Recognition and accreditation of prior learning at university: a first overview of process, tools, actors and open challenges

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Agenda

- **Validation Jigsaw**

- **Explicitation interview**

- **Portfolio practice**

- **Theoretical elements:**

  - **European scenario,**

  - **APEL/VAE models,**

  - **elements of recognition of prior learning,**

  - **Padova's experience,**

  - **open challenges**

Jigsaw groups

Group 1

A.   TCD Aidan Seery

B.   EDIW Lovisa Horn

C.   UPPSALA_U Anna Liv Jonsson

Group 2

A.   U_DEUSTO Maria Yarosh

B.   UGR Vanesa Gamiz

C.   EDIW Katja Kessler

Group 3

A.   EDIW Julia Maria Gonzalez

B.   EDIW Valeria Ciaccio

C.   UPPSALA_U Ella Stensson

Group 4

A.   EDIW Mikel Igartúa

B.   UNIVa Luis Carro

C.   EDIW Inés Carbajal

Group 5

A.   EDIW Mattia Barina

B.   RUG Robert Wagenaar

C.   UGR Mirian

RESOURCE PEOPLE:

Luis Carro

Alessio Surian

Anna Serbati

European scenario

- 2009: Cedefop: **European Guidelines** for validating non-formal and informal learning

- 2012: **UNESCO GUIDELINES** for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning

- 2012: COUNCIL **RECOMMENDATION** on the validation of non-formal and informal learning

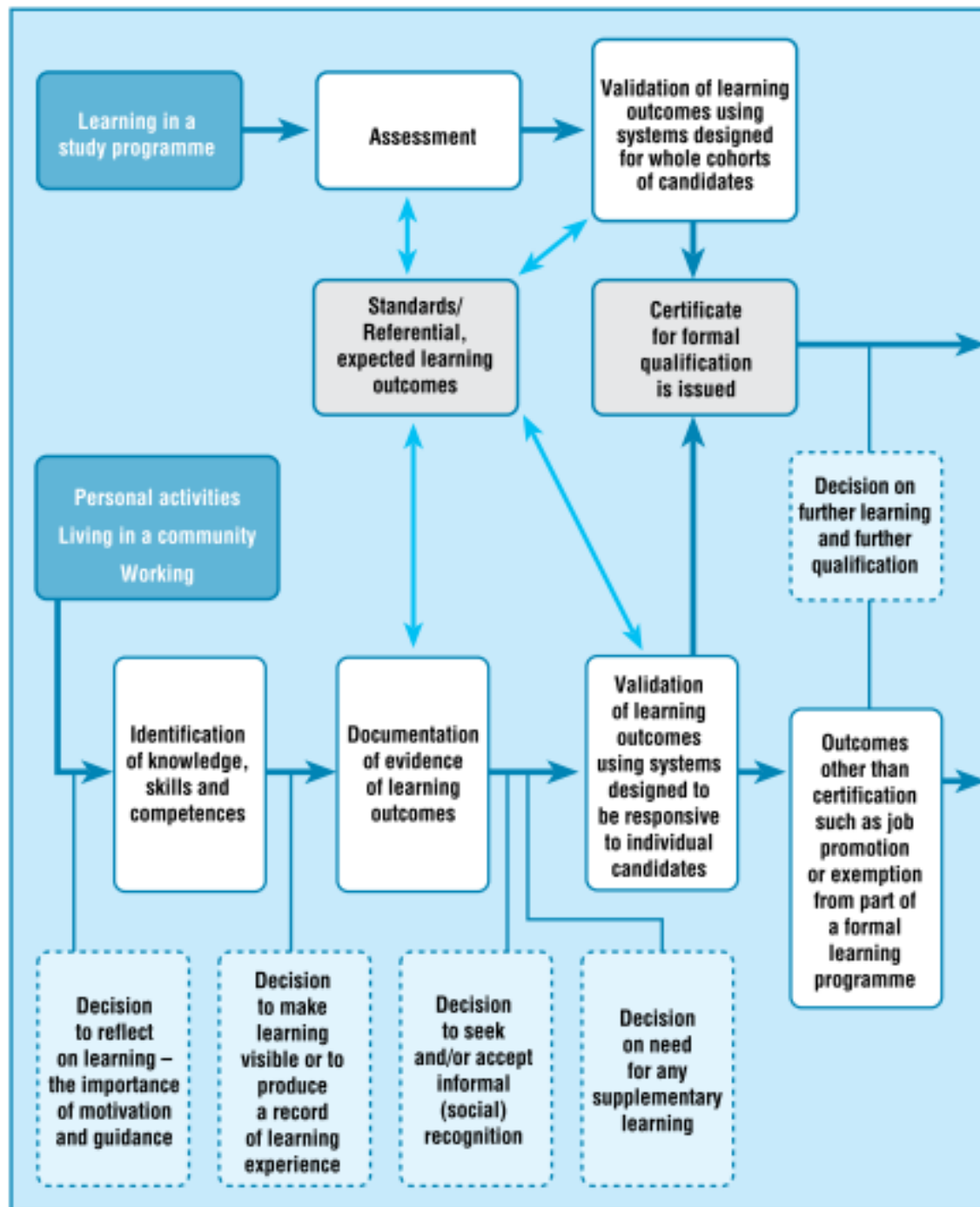- 2014: **European Inventory** on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning

swzone.it

eucen

www.eucen.eu

Cedefop 2009

Steps

- Validation necessarily starts with the identification of knowledge, skills and competence acquired and is where the individual becomes increasingly **aware of prior achievements.**

- Documentation will normally follow the identification stage and involves provision of evidence of the learning outcomes acquired. This can be carried out through the 'building' of a **portfolio** that tends to include a CV and a career history of the individual, with documents and/or work samples that attest to their learning achievements.

