



Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

**REFLECTIVE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT
FOR CVT TEACHERS AND TRAINERS
THROUGH SELF-EVALUATION**



FIRST COUNTRY REPORT

(WALES)

c r e d

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1 Overview and background

Although CRED are the UK partners, this country report has been prepared for Wales rather than the UK as a whole because since devolution in 1999, there has been no 'UK' education system. The Wales Assembly Government and the Scottish Parliament have primary law making powers with respect to all aspects of education and have chosen to exercise these. Thus the education systems in England, Wales and Scotland¹ and the institutions and instruments for monitoring quality in each country are quite different.

1.1 Role of Quality Management in Non-Profit Organizations

Within the non-profit sector there is an important distinction to be made between the public (governmental) sector, NGO (non-governmental organisations) and the voluntary sector. This document focuses on the public sector education system.

The practice of systematic evaluation in the non-profit sector predates the broad scale introduction and adoption of quality management in the industrial and commercial sectors.

The least formal areas of education have the longest history of using evaluation and self evaluation mechanisms. It was built into the culture of practitioners in the adult education sector due to their typically Labour mind-set.

Part of the National Youth Bureau, the part time and volunteer education sector (PAVED) formulated panels for accreditation and quality measures in each area. Training programmes could be endorsed by PAVED to allow them to be judged against their own objectives rather than pre determined requirements.

For vocational issues, yearly plans were devised. A work related advanced plan and a non advanced plan, one for the Further Education sector (FE) the other for Higher Education (HE). These plans were reviewed annually using performance indicators.

The Government apportioned money to Manpower Services, some of which was allocated for small projects, one project was determining performance in FE.

FE self evaluation began, using indicators set by themselves such as;

- The ratio of enrolments to allocated places, (in order to match training to the labour market)

¹ The independent government in Northern Ireland has been temporarily suspended and so the education system has come back under the rule of the British government in Westminster.

- The ratio of students enrolling to those completing the course,(as a measure of student satisfaction)
- The ratio of students enrolling to those who were successful (a measure of academic achievement)
- The ratio of those completing a course compared to the number who secured a job at the end of the course (as a measure of progression)

Efficiency was measured using indicators such as

- Staff : Student ratio
- Room occupancy
- Contact hours
- Class size

Economy indicators were also used.

This practice spread throughout sector by 1989 although it did not include schools until later.

It was suggested that BS5750, the British version of ISO9000 commercial quality assurance schemes, be introduced into schools and colleges. The scheme was piloted by Gwent but was deemed irrelevant to the sector as the emphasis was on standardisation of practices rather than improving standards.

Similar arguments stand against accreditations such as Investors in People and TQM.

Performance appraisal was seen as the way forward with practitioners being allowed to choose their own assessor, with reasons. This non standardised approach is successful in raising standards.

Initial teacher training in Wales has Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) or University accreditation.

When CPD first began in school it consisted of a voluntary two day course at a summer school. These courses were subject focussed and occurred annually from the 1940's to the late 1980's.

Training in schools has now been systemised; all teachers now have to take part in in-service training (INSET). Schools are responsible for their own INSET and many cluster together to share the cost of training.

1.2 Role of Quality Management in the Educational Sector

The idea of quality is deep rooted in the history of Welsh education. From the advent of compulsory education in 1870 School Boards were set up to build and run schools. Following the Education Reform act in 1988 a national curriculum for Wales, England and Northern Ireland was introduced making it compulsory for schools to teach certain syllabuses. National curriculum assessments were then introduced for 7, 11, 14 and 16 year olds and the National Assembly for Wales took over responsibility for these tests in 2000.

The idea of the 1988 reforms was to encourage competition between schools and force poorly performing schools to either improve or close. The results of the tests were compiled as league tables which were published in local and national press. These tables compared performance statistics for individual schools and between LEAs (Local Education Authorities, formerly school boards).

At the end of 2003, the Daugherty Report was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly to undertake a review of the country's assessment procedures. The interim report by the committee was perceived by many as supporting a complete abolishment of the assessments at key stages two and three.

Educational establishments in Wales are subjected to regular inspections by Estyn. Estyn is responsible for school inspections, and reporting on school achievement for all levels of compulsory education as well as pre-schools, government-funded training programmes, and further education colleges, including adult education. All schools are inspected at least once every six years. These inspections cover all aspects of a school's provision, apart from denominational education.

