuskóli, increased competition the market during the past years has resulted in an enormously growing need for quality assessments. Julie feels that a project like ALL has been beneficial for the school, since it has helped in generally improving the education they offer, increased the quality of their offer and helped in formalising the internal work processes.

As an example, this internal quality evaluation has meant that the Enskuskóli has developed

new methods to measure the students' knowledge during their education. Instead of only assessing the students' abilities in the beginning and at the end of the course, the school has now introduced continuous periodical assessment to evaluate how the students are progressing in the learning process and the students are able to express their view on the course content and the learning process. Thereby the teachers are more able to help the students to achieve optimal results in their studies.

The students' evaluations are passed on to the teacher coordinator who takes the subject up for discussion in personnel meetings. The meetings are used to make the necessary changes based on the students' responses. The strategy involves an observation of the teachers followed up by a staff development interview and support on the areas that require change. At the end of each year, as a review on a final meeting with the staff, changes are made based on these discussions and the views expressed by the staff.

(www.enskuskolinn.is; www.all-accreditation.com)

The financing of adult learning can also be used as an active instrument to follow up on daily learning activities, as demonstrated in the following case from Sweden.

Case 56. Sweden national: Adult education in receipt of state subsidy 2008

During the years 1997 – 2002 intensely concentrated attention was focused on adult education, the so-called Knowledge raise. The government provided the financing, 19,000,000,000 Swedish crowns SEK, not including study allowances, to the municipalities carrying the responsibility for implementing and developing adult education. The aim of the Knowledge raise was to bring unemployment down and contribute to a lasting development of adult education, including content and work processes. A public authority gave all 290 municipalities the responsibility to write quality reports on their commitment. These were gathered together in the publication: Utmaning – Lära hela livet (Challenge – Life-Long Learning). After this concentrated campaign the state continued to direct subsidies to municipal adult education during the years 2003 – 2006.

The Swedish parliament decided on December 21st, 2006 that the state subsidy specially allocated for adult education should be allocated through more general measures. The Swedish National Agency for School Improvement still bears the responsibility for adult education. Their main task for development is to support the municipalities in their work on adult education for everyone, to work with recruiting, to enhance equal opportunities within adult education and to contribute to systematic quality management in the municipalities. During 2008 the agency has also been in charge of the validation project and has distributed the final report of The Swedish National Commission on Validation: Mot en nationell struktur (Towards a National Structure). Validation is regarded as an important part of the municipality's quality assurance of adult education.

In the Quality Assurance Model the review provides a link between assessments, plans and goals. All of the activities in the Quality Assurance Model have to be organised and carried out. This issue is dealt with in the next chapter.



Chapter 5 Methodologi

The cases from Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden cover both the quality of the quality managementsystem and the quality of adult education – primarily in formal education.

Quality assurance does not just happen by itself. It has to be planned, organised and implemented.

For every phase of the quality assurance process the following questions should be asked:

- Who will participate in the work?
- What procedures and work processes will be applied?
- Under what conditions and in what context should the work be carried out?
- Where, how, when and what shall be measured by whom?

Because the borders between the different phases of the quality assurance are often blurred with regard to the above-mentioned questions, we have chosen to keep all the methodical considerations in a separate chapter.

The Participants

One of the characteristics of adult learning is the adults' involvement and the use of their own experiences. This puts a demand on these adult resources and opens up possibilities for making use of them in quality assurance.

A dilemma may arise in adult education because of executive order/curricula and the participants' demands. Therefore it is vitally important to determine what quality is for the individual groups in addition to finding out whether a common understanding of quality can be reached.

The following case from Denmark illustrates some of the steps in the quality assurance approach and the people who are involved.

Case 57. Denmark: Elements in the quality assurance process

1.: Requirements for participants in courses and students

The students studying for Diploma, Educational- and Vocational guidance in addition to Adult Teaching must fulfil the entrance requirements stated in the executive order. In some instances a dispensation can be authorized on the basis of an individual validation of the student's professional and vocational background.

2. Guidance and complaint filing for course participants and students

Consultants attached to the adult pedagogic group perform study guidance for those enrolled in adult teaching. Professional coordinators and study secretaries primarily carry out guidance for those registered for diploma education.

The study leader and/or the study director deal with complaints filed about courses.

Complaints filed about the education towards a Diploma, the Educational- and Vocational guidance, and Adult Teaching are dealt with by the study leader. Complaints filed about examinations are dealt with in accordance with the executive order on examinations.

3. Teachers' education and competence development

All teachers are university graduates or have a master's degree or are engaged as pedagogic consultants with a specific professional, practical knowledge.

Agreement on competence development is reached in staff development interviews.

In addition to this 5 % of the teaching time is devoted to professional updating and 37 hours pr. man-year to competency development.

5. National and international networks

Networks and agreements of cooperation between the department for further- and continuous education and universities, research centres and other Scandinavian educational establishments have been established.

6. External valuation

With regard to the activities of further- and continuous education, examinations constitute the actual external evaluations. Assigned censors grade 80% of all examinations on the education towards a diploma. Censor reports are submitted.

7. Internal Evaluation

Courses: The teaching in the courses is carried out according the course outline and together with the participant's contribution results in the final plan for the course.

During the courses an interim evaluation is performed, solely between the participants and the teachers. At the end of the course an assessment of satisfaction is performed. These assessments are processed by a database and are then published on CVU's website.

Source: CVUSTORKØBENHAVN

The participants can also become more competent with focused training and education as is illustrated in the next case from Finland.

Case 58. Finland: Education for senior examiners

The Finnish National Board of Education encourages providers of competence-based qualifications to make sure that the person responsible for the examination in addition to at least one of the assessors of performance have undergone the educational programme for senior examiners. The education has been arranged since 1995. The content of the education has since been updated several times. The Finnish National Board of Education has authorized the current educational programme in 2007. The education is comprised of 25 study credits.