Steps

- Assessment is normally referred to as the stage in which an individual's learning outcomes are compared against **specific reference points and/or standards.** As validation is about capturing diverse individual learning experiences, assessment tools need to be designed to capture and assess the learning specific to each individual and the context in which this learning took place.

- The final phase of validation is linked to the certification of the learning identified, documented and assessed. Validation reaching the stage of certification requires a **summative assessment** officially confirming the achievement of learning outcomes against a specified standard. It is crucial that this process is managed by a **credible authority or organisation.**

Portfolio, storytelling and reflection on competences

1. **Portfolio** as the most used tool (Cedefop 2009, Sansregret 1984, Deiro 1983, Litetard 1992, Pellerey 2000, Aubret 2000, Varisco 2004).

2. According to Kolb´s (1984) reflective model, the experience is ″grasped″ from the context by concrete experience and abstract conceptualization and then elaborated by observation/reflection and active experimentation.

    - This reflection has a transformative value and the opportunity to **make tacit knowledge explicit** (Vermersch, 1994) allows people to develop awareness of competences.

Portfolio, storytelling and reflection on competences

- The **autobiographic reflective process** has the **transformative power** (Mezirow, 1991; Lichtner, 2008) to bring out moments or past aspects and create new connections between these aspects, generating new coherences and perspectives.

- **To name is to know** (Dewey & Bentley, 1949), building a new relationship between language and knowledge.

- **Writing is the first naming process** that is then integrated with the process of sharing and co-construction of meaning, implemented in the relationship with the tutor/advisor who supports the process (Paul 2003, Veilhan 2008, Aubret 2009, Salini 2010, Biasin 2010, Savickas 2011)

Portfolio, storytelling and reflection on competences

3. Value of certification, but also

the educational and guidance value of the process,

the educational and professional impacts, and

the learning strategies activated

(Feutrie 2004, Vermersch 2005, Guichard 2005, Alheit 1995, Dominicè 1990, Lenoir 2002)
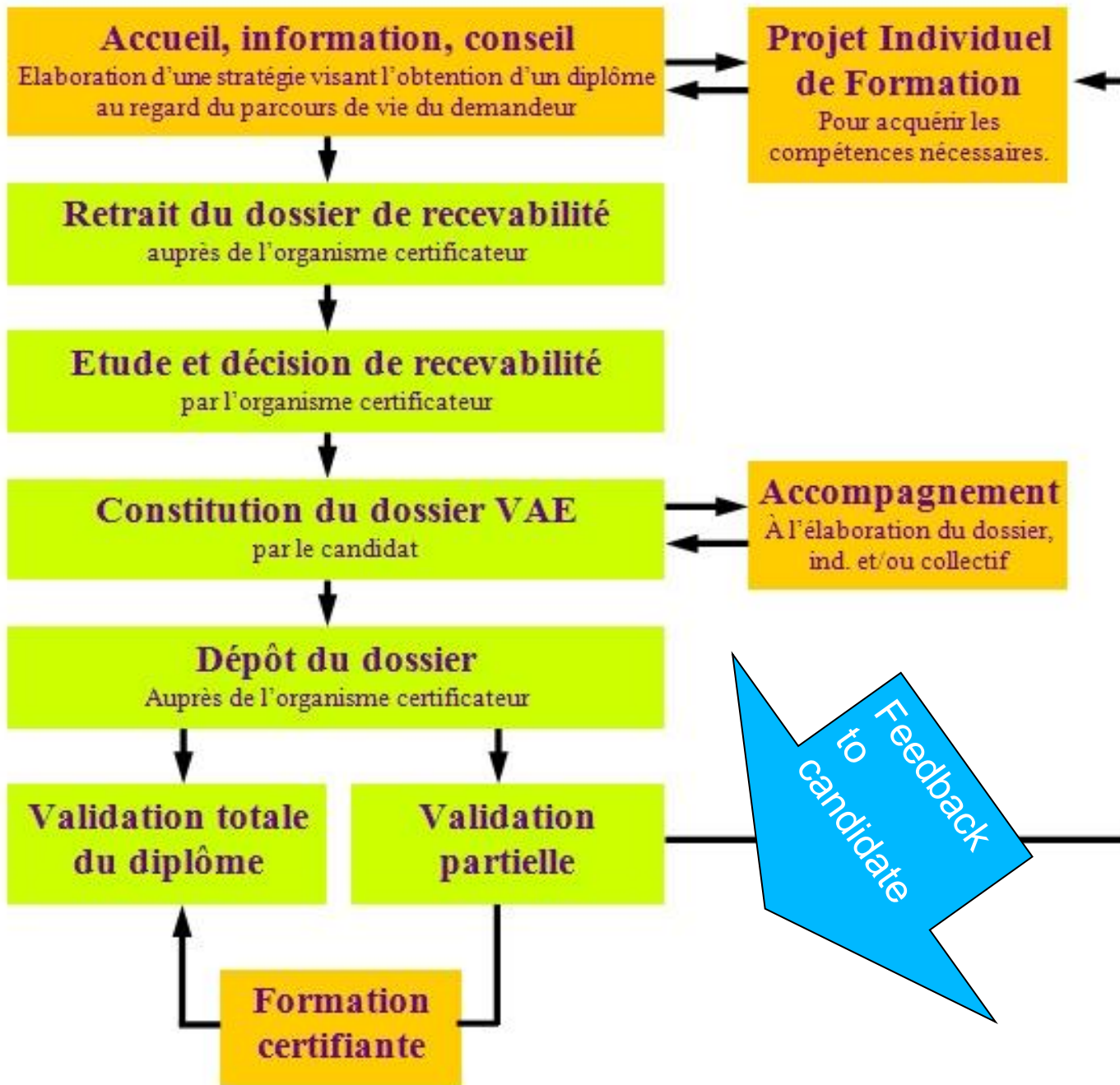
3a. Best practices

