# Model for evaluating teacher and trainer competences

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TEVAL – Evaluation Model for Teaching and Training Practice Competences. Leonardo da Vinci Pilot Projects

#### SUMMARY

A lack of common criteria for comparing education and training systems makes it difficult to recognise qualifications and competences acquired in different environments and levels of training. A valid basis for defining a framework for evaluating professional performance in European educational and training contexts must therefore be established.

In this context, the TEVAL project presents a proposal for an evaluation model applied to teaching and training competences. The model is based on a common competence framework and on a holistic concept of the theoretical principles that justify the evaluation process, bearing in mind professional development and system regulation – the Close Evaluation Model.

#### **Keywords**

Evaluation, teacher, trainer, professionalisation, validation of competences, regulation

## Introduction

Evaluating professional performance by means of a common framework will offer greater assurance of the value of the work of professionals in all national contexts. In the field of education and training, teacher and trainer evaluation should provide credible and useful information for developing professionals and the system, without being restricted to describing, quantifying and classifying performance.

It is at this point that the TEVAL (1) project becomes relevant in defining an evaluation framework for:

- (a) teachers in primary and secondary education;
- (b) teachers in vocational training schools and courses;
- (c) trainers in various areas who work for a training institution (such as training centres);
- (d) technical trainers in the workplace who work for a company (for example, in industry, commerce or services).

During the first phase of the project, the research team carried out a transnational analysis of current evaluation procedures in the national contexts of participating countries – Portugal, Germany, Estonia, France, Greece and the United Kingdom. That study recognised that, despite the European objectives enshrined by the European Council in the Work Programme for Education and Training (2002), teachers and trainers are often seen as remote professional groups, and that evaluation is mainly carried out under national regulations in a manner that differs substantially between one context and another.

The conclusions confirmed the need to establish a common basis for evaluating professionals that will add value to the career paths of Europeans in terms of:

(a) consolidating the European project;

<sup>(</sup>¹) The Leonardo da Vinci pilot project known as TEVAL – Evaluation Model for Teaching and Training Competences – was developed (2005-2007) by a partnership of expert evaluation institutions from six European countries: the Instituto Politécnico de Beja/Escola Superior de Educação de Beja (Scientific Coordinator of the Project) (Portugal), Univation Institute (Germany), EntenteUK (United Kingdom), Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques (France), Tallinn University (Estonia) and the Hellenic Regional Development Centre (Greece).

In this context, the research partnership proposed to develop a set of common European principles for evaluating teachers and trainers, who are seen as a single professional group involved in the personal, social and vocational development of other people and who thus have similar needs in terms of competences. Further information can be obtained at http://www.teval-ii.eu/

- (b) promoting transnational employability and mobility;
- (c) transferring good practice between contexts.

The evaluation model was therefore based on the following assumptions:

- (a) Teachers and trainers are currently undergoing a process of professionalisation that is changing their roles and responsibilities and consequently the professional competences required.
- (b) Teachers and trainers constitute a professional group which is united by the objectives of their activities in the light of the concept of lifelong learning and which makes a fundamental contribution towards achieving the European objectives defined in the Lisbon Strategy. A range of documentation has been produced and promoted by various European bodies (Cedefop, 2002b; European Commission, 2003, 2005a,b; European Council, 2004; Schratz, 2005) which link the harmonisation and unification of education and training systems and suggest the implementation of common principles and criteria in various areas, including teaching and training competences and qualifications. Under the concept of lifelong learning, teachers and trainers share the same fundamental objectives in their activities promoting the acquisition and development of competences throughout learners' lives.

Against this background, the TEVAL project has defined an approach to evaluation that is adapted to teaching and training competences within a common framework, and that is at the same time flexible towards the specifics of each context in which those competences are applied.

This approach, backed up by the data collected by the research team on the limitations and opportunities of evaluation systems implemented in the European context (TEVAL, 2006a), is defined on the basis of a range of basic principles, namely:

- (a) evaluation should be considered essentially as an instrument for learning at the service of professional development, yet it should at the same time provide the information necessary for regulating the education and training system;
- (b) teachers and trainers should be the main agents and actors in the evaluation and decision-making process:
- (c) the evaluation should include various strategies and methodologies of self- and hetero-evaluation;
- (d) applying the above principles means that the evaluation process should take place at the level which is closest to the professional activity.

