



First Expero2Eu Newsletter

Expéro2Eu... what is it?

Expéro2Eu is an European Project, funded by the Leonardo da Vinci LLP program as a Transfer of Innovation project, aimed to made the ExPerO model a sovra-national European standard to evaluate the quality of the learning outcome in the vocational schools.

Let's start from the beginning.

What is the **ExPerO** Model?

ExPerO was a Leonardo da Vinci European Pilot Project (2005-2008) involving 5 European Countries headed by two Italian institutions: the Arturo Malignani school (Udine) – as project coordinator - and the University of Trieste (PsiQu group, Department of Political Science) – as Research manager. The main aim of the ExPerO project was to define a model and to realise tools able to evaluate the quality of learning outcome of the HTE, taking in account the stakeholders' expectations and perceptions.



To fully understand this definition, we have to provide some clarifications:

-  The HTE (Higher Technical Education) is a upper secondary, not tertiary training/educational level. Its morphology between the institutes and countries is very heterogeneous. Its duration varies from 6 months to 2 years and it can include different curricula in order to different needs and requests deriving from the work local contest. Its aim consists in offering full competencies in the profession whom it is aimed to.
-  The HTE learning outcome is an integrated system of competencies, acquired during

the HTE training, formed by knowledge, capabilities and professional behaviours of the trainee, which answers concretely to work needs.

-  The stakeholders are entities or people that have a kind of interest on the educational outcome provided by the school and that are able with their decisions and behaviours to influence its activities and results. In the “stakeholder approach” it arises the need to take accountability of their needs and opinions; it is not requested to satisfy all their expectations, but mainly to create networks and communication flows among them and the school, understanding their priorities and negotiating the features of the service.

To develop these aims:

-  It was developed a theoretical model aimed to study how to evaluate the quality of the HTE learning outcome.
-  Tools to collect data were created and validated.
-  Results were disseminated by means of conferences, training courses ad one hypertext.

1. Theoretical model aimed to study how to evaluate the quality of the HTE learning outcome.

In this sense we took care about the booming Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality literatures. After a deep review, we recognized the most important theoretical prospective and approaches and we tailored them to ExPerO aim (quality of learning outcome). In this elaboration, we have created something new.

2. Tools to collect data.

In this sense we located qualitative tools (interviews and focus group) together with quantitative ones (questionnaires) to be used as methodological choices in order to gather detailed information and standard comparable data.

From the tools aimed to collect data we obtained a big amount of information. To manage all these data we elaborated some tools able to:

- * Compare the result by different prospective (by stakeholder, by HTE, by indicators);
- * Represent in a synthetic and user-friendly way the results;
- * Suggest new insights and proposals.

3. Disseminate the results through conferences, training courses, publishing books ins everal languages and one hypertext, also published in the website.

The results itself are important; but their communication have the same importance. With some dissemination acts we explained - to different targets and in several ways – our reached objectives, with the aim that they could be the basis for other future researches.

You can find more information about the ExPerO model (theoretical axis, tools, data collected)

at these websites: <http://www.expero.org/hypertext/index.htm> and <http://www.expero.org/>

Returning back to Expero2Eu.

The European LLP Commission evaluated the ExPerO project with a mark of excellence (9/10); in this way, the transfer of the ExPerO model to a larger sample has been approved with a new project: Expero2Eu.

Expero2Eu aims to transfer the ExPerO model (as innovative content) in the specific field of mechatronics and to make ExPerO an European model to certify the HTE learning outcome. The project involves an operative- and a theoretical side.

The **operative side** aims to involve new HTE institutes and political institutions. The schools will adopt the ExPerO model and the ones belonging to the mechatronics sector will be involved in an international critical circle of assessment. Every school will disseminate the results in the local area; the political institutions will be involved to disseminate ExPerO in the institutional areas.

On the **theoretical side**, Expero2Eu aims to present ExPerO model as the supranational standard for certification of HTE courses, following the “think globally but act locally” principle. In this sense, we will integrate the instruments produced in VQTS (LdV Pilot project) to compare the credits and the competencies. Expero2Eu will provide a system able to evaluate the Quality (through the ExPerO model), the Competencies (following the EQF meta-framework) and the Credits (thanks to the VQTS tools) of the learning outcome (CCQ Expero standard). Finally, the mechatronics network will act for a reciprocal recognition of competencies and credits.

The certification of educational organizations through a model dedicated to evaluate the learning outcome signs a new development in the quality models. The realization of this first network in mechatronics area and a European certification available for schools and other educational bodies is the first step to produce an increasing flexibility and mutual recognition among competencies belonging to different countries.

In this sense, the aim is to integrate the instruments produced in **VQTS** (another LdV Pilot project) to measure and compare also credits and competencies as part of the learning outcome. The project is dedicated – in this experimental phase - to the mechatronics area of competencies. A network of schools in different European countries will act for a reciprocal recognition of competencies and credits.

Expero2Eu, finally, has a backdoor reserved to trigger **future applications** of the ExPerO model in different contexts. Since the extraordinary evaluation of the LLP Agency and the ones given by the others contacted external evaluators (you can find them into the ExPerO Hypertext), we want to open the possibility to test the model in different fields: as a model to the learning outcome quality in the post secondary education in sectors as fashion and communication, as an element of stakeholders’ evaluation of quality in the social sheet balance, as an evaluation of

the outcome quality in the business area.

Till now...

The project starts in October 2008. Till now we have created the project web island (www.expero2.eu) and also we have triggered the social network (<http://experto2eu.ning.com/>), where all partners are involving their stakeholders in.



We did also the first meeting (1st and 2nd of December at Udine- Italy), where the ExPerO model was exposed and where Expero2Eu aims were illustrated. The project next steps were discussed together, and all partners started to engage in their own roles and activities.



Expeor2Eu partnership

The partnership permits an optimal development of the operative and theoretical side. The network is composed by: five HTE schools (4th/5th level of EQF in Denmark, Belgium, Italy, Spain and Turkey) providing a similar vocational programme (mechatronics); two consultancy firms in school quality (from Spain and from Demark); the coordinator of VQTS project (Austria); two Universities (Italy and Finland); a Switzerland Educational Centre as critical friend and quality manager; two Italian schools for local area dissemination.



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