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING – **APEL**

(Portwood – Costely 2004, QAA report 2004, Reynolds - Vince 2007, Simosko 1991, Nyatanga - Forman - Fox 1998)

VALIDATION DES ACQUIS DE L'EXPERIENCE – **VAE**

(Cherqui Houot 2004, Farzad - Paivandi S. 2000, Lainè 2004 e 2006, Pirot 2007, Adjas 2006, Aubret – Gilbert 2003)

Accueil, information, conseil
Elaboration d'une stratégie visant l'obtention d'un diplôme au regard du parcours de vie du demandeur

Projet Individuel de Formation
Pour acquérir les compétences nécessaires.

Retrait du dossier de recevabilité
auprès de l'organisme certificateur

Etude et décision de recevabilité
par l'organisme certificateur

Constitution du dossier VAE
par le candidat

Accompagnement
À l'élaboration du dossier, ind. et/ou collectif

Dépôt du dossier
Auprès de l'organisme certificateur

Validation totale du diplôme

Validation partielle

Feedback to candidate

Formation certifiante

VAE: origins

The article 133 of the Social Modernization Law (17 January 2002) established
the right of all to acquire any degree
(registered in the *Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles*, which lists by sector and by level all diplomas, titles, professional qualification issued or recognized by the State)
through the *validation des acquis de l'experience*

http://www.vae.gouv.fr/
http://eduscol.education.fr/cid47151/obtenir-un-diplome-ou-un-titre-par-la-vae.html

VAE = a device for individual and collective needs

- Singular paths of professionalization
- Validation towards a **certification** (formal education).

- Competences are acted and they are not usually validated by a certification
- An employer validates the results, the performance of the exercise of competences
- A process of certification validates individual learning **(acquis)** acquired by practicing competences

Source: Veilhan, 2009

A process of validation

For the candidate it takes time to retrieve his/her practice:

"What did I learn? What remains from my work?"

From a logic of testing to a **logic of evidence**

The act of validation is a dynamic process that allows first of all the candidate to reclaim and be aware of his/her learning in an evolution path

Distance and appropriation

Double approach:

- **distancing and ownership** (awareness and mastery of each own competences)

- **formalization and capitalization**

At all levels of analysis, distancing facilitates understanding, awareness and identification of exercised competences and particularly the learning gained from the practice described.

Guidance

- Right to have a **24hours leave**

- **Support** to self evaluation and co-construction of evidences/prooves

- The advisor supports in detailing the work/life situation, by **identifying activities, roles and responsabilities**, in order to focus on learning occurred

- This crucial exercise of **de-contextualization** requires two moments:
  - Writing can be done in sheets with **table to help synthesis**
  - Dialogue and sharing with advisor (i.e **explicitation interview**)

- Normally interviews are more than one (scaffolding awareness and explicitation in different phases)

Explicitation interview

- The explicitation interview is a form of **guided retrospective introspection** (Vermersch)

- The explicitation interview makes it possible to support the person as he makes the transition **from pre-reflective consciousness to reflective consciousness**, about a specified lived experience in the past

- The interviewer guides the subject through his exploration of the past, to help him re-discover all the information and resources whose recovery is desired.

- The final stage is that of **putting into words**, grasping the learning of the experience (avoid general definitions)

Key questions:

in pairs, think about a concrete professional experience in the framework of DARE+ competences

General recommendations

- □ *Focus on concrete actions*
- □ *Support cognitive exploration of the action by the interviewee*
- □ *Encourage the description of the action (don't analyse or explain)*
- □ *Guide and support a step-by-step re-construction of the action*

Questions about the meaning of the action for the interviewee

- □ What did you do?
- □ What did you say?

Identify interviewee's intentions and concerns during the action

- □ What did you try to do? What specifically were you trying to achieve?
- □ What were you concerned with?

Focus on significant elements

- □ What did you focus on? What did you pay attention to?
- □ What did you expect? Were you surprised?
- □ What did you take into account?

