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(Article begins on next page)

The
of Adult **E**valuation
Education Staff

EDUEVAL Handbook

Extended Version

edited by
EDUEVAL Consortium





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of Crete



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w Warszawie



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Introduction
by Elisabetta Biffi
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The *EDUEVAL Handbook* is one of three volumes, based on the results of the EDUEVAL Project - *Evaluation for the Professional Development of Adult Education Staff*¹. The three volumes are: *EDUEVAL Curriculum* (vol. 1); *EDUEVAL How to do Guide* (vol. 2); *EDUEVAL Handbook* (vol. 3). Specifically, the *EDUEVAL Handbook* is the manual of reference for the students addressed by the EDUEVAL training proposal, presented in the *EDUEVAL Curriculum* (vol. 1).

One of the main aims of the EDUEVAL project was to contribute to the reflection on defining a professional profile of the evaluator of Adult Education (AE) staff and on the training for this profile.

The *EDUEVAL Handbook* (vol. 3) is structured in such a way as to present the concept of evaluation, offering a view of the theoretical models of evaluation of adult education staff. In addition, the manual focuses on the aims of the evaluation and on the methods and indicators of the evaluation of the work of adult education staff. This is followed by a reflection on the impact of evaluation of adult education staff,

1 *EDUEVAL - Evaluation for the Professional Development of Adult Education Staff* is a project supported by the LifeLong Learning Programme of the European Commission (Project Number: 538743-LLP-1-2013-IT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP Grant Agreement Number: 2013 3800/001/003). For more information: www.edueval.eu.

and on the ethical implications of the role of the evaluator.

As will be better specified in the handbook, the evaluation of adult education staff is a very delicate task, which requires specialized knowledge and skills that cannot be covered in full here. This volume aims at providing the main aspects for building the necessary knowledge.

2 See the project website at: www.edueval.eu.

Towards the definition of the professional profile of the evaluator of adult education staff

by Loredana Perla and Viviana Vinci³

University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy

1.1 A preliminary statement: beyond the evaluating function, towards a new professional profile

Reflecting on the *professional profile* entails, beyond the specific field where the professional operates, clearly focusing on and defining a number of elements, such as the role played, the contexts of work, the areas and sectors of relevance, the type of users of reference, the knowledge, skills and competences necessary for the profession and the professional ethical principles inspiring professional action.

The international debate on the skill profiles of educational work has highlighted the complexity of being able to reach a complete model of the procedures and methods of evaluation on this subject (Research voor Beleid, 2010, Carlsen & Irons, 2003; Jäger & Irons, 2006; Jarvis, 2009). Evaluating educational work requires a view that can penetrate the density of the processes implemented in various contexts. The very expression of *educational work* is in itself difficult to be defined and delimited as it concerns different targets and an action that takes place in varying contexts and for different purposes.

The evaluator of Adult Education (AE) staff therefore rep-

3 Loredana Perla is the author of the sub-sections 1.1, Viviana Vinci is the author of the sub-section 1.1.1.

resents a *new* professional figure for a *function* which, actually, it is not: it has been performed for some time, through heterogeneous practices and professionals which change depending on the context and, to a considerable extent, on the different European country.

The evaluation of educational work, as the EDUEVAL⁴ research results have shown, is mainly performed in two ways:

- either through ‘officially recognized’ evaluators, i.e. *professional evaluators* or certifiers of the quality of personnel belonging to bodies outside the organization, who evaluate the conformity with pre-established standards and who do not necessarily have in-depth knowledge of the educational context and of the complexity of the work processes and dynamics of the staff operating in it;
- or through ‘unofficially recognized’ evaluators, i.e. professionals from different training and professional backgrounds, with experience in the field of education and who mainly have roles of coordination (trainers, supervisors, consultants, experts). Unlike the professional evaluators of the previous point, they certainly have a wide knowledge of the contexts of adult education. However, they do not necessarily have specific training for evaluation: evaluating the staff often takes place, in this second way, through strategies which are not highly standardized and informal tools or ones which have been built up inside the work group.

There is, therefore, an *evaluating function* which is carried

4 See the *EDUEVAL Public Research Report*, available at: http://www.edueval.eu/download/pdf/2.2_Public_Research_Report.pdf.

out in a very different way depending on the professional contexts and the different European countries, oscillating between external certification and practices which are not officially recognized.

