



The Future of Education: Practitioner as Pedagogue! Developing an Educational Model for Training and Evaluating Practitioner-Trainers in non-Formal Learning Contexts

Denise Stanley, Vincenzo Pellegrini

Collage Arts (United Kingdom), MuLab (Italy)

denise306@btinternet.com, vince.p@libero.it

A small group of European social enterprises, employing practitioner trainers from the creative industries, has spent the last 2 years developing an organic educational model for their sector, after decades of working with ill-fitting, constraining and linear educational models. Employers in the UK, Italy, Spain and Holland have worked together with their practitioner-trainers to discern, understand, develop and test an interpretative framework for their shared knowledge and practice. As part of the Leonardo-funded project, they were able to link this interpretive framework to the European Qualifications Framework and their respective National Qualifications Frameworks. This would enable the recognition and validation of the skills, knowledge and expertise of their previously, unrecognised and invalidated work as trainers.

The exploratory journey of this group of practitioner-trainers highlights the need to engage with complexity in a work-based or non-formal learning context. There is a requirement for organic and non-linear modelling of the long-term development, learning and achievement of workforce members, including those trainees, developed entirely within the sector. This modelling could be used to profile workforce members and the developing practice across the sector throughout Europe in order to strengthen the practice and to encourage greater mobility and exchange of programmes, trainers, trainees and other workers.

The Euro-Aspire framework is the first stage towards this modelling process. The practitioner-trainer 'fields' have been described by 3 broad profiles, from which any organisation in the sector is likely to acknowledge or recognise the status of a trainee-trainer or someone who is being mentored and trained for a training role in a non-formal learning setting; a competent trainer, one in which a 'licence to practice' is given; and a proficient practitioner-trainer with a large repertory of experience and contexts, including the observation and assessment of others, through which their expert status is achieved.

This enables the sector to map the profiles, bench-mark achievement against the EQF and identify the development needs of individual practitioner-trainers and to assess the success of individual and organisational learning strategies but it can also enable the organisations to view their workforce, not only as people continually learning their profession, but also as 'continually developing and shaping their profession'. Employers in the sector can use this knowledge of their workforce strategically to create, develop, combine, substitute, maintain or engage a specific group profile to suit a specific programme, project or context.

This investigative work has also raised interesting questions about the role of 'artists as pedagogues' and the partnership are aiming to develop a network of educators and practitioners to explore this area further in the next stage of the project.