Compulsory parts of the educational programme:

- Observing the principles of the system of competence-based qualifications
- Planning and personal application of competence-based qualifications and examinations occasion
- Organising examinations and evaluating vocational skills

Elective parts, at least one has to be chosen:

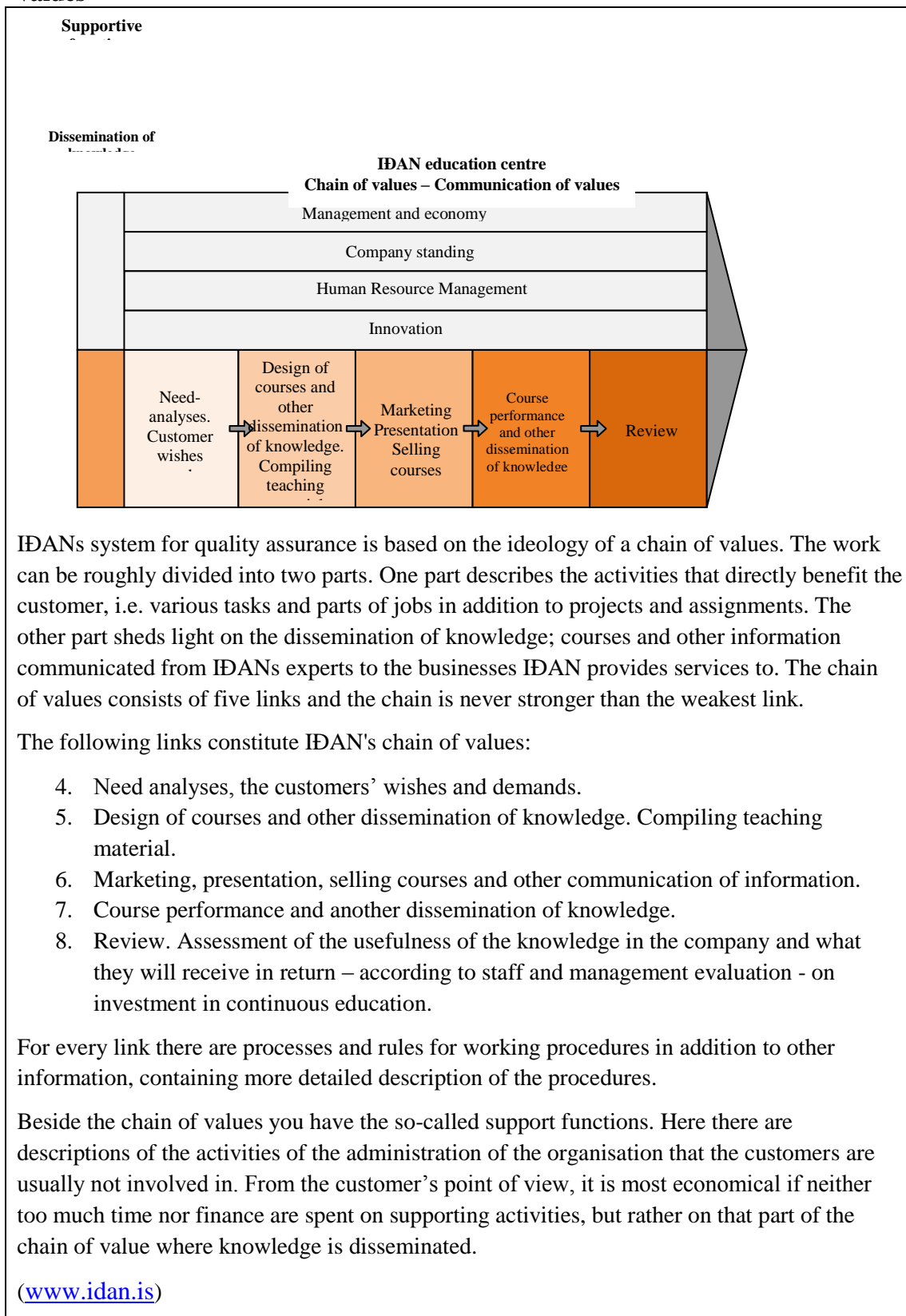
- Developing the quality of examination activities
- Directing examination activities

www.oph.fi/svenska/fristaende vocational examination/regulations

Procedures and work processes

The quality approach may be organised in a myriad of ways. Extensive quality handbooks and manuals are one option; full responsibility and freedom of the individual teacher another. The procedures and work processes reflect a deliberate choice made by the organisation on how quality management is perceived and valued. At IDAN, the Vocational Education and Training Centre in Iceland a chain of values forms a foundation for the quality assurance system, as can be seen from the following case. The chain clearly defines the superior structure underlying IDAN's quality management and shows that all employees are aware of their role within the chain.

Case 59. Iceland: IDANs system for quality assurance, founded on a chain of values



Pedagogy

The processes and procedures are also closely linked to pedagogical and didactic considerations and methods underlying teaching and learning.

The organisation and implementation of the education is founded on a series of principles. The case from Denmark elaborates on the principles of the organisation, implementation and assessment of the education and points out that different pedagogical traditions all carry their own implications for quality management.

Case 60. Denmark: Adult learning and quality

Current adult learning takes place in various contexts. There are different types of educational establishments as well as learning in the work-place.

Adults learn in different ways, and therefore it is of vital importance that the teacher is aware of the variety of learning preferences present in the learning environment.

The choice of pedagogic method should among other things depend on the goals that are set for each individual course:

- Is it the participants' experiences and resources or the instructors or perhaps the subject that direct the course?
- Is the course subject-oriented or rather problem-oriented?

The chosen teaching method depends for example on the group participating, the wishes of a financier, regulations requirements, and so on. Some courses have a clearly stated professional topic that has to be learned. There may also be courses where it is important to become aware of various aspects of a particular matter.

The specific quality assurance system must take this diversity into consideration.

According to the Danish pedagogical tradition, it is emphasised that it is up to the individual instructor to decide how he/she should go about the course in accordance with decisions reached, the institutional culture, participants' prerequisite etc.

Source: CVUSTORKØBENHAVN.

Context

Adult learning is versatile and will therefore often accommodate a variety of framework conditions. The learning can be governed by rules, a societal need or the demands of an individual adult.

The different types of further- and continuous education provide a framework for the quality management. The following case from Denmark sheds light on these different framework conditions.

Case 61. Denmark: Framework conditions for quality assurance

Schematic, it could be maintained that there are 4 main categories of further- and continuous education in Denmark, aimed at different groups of individuals.