Interpretations and knowledge which were relevant during the action

- □ What did you say to yourself? How did you see the situation? What was happening according to you?
- □ What made you act like that? What made you say what you said? How did you know that..?
- □ What did you learn?

Feelings and emotions

- □ How did you feel?
- □ How did you see it?

Feedback questions

1. How did I feel at the beginning of the interview? Why?
2. What did help me during the interview?
3. What did I find difficult during the interview?
4. What was the most interesting moment during the interview?
5. What did I learn during and as a result of the interview?
6. I would like to thank my partner because …
7. Further comments

Main emerging elements

- Happier to being interview rather than interviewing (no training)
- Difficult to put together the picture and give a feedback (being comfortable is not always the case)
- Pressure to reach something (structure to other people: scaffolding)
- Seeing/visualisation of the competence narrated and different elements
- Important that the aim is common and declared between interviewer and interviewee
- Initial contact, facing with differences
- Physical presence to each other, active listening (body language)
- Genuine interest, encourage
- For recognition is important to have knowledge on the competences and experience shared
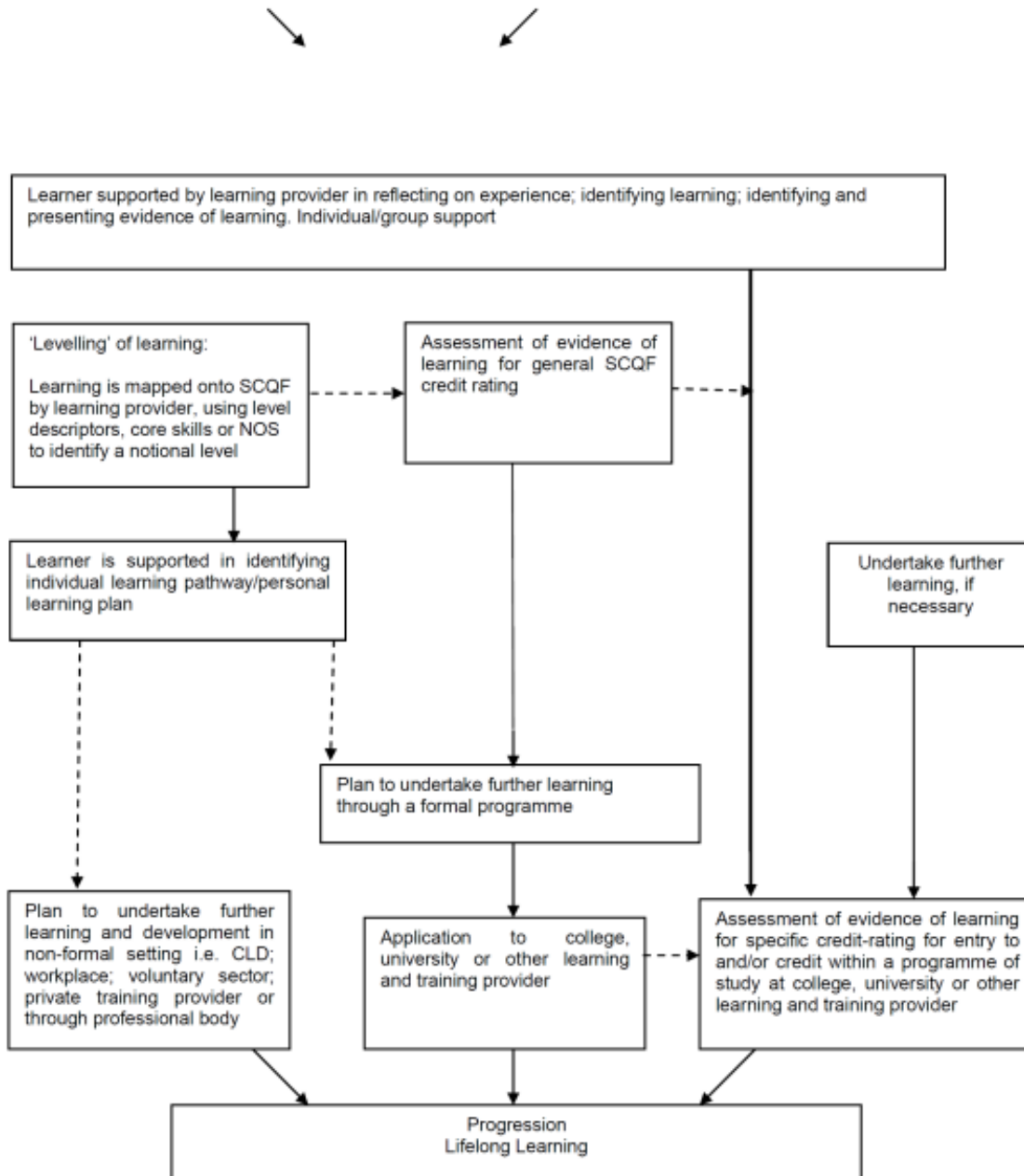- Reference is important to guide the interview