With the aim of establishing evaluation assumptions in a model of criteria and procedures for recognising professional competences, the research team started out by focusing on the content of what the profession of teacher/trainer is considered to be.

This article considers the process of close evaluation of teacher and trainer competences, bearing in mind their common professionalisation. Certain theoretical considerations on the purpose of evaluating these professionals are therefore first presented, taking the implications of the professionalisation process into account. The model constructed during the TEVAL project is then described, in response to teaching and training competence needs.

# Teachers and trainers as professionals

Once seen as an art (based on intuition and improvisation) and later as a technique (application of methods best suited to various situations), the practice of teaching and training currently tends to be defined in terms of the combined and organised competences that constitute a profession.

'In summary, while it is accepted that good teaching reflects artistry as much as technique, the fact remains that there is little that policy can do to develop artistry. Regarding teachers as workers limits our view of the kind of educational opportunities that can encourage the development of teachers and the kind of education that they need to cater to the multiple demands of preparing the younger generations to live as contributing members of society ... These metaphors are inadequate to meet the new demands which teachers are facing ... By definition, professionals can introduce highly specialised expertise to solve complex problems, and yet historically 'teaching has fallen short of the status of profession' (Walling and Lewis, 2000) ... In order (...) to meet the demands of our times, teachers need to be prepared, perceived and treated as professionals' (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p. 38).

The process of professionalisation can be defined, on the one hand, in terms of new competences to be acquired (professionalism (2))

<sup>(2)</sup> Professionalism is understood to be the application of a range of competences that characterise the performance profile of these professionals. In practice, professionalism is demonstrated by active engagement and by putting into practice techniques, processes, aptitudes and knowledge directly related to the tasks and functions that characterise the profession.

and, on the other, in terms of the development of professional identity (professionality (3)).

According to Le Boterf (2005), the process of constructing competences depends on the image that people have of themselves, revealing the interaction between their emotions and aspects of identity and their professional performance.

It is therefore the interaction between different kinds of competences that makes it possible to define and construct the professional practice of teachers/trainers, i.e. their professionalism.

Being competent means being able to deliberately mobilise a combination of competences in order to manage a range of professional situations. Such mobilisation does not refer simply to execution but to construction; it means moving from knowledge to action by reconstructing that knowledge. This is a value-added process that is not based simply on transferring theories (or elements of such theories) into the work context in an analytical way. On the contrary, the professional should produce competences (Le Boterf, 2003).

# Professional competences of teachers and trainers

Teachers and trainers operate in a range of professional situations that can be defined according to the areas in which they engage. Discussion and reflection among the TEVAL experts, supported by external consultants, defined the following four main areas of impact of teacher and trainer engagement:

- (a) learning space (the place in which the pedagogical relationship occurs between teacher/trainer and learners);
- (b) organisation (the system of the institution as a learning organisation);
- (c) community/society (their role in changing social processes and in developing local communities);
- (d) professional (action with respect to their own learning and professional development process).

<sup>(3)</sup> Professionality is a range of identifying elements that describe attitudes, values, beliefs and codes of conduct associated with a profession. These elements describe the way of becoming and being – both in the immediate context and in the long term – a fully-fledged professional, both individually and as part of society.

In each of these areas, professionals need to demonstrate certain key competences. It is their command of a range of competences in their various areas of engagement that characterises the professionalism of the teacher/trainer.

#### Areas in which teachers and trainers engage

In order to obtain a framework for defining professional competences, the research team formed discussion and literature review groups for each area of engagement. Each group defined a range of principal competences that teachers and trainers should consider in their actions in that area, together with the respective descriptors. These are not defined as operational indicators for evaluating competences,

Organisation Community/Society

Community/Society

Learning Space

Figure 1. Areas in which teachers and trainers engage (TEVAL, 2006)

Source: TEVAL, 2006b.