- The adult educational system will constantly offer education that is based on executive orders and award certificates of one kind or another. This type of education should be looked upon as the “parallel adult educational system”. Here you will find education such as GVVU- (basic education for adults), VVVU- (academic education for adults), in addition to education awarding a diploma or a master’s degree. The content of this type of education is decided upon centrally. The same applies for completion and possible merits. This type of education is characterised by the educational- and cultural views predominant in the educational institution offering them. For some participants this type of educational process may evoke the experience of being back to school. The teachers will share the prevailing culture. While central decisions are adhered to, a development of the structure takes place, involving division into modules, differentiated stages of completion and a pattern of courses. From a pedagogical view, the emphasis is on individual planning and choice of competences in relation to the individual need for education.
- Within this group of continuous educational approaches one includes **education according to executive orders that are provided in cooperation with a requester**. Hence the education is aimed at a particular group of people. One example of this is the education for adult teachers offered together with FIU (the trade unions’ internal education) to teachers in the trade union and is therefore intended for their education and that of their participants. Another form can be specially designed courses, initiated by an executive order. Within the selection offered at CVU Storkøbenhavn (The University College of greater Copenhagen) one could mention 'Læring i egen praksis', (Learning in own praxis), that is aimed at competency development of teachers within health- and social education. A third form could be modules selected from an education offered or requested by one or more clients.
- **Requested courses**, that are organised in cooperation with the requester – either an employer or cooperation between both employees and employer. This type of continuous educational course is almost always based on the needs and functions of the work-place, whereby the provider organises a course taking into consideration needs, resources and their own professionalism. An example of this could be a course for a group of teachers on how to work with projects.
- **Work-place learning**: Within this group one includes continuous education taking place in a given work-place in relation to the work processes. The teacher comes to the work-place and organises learning processes in cooperation with the participants and local representatives. This means that the adult educational institutions have to adjust their organisation to the challenge of going out and finding participants by offering continuing education in response to the companies’ needs.

Source: Lis Boysen and others. Livslang læring og voksenunderviserkompetencer – et undersøgelsesprojekt. CVU Skriftserie nr. 8 2005 ss 50-51

The framework conditions can also be of a physical nature as the following case from the Havneskolen (Harbour school) in Copenhagen illustrates.

Case 62. Denmark: Havneskolen: Physical framework

The Harbour school was founded as an autonomous institution in 1993. With the location on Nordhavn in Copenhagen it is in the midst of pulsating working place. The view from the school's classrooms still bears witness to the fact that a lot of goods are unloaded along the harbour, Kalkbrænderiløbskajen in a traditional way. Representatives from the board constitute the highest organisational authority. The board comprises [Havnearbejdernes Brancheklub København](#) (the Dock Workers Branch Club), [Lager og Handelsarbejdernes Forbund \(the Association of Warehouse and Service Workers\)– now LPSF,](#) [Stilladsarbejdernes Klub af 1920](#) (the Scaffolders Workers Club) and [Havnearbejdernes Klub af 1980](#) (the Dock Workers Club). With that constitution the school is a part of the union-organised network in Copenhagen, with a special affiliation to the unskilled part of the labour market.

The composition of education provides the Harbour school with a connection between common and branch-specific qualifications, which means that the Harbour school has, as far as possible, to strive to unite general subjects such as: Danish, mathematics, ITC, social- and natural sciences with the more branch-specific elements, often offered as AMU – courses (courses in vocational open education). The educational process in the Harbour school is based on the participants' real lives, and with such a foundation the school strives to give the participants new opportunities for personal as well as professional development.

Periods of practical training play an important role in all Harbour School educations. These periods of practical training are regarded as an important link in the educational process. They are thoroughly prepared and worked on thoroughly afterwards. The Harbour School's strong links to a professional network are the basis of a vital activity in the ongoing development and improvement of these practical training periods. In close cooperation with the school's professional network, new contacts to cooperative businesses are constantly being made.

In Finland they have worked with the physical framework in a somewhat different way, as the following case shows.

Case 63. Finland: Practice enterprise

A practice enterprise is a simulated company functioning as a learning environment. The practice enterprises exercise trade in a global practice network, including 40 countries and 5500 practice enterprises around the world. In Finland there are some 70 active practice enterprises out of which five function within adult education. The practice enterprise as a learning environment has been primarily applied in education based on labour policy.

In a practice enterprise theoretical studies are linked to practical activities in the company and in working life. The students work during the education with practical assignments in one department of the enterprise. In addition the student also takes part, according to his or her individual study programme, in a human resource development programme within the different company branches. The students also have the possibility of undergoing an appropriate competence qualification. The teachers act as consultants in the enterprise and support the learning. The education often also includes workplace-learning in a company

The practice enterprise is a flexible and versatile learning environment, stimulating self-initiatives. The work in the practice enterprise develops group-working and communications skills necessary for active citizens and their working-life.

(http://www.finpec.fi/english/a_introduction/c_appliance/index.html)

Often the task of quality assurance already begins during the development of a course. The next case from Denmark illustrates this.

Case 64. Denmark: Framework for quality assurance

Learning in own praxis (over a period of year)

The starting point for the course is the executive order for adult teaching education. The course was developed in the adult education branch of Blaagaard Seminarium and the requester. It was also offered to the general public. The course is aimed at instructors in the adult learning system with a solid, professional background and the goal is that they should acquire some adult pedagogic competences.

Development: The requester and some of the instructors in the course were responsible for the development of the course, which we considered to be essential. The course was developed over a considerable period of time and several proposals were presented.

The participant did not only include instructors from the requester as the course was being offered to the general public.

Before the course started, a clarification of expectations for the course took place. In this way the instructors, equipped with a set of pedagogic themes, which had already been decided upon, could match the process to the expectations.

The course emphasised formative evaluation, in order to take the wishes/needs of the participants into consideration on a continuous basis.

A vital aspect of the process was the combination of theory and praxis, since the theoretical part was based on the participants' praxis. But the essential part was the offer of "supervision in own praxis", which meant that one of the instructors would supervise individual participants in their own praxis.

Source: CVUSTORKØBENHAVN.

Measurement

By determining the goals for quality assurance and learning the first methodological challenges become evident. The goals should be measurable, i.e. it should be possible to decide whether goals are being attained.

The problem with measurement remains evident during the assessments and the review. Clear conclusions are necessary preconditions for reaching new decisions and thereby setting new goals.

The following case from Sweden shows how measurements can be applied and how measurements can be related to documentation of quality.

Case 65. Sweden: Developed quality questionnaire– are the core values of the folkbildning¹ attained?

The Runö folk-high school is the main applicant for a project to develop a method and a number of indicators to measure whether the core values of folkbildning are being attained in the education. The core values appear in the government proposal for subsidies to the folkbildning and The Swedish National Council of Adult Education formulation on what characterises quality in folkbildning

The project is a further development of a project started in 2002 when a number of folk high schools agreed upon 21 questions that should be put to all participants in longer courses, after the completion of their studies. The questions should be viewed as indicators of good folkbildning and the sum total of the answers constitutes an index value of the total worth of the education. This index value is applied by comparing the indexes of schools and courses over a longer period of time. Some 40 folk high schools have used the instrument and participated in the measurements.

