



OPERATIVE CARDS

FOR THE VALORISATION OF
THE INFORMAL LEARNING
IN WORKPLACE

Workplace as learning environment

The workplace is a learning environment, as in the enterprise all workers increase their wealth of knowledge and practice specific competences through their daily actions:

- to follow certain procedures,
- to use special tools,
- to study user manuals of the machinery,
- to solve concrete problems,
- to Interact with other people,
- to observe more experienced colleagues.

Companies can choose to use the knowledge and competences developed within them in order to get some benefits:

- saving time for managers of work processes;
- improving the business climate;
- increasing the company's reputation;
- increasing the motivation of workers;
- decreasing the turn-over;
- increasing the employability of workers leaving the firm

In this guide you can find tools that some companies have adopted to enhance and recognize learning of employees.

Informal Learning

What people learn at work is defined by the experts "informal learning", since it is the result of actions that are not directly aimed to learning.

In many European countries the informal learning can be valorised in order to issue diplomas or professional qualifications without having to attend courses of study. In Italy, at the present time, you can get a recognition of informal learning in order to complete their studies for a diploma (evening classes) or a professional qualification.

Under Italian law the "informal learning" is that learning that, "even apart from a deliberate choice, is realized in the performance, by any person, of activity in everyday life situations and interactions that have in it place within the context of work, family and free time"(Legislative Decree 13/2013)

The valorisation of the informal learning in workplace

Each person engaged in work processes in a given sector or department of the company

- acquires knowledge,
- exercises and develops competences.

The **knowledge** can be possessed by a single or it can be shared with colleagues and it can become the common property of the company or his department. In many cases, it is useful and, in other necessary, **managing the acquired knowledge** in the company in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of work processes.

The **competences** that are essential by the person who exercises, can be enhanced simply by making them visible, giving workers the opportunity to become aware of what they do and what they have learned in the company.

The following lists some of the methods used to promote and valorise informal learning by companies:

- Organization of the environment and of working time in order to facilitate the exchange of experience and information.
- Organisation of events that promote socialization.
- Activation of study circles: moments of learning managed directly by the workers with the possible support of more experienced workers.
- Use of the coaching of less experienced workers to more experienced workers in a particular skill (mentoring).
- Promotion of awareness of workers through research and collection of the experiences of the worker in a file or portfolio.
- Production of information tools to share strategic knowledge.

The valorisation of informal learning in company

Best Practices in Europe

1. **LightBite**. Developing and sharing educational content in the company
2. **E-portfolio Inform.Edu**. Collecting and presenting evidence attesting formal and informal learning
3. **SkillCatch**. An app available in the Google play and Apple store to capture talents around you and share them with whomever you like. This allows you to create real, ready-to-use training instances that can effectively transmit each person's expertise through educational video sequences that can be accessed at any time.
4. **Padlet**. An online tool for people to brainstorm around a topic of their interest which can create new ideas to integrate on the workplace.
5. **BOOST**. Business PerfOrmance imprOvement through individual employee Skills Training.
6. **Just Frameworks**. Just Frameworks allows you to construct and share competency frameworks
7. **My Showcase**. An online tool for people to store evidence of personal learning which, for example, has taken place informally in the workplace.
8. **KØDE-NQF**. 'Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal competencies in the context of National Qualification Frameworks' (2011-2013)
9. **PROVIDE**. PROmoting the Validation of Informal and Non-formal Learning and the Development of Key Competences for Professionals in Vocational Education
10. **Women in SMEs**. Validating non-formal and informal learning of family SME managers (2013-2015)

LightBite

Developing and sharing educational content in the company

What is it?

A LightBite is a mini-course developed by the employee of a company to be used by other employees in order to quickly learn how to perform a not particularly complex task

Who is it for?

This tool is useful for employees who occupy positions of responsibility within a company and who need to communicate to employees information they need to perform a task.

What is its purpose?

Its use is to save time for those who need to monitor the work of others, give information or provide answers about some work processes, operation of machinery, etc. All workers who need information, moreover, thanks to this tool can have quick answers and immediate, without having to wait for the availability of other people.

What is needed to use it?