Adviser's competences
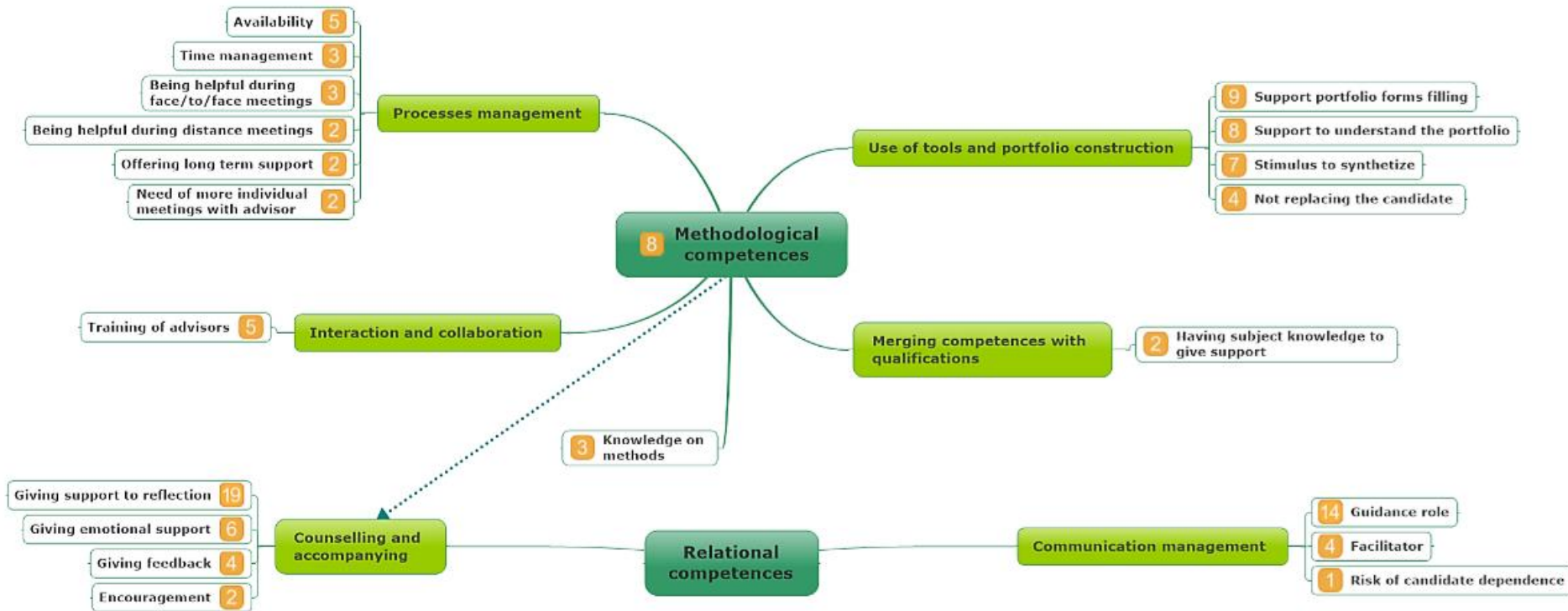
APEL

example from Scottish framework

RPL: The Learners Journey
Diagram indicating possible RPL routes for learners, based upon SCQF RPL Guidelines.

Learner supported by learning provider in reflecting on experience; identifying learning; identifying and presenting evidence of learning. Individual/group support

'Levelling' of learning:

Learning is mapped onto SCQF by learning provider, using level descriptors, core skills or NOS to identify a notional level

Assessment of evidence of learning for general SCQF credit rating

Learner is supported in identifying individual learning pathway/personal learning plan

Undertake further learning, if necessary

Plan to undertake further learning through a formal programme

Plan to undertake further learning and development in non-formal setting i.e. CLD; workplace; voluntary sector; private training provider or through professional body

Application to college, university or other learning and training provider

Assessment of evidence of learning for specific credit-rating for entry to and/or credit within a programme of study at college, university or other learning and training provider

Progression
Lifelong Learning

Origins:

- **1970s: US funded research** on how to assess and recognise ʹextra-collegiate learningʹ. APEL established by 1980s

- **1980s: UK pioneering work:**
  - Making Experience Count - first course to enable reflection on experience
  - research on how to assess APEL

- **UK favourable policy context**:
  - Council for National Academic Awards legitimisation of APEL (1986)
  - by 1990s HE credit consortia developed degree modularisation/credit
  - political emphasis on widening participation
  - 2004: Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidelines

Methodologies and benefits
for the learner:

- The APEL process **identifies** the **knowledge, skills, competences** and **behaviours** acquired through experience: they are **recognised** and given **academic value** expressed in **credits/levels**

- It transforms **subjective experience** and **tacit knowledge** into explicit **statements** of **objective learning** and **learning outcomes (LOs)**

- It is a **tool** for **professional** and **personal development**

Methodologies and benefits
for the learner:

- It **values** previous **professional** and **personal learning** as **equipollent** to academic learning
- It is **learner centred** and **enables access** to **HE**
- It **recognises** the **multiplicity** of **learning sites**
- It **consolidates** previous **learning** and **identifies** learning ′gaps′
- It is a forward-looking **reflective review** of learning
- It **enhances capability** and **self-esteem**
- It is **socially inclusive**

Methodologies for the university:

- **APEL** is the process of accrediting the **achievement of learning**, or the **outcomes** of that learning, and not just the **experience** of the activities alone. This *must* be supported by **evidence**