1.1.1 *The multiple competences of the evaluator: a single profession or a mix of different professionalisms?*

From surveys of the scientific contributions on the training/profile of the *evaluator* (Wilcox, King, 2014; King, Stevahn, 2015; Russ-Eft et al., 2008; Stevahn et al., 2005; Mertens, 1994; Torres, Preskill, & Piontek, 1996; Altschuld & Engle, 1994; Phillips, 1997; Brinkerhoff et al., 1983; Caron, 1993; Balotta, Righetti, Turbati & Caropreso, 2013) and from an analysis of the work on the *professional standards* of the evaluators, carried out by the most influential European and American societies of evaluation, some elements have been used in order to orient the definition of the *EDUEVAL profile of the AE staff evaluator*. The first element concerns the complexity of reaching a model for the professional profile of evaluator, starting from the absence of a univocal definition of the evaluator's competences.

Faced with a mix of recommendations and suggestions collected from guidelines and standards for evaluators focused, in particular, on professional ethical principles and on the ethics of evaluation, including rules of conduct and the values inspiring action, the professional competences of the evaluator are stated in a fairly general way. Those described refer to *families* of different co-existing competences: those related to the policies, to the programmes and to the projects to be evaluated; those relative to the specific sector in which the programme to be evaluated is included; competences relative to the evaluating research methodology; competences relative to group management and, lastly, communication and multi-

disciplinary cultural skills. These all contribute jointly to defining the professional expertise.

A second recurring element in the description of the profile of the evaluator is the combination of skills closely related to the context of evaluation with inter-personal skills, common to the profile of the evaluator and other *practices of consulting and care of individuals*, therefore counselling, training and supervision: for example empathic, listening and inter-personal skills with users, clients and stakeholders. Another association that emerges concerns the profile of the evaluator and that of the *researcher*, who both have in common multiple and flexible skills which include the ability to choose, adapt and conceive of models and methodologies of evaluation depending on the context, the users and the resources available. At stake there is a dimension of interpreting, reading, listening to and understanding the context and the processes enacted, which leads both the evaluator and the researcher to constantly *put their judgement to the test*, to continuously negotiate their interpretations and a continuous professional updating which never comes to an end⁵.

5 The point of the question could appear to be summarized in a *provocative* question which started the reflection of a work group in Italy on the figure of the evaluator (cf. “Profession Project” edited by Daniela Oliva, Riepilogo 21 gennaio 2008; cf. activity of the AIV group, <http://www.valutazioneitaliana.it>): *Is the evaluator a professional or a figure who has developed a series of competences which have come into being in different professions (trainer, psychologist, consultant, sociologist, researcher etc.)?*

This question has led to the reflection by the Italian AIV work group over the years to defining not an individual professional profile of the evaluator but no fewer than four clearly distinct profiles. They talk of the *methodologist* of evaluation, or *coordinator* or “manager” of evaluation. There is also the *sector expert* or the *technician of evaluation*. Thus, it is not only about an “evaluator” but rather a “team of evaluation” as

As Balotta, Righetti, Turbati & Caropreso (2013) effectively emphasize:

“on the one hand there is a tool box and on the other there is a process which has its own specificities and characteristics: the capacity to control both these aspects and above all the possibility of balancing the ability to evaluate with knowledge of the intrinsic characteristics of the process in action, become the point of excellence where the distinction between good evaluators and mere technicians of evaluation can be made. This is where an important part of “good evaluation” is played out and those with the responsibility of “training evaluators” ask themselves questions about this specific topic” (p. 275).

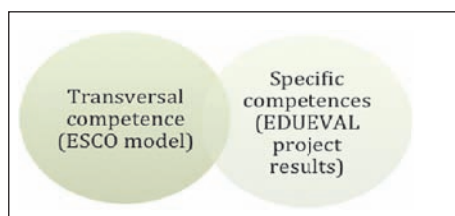
In the study of the profile of the evaluator of AE staff and in designing the current training model (cf. *EDUEVAL Curriculum*, vol. 1, and *EDUEVAL How to do Guide*, vol. 2), the theoretical frame which considered the competence of educational work as a “complex form of action through which the tasks and projects characterizing it are carried out” was taken into consideration (Harré, 2000, p. 74). The work of defining the Curriculum also received the extensive contribution offered, from the 1980s, by research on what are known as *transversal* skills (Rey, 1996) – such as, for example, problem-solving, management of group work, creativity, inter-personal skills, coping strategies in anxiogenic situations

through different professional skills it is possible to combine the double expertise, the technical/evaluation one with that relative to the specificities of the context which is the object of evaluation (in our case, adult education).