To use it, you need an Internet access. At present, the tool is available in English and in French, German, Spanish, Dutch, greek, too. A brief downloadable guide helps you learn quickly how it works.

How does it work?

To process and, as a result, to use the LightBite, you must subscribe to the site <http://www.LightBite.net> and follow a procedure which is divided into the following phases:

1. Collection of evidence (documents, photos, etc.) that attest the operation of a particular work process. These witnesses or evidence are the pedagogical material on which the LightBite is built .
2. Loading of educational materials on the platform.
3. Identification of possible educational materials already present on the Internet (for example, popular video tutorials on YouTube, etc.).
4. Inclusion of keywords (tags) that allow you to make the traceable content.
5. Publication of LighBite.

Source: LightBite: project funded with support from the European Commission
To get more information about the project, see:

www.lightbite-project.net

E-portfolio Inform.Edu

Collecting and presenting evidence attesting formal and informal learning

What is it?

The e-portfolio INFORMEDU is a digital online tool that is used to create an organized collection of documents and evidence that prove the knowledge and competences of a person.

Who is it for?

Workers in the tourism sector (hotel reception, front office, etc.).

What is its purpose?

Allow workers to become aware of their informal learning and to subject them to evaluation.

What is needed to use it?

To use it, you need an Internet access. The instrument requires to be accredited by a guidance counselor. A brief downloadable guide helps you learn quickly how it works.

How does it work?

To develop an e-portfolio you need to subscribe to a site and follow a procedure which is divided into the following phases:

1. Compiling the personal profile (skills, goals, synthetic presentation).
2. Writing a diary in which you record the experiences of informal learning and upload files of various types (photos, audio, video, documents, etc.) that attest the learning.
3. Entry on a group of workers to participate in the discussion forums.
4. Creating a presentation of their experiences that testify to the learning.

Source: Project INFORMEDU, *Guidelines for the recognition and validation of informal and non-formal learning in the Education system*, Giano Ambiente srl 2013.

SkillCatch

An app available in the Google play and Apple store to capture talents around you and share them with whomever you like. This allows you to create real, ready-to-use training instances that can effectively transmit each person's expertise through educational video sequences that can be accessed at any time.

What is it?

The idea of skillcatch is similar to the idea of Lightbrite. Its purpose is to create small learning objects which can easily be distributed amongst other interested employees. In this way staff can remain up to date and strong in the ever changing and challenging job market.

Who is it for?

It can be used by first line managers, but also by the employees themselves. You can empower them by giving them the opportunity to capture their knowledge in a small learning nut.

What is its purpose?

By using the skillcatch app you will be able to create small learning bytes instantly and distribute them amongst your target group. It drives the fact that people can easily learn something they need immediately. On the job, just in time. The creator can record a problem on the workflow when it occurs and save this for later and distribute this immediately if useful.

What is needed to use it?

You need a mobile device and access to the apple or play store. You will also need an Wifi connection in order to upload your content and share it with your audience.

How does it work?

Padlet

An online tool for people to brainstorm around a topic of their interest which can create new ideas to integrate on the workplace.

What is it?

Padlet let everyone participate in an online brainstorm. It works perfectly from multiple devices and from different places. It gives you an incredible input from your audience. Everyone can contribute. The initiator can sort the different inputs and if needed delete some if not applicable to the subject. It will boost informal learning in the workplace as participants can insert their ideas anonymously and ideas are coming from their direct colleagues.

Who is it for?

For all kind of groups who like to collect in a quick way valuable information for their organization or project.

What is its purpose?

Padlet is the easiest way to create and collaborate in the world. It works like a sheet of paper where you can put anything (images, videos, documents, text), anywhere, from any device (pcs, tablets, phones), together with anyone.

What is needed to use it?

Access to the online tool which is free. It can be accessed on <https://padlet.com>

How does it work?

The way it works is quite intuitive. Instead of explaining every step in written text, you can find a nice tutorial on <https://youtu.be/bt6orv2QfZw>



BOOST

Business PerfOrnance imprOvement through individual employee Skills Training.

What is it?

This is a methodology and associated online tool developed in a Transfer of Innovation project managed by RWTH, Aachen, Germany with other partners from Greece, Czech Republic, France and the UK.