- **Public confidence** in the rigour of this process is important – it needs to be comparable to more traditional teaching and learning

- **HE providers** develop their own diverse but meaningful approaches to APEL: so **no UK-wide prescriptive** framework or legislation

Methodologies for the university:

- APEL practices need to conform to the generic **HE Code of Practice** that ensures quality and standards

- **QAA** sets **16 principles** in its Guidelines, such as
    - decisions on accreditation are based on academic judgement
    - process should be rigorous, clear and fair and accessible
    - all information and assessment criteria should be transparent
    - a range of assessment tools should be considered
    - assessment, polices and procedures should be scrutinised, monitored and reviewed internally and externally

See: http://www.qu.edu.qa/offices/vpcao/documents/accreditation/UK_QAA_APL.pdf
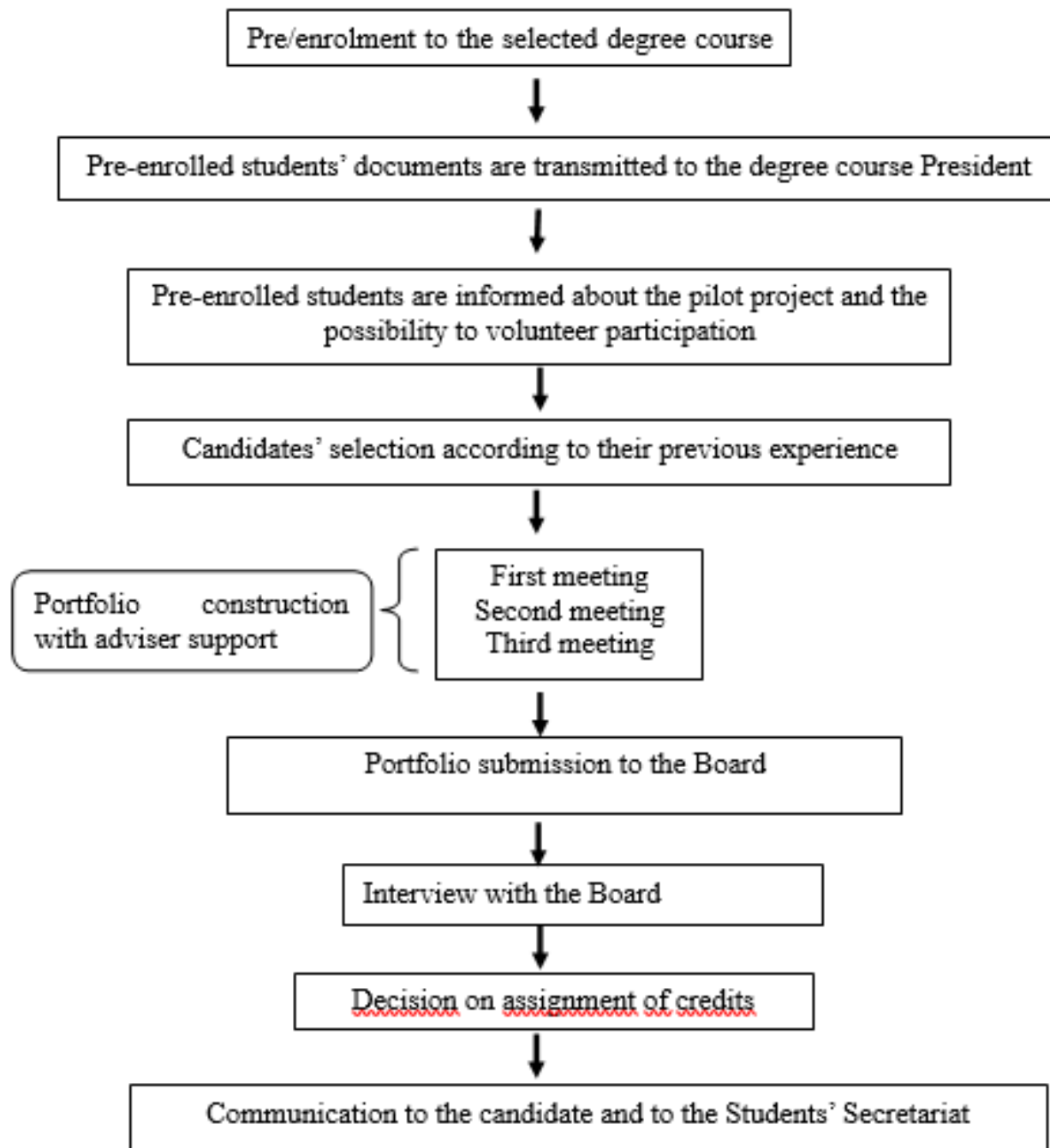
Source: Barbara Light (2015)

CHALLENGES FOR RECOGNITION

- Access, awareness and social recognition

- Fragmentation

- Financial sustainability

- Coherence

- Professionalisation of staff

- Data collection

THE UNIPD EXPERIENCE
ALIGNMENT MATRIX WHICH MATCHES DUBLIN DESCRIPTORS WITH PROGRAMME SUBJECTS

Corso di laurea in ....