– which are essential in building up the profile of the evaluator of educational work and, therefore, at the basis of curriculating the training path.

This work of immersion and recognition of works on the evaluator profile has allowed building up a detailed picture to use as a starting point, to bring into focus the complex identity and the heterogeneous competences of the evaluator of AE staff.

Lastly, the classification proposed by the ESCO model was taken into consideration in designing the Curriculum. Therefore, the profile of the evaluator of AE staff can be defined using both the transversal competences of the ESCO model and the specific competences identified from the results of the EDUEVAL project.



Profile of the AE staff evaluator

EDUEVAL profile of the evaluator of adult education staff	
<i>Who s/he is and the roles s/he holds</i>	The evaluation of AE staff is a high level professional who operates in adult education, using specific evaluation methods and tools aimed at improving the educational work of the staff. The roles of the evaluator in adult education contexts are multiple and include – as well as those more specifically on evaluation – others of management, training and coordination such as management of the service, staff training, selection of human resources, supervision, inspection and consulting.

<i>What s/he does – activities, methods and tools</i>	The professional activities of the evaluator of AE staff include: - planning, implementing and managing the evaluation of the educational and training actions of the staff operating in AE services; - building up plans and tools of evaluation and self-evaluation; - collecting, analysing and interpreting data; - documenting and communicating the results of the evaluation; - accompanying and planning follow-up actions and redesigning the educational work of AE staff; - supporting collaboration of the staff with the local area and the interlocutors/stakeholders involved in various capacities in the evaluation processes of the AE services. The evaluator of AE staff uses qualitative and quantitative methods and tools to carry out these activities. Those which must be mastered in particular for the evaluation of the staff – according to the triangulated EDUEVAL model (cf. sections below) – are: - methods and tools of observation, checklists and evaluation rubrics; - methods and tools for recording quantitative data such as surveys and questionnaires; - methods and tools for recording qualitative data, used in the evaluation and self-evaluation activities, promoting the group dimension (the object of evaluation is the staff, not the individual operator), including focus groups, case studies, brainstorming, portfolios, audits and professional/documentary writing by the staff. It is also important for the evaluator of AE staff to have knowledge about: - quality certification standards and systems; - legislation on the adult education services where s/he is to operate; - the specific characteristics of the context, the object of evaluation and of the services it networks with in the local area; - theories, models and meanings of evaluation; - leadership and how to manage a group and conflicts - communication, interpersonal, organizational and institutional processes, which underpin the evaluation of AE staff.
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<i>Where s/he operates (in which services)</i>	The evaluator of AE staff operates in different areas of the social sector, including education, cultural development, mental health, family, social and legal, vocational training, community development and prevention, carrying out activity in multiple services aimed to promote adult educational care and education: - education, literacy and second chance services; - intercultural integration services; - services for drug addicts; - services for the disabled; - mental health services; - prison services; - parent/family services; - services for the promotion of cultural activities; - services promoting prevention; - personal care services. The evaluator of AE staff must have specific and transversal knowledge, skills and competences – didactic, educational, methodological, doximological, psychological and sociological – at the same time, which allow the evaluator to act with rigour, autonomy and professional awareness in multiple situations and contexts.
<i>With which users s/he works</i>	The evaluator of AE staff works with the staff that operate in adult education, therefore mainly with groups of teachers, educators, trainers and operators who, in various ways, operate in the services mentioned above. The users of reference, therefore, do not concern the individual operators or the users directly (who are at the <i>first level</i> of services and educational bodies/institutions – in this case, adults –) but the staff, the work groups who are at the <i>second level</i>.
<i>Professional ethical principles</i>	The professional action of the evaluator of AE staff must be guided by deep professional ethical principles, that can guarantee transparency, impartiality and rigour in the evaluation processes, such as: - integrity, coherence, respect, responsibility, emotive balance and self-awareness, open-mindedness, social conscience (<i>ethical attitudes</i>, cf. <i>EDUEVAL Guidelines</i>); - knowledge of the cultural framework of evaluation, transparency, respect of privacy (<i>professional ethics: principles and advice</i>, <i>ibid.</i>); - ensuring the whole evaluation process, providing clear indicators, creating trust, interpreting the explicit and implicit dynamics, providing effective feedback (<i>competences and skills</i>, <i>ibid.</i>); - taking into consideration the complexity of evaluation, interpreting the context promoting organization and professional well-being, taking into consideration the local area and external interlocutors (<i>political and social aims</i>, <i>ibid.</i>);