<sup>(1)</sup> These refer to the main areas of competence, as explained below and as shown in the Common Competence Framework.

given that during the development of the evaluation model, they will evolve into professional development objectives in individual and contextual terms, giving rise to personal professional profiles.

The result of this work is presented in Table 1 in the form of the Common Competence Framework for Teachers and Trainers, which comprises one of the main criteria for generating the proposed evaluation model.

The European scope of the Project required another element to be considered in terms of teacher and trainer professionalisation: the paradigm associated with the knowledge society, characterised by constant change and renewal of activities and people. In this light,

Table 1. Common competence framework for teachers and trainers

Area of Engagement	Principal Competences	Descriptors
Learning space (4)	Technical-scientific competences	Have a theoretical and cognitive knowledge of subjects Understand the interactions and relationships between disciplines Have a knowledge of pedagogical methodologies Have a knowledge of the education and training system Have a knowledge of the principles of science and research
	Pedagogical-didactic competences	Know how to communicate Promote learning opportunities Develop learning plans, actions and resources Prepare and manage the learning environment Formulate material in order to make it understandable to others Understand the ethical, intellectual, emotional, social and physical development of the target groups Manage learner behaviour and discipline Deal with heterogeneous learning styles and needs Plan and draw up training/education curriculums
	Diagnostic competences	Be conversant with, select and utilise evaluation models Apply adapted evaluation procedures Evaluate learner progress Evaluate the effectiveness of learning actions Communicate the results of the evaluation Develop valid classification procedures

<sup>(4)</sup> The learning space is where the pedagogical relationship takes place between teacher/trainer and student/trainee. This could be the classroom in the case of a teacher, or the learner's place of work in the case of a trainer in the workplace.

Area of Engagement	Principal Competences	Descriptors
Organisation (5)	Participation	Cooperate and act in a teamwork environment
	competences	Engage in, be available for and take an interest in organisational initiatives and activities
		Participate in work groups
		Support the decision-making process
	Relational	Exchange information and emotions
	competences	Establish and promote close contacts among and between professionals and their target public
		Understand the system of values, beliefs and rituals that exist in the institution
		Share leadership
		Be aware of and sensitive to peoples' differences
	Competences	Understand and commit to the project
	for realising the educational project	Utilise institutional and personal resources to achieve project objectives
		Plan, implement and evaluate, in accordance with objectives
		Critically analyse and change the project
	Organisational development	Take a proactive approach to training, seeking methods of professional enrichment
	competences	Update and change practices, demonstrating that professional development adds value to organisational development
		Be critical and question the operation of the organisation and their role in it
		Find solutions and ways of applying them Generate development partnerships
Community	Community	Understand the socio-cultural context of their actions
,	awareness	Combine community aspects with the teaching process Reflect upon the community factors that influence learning
		Recognise the learning needs of the context
	Collaboration and Interaction	Look for learning potential, needs and opportunities in the social environment
	Interaction	Work with different people and institutions
		Propose and negotiate work plans
		Promote broad negotiation and shared decision-making
		Consider feedback from collaborators
	Community	Get involved in research and development projects
	development	Identify the roles and responsibilities of others in
	competences	supporting learners
		Reflect upon their own engagement in the community Generate partnerships and promote joint solutions

<sup>(5)</sup> The organisational scope always refers to the institution promoting and receiving the learning actions: schools and training centres are examples of organisations in this context.

Area of Engagement	Principal Competences	Descriptors
The professional	To account for their own professional practices	Analyse their own psycho-sociological type Inform peers about their engagement, pedagogical training and understanding of projects Evaluate the impact of their practices on learners, the organisation and the community Identify internal and external factors influencing their performance
	Strategic intelligence	Update their academic and didactic knowledge Assimilate new training instruments and methods Participate in professional development programmes Update methods and processes of monitoring, tutoring and guidance Utilise information and communication technology (ICT), particularly the Internet
	Working for and in a multicultural context	Participate in exchange programmes Familiarise themselves with the socio-cultural systems and frameworks of different countries Support learners in their role as multicultural citizens Engage with the multicultural nature of the European dimension of education and training
	Contribution to the profession	Get involved in the process of professionalisation in learning and training activities Collaborate with the professional community Contribute to the success of the profession and reinforce its status
	Ethical and deontological competences	Apply ethical responsibilities as a teacher/trainer Be aware of and promote respect for professional rights Understand the impact of their values, beliefs and experiences on learners and learning Investigate the deontology of education and training