Estyn's aim, as outlined in the School Inspections Act 1996 (chapter 57) is to raise standards and quality of education and training in Wales through inspection and advice, in support of the vision and strategic direction set out by the Welsh Assembly Government. Its stated objectives are; to deliver high quality inspection of individual education and training providers, and related services in Wales, to provide independent and sound advice based on inspection evidence, to inform the Welsh Assembly Government in the formulation and evaluation of education and training policy.

1.3 Concept of Self-and Empowerment Evaluation

The idea of Empowerment Evaluation is just one possible method of self-evaluation.

Evaluation is a broad heading under which many mechanisms are housed. FitzPatrick et al identified 5 major clusters of evaluation approaches

Objectives oriented approaches

Management oriented approaches

Consumer oriented approaches

Expertise oriented approaches

Participant oriented approaches

Another is Van der Knapp's 'learning oriented approach'.

Participant-orientated evaluation approaches (Self Evaluation)

An increasingly popular approach that differs fundamentally from all the others as it takes the needs of project participants as its starting point. This is not to say that the other approaches ignore participant needs but that for the most part benefits for participants represent the end point of the evaluation and not the beginning.

Participants are not simply the direct beneficiary target group of a project but will also include other stakeholders and *potential beneficiaries*. Thus an educational project for women returners would include the learners themselves, the project staff, the management team and the funders but may also include the wider community, the learners families, the schools attended by the learners' children, childcare agencies or whatever.

Participant-orientated evaluation does not usually follow a formal plan drawn up in advance; rather it looks for patterns in the data as the evaluation progresses. Data is gathered in a variety of ways using a range of techniques and culled from many different sources. Understandings grow from observation and bottom up investigation rather than rational deductive processes.

Participant oriented approaches encompass many sub-groups that share all or some of the above characteristics including Responsive Evaluation, Naturalistic Evaluation, Utilization Focussed evaluation and Empowerment Evaluation.

1.3.1 Concept of Empowerment-(Evaluation)

Practitioners in Wales reflect upon their experiences in order to review and amend their practice. For example; schemes of work are regularly re-written by taking into account the experience of teaching the existing scheme. The concept of empowerment is already deep rooted within the whole education system because it is the practitioners who create and shape the policies. Although guidelines such as the National Curriculum and Health and Safety have to be adhered to, it is up to the individual practitioner to create the lesson, the scheme of work and the learning environment

1.3.2 Concept of Self-Evaluation

Self evaluation is strongly advocated by teacher training establishments. Trainee and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) are encouraged to write a short self evaluation at the end of every lesson taught in order to aid their planning of future lessons and to encourage regular reflection.

For trainee teachers, monthly and termly written self evaluations are carried out. Trainees are encouraged to reflect upon their strengths, weaknesses and major achievements. The self evaluation is then used to draw up an action plan with targets relating to the first day of term, the first week of term, the first month of term, half term and the end of term.

At the end of the initial teacher training the NQT fills out a Career Entry Profile (CEP). This is a summary of all of the previous self evaluations. The CEP is presented to the Senior Mentor for NQTs at the start of the NQTs career within an establishment. The CEP allows the Senior Mentor to structure the NQTs further training based on their individual needs. At the end of each term of the NQT induction year the CEP is updated. The idea is that after the NQT year, practitioners will continue to update their profiles. The profile information can then be used to aid and inform the yearly Continual Professional Development (CPD) review.

As the CEP is a fairly recent initiative, most established practitioners do not have this system in place. Many rely on keeping their CV up to date and by keeping copies of CPD reviews and Estyn Inspection results.

2 Survey

2.1 Cultural and System-Related Requirements for Self-Evaluation in CVT institutions

Views of practitioners in Wales were collected by conversation, email, web blogs and internet forums.

2.2 Criteria for Quality Development

2.2.1 View of Practitioners

The practitioners are the teachers, classroom support staff, learning support staff, technicians, management and senior management. This could also extend to auxiliary staff.

The most common form of staff assessment in schools is an annual CPD review. The results of these reviews are kept on file and revisited yearly. Each practitioner must have one lesson observed by a senior member of staff. The observer gives feedback to the practitioner regarding the quality of the lesson and suggests improvements to be made. The teacher is then invited to talk freely about his or her experiences over the past year. The practitioner should express any concerns and inform the observer of any new skills, ideas or aspirations they may have. An action plan for the next year is then drawn up to cover two or three key targets.