EQF	Descrittori di Dublino	Attività didattiche				
		Insegnamento....	Insegnamento....	Insegnamento....	Tirocinio	Tesi
Conoscenze	**Conoscenza e capacità di comprensione** - - -					
Competenze — Abilità	**Capacità di applicare conoscenza e comprensione** - - - -					
	Autonomia di giudizio - - -					
	Abilità comunicative - - -					
	Capacità di apprendimento - - - -					

THE PROCESS

Pre/enrolment to the selected degree course

↓

Pre-enrolled students' documents are transmitted to the degree course President

↓

Pre-enrolled students are informed about the pilot project and the possibility to volunteer participation

↓

Candidates' selection according to their previous experience

↓

Portfolio construction with adviser support {
First meeting
Second meeting
Third meeting

↓

Portfolio submission to the Board

↓

Interview with the Board

↓

Decision on assignment of credits

↓

Communication to the candidate and to the Students' Secretariat
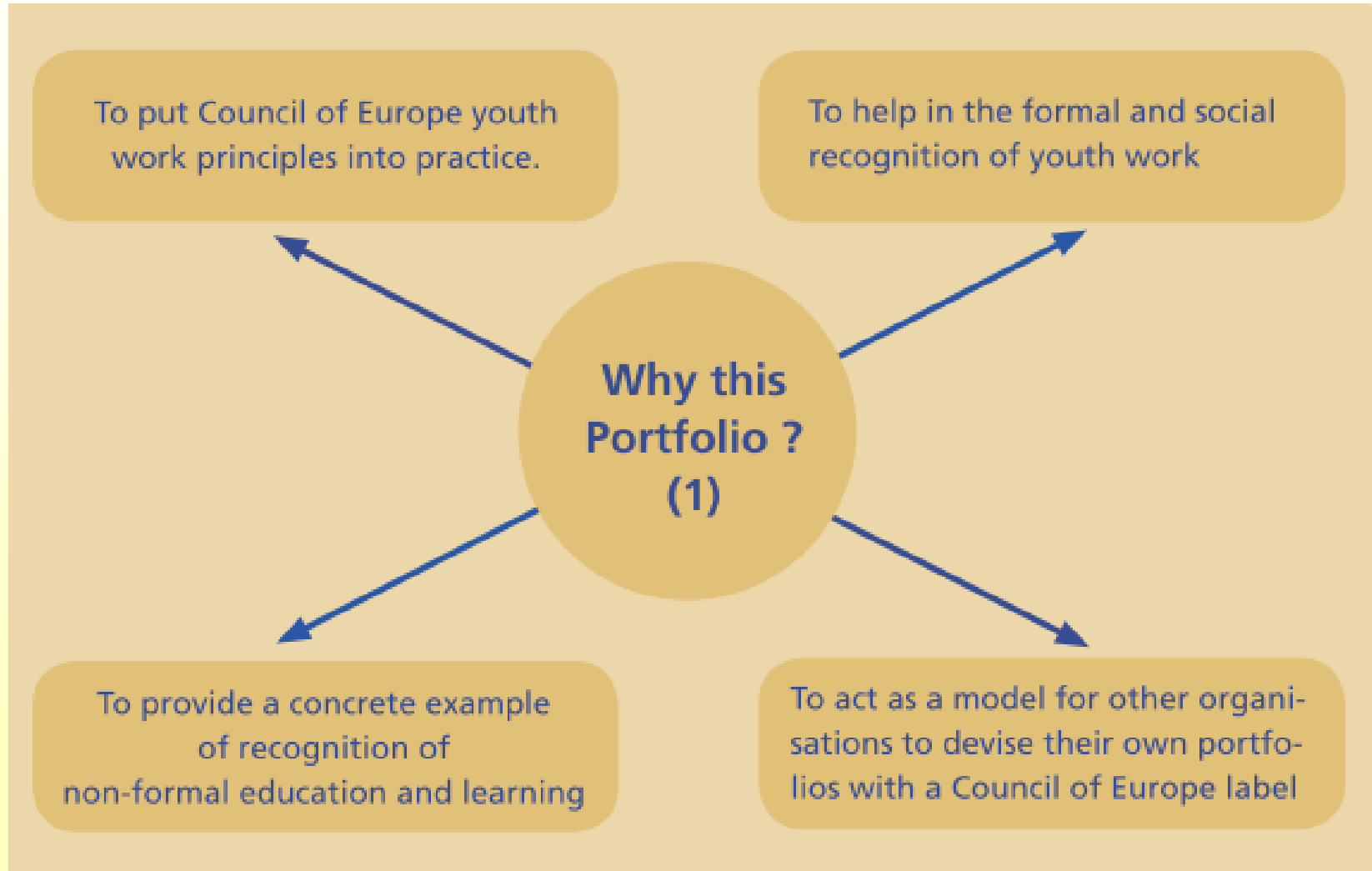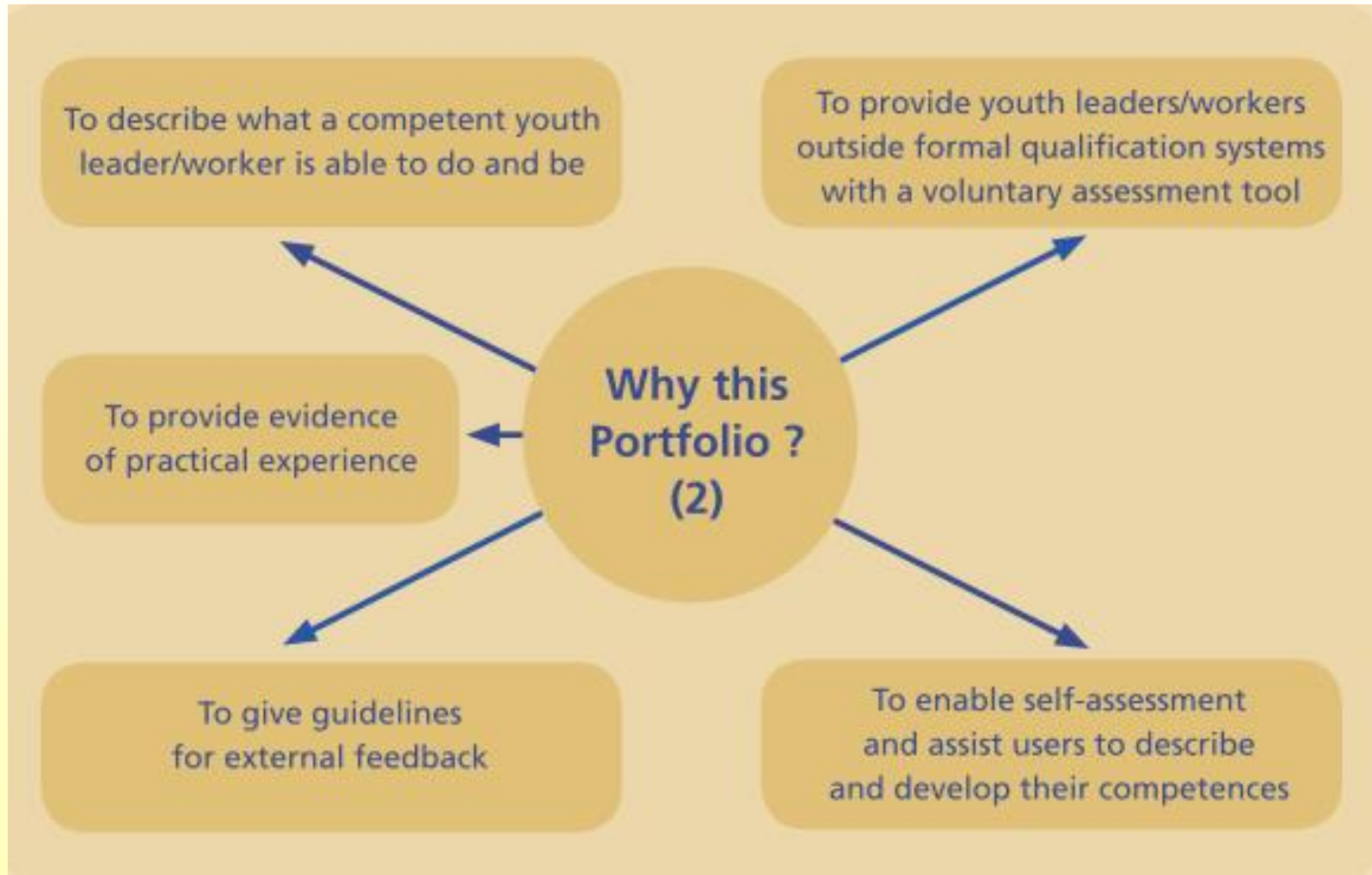
THE PORTFOLIO STRUCTURE
(with a guide for filling forms and for reflection)