The main aim of this project is to further develop the instrument applied to conducting the web questionnaire, with regard to content, method of follow up, functions and technique. The aim is to gradually involve all folk high schools and have them use the questionnaire.

The measurements can meet new challenges when moving away from traditional ways of study towards more flexible ways of learning – as can be seen from the following Swedish case.

Case 66. Sweden at a national level: Quality of flexible learning tools and methods

Nationellt Centrum för flexibelt lärande (The Swedish agency for flexible learning) CFL, is working towards making life-long learning available to all, by strengthening and stimulating the development of flexible learning within municipalities, folk high schools, study associations and working life. The agency provides support and resources to development projects enhancing the possibilities for offering flexible forms of learning. CFL offers competence development for teachers, school administrators and study leaders on flexible forms of teaching and supports the development of methods and teaching resources for

¹ When the Swedish term folkbildning is used in this text, it refers to the folk high schools and the study associations, i. e. the organisations that constitute the liberal non-formal and voluntary educational system in Sweden. The term 'folkbildning' is difficult to translate into English. It is sometimes translated as liberal or popular adult education. However the specific conceptual foundation of 'folkbildning' extends beyond the term 'adult education', which is why 'folkbildning' is used in this text as-is. (Source; <http://www.folkbildning.se/download/757/Fbr%20Facts%20web.pdf>)

flexible learning. The agency provides information and guidance aiming at increasing the knowledge of various educational providers about teaching material, work procedures and methods. www.cfl.se

Evaluations may be roughly divided into two types; summative and formative. The following case from Denmark shows an interaction between the different forms.

Case 67. Denmark: Summative and formative evaluations

Nowadays, adult educational institutions receiving state subsidies are required to work with quality assurance systems by which evaluations can be concluded. Within the formal education, evaluations are conducted via the examinations and grading system. This, of course, is a summative evaluation and control of the participants' learning.

But within most of the adult educational institutions one also emphasises formative evaluation as a link in a pedagogic- didactic development and quality activity. In this context documentation is looked upon as an opportunity to formulate and sustain experiences. The aim of the formative evaluations is to assess in order to improve. This demands, that the assessments conducted can be characterised as a systematic examination of teaching procedures and the participants' learning processes.

The summative evaluations can in the same way be used to adjust the future procedures both with regard to the method and content, hence they can have a formative character in respect to future procedure.

Source: CVU-STORKØBENHAVN.

The organisation of quality management

Quality management may be organised by the responsible organisations and educational institutions in a variety of ways. Development, though, has been relatively common in most places, namely moving from the point where the individual teacher was responsible for quality towards being a mutual responsibility and an area with high priority.

In spite of the initial impression of simplicity the Quality Assurance Model presents, the quality assurance system is often relatively complicated. The following case from Sweden shows how those concerned have chosen to organise the management of quality within Folkbildningsrådet (the Swedish National Council for Adult Education) and the folk high schools.

Case 68. Sweden: Quality assurance within the folk high schools

Folkbildningsrådet has allocated 40 million SEK to quality assurance in 2007. Every folk high school receives within the framework, an allowance of 250000 SEK to develop and implement models for quality management and quality reporting. A sum of 3 million SEK has also been allocated for mutual efforts in the form of competence development, exchange of experiences and particularly within the area of quality assurance.

The plan for the folk high school mutual efforts in the area of quality assurance;

- Mentoring, meeting places, exchange of experiences, etc, for the headmasters of folk high schools (mainly organised by SKL and RIO).
- Introduction days on quality assurance aimed at all staff and union representatives in folk high schools (ca. 15 instances, divided regionally).

Targeted educational efforts for instance on

- quality of administration
- quality in information and guidance
- evaluation methods
- conditions for state subsidy and responsibility for following up (to the school's chairperson and auditors).

A reference group with representatives from the folk high schools was appointed. The group is to function as a forum for discussion on quality reporting and quality indicators.

Development of competences

Introduction days about quality management have been conducted in about 20 locations around the country during the first half of 2007. The introduction days have been conducted in cooperation with three different consultants. Organisation and content are presented in the following document:

Ramböll Management (RM)

Rörelse och utveckling (RoU, Rörelse & Utveckling translates "motion & development")

Institutet för kvalitetsutveckling (SIQ, the Swedish Institute for Quality)

Folk high school conference 2006

At the folk high school conference 2006 a series of group discussions were conducted on what could be perceived as indicators of quality within the seven areas chosen by the government that should, in particular, serve as a foundation for the folkbildning receiving governmental subsidies. The discussion is of current importance and should be elaborated upon.

The notes from Runö, October 2006.

The study on systematic quality approach in the folk high schools, Elisabeth Ernholm (2005)
The mutual development process of the folk high schools.

Since 2006 the Folkbildningsråd also allocates funding for common development within the folk high schools. During 2006 nine projects on quality were granted a total of 2,5 million SEK. The final reports on the projects should be handed to the Folkbildningsråd no later than December 31st. 2007.

Common work on the development of quality in folk high schools

According to Folkbildningsrådet's decision on granting the new governmental subsidy counting/in force since 2006 a certain sum should be allocated every year to common developmental efforts. In considering the allocation of money for subsidising development it is emphasised that the folk high schools should cooperate on urgent development projects. It is further possible for the Folkbildningsråd to prioritise special areas of development that they regard as being of strategic importance.

During the year 2006 applications for project funding have been delivered to the Folkbildningsråd and they have granted funds for nine projects, involving a total sum of 2,5 million SEK.

The following is a list of projects that were granted funds, some of which are described in more detail. The final reports on the projects should be handed to the Folkbildningsråd no later than December 31st. 2007.

It is not only at the higher levels in Sweden that experience in organising quality management has been gained. In individual folk high schools work on the issue of measuring quality is also conducted and a common language on quality is under development.

Case 69. Sweden on a national level: Quality in adult learning with balanced scorecard

In the municipality of Gothenburg, organisations in adult education have for several years worked with balanced scorecard and quality indicators to decide the systematic quality approach within the whole organisation. The municipality's quality auditor annually reports on the priorities with regard to the quality approach conducted and with regard to what results have been attained. www.goteborg.se/vux

And with this the Quality Assurance Model is closed (hopefully), via the decisions on the method chosen.



