

Brief Report on Day-long Reinforcement Seminar for Maieuta Project Supervisors

The day started by collecting the needs of the participants and arranging the activities with them, taking into account prior instructions of the Project Coordinator, Mr Antonio Viccaro, to adopt a highly operational approach by dealing with the key steps to be performed immediately (company commitment, portfolio compilation, definition of professional profiles).

Briefly, the needs identified were the following:

- General revision of the procedure and the definition of the different development stages (inclusion of a new participant);
- Verification of timetable and products, with particular reference to the Portfolio and the Personal Development Plan;
- Clarifying the distinction between the different roles of the professionals involved (assessors, tutors, etc.).
- Adapting the procedure to project needs and context (type of businesses, integration of the roles of professionals involved etc).
- Simulation of some key steps, with particular reference to obtaining commitment and assessing skills.

To make best use of the time available (6 hours), it was decided to:

- place the procedure within the context of lifelong learning.
- review the various stages and key steps;
- develop the two topics so that during development of the various steps it was possible both to review the reference principles and the quality criteria of the procedure, and to effectively respond to the needs of the participants;
- simulate the key steps as requested;

Optimizing the timetable made it possible to review and “reinforce” the topics and key steps in their essential aspects and to simulate an interview following the START method¹.

Contextualizing the procedure within lifelong learning was done by briefly re-examining the individual learning process and specifying its essential elements with regard to the process itself, outcomes and implications. By analogy, the discussion was then referred to the organizations and territories, in order to establish the key elements connected to the concept of the “learning” organization and territory and with reference to skills validation. It was thus possible to:

- clarify and summarize the framework of the VPL model

¹ Situation in which the task is performed

Task

Activity which the worker learns and performs.

Transfer: worker’s capacity to transfer what he learns to another situation.

- place it within a general framework of innovations, thus substantiating its significance,
- provide an approach and arguments suitable for obtaining the enterprise's commitment

The VPL model was reviewed by retracing all the steps in the procedure – in their essential elements – and by specifying the criteria of appropriateness and quality, professional figures involved, tools/products, possibilities of adapting to the planning needs and context, in order to optimize the available time and to respond to the needs of participants.

The procedure was re-examined on the basis of its experimentation in the Macerata Region during the “Investing in People” Project in order to have a clear benchmark with which to evaluate to what the extent it was necessary to adapt the procedure.

Structure:

Phase focusing on enterprise/organization:

- Commitment
- Information about enterprise/organization, with reference to vocational training and UR management (report number 1- analysis of the enterprise))
- Observation (report number 2 part 1- analysis of the profiles)
- Definition of profiles (report number 2 part 2 - analysis of the profiles)
- Definition of indicators (report number 3 analysis of the profiles)

Phase focusing on workers:

- Compilation of Portfolio (report number 4- Portfolio)
- Collection of evidence of acquired competences
- Assessment of competences (report number 5 and 6- assessment checklist referred to the individual profile, final assessment report)

Phase focusing on company/organization and workers:

- Development plans number 7 and 7°- final report for the company/organization, Personal Development Plan)

The procedure was illustrated by providing important and fundamental information (cfr. section on the experimental method in the “Investing in People” project publications), and indicating the elements that cannot be eliminated without harming the procedure in terms of effectiveness and quality.

The indications referred to:

- The need to start the commitment phase by underlining the advantages the company/organization will have in experimenting the procedure (investing in learning), and to conduct the interview and the illustration of the procedure in a concrete way reflecting the characteristics of the individual company managers;
- The need to observe the profile to be defined, with a subsequent interview of completion/verification, so that the profile effectively represents the actual company situation (with observation times being adapted according to the complexity of the profile);
- The need to add to the defined profile any elements of change / improvement, indicated by company management, in order to be able to structure the standard company profile;

- The need to connect the company's standard profile to an external and recognized standard of reference (national/regional/ by sector) in order to establish an adequate basis for validation;
- The essential features of the indicators of concreteness (for competence measurability) and portability (for worker employability);
- The main characteristic of the Portfolio as a tool for the orientation of worker (reconstruction of experience, emersion of skills, identification of development objectives);
- The need to collect authentic, current, relevant and sufficient evidence in terms of quantity and variety;
- The objective of the Assessment (to evaluate the worker's skills in relation to a certain profile rather than globally), the stages of assessment (portfolio / evidence and, where appropriate, directly with the worker), the instruments used (especially the assessment interview), the characteristics of the assessment group (supervisor- accuracy of the process , assessor - specific work process, internal and external for assessment objectivity, tutors - support for workers, already in the stage of compiling the portfolio), the products of the process (Assessment documentation - checklist; final report - final document as a basis for validation), with particular attention to the value of the final report in relation to possible legal effects of the procedure (validation / certification of skills)
- The specific characteristics of the Personal Development Plan, a document that sets down the various steps planned and agreed by worker and company/organization for achieving the shared development objectives.

In addition to the indications listed, further possibilities for adapting the procedure were discussed in the meeting; these are to be evaluated and confirmed by the project management and are related to:

- The possibility of placing over-40 jobless individuals in the company on the basis of the results of a previous orientation phase and of a first Personal Development Plan based on this (retrieving internal agreements in the training sessions for supervisors);
- The advisability of defining professional profiles on the basis of which to assess jobless workers' prior skills in the very early stages of their placement in the company/organization;
- The advisability of compiling at the same time the Portfolio of individual workers, which could be pre-compiled by professionals (supervisor and / or counselors already involved in the first part of the project?) on the basis of the documentation produced in the previous stages, subject to prior agreement with the workers themselves and with a subsequent sharing of what has been introduced;
- The advisability of supporting workers in the collection of evidences using any documentation already assembled in the earlier stages, and during compilation of the Portfolio, unless the worker is deemed capable of performing the task on his/her own;

- The advisability of optimizing the results of various prior orientation phases to spare the worker repetition of steps and activities previously undertaken and reduce working time for the supervisor, thus ensuring feasibility and effectiveness of actions;
- The possibility that the portfolios already completed under the Tipeil project be considered experimentation (albeit minimal) for unemployed adults of the digital portfolio used in that project, while the remaining workers would use the paper portfolio utilized in 'Investing in People', suitably simplified and modified (logos, graphics, etc.).
- The possibility of combining the roles of supervisor and tutor and at the same time of avoiding a situation where the same figure plays the roles of tutor and assessor (guidance support for workers and assessor);
- The advisability of writing final assessment reports (on the already diffused 'Investing in People' model) and final Personal Development Plans.

The day concluded with an interview simulation aimed at assessing skills in cases where these were adequate or evidence was lacking (START method).

Macerata

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