	- paying attention to the risks linked with roles that are not clearly defined, misunderstandings, manipulation and influence of one's personal background (<i>risks to manage</i>, <i>ibid.</i>).
<i>Training and professional paths</i>	The training of the evaluator of AE staff must meet two areas of competence: - a basic one, following an educational qualification, as required by the regulations of the national context - a specialized one, on evaluation. In addition to specific training, a compulsory requisite for practising the profession of the evaluator of AE staff is having substantial professional experience in the field of adult education, both in the roles of educator/operator and in second level roles, i.e. of staff coordination.
<i>Specific professional competences</i>	<i>Being able to analyse the context and the demand for evaluation</i> - collecting information on the context of adult education; - consulting documents of the service or body/institution (charter of services, documentation etc.); - consulting direct (operators of the service and/or body/institutions) and indirect (stakeholders) witnesses; - observing the context; - identifying the specificities, constraints and resources of the context; - studying the feasibility and sustainability of the evaluation process; - using mixed strategies (listening, conducting groups, exploring representations) to support the operators in clarifying a demand for evaluation (optimization of work processes, well-being of the staff, improvement of the internal dynamics of the organizations, communication with the stakeholders etc.); - understanding the implicit and explicit expectations of the staff and of the organization; - working out interpretative hypotheses of the need expressed by users. <i>Being able to plan the evaluation</i> - collecting bibliographic or research material as a support for planning the evaluation; - collecting all the data that has emerged from the exploratory phase and hypothesizing the evaluation questions;

	- selecting theoretical models and tools, approaches and tools to be used coherently with the specificities of the context and the data collected; - designing an evaluation plan, identifying the resources necessary and estimating the costs; - indicating the objectives and the results expected of the evaluation; - organizing the phases of work and a time schedule for the activities; - building up evaluation devices using techniques and tools that are already known or adapting them specifically to the context; - identifying any risks, times for monitoring and redesigning one's work. <i>Being able to collect, analyse and interpret the data of the evaluation</i> - applying the methodologies, techniques and tools included in the evaluation plan in the context; - collecting the data that emerged from applying the data collection devices; - triangulating the data obtained with different strategies; - mixing different data analysis techniques; - leading the staff by assigning tasks and defining roles and leadership to the members of staff in the evaluation and self-evaluation processes; - supporting the operators of the staff in the different phases of the evaluation and self-evaluation process; - identifying any criticalities and making modifications; - interpreting the data of the evaluation.
	<i>Documentation and communication of the evaluation report</i> - preparing a report on the outcome of the evaluation process; - communicating the outcomes of the evaluation report to the staff; - using different and contextualized methods of documentation, languages and styles of presentation with respect to the specificity of the context; - identifying the findings that have emerged from the report and motivating them; - negotiating interpretations emerging from the report with the staff; - remaining in communication with the client/organization;

	- managing and containing any dysfunctional dynamics and internal conflict in the staff, after returning the results of the evaluation report. <i>Follow-up and implementing the evaluation plan</i> - communicating with stakeholders and local area networks; - preparing recommendations and plans for the improvement of the processes which have been evaluated; - providing suggestions for the autonomous use of self-evaluation tools by the staff. <i>Management of the evaluation process</i> - monitoring the evaluation plan; - evaluating one's own work; - observing ethical principles and guidelines* for evaluators.
<i>Transversal competences selected by ESCO</i>	<i>1. Application of knowledge</i> 1.1 Numeracy skills 1.2 Information and communication 1.3 Health, safety and the workplace environment <i>2. Attitudes and values at work</i> 2.1 Attitudes 2.2 Values <i>3. Social skills</i> <i>4. Thinking skills</i> <i>5. Language and communication</i>

The profile of the evaluator of adult education staff is thus very complex. This figure has to have specific knowledge on evaluation (models and theories, methods, procedures, stan-