1. Personal data
2. My professional and educational path
3. Summary of my path
4. My educational path (formal), summery of thesis, left or interrupted studies, formative path (informal, non-formal, e.g. courses at work, voyages, lectures…)
5. My professional path (professional experience)
6. My extra-professional path (sport, hobbies, charity work…)
7. European Languages Portfolio
8. Summary of knowledge, skills and competences acquired by professional and extra-professional experiences
9. From learning to competences in use
10. Scheme of self-evaluation about learning outcomes of the Course
11. Curriculum Vitae Europass
12. Records of documents (highlights)

European Portfolio for youth leaders and workers

To put Council of Europe youth work principles into practice.

To help in the formal and social recognition of youth work

Why this Portfolio ? (1)

To provide a concrete example of recognition of non-formal education and learning

To act as a model for other organisations to devise their own portfolios with a Council of Europe label

European Portfolio for youth leaders and workers

Let's do it!

4.4 Function: To contribute to organisational and youth policy development

The youth leader/worker is able to:

- 1. find resources and manage them;

- 2. manage others and work effectively in teams;

- 3. work for change and development within organisations;

- 4. cooperate with others to shape youth policy

Work in pairs for the competence 4.4 (p. 31). In the narrative, try to use the approach proposed by Vermersch: you have the standard as reference point, but try to start from your experience!

Youth portfolio for DARE+

PROPOSAL FOR RECOGNITION :

- Self assessment grid filled by each participant for each competence in DARE+

- Evidence based narrative of each competence (+ evidences seeking)

- Feedback from a peer

- Feedback from trainer