Source: TEVAL, 2006b.

teachers and trainers need to be aware of their new competences in their role of applying the measures and reformulations that may arise in the panorama of the integrated education and training system. European policies recognise the need to adapt systems for accrediting and recognising the competences of education and training professionals, one of the basic assumptions being that these professionals can promote lifelong learning as a key process in human development.

Based on these assumptions, it was deemed necessary to define a range of key competences for teachers and trainers as participants in achieving European Union objectives. These will complement the aforementioned Common Competence Framework and will apply in the contexts in which these professionals operate. The following table presents the competences required for the *Europeanisation* of education and training systems.

Table 2. Competences of trainers and vocational training bodies resulting from the European strategic guidelines

Area of Engagement	Principal Competences	Descriptors
Knowledge society	Be thoroughly familiar with the functioning of the knowledge society and with the promotion of experience	Be familiar with:  (a) the knowledge society (b) European policies (c) national and sectoral employment systems (d) national and European vocational training systems (e) training policies and plans
		Put into practice: (a) research-action methodology (b) evaluation of capacities and competences (c) use and planning of competence management (d) quantitative and qualitative studies
	Be thoroughly familiar with the functioning of learning organisations and methods of knowledge management	Be familiar with:  (a) vocational training systems and bodies  (b) learning organisations  (c) competence management and knowledge management  (d) quality systems in companies and training centres  Put into practice:  (a) organisational change methodologies  (b) construction and consolidation of partnerships and work networks  (c) quality management methodology  (d) knowledge management methodology
	Be thoroughly familiar with the principles of drawing up and planning training courses	Be familiar with:  (a) vocational teaching methodologies  (b) production and diversification of vocational competences  (c) vocational guidance  (d) modularisation, individualisation and guidance  Put into practice:  (a) construction of routes to professionalisation  (b) diagnosis, evaluation and counselling  (c) self-training  (d) private classes

Area of Engagement	Principal Competences	Descriptors
Knowledge society	Be thoroughly familiar with the principal processes of promoting lifelong learning	Be familiar with:  (a) assessing actors' involvement in the lifelong learning process  (b) experience and learning acquired through work situations (learning by doing/learning by using)  (c) prioritising entrepreneurial behaviour  (d) increasing mobility and employability  (e) development of ICT practices  Put into practice:  (a) recognition and accreditation of experiential learning  (b) transfer of knowledge between generations  (c) roject management  (d) e-learning  (e) management of group activities

Source: TEVAL, 2006b.

## The close evaluation model

Starting from the Common Competence Framework, the TEVAL project team has developed an evaluation model based on the concept of close evaluation, which brings the basic principles and assumptions together. Close evaluation involves approaching the items for evaluation on the basis of the actual context in which they are produced and bearing in mind the conditions for that production.

Close evaluation has the following characteristics:

- (a) it occurs at the closest possible level to the teacher/trainer (school, subject group, course team, training centre, department, etc.), thereby allowing the teacher/trainer to participate effectively and productively in the evaluation process;
- (b) the evaluator is not an examiner but cooperates with the professional in his or her development, bearing in mind the importance of cooperation for changing behaviour and practice (Day, 1999);
- (c) the evaluator looks at the professional's real work and at the actual achievement of the objectives proposed, not only in terms of whether they have been achieved, but also in terms of how this was done and what difficulties/obstacles were overcome in order to do so:
- (d) it covers various dimensions of the professional behaviour of the teacher/trainer (professionalism), which should follow qualitative parameters;

- (e) it enables individual feedback in the short term, thereby helping to change professional practices more quickly;
- (f) changing work contexts are taken into consideration;
- (g) the training area is linked to the work space and time, giving meaning to the daily effects of training and generating a 'training' dynamic (Correia, 1992; Pain, 1990, cited in Silva, 2002, p.135);
- (h) decisions are shared and agreed, giving rise to a fairer system;
- (i) it is carried out through a continuous process.