★ See the *EDUEVAL Guidelines* available at: http://www.edueval.eu/download/pdf/brochure_guidelines_def.pdf

dards and indicators, tools), the contexts of adult education (legislation, users, local areas) and educational work with adults (characteristics, specificities, structure, dynamics). Above all, the evaluator must be able to translate this knowledge into competent action which, whilst respecting a particular ethic, can increase the level of awareness of adult education staff on the educational work done in their particular contexts. This effectively seems the condition to promote the development of adult education staff and consequently the services of adult education. The evaluation model developed by EDUEVAL highlights the areas in which the evaluator must have full expertise

The EDUEVAL triangulated model of evaluation

by Viviana Vinci

University of Bari Aldo Moro, Italy

The evaluation of the work of adult education staff is a complex task, full of meanings, with many variables – linked to the mission of the organization, the work styles of the operators and the internal dynamics of the staff – which involve multiple aspects concerning community, professional and personal development, from a micro and a macro, individual and system point of view. Many adult education contexts can be defined as *services to the person*, characterized by a number of *specific features* (Bezzi, 2000; Pandolfi, 2012; Barbanotti & Iacobino, 1998) including, by way of example, the *intangibility* and *immateriality* of the services and activities, the *negotiability* and *flexibility* of the interaction between operator and user (characterized by *direct* communication and relations, by *emotive involvement* and responsibility of the operators), the *limitation of resources*, the *individualization of the action*, *legislation*, the co-presence of *different professional profiles* such as teachers, educators, healthcare operators, volunteers, trainers, quality managers, mentors, tutors, coordinators and administrators.

This heterogeneity and complexity reveals the difficulty of identifying a single model of evaluating educational work. There is no theoretical framework that can comprehend, from a univocal perspective, the complexity in the contexts and in the professional profiles involved in adult education, in which indicators and areas of professional competence that relate to different dimensions exist. The very process of evaluation has multiple objects and references: for example the context, the

processes, the results, the attainment of objectives, the respect of pre-established standards, the dynamics between operators, the improvement of the organization, the well-being of the staff and individual performance are all evaluated.

In building up a model of evaluation of educational work, the complexity and heterogeneity of the theories, practices and tools of evaluation emerging – whether explicitly or implicitly – in the professional context have to be taken into consideration⁷.

Starting from these presuppositions, the model of evaluation of adult education staff is conceived in such a way as to emphasize the *subjective* (self-evaluation), *objective* (external evaluation) and *intersubjective* (evaluation of the context) dimensions of the educational processes (cf. section 3.3.1 *Levels of evaluation*, for further information), considered in their complexity and richness.

The methodological principle underpinning this model is *triangulation* (Denzin, 1989; Greene, 2007; Hussein, 2009). A complex reality characterized by multiple dimensions, like educational work, cannot be evaluated from a single point of observation of the phenomenon but needs several perspectives of analysis and complementary points of view.

Triangulation is borrowed from the language of mathematics, as a technique which allows calculating distances between points taking advantage of the properties of triangles. It becomes a typical principle of qualitative methodologies, i.e. a technique that allows appreciating the properties of a phenomenon by comparing several representations of the phenomenon itself, which can be obtained from different points of view, subjects, tools and perspectives of analysis. In

7 On evaluation practices see the results of the first phase of the EDUEVAL project, in the *EDUEVAL Public Research Report*; for the theories and tools of evaluation, see the following sections.

particular, according to Denzin (1989, 2010), the concept of triangulation consists of the possibility of studying the same object of research through:

- different theoretical perspectives (*theory triangulation*);
- different methods (*methodological triangulation*, in turn divided into triangulation “*within method*” and triangulation “*between method*”. In the former case, the same method is used when the unit of analysis is multidimensional. In the questionnaire, for example, several questions are asked on the same subject. In the latter case, different methods are combined – for example a questionnaire and interview – and used either “in parallel” or “in series”, i.e. connecting each method to the previous one);
- different researchers (*investigator triangulation*);
- different research data (*data triangulation*).

There are different ways of speaking about triangulation and include different research techniques used by the same researcher, or several researchers who use the same research technique or even several researchers who use several research techniques (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993). The aim is to “obtain a general convergence of the results obtained and to make the complex reality of social facts as clear as possible” (Trobia, 2005, p. 42).