II. Reflections

The intended reflections involve central issues regarding both adult education and quality approach in general. We have chosen to reflect upon our own cases and to maintain a constructive yet critical view with regard to our own practices. The cross-sectoral work in the group has in many ways contributed to making the discussions around quality approach in adult learning more concrete and nuanced.

In the introduction to this report we undertook the assignment of finding out how we approach quality and quality assurance in adult learning in the Nordic Countries, among other things finding out whether a common understanding of quality exists and what characterises quality in adult learning in the Nordic Countries.

Words and concepts like openness between different players, dialogue, participation, freedom of methodology, flexibility, accessibility, experience and freedom with responsibility seem to characterise adult learning in the Nordic Countries.

Our work pertaining to the quality approach in different institutions, etc. within the different Nordic countries has made it clear that while working on quality we are working with an extremely complex concept – a concept with flexible meanings that in concurring debates we struggle to define even within the same educational framework.

The approach to quality may also be viewed from a political perspective, depending on what kind of society we want to live in. The indicators may aim towards a demand for a rational and effective knowledge-based competitive society (Best-practice goals). They might aim at a society where learning and skills should be acquired through more broadly defined goals such as democracy, equality and sustainability, or they can combine competitiveness, democracy, equality and sustainability.

Official curricula and knowledge objectives have through time reflected the present political thinking. With regard to adult learning, we have experienced that demands, contributions and needs are regulated by the state of the economy. During periods with high demand for labour and a high employment rate the challenge is to get exposed groups into the work force. Then the question for education is: What type of knowledge is necessary and for which target groups?

During periods with high unemployment rates it is the individual that has to face the challenge and the authorities wish to have more people working, for various economic reasons. Historically, adults' learning opportunities were marked by the idea of equal

opportunities for all, as well as by cultural perspectives.

These different perspectives do not necessarily stand in contrast to each other. In both the national and the Nordic discussions, the need for holistic and long term political thinking with regard to adult learning became evident, and this thinking has to accommodate considerations for the needs of both the individual and the welfare state. In any case, it will be crucial for everything which should first and foremost characterise quality in adult learning.

In our work with “Nordic Tiles in a Mosaic” we have primarily reflected on the multiplicity of the content of the concept of quality and how that quality should be viewed in the concrete context and in relation to the goal of the specific adult learning activity.

Quality can be perceived as being contextual as a construction and it is vital to be aware of what levels and processes we are relating to in the quality approach.

It has been confirmed that quality and quality approach has to be integrated at all levels of the organisational culture. That means it is fundamental that all personnel in question experience co-ownership of the quality approach and the measurement of quality and that all aspects of the quality assurance of adult education are perceived as significant.

Our considerations and selection of examples are founded on humanistic, democratic understanding of quality, based on the dialog and perception of quality assurance as a continuous process.

In spite of the differences between the individual types of education the more highly developed types have a greater tendency to move in the same direction, namely towards a greater transparency, enhanced communication and increased documentation of the work on adult education. The trend for the quality assurance process during the years to come is more or less apparent regardless of which type is under consideration. This provides us with an opportunity, across institutions and categories of adult education, to be inspired by one another and thereby enhance the quality of our own work in adult education.

Having observed our own praxis, we have become conscious that the quality assurance system in adult education can be systemised and described based on the following steps and phases;

- Planning and goals
- Implementation
- Assessment
- Review
- Methodology

It is our belief that it is vital for all further work – both analytical and in praxis – to distinguish between the quality of structure, process and result, while maintaining coherence between the various dimensions of quality.

In an analytic approach, the division of the quality concept in three components,

presents an opportunity to become more concrete with regard to which form of quality we are interested in.

Quality of structure will focus on the broad framework of the quality approach i.e. organisational and with regard to resources.

Quality of process focuses on the internal activities, the assignment of learning.

Quality of result focuses on what has been learned, on the outcome of the learning activities. In praxis it is possible to work with different levels of quality of structure, process and result and in spite of perceived high quality in one of the areas, the quality of the other two may not necessarily be high.

Despite the fact that the quality of structure, to a great extent, was common for a number of educational institutions, both quality of process and result may vary. The different forms of quality can therefore be closely interconnected but can also be very loosely connected and almost function independently.

In Chapter 6 we will make an attempt to provide a unified status of individual steps and phases of the quality assurance process.

Moreover the reflections will – in Chapter 7 – be turned into propositions for improvements and actions – on several levels.



Chapter 6. Systematic or atomized approach to quality?

In the preceding chapter we have presented the approach to quality based on the following phases and steps:

In the preceding chapter we have presented the approach to quality based on the following phases and steps:

- Planning and goals
- Implementation
- Assessment
- Review
- Methodology

Our immediate conclusion is that most institutions are active within all these phases. The activities can be more or less planned, accepted and well documented, but they exist.

But are the current activities sufficient to ensure quality in adult learning? We are not able to answer that question directly, on the bases of the selected cases, but have to, at first, draw a conclusion that a foundation to build on does exist.

Simultaneously, we have to conclude that the individual institutions and forms of adult learning have very different traditions and experiences of work on quality assurance. The greatest challenge seems to be the fact that while working on each part of the quality circle it is important to acknowledge the whole.

The systematic work, the fact that all the activities of the Quality Circle are connected and are implemented, is still an area of great potential development for many of the institutions.

An atomized approach to quality brings neither quality in breadth nor quality which is inter-communicable. The quality approach should permeate the whole organisation, hence the importance of a **systematic approach to quality** founded on co-ownership, joint responsibility and meaningfulness.

Working on documentation, measurement and steering of the processes is an important link in the quality approach and the creation of an explicit foundation for assessments and quality assurance; what is to be measured, by what method, in what context and how will the result be utilized?

It can be stated that the Quality Circle is an **overall model**, where you work on the individual elements, not a model that only recognises the whole. The work on various elements influences work on the other single elements and thereby also the whole. If something is not conducted in a proper qualitative way it will have consequences on

the other parts, i.e. if the reception/administration in adult educational institutions is not appropriate it will influence the education.

Planning and goals

Unambiguous goals and concrete plans are prerequisites for almost all quality management. Many of the goals are more concise and more concrete within formal education, whereas within the less formal area of adult education it is more common that the goals are set individually and are decentralised.

Quality goals always have to be the ideal to strive for, knowing full well, that it is at all times possible to improve things, a process imaginable as a circular upward spiral. Goals for adult learning processes are also dependent on external factors: new knowledge, new policies and new institutions resulting from a fusion. Therefore quality goals are inconsistent over time and across borders.