Who is it for?

Businesses, business advisers and VET providers supporting small businesses.

What is its purpose?

The whole project is based on the fact that many small businesses have no record of their learning experiences and the contribution and benefits that brings to increased competitiveness and the further development of the business. Similarly, many individual employees have no concrete way of understanding how their own learning, both formal and informal, contributes to the overall business performance.

What is needed to use it?

Access to the methodology document and the the online demo of how to use the tool which can be found on http://mrsconsultancy.com/?page_id=17 The online demo of how to use the tool can also be seen directly on [Boost YouTube channel](#).

How does it work?

Key ideas.

1. The Business Critical Needs¹ (business critical goals) will be the starting point for all activities.
2. These are identified either internally within the enterprise by management and / or with the help of an external business consultant /adviser.
3. Their respective importance are rated.
4. For those which can be addressed by learning, indicators are developed at company level (and for individual employees). This might involve a trainer (external or internal).
5. These learning indicators are rated in importance by the management of the enterprise as will the current positions and targets for the company as a whole and individual employees.

6. All the above are inserted into the tools on the BOOST platform.
7. Learning resources are identified by a trainer appropriate to each employee's learning requirements. These can be: support through informal learning via colleagues and mentors, in-house resources developed by the business, external experts, other bite-size resources to be found on the internet or external training programmes.
8. These resources are made available to the individual employee through their on-line learning space or they will be directed to off-line training where appropriate.
9. The individual employee is encouraged to self-assess progress and further discussions take place with a trainer / manager to agree on progress.
10. Progress in achieving the learning indicators is recorded.
11. The BOOST tool collates data and demonstrates graphically the impact of the training on individual employees and the company as a whole. This is in terms of the learning indicators associated with each Business Critical Need / Issue (Business Critical Goal).

Source : The BOOST project funded under the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme <http://www.boost-project.eu/>

Just Frameworks

Just Frameworks allows you to construct and share competency frameworks

What is it?

This is an online tool which allows you to create and share competency frameworks.

Who is it for?

Individual teams and whole businesses.

What is its purpose?

This open service allows the creation of a framework for your own use or to share with others if you wish, find other useful frameworks and even create derivatives of them tailored for your own use.

A business could create a framework for competencies required for different jobs within the company and then measure progress towards achieving these using other tools such as My Showcase, e-portfolios to provide evidence and the BOOST tool to measure progress against learning indicators linked to Business Goals/ critical needs.

What is needed to use it?

Access to the internet and this website:

<http://www.justframeworks.com/#!/>

How does it work?

A Framework can be created to suit your own requirements by accessing the above site, registering and then you can create your own Framework which when complete can be published either for yourself privately or made public.

An example of one created for people starting their career in a business environment can be found

<http://www.justframeworks.com/#!/frameworks/550313c9-9544-e411-9306-d067e5ec4c65>

Source : <https://www.myknowledgemap.com/free-tools.aspx>

My Showcase

An online tool for people to store evidence of personal learning which, for example, has taken place informally in the workplace.

What is it?

Myshowcase enables individuals to build up lifelong, sustainable and rich records of their capabilities and achievements, for example, through informal learning in the workplace.

Who is it for?

Individuals at the moment but the potential exists for it to be used by businesses and their employees.

What is its purpose?

MyShowcase is designed to allow individuals to collect evidence from a variety of sources and then to organize these using tagging. These can be mapped against skills frameworks derived nationally or regionally or by employers. Individuals can add their own annotations and share on the web – the latter being under the user's control

What is needed to use it?

Access to the online tool which is currently free to individuals. It can be accessed on www.myshowcase.me

How does it work?

The whole process can be divided into three main stages.

1. Collect.

A user (individual or employee) collects items of evidence and stores them on-line. This evidence can be from personal tools such as Evernote, Flickr, Vimeo and You Tube.

2. Organise

A user organizes the items by tagging them, mapping them to frameworks and annotating them. Items can be stored locally on a device (laptop, tablet) or within someone's personal cloud storage.