Triangulation in research is a pivotal tool to get to know and understand complex concepts, with a polymorphous nature, which require multiple points of view (Castoldi, 2012, p. 175), a combination of perspectives, tools and data necessary to describe it, overcoming the reductionisms inherent in dichotomies and in the descriptive categories of a phenomenon – quality/quantity, auto/hetero, outsider/insider, justification/discovery, standardization/flexibility, verification/exploration, nomothetic/ idiographic – (cf. Cipriani, Cipolla & Losacco 2013, p. 238).

<i>Comparison between quantitative, qualitative methodologies and the mixed method</i> (Cirpiani, Cipolla, Losacco 2013, p. 238)			
	<i>Quantitative methods</i>	<i>Qualitative methods</i>	<i>Mixed Method</i>
<i>Research design</i>	Standardized	Destandardized	Variable
<i>Hypotheses worked out</i>	Ex-ante	In progress	Back and forward
<i>Primacy</i>	Object	Subject	Co-
<i>Subject/object relationship</i>	Static	Dynamic	One-to-one
<i>Object</i>	Samples	Individual cases Experimental groups	Multi-factor approach
<i>Perspective</i>	Outsider	Insider	Multiple perspectives
<i>Researcher's role</i>	Low involvement	High involvement	Co-involvement
<i>Researcher's attitude</i>	Methodological rigour	Intuition/empathy	Flexibility
<i>Approach</i>	Justification	Discovery	Triangulation
<i>Objective</i>	Explanation	Comprehension	Interpretation
<i>Data treatment</i>	Measurement	Classification	Digitalization
<i>Surveying dynamic</i>	Standardization	Flexibility	Operative pluralism
<i>Orientation towards</i>	Verification	Exploration	Eclecticism
<i>Nature of the results</i>	Nomothetic Confirming	Idiographic Descriptive	For contextual and limited reference

The decision to use three perspectives (self-evaluation, external evaluation and evaluation of the context) is inspired by the *trifocal* view, which Pellerey (2004) initiated to understand *competence*, a complex construct that requires three levels of observation which can be referred to as the subjective, inter-subjective and objective dimensions. Some extracts about Pellerey's trifocal view, recalled by Castoldi (2012, pp. 176) can be quoted:

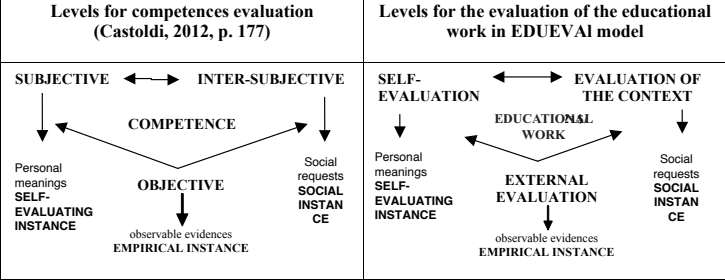
The *subjective dimension* refers to the personal meanings attributed by the subject to his learning experience: the meaning assigned to the operative task, on which to show personal competence and the perception of adequacy in dealing with it, the resources to use and the patterns of thought to activate. It implies

a self-evaluating instance connected to the world with which the individual observes and judges his learning experience and his ability to meet the tasks, required by the context of reality in which he acts.

The *intersubjective dimension* refers to the implicit or explicit system of expectations that the social context expresses in relation to the ability of the subject to adequately meet the task required; it therefore concerns the people who are involved, in various capacities, in the situation in which the competence and all their expectations and evaluations expressed appear (...). The intersubjective dimension therefore implies a social request connected with the way in which the subjects belonging to the social community, in which the competence appears, perceive and judge the behaviour enacted.

The *objective dimension* refers to the observable evidence which attests the performance of the subject and his results, in relation to the task assigned and, in particular to the knowledge and skills that the appearance of the competence requires. It implies an empirical instance connected with surveying the subject's behaviour in relation to the task assigned and the operative context, in which he acts, in observable and measurable terms.

The theoretical structure proposed here focuses on educational work (instead of “competence”) as the complex construct to be evaluated through a subjective (self-evaluation), objective (external evaluation) and inter-subjective (evaluation of the context) level. The proposed structure of evaluation of educational work therefore requires the simultaneous activation of three dimensions and of a “trifocal” view, that can make up the overall picture, using specific and different tools.