Quality assurance generally has two main purposes:

- Measuring and documenting
- Developing quality

Implementation

Most of the resources associated with adult learning are applied in the day-to-day work. In spite of the abundance of resources employed here, the quality approach is often characterised by a lack of methodology. Many of those involved have their own goals and definitions of quality; furthermore it is not discussed nor communicated to the general flock of colleagues and students.

This does not necessarily imply that the quality yielded is poor, but on the contrary that it is difficult to evaluate the quality of the work conducted.

Not only educators, but also a number of different professional groups in each educational institution carry out the daily work. Administration and supporting activities such as that done by canteen and cleaning workers and school caretakers also have an important say in the perceived quality. The employees working in these departments are not always properly involved in the quality assurance system, and that again may result in more decentralised and suboptimal activities and solutions.

Evaluation

During the past years a substantial praxis on evaluation and especially self-evaluation has been developed. A variety of very advanced instruments for evaluations do exist so you might question their applicability. On the other hand in some institutions the culture of evaluation has not been developed and is often entrusted to the individual employee/educator.

Review

The follow-up on the evaluations does in many ways expose the weaknesses of the approach to quality. In some educational systems and educational institutions this part of the work is well organised but generally speaking there is only limited application of the evaluations performed.

Methodology

The organising of quality assurance has been, and still is, a great challenge for many institutions. The participants, the methods applied, the timing and methodology are among the assignments that can be carried out in a variety of ways.

The documentation of the quality approach poses a great challenge for many and also exposes weak links in the management of quality. This concerns both the institutions' internal work and the attitude towards transparency. The documentation is not only a part of quality management but also implies control of the work. This balance is often delicate in praxis.

The quality approach should moreover be communicated in a way so all participants and those interested have an understanding of what is meant by quality.

Among the distinctively Nordic features of the quality approach worth mentioning, is that the work is based on widespread mutual trust, comprehensive dialogue between many players and a generally limited direct control of the quality approach.

This type of "soft" attitude to the methodology of quality management entails a number of challenges when endeavouring to keep quality management systematic. It is up to all of the players to organise a systematic approach so that both mutual trust and dialogue are kept intact while the work is being systemised.

The systematic approach to quality is especially complicated because it requires that it is possible to involve the whole organisation in a number of interconnected activities over a period of time.

One of the great challenges of quality facing many institutions in adult education lies in the systemising of the quality approach and the attendant documentation of the quality procedures. It is NOT satisfactory to have only some parts of the Quality Circle functioning well.

In the following and final chapter we will present a number of concrete proposals on how it is possible to enhance the quality of adult learning in addition to how the process can be clarified and documented.



Chapter 7

Scope for action and proposed action

In order to be able to enhance quality in adult education, activities at all steps of the Quality Assurance Model have to be carried out;

- Planning and goals
- Implementation
- Assessment
- Review
- Methodology

Planning and goals

Here the great challenge is to reach a common definition of what quality of adult learning is in individual situations and within each institution. A central issue regarding this matter is to be able to evaluate goal achievement together with result achievement, both with regard to quantity and quality.

This could be described through a Nordic, national, regional or sectorial collection and analysis of how a variety of institutions define quality in adult learning. Such an overview could serve as an inspiration and even demystify the approach to quality in some institutions.

This report may be viewed as the first contribution on a Nordic level.

On a national level the elaboration of goals could be described even in work with the qualifications framework in the different countries - thereby advancing communication between different learning contexts and actors.

Implementation

The instructors are usually the central factor in both the perceived and actual quality from the individuals', adult pupils'/students'/learners' points of view.

Many instructors are less secure in the face of documentation of quality than in delivering quality in day-to-day teaching. The instructors need to be trained in quality assurance, especially on documenting the quality of their daily work.

Training programs for instructors could be arranged, both on national level and across sectors, focusing on common adult pedagogic competencies.

Administrative quality has in many places been undermined and very seldom put in focus. In spite of this, all administrative processes related to learning also contribute to the sum of perceived quality. The effort should take place in two main areas. First of all, the focus should be on the quality of administration, enrolment, classroom planning, examinations, certificates etc. The administration should set some quality goals in addition to implementing the whole procedure included in the Quality

Assurance Model, starting with the setting of goals through the daily work of evaluation, assessment and review in order to reach new goals and plans. Secondly the interface of the administrative task and the instructors needs to be discussed and clarified in close cooperation between the administration and instructors.

Evaluation

A number of educational institutions and instructors have developed a variety of tools to assess a number of activities and players. But do we really need all these instruments -could they perhaps be made more effective and less complicated?

In some places there is a need to organise the culture of assessments by implementing assessments and quality assurance in connection with all new initiatives within the organisation.

It could be advantageous to discuss questions like those mentioned above internally in the educational institutions and in common, nationally organised courses on the methodology of evaluation.

Review

The review is apparently one of the greatest challenges facing the management of quality. In many places there are legitimate doubts about the value of assessments and whether the set goals are altogether achievable.

Activities around review are needed on all levels. The application of national assessments and reviews contribute/present a challenge for ministries, associations and individual educational institutions.

Critical inspections of the review procedures are needed within the individual institution:

- Do they exist?
- Are they working?
- What effect do they actually have?

This applies to the institution as a whole, the individual departments, every instructor team and lastly to the individual instructor.

One link in the meta-reflection on the quality approach in itself and the inner rationale should include an attempt to answer questions such as:

- How can assessments and quality assurance contribute to strengthening good Nordic traditions?
- What impact (both positive and negative) does quality assurance have?
- How can experiences be transferred from one institution to another?

Method

One of the challenging tasks lies in the methodology of assessing quality in adult education.

This could be described through gathering and analysing a number of institutions' assessments on the quality of adult learning. Since the quality is rarely measured directly, there will be a need to create an overview and maybe even to develop special quality indicators. The quality indicators should provide measurement positions that contribute to the creation of a picture of quality of adult learning in each institution or in the actual situation. The work could be a part of working towards the national framework for qualifications.

The indicators could contribute to reducing the observations to something "measurable", but it will still be necessary to;

- Maintain breadth and at the same time be precise in the understanding of what kind of quality should be promoted
- Take the contextual, the common and general, i.e. citizenship and employability into account – covering all angles; structure, process, result
- Sustain a view that considers quality as being whole and coherent and something that can be communicated
- The indicators should be assessed locally in relation to their usefulness.