In the model proposed, teachers/trainers are evaluated through processes of self- and hetero-evaluation, the resulting data being analysed in discussion and formative evaluation groups. Cooperation and dialogue are maintained between the evaluator and the subject, at the level of the institutions in which they work. The evaluation task is monitored by a discussion group that aims to understand the complexity of the situations, develop alternative action and broaden perspectives by putting ways of thinking into context and altering actions (Silva, 2002).

The whole evaluation process is defined in accordance with the guiding principles of the evaluation of professionalism, and the concept of close evaluation continues to form the bedrock of the process. The model therefore proposes a progressive and continuous line from the level closest to the professional to the decision-making and political level regulating the whole system.

The scheme proposed provides an answer to the challenges of a) professional development, and b) system regulation, which arise in the process of evaluating professionals. The first challenge is resolved by ensuring constructive feedback between the professional and the formative evaluation group. The second is addressed by means of a system for transferring information between the different levels of the system, starting from the context that is closest and most real (see Figure 2).

In implementing the model, each teacher/trainer passes through the following phases of evaluation:

- (a) establishment of a Personal Professional Profile (PPP);
- (b) evaluation sessions;
- (c) information gathering and portfolio construction;
- (d) presentation and discussion of the portfolio in the formative evaluation group;
- (e) portfolio revision.

The starting point for successfully carrying out the evaluation process is the establishment of the PPP. The profile should cover

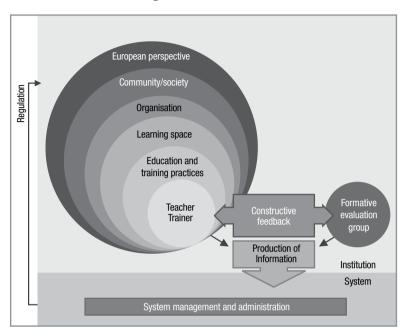


Table 2. Functional diagram of the close evaluation model

Source: TEVAL, 2006b.

the principal competences defined for each area of engagement (as set out in Tables 1 and 2). In accordance with this structure, the professional, together with the formative evaluators, should define the individual performance objectives for the period corresponding to the evaluation process. Since the professionals participate in establishing their Personal Professional Profile (PPP), their commitment to that profile increases, as does their responsibility for carrying it through in the best possible way. In the subsequent evaluation stages the professional is monitored by the formative evaluation group that is set up within the organisation, the members of which are responsible for collaborating with the teacher/trainer in improving his or her professional practices.

The fifth phase – portfolio revision – is when the individual concerned revises the information in their portfolio in the light of the previous discussion in the formative evaluation group. The objective is to produce a more consistent portfolio which can subsequently be used by evaluators at different decision-making levels in the education and training system, and which clearly demonstrates the professional's achievements.

Bearing in mind that the principal objective of the evaluation is to promote professional development, various evaluators from the professional's work context should participate in the process. In addition, self-evaluation provides teachers/trainers with a perspective on their work.

The group of formative evaluators may include:

- (a) the teacher/trainer to be evaluated;
- (b) an administrator from the school/training centre;
- (c) two or three colleagues from the school/training centre, preferably from the same department (depending on the type and size of the organisation);
- (d) an external evaluator (this can be a teacher/trainer from another education and training organisation or from a company; this external participant will ensure that the group has an unbiased viewpoint);
- (e) a learner or trainee who represents a teacher/trainer's class.

The formative evaluators should function as a support group: in the meetings, the teacher/trainer being evaluated presents – orally and/or using to documents or other material (including in digital and other formats) – his or her perspective on the work carried out. The group constructively criticises the work, allowing the teacher/trainer to identify his or her needs and helping them to overcome difficulties and improve practices.