Before concentrating better on the three levels of evaluation considered in the EDUEVAL model⁸, the following section intends to understand the heterogeneity of the *theories* and *theoretic models* underpinning the evaluation of educational work⁹.

8 These will be the subject of specific in-depth study in the later sections of the *EDUEVAL Handbook, vol. 3*, focused on the methods, the levels, the criteria and the tools of evaluation.

9 The EDUEVAL work group started from here to bring a *triangulated perspective* into focus.

The evaluation of adult education staff

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In order to contextualize the EDUEVAL model of evaluation of adult education staff, the plurality of theoretical approaches underpinning the *evaluation object*, conceptualized as a powerful regulator of the functioning of systems, should be understood first of all. It is based on the collection and scientific interpretation of data and oriented at improving the processes and products of a system.

To be extremely concise, the international debate on evaluation will be referred to, starting from a tripartite pattern (Stame, 2001) which groups together evaluation studies in three main approaches, describing, for each approach, both the main meanings and models of evaluation that emerge and how the evaluation of adult staff is (or is not) considered. The intention, taking this tripartite model as reference, is to understand and refer to those models of evaluation, the characteristics of which appear more coherent with the requirements of the evaluation of AE staff.

10 Loredana Perla is the author of sub-sections 3.1 and 3.1.1; Viviana Vinci is the author of sub-sections 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4.

3.1 The theoretical framework : theories and models of evaluation

The meanings and functions of the act of evaluation are multiple and fundamentally vary between two poles, *measurement* and *evaluation*, from which different approaches stem with different considerations of evaluation, as “measurement”, “estimate”, “appreciation”, “comprehension”, and which refer, with a different importance, to criteria such as determining the results obtained and the efficacy, efficiency and the performance of the object being evaluated. The three main approaches of evaluation, focused differently on one or more dimensions of those described, are summarized below in graphic form (in a table and a figure).

Table The approaches to evaluation (Stame, 2001)

	Positivist-experimental	Pragmatist-quality	Constructivist
Benchmark	The objectives	The standards	What the <i>stakeholders</i> define “success”
Authors	Hyman, Suchman, Campbell, Rossi and Freeman, Chen	Scriven, Wholey, Donabedian, NPM (New Public Management) tradition	Stake, Stufflebeam, Guba and Lincoln, Cronbach, Patton, Fetterman, Hirshman, Tendlar
Questions	Do the results correspond to the objectives?	Do the results correspond to the criterion of quality?	What happened? Is what happened good?
Direction of the investigation	<i>Top down</i>	<i>Top down</i>	<i>Bottom up</i>
Attitude towards values	Relativism: the values are those of the programme	The evaluator judges with respect to the values (his own or of the existing concept of quality)	The values are those of the <i>stakeholders</i> : at times they agree, at other times they are conflicting
Theory	With good planning all the effects can be foreseen	There is a concept of quality to aspire to in every situation	Reality is richer than can be foreseen; the importance of unexpected events

Main method of investigation	Experiments and quasi-experiments	Scriven's "logic of evaluation"; multicriteria analysis	Comparative analysis; exploration; participated analysis
Techniques	Survey	Analysis of user satisfaction; opinions of the experts	Case studies; interviews, focus groups, observations
When and where it is normally applied	In programmes; in European Structural Funds; wherever there are objectives with respect to which it is possible to identify means and results (social and work policies etc.)	In training and education institutions for adults; in cultural and literacy centres; in services (health, education etc.); in university evaluation; in charters of services (standards of quality); in programmes of public sector reform	In innovative situations; in pilot projects etc.
Area of use	Instrumental for political decision	Instrumental for the management and functioning of the administration	Fact-finding; <i>empowerment</i>
Theoretical problems	The black box: why should there be this result?	What is quality? How are values formed?	Where to start?
Problems of empirical research	The objectives are not clear: there is no data	How are standards of quality fixed?	Where to look?
Answers-Solutions	Analysis of evaluability; taxonomic evaluation, conceptual maps, evaluation based on theory: Weiss, Toulemonde	If there are no standards of quality, use those from a comparison with other situations or with one's own past. Involve the users in defining quality	One thing leads to another; the reflective practice of the evaluator
Advantages	It helps to plan better	It helps for good management	There is something to learn for all the stakeholders