Our work has resulted in an overview of the areas and subjects that play a central role in the approach to quality in adult learning. The contents of each of these areas are excellent indicators of the quality of adult learning. Goals and planning, the day-to-day work with education, continuous evaluations and reviews are, along with the methodological aspects such as players, instruments, tools, measurements and methodology – all indicators of quality in adult learning. We have deliberately not elaborated on the indicators in greater detail, because these will primarily depend on which context they are used in. The cases can be read as a series of concrete proposals and examples of quality indicators that were only applicable in the actual, described situation.

The documentation is closely linked to the measurement and communication of the quality approach. It is difficult to assess and decide upon the scale, manifestation and presentation of the documentation for a variety of institutions.

An overview of a number of different forms of documentation of quality would provide a support for several of the institutions engaged in adult learning.

The players in the quality approach process make the third methodological challenge. Who should actually take part and have opinions concerning quality of adult learning? And how should you participate?

There is a current need for knowledge about the participants, hereunder especially concerning how adults can be involved in the assurance of quality. The question of how you can guarantee co-ownership contains another area that would benefit from the gathering of examples of experiences from a number of institutions. Generally stated, quality assurance, from the participants' point of view, is an area for development. Areas such as the participants' knowledge about goals, the degree of

common perspective and the adaptation of expectations should all be clarified in greater detail.

One of the central methodological challenges facing the quality approach lies in the procedures of implementation. The quality assurance system can be organised and implemented in myriad ways. An overview of these, together with the most frequent challenges and solutions would be a great source of inspiration for educational institutions faced with this assignment.

The implementation procedures would be a suitable topic for a conference for paring with either mentors from other educational institutions or with external consultants, i.e. organised within the various educational areas.

There is a general need for a common language on competences and qualifications. There has been an ongoing process creating such a language on a European level for some years, through the European Qualification Framework and a number of national frameworks.

Countries would benefit from cooperating and learning from each other on this subject.

External inspiration

Quality is a key issue for all types of education and has been for a number of years. This means that there are a series of experiences in other educational systems and on different educational levels that could serve as a source of inspiration. The inspirational material should moreover not be kept within national borders, but should be provided by the other Nordic countries and in addition by other countries in the EU:

The material should be gathered with short introductions to the content and stored in a systematic way in a database accessible to all – both nationally and internationally. The material compiled should preferably be divided into subjects according to educational sectors and areas. Excellent examples of such projects are worth mentioning; Managing Quality of adult education in Europe, A good adult educator in Europe, RECALL, Recognising Quality in Lifelong Learning.

Direct contact should be made with the quality management of lifelong learning on a European level in order to contribute to European development and to be inspired and learn from experiences gained in the other European countries.

Quality approach in informal learning

The approach to quality in informal learning is only described in a very limited way. Since this part of learning encompasses learning activities that are a part of everyday life, taking place in both the private sphere and in working life, this contributes to much of the total learning. Mapping and describing the mechanisms and activities connected to the quality of informal learning would therefore be an excellent supplement to this report.

Organising the quality approach to adult learning in the future

The work of compiling this report has revealed a number of areas connected with a variety of players active in adult learning. This has enabled mutual inspiration and learning and can, moreover, contribute to a more effective application of resources.

There is an existing need for an updated list with links to all of the Nordic websites on adult education so that information on quality approach becomes accessible.

It would be advantageous for the Nordic Network for Adult Learning to be the body which gathers the common experiences and presents these – either as a report and/or in conferences and workshops. This implies, in the first place, that the work has to be continued, and, in addition, continuously updated. This could be carried out on NVL's website, where this report will be accessible to all.

Likewise, there is a need for an overview of existing written material in the various Nordic countries and of what still needs to be compiled.

However, accessibility is not enough!

There is a need to communicate the work that has been carried out, so that potential consumers of our experiences become aware of its existence. This should be a particular assignment for every educational area, educational organisations and for the institutions.

This could be organised together with a person responsible/interested contact within each area. The person in question should have contacts with relevant educational areas.

The individual should act as a kind of a “quality pusher” whose main assignment would be to influence the daily approach to quality.

NVL could be assigned the responsibility for a conference on quality, a common Nordic quality platform, and the group in charge should be gathered across sectors and Nordic.

The group could be engaged with a series of different political tendencies, official policies, new ideas and projects, in addition to experiences and results.

The final product of the conference should be a platform for quality in adult education, new thoughts and projects and a discussion forum.

We have, as a first step, gathered information on quality in adult learning and have presented a structure for describing the quality assurance processes. We have demonstrated that we are, to a certain degree, in all the Nordic countries and on all levels dealing with the same issues and challenges; just as the considerations on solutions are convergent. These common features make it both relevant and possible to become inspired and able to learn from each other – across borders and educational fields.

In closing, it is our hope that you as a reader will be motivated by this journey in the Nordic quality landscape, and that your reflections will be turned in to actions that will make a difference.