All practitioners agree that the review is important for their own CPD and for whole school improvement.

Practitioners' views about this style of review differ between establishments. Positive views were expressed by those who were reviewed by a trusted or well known colleague. Those who were reviewed by an unknown colleague were less likely to set honest or realistic targets.

Many practitioners felt that peer evaluation was highly productive in terms of professional development as it allowed them to share resources and ideas in a non-threatening atmosphere. Communication with other practitioners provided stimuli for reflection on their own practices.

Most practitioners agreed that a method of self-evaluation would be preferable to the current system. They would appreciate having time for reflection as well as time to carry out further study in areas of particular interest.

2.2.2 View of Those Responsible

Those responsible are the practitioners, the senior management, the governors, the PTA, the LEA, the government, ESTYN...

Those responsible for carrying out the annual review appreciate that it is a necessary and important role. By spending time with each practitioner a whole school overview is obtained

In cases where many practitioners share the same concerns, In Service Training (INSET) can be arranged. The results of the reviews help to shape school policy.

It is believed that without this level of communication and cooperation, quality can not be assured and development can not continue. Self evaluation is seen as an important part of the CPD process.

2.2.3 View of Stakeholders

There are many stakeholders in the Welsh education system; the practitioners including senior management, pupils, parents, governors, investors, the local community, industry, the labour market, tertiary colleges and universities.

Stakeholders do not consider the certification of ISO 9000ff as suitable for the educational sector. They believe that the current system is adequate.

2.3 Criteria for Self-Evaluation

The criteria for Self-Evaluation are no different to criteria for any other method of evaluation. Some may vary according to perspectives but not by methodology.

2.3.1 View of Practitioners

Most practitioners prefer using a combination of self-evaluation, external evaluation and internal assessment and evaluation. Practitioners may be concerned about the extra work involved.

Self evaluation should be carried out regularly and should provoke reflection.

2.3.2 View of Those Responsible

Self evaluation is both encouraged and expected by those responsible. However, data needs to be aggregated and reported so facts and figures are required.

Teacher self evaluation is more valid but less reliable than other forms of evaluation.

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2.5 Requirements for Self-Evaluation with Respect to the Target Group

All practitioners agreed that having good working relationships with colleagues is important. Many feel that without this relationship, communication is difficult. Without good communication, practitioners find it difficult to obtain peer assessment.

2.6 Make-up of a Good Self-Evaluation Tool

2.6.1 View of Practitioners

An evaluation tool must provoke thought and reflection and ultimately lead to improvement in policy.

The tool should be easy to use.

The tool should give practitioner access to information, new ideas and relevant training materials.

Practitioners would appreciate it if the tool allowed them to communicate results, findings and ideas with other practitioners.

2.6.2 View of Those Responsible

Those responsible would like to receive an overview of the usage of the tool.

They would also like the tool to incorporate different methods of self evaluation.

The tool should be able to be used in conjunction with other evaluation methods.

2.6.3 View of Stakeholders

Stakeholders would like the tool to address whole school issues. They would like the results to be accessible.

3 Conclusions

3.1 Requirements on the Planned Tool

The tool needs to allow practitioners to evaluate themselves. It should allow time for reflection and development and should fit into the whole school ethos of evaluation.

3.2 Cultural and System Specific Requirements to be Considered

Factors which should be taken into consideration when choosing indicators;

The indicators must be based on the objectives of the project.

- The indicators used for monitoring purposes may or may not be different from the indicators used for the evaluation.
- Indicators determine what information needs to be gathered
- The indicators must be understood by stakeholders and be familiar to those intimately involved with the project.
- Ideally the tool should be universal in that it will be valid to practitioners in all areas of the education sector.

It should take the following points into consideration;

- Self-Evaluation and Reflection
- Society and Work Conditions
- Social Integration and Accreditation of Skills
- Values and Roles
- Learning, Teaching, Training experiences
- Cooperation and Networking

3.3 Considerations to Develop Quality

Practitioners will only use a new designed self-evaluation tool if they appreciate that it is a worthwhile use of their time. It also needs to be widely used and accepted throughout the establishment.

The tool should cover the areas outlined in section 3.2 above.

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