3. Share

A user shares selected items from their assembled files together in a showcase. This showcase can be shared, for example, with prospective employers, employers for internal reviews

To download more information about the tool, go to:

<https://www.myknowledgemap.com/media/122035/myshowcase-brochure-web.pdf>

Source : <https://www.myknowledgemap.com/media/122035/myshowcase-brochure-web.pdf>

KØDE-NQF

'Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal competencies in the context of National Qualification Frameworks' (2011-2013)

What is it?

The starting point of the project approach is the **system KODE®**. **KODE®** is the acronym for 'Kompetenz - Diagnostik und -Entwicklung' (Competence - Diagnostics and -Development). it denotes an extensive diagnostic, training and coaching system. This scientifically established system for skills analysis is to be adapted to the European Qualifications Framework within this project. 64 fields of competencies (atlas of competencies) are the basis of this system which is in many European countries used for staff development in private business or within authorities.

Who is it for?

The project's goal is to provide VET counsellors, advisers and consultants with a set of training guidelines that are easily adaptable not only to the individual users' needs but also to the specific learning cultures of the partner' countries.

What is its purpose?

VET providers and companies will have access to efficient training materials that can assist them in measuring or assessing competencies and skills acquired in a non-formal and informal context and validating them according to NQF and EQF standards. The project has also in view people who have not only formal education and professional qualifications but also highly developed non-formal and informal skills and competencies, and they need comparable recognition of these competencies on the European or global labor market.

What is needed to use it?

To use it, you need internet access.

How does it work?

The KØDE-NQF Handbook containing a description of the methodological approach and instructions for the implementation of the designed tools
On request all tools are available individually in four languages (EN, DE, IT, PL) in order to be printed and implemented, please fill in the Consensual Rights Agreement and send it back to your national contact or the project coordinator.

wellwang@vhs-cham.de

Source: Project KODE-NQF, <http://www.kode-project.eu/>

PROVIDE

PRomoting the Validation of Informal and Non-formal Learning and the Development of Key Competences for Professionals in Vocational Education

What is it?

PROVIDE stands for PRomoting the Validation of Informal and Non-formal Learning and the Development of Key Competences for Professionals in Vocational Education.

Who is it for?

Managers of institutions providing learning opportunities for VET and adult learners

What is its purpose?

PROVIDE system allows for **acquiring and validating key competences in different learning contexts** such as continuing vocational training for educational professionals or learning at the work place.

What is needed to use it?

Project not finished yet (2013-2015), all results will be on project's webpage.

How does it work?

PROVIDE makes use of the LEVEL5 system which is specifically designed to assess personal, social and organizational competence developments in rather non- and informal learning settings.

It is based on a 3-dimensio-nal approach to validate

Cognitive
Activity related
Affective

Source: Project PROVIDE, <http://provide-eu.org/>

Women in SMEs

Women in SMEs: Validating non-formal and informal learning of family SME managers (2013-2015)

What is it?

Based on the experience of Switzerland, this two-year project (October 2013 – September 2015) aims to transfer a methodology, counselling process and innovative tools to Europe, to improve the recognition and validation of the expertise and skills acquired by women who (co-) manage VSEs/SMEs.

Who is it for?

Family business, women partners

What is its purpose?

The project aims to transfer, adapt and pilot an innovative process for validating/certifying the management competences acquired by spouses in non-formal (eg in-company training) or informal (through life & work experience) settings. A validation process has been developed by the Swiss Union of Crafts and Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SGV) resulting in a nationally recognised diploma in the management of SMEs with a specialisation in the management of family SMEs (Federal Professional Education and Training Diploma) specifically designed to meet the needs of spouses of family SME owners. The qualification profile, validation self-assessment tool and applicant support system was transferred to partner countries of FR, NL, SI who will adapt and test the Swiss process in their national/local context.

What is needed to use it?

Self-assessment tools and methodology is available at project partners websites and <http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=10985&page=1#.VVRcuPmqpBc>

How does it work?

The transfer includes: - a skills profile of VSE/SME management specialists - a self-assessment test of professional skills - a counselling methodology for the preparation of a record of evidence of experience acquired - an engagement process for all of those involved in implementing the methodology and tools

Source: "Women in SME"

<http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=10985&page=1#.VVRcuPmqpBc>