Kim Faurschou
Editor of the report

Begreper benyttet i rapporten 7

Dansk	Svensk	Norsk	Islandsk	Finsk	Engelsk
Arbejdspladslæring	lärande i arbetslivet	læring i arbeidslivet	starfsmenntun á vinnustað	työssä oppiminen	in-service training
Basiskunnskap	basiskunnskaper	basiskunnskap	grunnfærni	perustaidot	basic skills
Demokrati	demokrati	demokrati	lýðræði	demokratia	democracy
Dialog	dialog	dialog	samræða	vuoropuhelu	dialogue
Efteruddannelse af lærere	lärarfortbildning	videreutdannig for lærere	endurmenntun kennara	opettajien täydennyskoulutus	training of trainers
Efteruddannelse	fortbildning	etter- og videreutdanning	símenntun	täydennyskoulutus	continuing education
Evaluering/vurdering	utvärdering	evaluering	mat	arviointi	evaluation/assessment
Fjernundervisning	distansutbildning	fjernundervisning	fjarkennsla	etäopetus	distance learning
Flexibel læring	flexibelt lärande	flexibel læring	dreifmenntun	monimuoto opetus	flexible learning
Folkeoplysning	folkbildning	folkeopplysning	alþýðufræðsla	kansansivistys	liberal adult education
Grunnlæggende voksenuddannelse	grundläggande vuxenutbildning	grunnopplæring	fullorðinsfræðsla grunnskólastig	peruskoulutus	basic adult education
Højere uddannelse	högre utbildning	høyere utdanning	æðri menntun	korkeakoulutus	higher education
Ligeværd	jämlikhet	likeverd	jafnrétti	tasavertaisuus	equality
Ligestilling	jämställdhet	likestilling	jafnrétti kynjanna	tasa-arvo	gender equality
Kompetenceudvikling	kompetensutveckling	kompetanseutvikling	færniþróun	täydennyskoulutus	competence development
Kvalifikationer	kvalifikationer	kvalifikasjoner	hæfni	kvalifikaatiot	qualifications
Kvalitetssikring	kvalitetssekring	kvalitetssikring	gæðaeftirlit	laadun varmistus	quality assessment
Lovgivning	lagstiftning	lovgivning	lagasetning	lainsäädäntö	legislation
Lige muligheder	lika möjligheter	like muligheter	jöfn tækifæri	yhtäläiset mahdollisuudet	equal opportunities
Læringsresultat	läringsutbytte	læringsutbytte	Ávinningur náms	oppimisen tavoitteet	learning outcomes
Læse- og skrivefærdighed	läs- og skrivkunnighet	leseferdighet	lestrar- og skrifarkunnátta	luku- ja kirjoitustaito	literacy
Organisationsudvikling	organizationstveckling	organisasjonsutvikling	stofnanapróun	organisaation kehittäminen	organisational development
Realkompetence	reell kompetens	realkompetanse	raunfærni	opitun tunnistaminen	prior learning
Tverrfagligt udvikling	tvärsektorielt utveckling	tværfaglig utvikling	þverfaglegur þróun	monisektorinen kehitys	cross-sectoral development
Vurdering av realkompetencer	validering	validering	raunfærnimat	optun tunnustaminen	validation/accreditation of prior learning
Voxenuddannelse	vuxenutbildning	voksenopplæring	fullorðinsfræðsla	aikuiskoulutus	adult education
Voksenundervisning	vuxnas lärande	voksnes læring	nám fullorðinna	aikuisten oppiminen	adult learning
Studievejledning	vägledning	rådgivning	námsráðgjöf	opinto-ohjaus	guidance counselling
Erhvervs- og arbejdsmarkedsuddannelse	yrkesutbildning	yrkesutdanning	iðn- og starfsmenntun	ammattikoulutus	vocational education and training

Case overview

Chapter 1. Plans and objectives

- Case 1. Norway: Quality in vocational education – national guidelines
- Case 2. Sweden: Objectives on a national level
- Case 3. Finland: The National Board of education: Quality recommendations
- Case 4. Norway: Individual curricula
- Case 5. Åland: Process quality
- Case 6. Denmark: Process quality
- Case 7. Iceland: Process quality
- Case 8. Denmark: Day-High-School- Association. EFQM-Excellence model
- Case 9. Norway: Framework for basic skills
- Case 10. Norway: Merit and result quality
- Case 11. Finland: Competence-based qualifications: to acknowledge validated competences
- Case 12. Sweden: Documentation on a national level, quality report
- Case 13. Norway: Common toolkit. Structure quality in non-formal education
- Case 14. Norway: Documentation of adult educational speciality
- Case 15. Iceland: The use of quality indicators
- Case 16. Sweden: General recommendation on quality reporting of adult education
- Case 17. Sweden: The Swedish National Council of Adult Education's reaction to the government requirement

Chapter 2. Implementation

- Case 18. Denmark: The inclusion of adults' experience
- Case 19. Denmark: "Ethical guidelines for educational and occupational guidance"
- Case 20. Norway: Ethical qualities in occupational and professional education
- Case 21. Norway: An ethical dilemma.
- Case 22. Norway: The good circle - selecting the best option
- Case 23. Finland: To take in to account previous experiences in learning - one concrete example
- Case 24. Åland: The application of the adult's experiences
- Case 25. Finland: Teaching methods for training health and social workers in Edupoli
- Case 26. Norway: Career guidance
- Case 27. Norway: Quality norms in distance learning and flexible learning
- Case 28. Finland: Criteria for quality in internet-based education (teachers and quality in education)
- Case 29. Iceland: Instructors and quality in education
- Case 30. Iceland: Reaching out to selected target groups (seamen)
- Case 31. Iceland: Marketing of courses for foremen in the fishery industry
- Case 32. Sweden at national level; network for work on quality assurance

Chapter 3. Evaluation

- Case 33. Iceland: Assessment form
- Case 34. Finland: Continuous improvement of competence-based qualifications
- Case 35. Finland: Self-evaluation
- Case 36. Norway: Quality through holistic assessment in the folk high school
- Case 37. Finland: Response system for competence-based qualifications for adults (AIPAL)

- Case 38. Åland: Pedagogic Review
- Case 39. Finland: Evaluation levels and forms
- Case 40. Denmark: Evaluations on system level
- Case 41. Finland: Pedagogic auditing in Edupoli
- Case 42. Norway: Official evaluation of the learning associations
- Case 43. Finland: Evaluation on system level
- Case 44. Denmark: The timing of an evaluation
- Case 45. Norway: From ALL to BKA
- Case 46. Iceland: International rules
- Case 47. Iceland: IÐANs new curriculum for cooling- and freezing techniques
- Case 48. Iceland: IÐAN's Competence certificate for the metal industry according to EN 287
- Case 49. Sweden national level: A new tool for quality development

Chapter 4. Review

- Case 50. Denmark: Evaluation follow-up on system level
- Case 51. Norway: Evaluation of systems for quality assurance
- Case 52. Finland: The review process
- Case 53. Denmark: Review on the evaluations
- Case 54. Finland: Unemployment authority's response system, OPAL
- Case 55. Iceland: Continuous assessments on the learning process
- Case 56. Sweden national: Adult education in receipt of state subsidy 2008

Chapter 5. Methodology

- Case 57. Denmark: Elements in the quality assurance process
- Case 58. Finland: Education for senior examiners
- Case 59. Iceland: IÐANs system for quality assurance, founded on a chain of values
- Case 60. Denmark: Adult learning and quality
- Case 61. Denmark: Framework conditions for quality assurance
- Case 62. Denmark: The harbour school: Physical framework
- Case 63. Finland: Practice enterprise
- Case 64. Denmark: Framework for quality assurance
- Case 65. Sweden: Developed quality questionnaire– are the core values of the folkbildning attained?
- Case 66. Sweden national level: Quality of flexible learning tools and methods
- Case 67. Denmark: Summative and formative evaluations
- Case 68. Sweden: Quality assurance within the folk high schools
- Case 69. Sweden national level: Quality in adult learning with balanced scorecard

