

On starting the experimentation, it was very difficult to link the N.E.T.WORK Project and the IFTS course “Advanced technician for attendance to reception structures management”; even though the IFTS course was constructed using Training Units (U.F.), articulated by learning contents. As we all know, in the Ecvet system, a unit is a set of knowledge, skills, and competences which constitute a coherent part of a qualification. A unit can be the smallest **part of a qualification** that can be assessed, transferred, validated and, possibly, certified. A unit can be specific to a single qualification or common to several qualifications. The characteristics of the units (content, size, total number of units composing a qualification, etc.) are defined by the competent body responsible for the qualification at the appropriate level. The definition and description of units can vary according to the qualifications system and the procedures of the competent body. However, the ECVET system proposes to provide for each unit:– the generic title of the unit;– the knowledge, skills and competence which are contained in a unit;– the criteria for assessment of the corresponding learning outcomes. A learning outcome is, in turn, the set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate **after completion of a learning process**.

So, the unit is a part of a qualification, while the L.O. is part of a process. Herein lies the greatest difficulty of the Ecvet model: one must match the description of a work with the description of the process that will be necessary to train a person who will do that work

In my Region the training pathway project starts from a clear and detailed description of the JOB, or, better, of what we call COMPETENCES, which are like the Ecvet Units. The competences must be learnt: so the project gives a description of the learning run, by subdividing each competence (or group of competences) into knowledges, skills, behaviours. Since a skill in Ecvet is the ability to perform tasks and solve problems, we could say that Umbrian behaviours may be included in the skills. But what is a competence in Ecvet? The ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development). Competence is not limited to cognitive elements (involving the use of theory, concepts or tacit knowledge); it also encompasses functional aspects (involving technical skills) as well as interpersonal attributes (e.g. social or organisational skills) and ethical values. Very similar to Umbrian competence, isn't it? It seems to be a certain “concept overpopulation” in the Ecvet tools (L.O., competence, skills), that complicates a lot the work of comparison among the learning pathways of different countries. Moreover, the description of the professional profile (units/competences) should be clearly distinguished from the description of the learning process (L.O., knowledge, skills). In spite of these difficulties, we have drawn up our experimentation plan, also because the IFTS national projects method appears confused too. In the IFTS project model competences (or in Ecvet language, units) are not described: only the learning process is described, indicating L.O., knowledge and skills.

We started experimentation linking N.E.T.WORK (Italian) with IFTS course learning outcomes; in our experimentation course we have several LOs. for each N.E.T.WORK L.O.: for ex.:

L.O. N.E.T.WORK	L.O. TECNICO SUPERIORE PER L'ASSISTENZA ALLA DIREZIONE DI STRUTTURE RICETTIVE
<p>To supervise and manage the approach phase</p>	<p><i>Relations with colleagues, clients, etc.</i> Making an independent use of English <i>Using English as a technical language</i> To develop and to increase promotion and marketing activities</p>

but the unit/competences, that is, the activities, of the profession are the same in N.E.T.WORK and in “Advanced technician for attendance to reception structures management”!

I think we should severely simplify Ecvet terminology and its conceptual tools, in order to better understand each other, since I believe that the European school and vocational training systems are already very similar and we could rapidly realise a wide learners mobility.