The evaluation meetings should take place in the teacher/trainer's workplace. The group should meet as often as necessary to discuss the work and take decisions on its validity. In these sessions the professional reports on his or her performance and discusses ways of better achieving the objectives set out in their Personal Professional Profile. The teacher/trainer receives advice and guidance on his or her daily work from the formative evaluation group.

The group should consider the various education and training competences. The use of various sources of information on the teacher's performance will allow a more precise and comprehensive evaluation.

The teacher/trainer will prepare different types of data for presentation in the evaluation sessions. The information chosen must provide evidence of his or her competences in the course of events, situations, initiatives and difficulties that have arisen in the tasks in which they are involved. Each professional may choose the types of instrument to be used to provide evidence of their professionalism. The set of instruments concerned will comprise their Personal Evaluation Portfolio (PEP).

The portfolio will be evaluated by comparing it with the objectives proposed in the PPP for the evaluation period. In order to ensure an objective approach to the professional competences demonstrated during the period, each PPP objective must be evaluated by analysing the evidence that demonstrates its achievement and which is included in the PEP. Once all the evaluators have formed an opinion on the portfolio, they must discuss it and arrive at a consensus on its value.

The principal results of the evaluation process will be useful for improving the overall quality of organisations (schools and training bodies) and the education and training system. The results will enable needs to be identified and will point to changes for the better. This is where the individual evaluation process becomes relevant to the development of the professional group and the education and training system.

For example, an awareness of the competences of teachers and trainers in the context of their work can provide information to administrative and political bodies on:

- (a) the initial training needs of this professional group;
- (b) the need for continuing training and technical training;
- (c) curriculum organisation;
- (d) teacher and trainer recruitment;
- (e) teaching and learning climate of the organisation;
- (f) 'true' profile of this professional group;
- (g) strengths and weaknesses of the system.

#### Final considerations

An analysis of the needs and potential of teacher and trainer evaluation systems in Europe shows that the TEVAL project offers an evaluation model that goes beyond the evaluation of teacher and trainer performance.

The Close Evaluation Model proposes that teachers and trainers should be evaluated on their professionalism, i.e. on their capacity to mobilise a range of key competences so as to respond to situations and problems arising during their work. In our view, these professionals need to commit themselves to their work objectives, and in order for this to happen they need to understand themselves and to be understood as the principal actors in and constructors of their profession.

In view of the need to validate the model that has been constructed, the objective of the next stage of the project will be to conduct a transnational survey of the main target public and beneficiaries of the model in order to obtain information on its validity and suggestions for its revision.

In addition, and allowing for the differences in the evaluation cultures that co-exist in Europe, the proposed model is seen as a valid contribution to evaluation research, providing a basis for observing and promoting professionalism, both individual and group, in the light of a common competence framework. In real terms, the partnership firmly believes that the close evaluation strategy is a useful instrument for professional development insofar as it will:

- (a) promote discussion and contact between peers;
- (b) allow feedback to be obtained and given;
- (c) optimise training methods;
- (d) stimulate the development of solutions to ensure the success of the organisation;
- (e) stimulate self-evaluation and awareness of the potential of teachers and trainers as professionals.

Some questions may be raised about the close evaluation process. It should be noted that the assumptions underpinning the model mean that organisations should function as real learning systems in which information is shared and transparent, since close evaluation is always a negotiated process in which there is agreement with and commitment to the process, instruments and methodologies. This also raises the difficulty many professionals may have in carrying out the process, which means that everyone involved needs to be trained to apply the principles and the process, rather than the instruments.

A further limitation of the evaluation model is the lack of definition of parameters to guarantee the quality of the results obtained and the establishment of an ethical code for evaluation, in accordance with recognised standards .

In view of these recommendations for the future development of the model, after it has been revised and validated it will help to make the different evaluation processes employed in Europe more homogeneous and will thus help to reinforce the evaluation culture among professionals.

# List of abbreviations

ICT	Information and communication technology
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PEP	Personal Evaluation Portfolio
PPP	Personal Professional Profile
TEVAL	Evaluation Model for Teaching and Training Practice Competences
Unesco	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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