3.1.1 The *positivist-experimental* approach

In the *positivist-experimental* approach, evaluation is understood as the analysis and verification of the attainment of pre-established objectives. Alongside methodological rigour and therefore validity and reliability, the coherence, pertinence and neutrality of the evaluator are important in the models with this approach. Particular emphasis is given to *measurement*, the *quantitative* dimension¹¹. The conditions necessary

11 In practice, this approach coincides with the logic of examinations and tests.

for an evaluation understood as “measurement” are very careful planning of the objectives – including classified taxonomically in terms of observable behaviour – and reliable tools to analyse the expected results. The resulting evaluation model is of a *rationalist* type (Galliani, 2014, p. 28), in which evaluation is associated with the ability to foresee – owing to clear planning of objectives – not only the outcomes of the training process but also of the possible changes/improvements. This approach is affected by a certain methodological rigidity and is not always able to reconcile *grey area* variables.

This approach includes *measurement* models and *goal-oriented* models, which have been applied almost exclusively in scholastic contexts. Some procedures and tools (questionnaire) have also been borrowed from the pragmatist-quality approach and then applied to the evaluation of educational actions.

“*Measurement*” models (authors: Galton, Wundt, Binet & Simon): according to these models, evaluation and measurement are synonymous. The evaluator takes on the role of a technician who has to suitably record, with procedures that are mostly quantitative, all the variables necessary for the evaluation. These are models which can be situated at the dawn of docimology (dating back to the 1950s and 60s) but still have extensive influence, in the form of procedures which use psychometric techniques of measuring performances, objective tests of profit and in general all the tests that aim at reducing the subjectivity of the evaluator. This traditional concept of evaluation (evaluate the product, measure and select) was not to be challenged until the 1970s, but it is nevertheless still used, especially in schools¹². The theoretical frameworks, which form a background to these models, are those of studies on psychometrics and experimental pedagogy.

12 For example the international PISA objective tests.

Goal-oriented models (author: R. Tyler): This focuses on the comparison between goals and results (with the adoption of procedures of checking in progress). Resumed by B.S. Bloom (1956), who formulated a taxonomy of the cognitive behaviour expected from the learning subject, this model understands evaluation as *measurement through tests of difference* (between expected goals and behaviour). Initiated in the United States with the precise aim of revising school curricula and identifying ways of evaluation that could play down spontaneous behaviour, which had emerged in the innovative school experiments of the New Schools movement, it has been applied in the training context only with reference to the procedures of instructional evaluation of formal learning skills.

3.1.2 The *pragmatist of quality* approach

The *pragmatist of quality* approach, on the other hand, stresses the dimension of the comparison and definition of standards and criteria, conceiving of educational evaluation “as *management of the organizational procedures* to guarantee attaining the training standards defined inside or outside the system” (Galliani, 2014, p. 31). The implied evaluation model is of a *functionalist* type, in which evaluation takes on a supporting role for the *decision-makers* and meets the external requests of the *stakeholders*.

In the models that can be ascribed to this approach, particular significance is given to the opinion (and therefore to the “voice” of the different players involved in the evaluation process). The risk of these models is that of self-referentialism and being anchored to indicators established only in the system where the evaluation takes place.

This approach includes various models, such as *Company-Wide Quality Control*, *Goal-free evaluation*, the CAF model and the Servqual model.

Company-Wide Quality Control Model: this came into being in the United States in the first half of the last century and was perfected in Japan in the corporate context. It has the aim of identifying a managerial strategy and a culture that can sustain competition in quality and through quality. *Company-Wide Quality Control*, by shifting the axis of evaluation from the outcomes to the processes (of transforming incoming resources into “products”), is characterized by the central role assigned to some factors deemed essential to achieve quality: the context the company belongs to (with its system of relations and people); the definition and the clear attribution of roles and tasks to the different players in the system; agreement on the formative aims by all the subjects involved in the process; institutionalized innovation; a system rewarding personal commitment; constant attention to satisfying the user, i.e. *customer satisfaction* and the production of data for both internal and external control. By retrieving the whole contribution of the comparative and measuring tradition of evaluation (Tyler, Provus, Fisher), for the first time this model focuses attention on the “black-box” of the training path, i.e. on the black box of actions between the objectives and the outcomes of the path. Quality is divided into *expected quality*, including all the needs expressed by the client; *designed quality*, i.e. all the processes and outcomes expected in relation to the expectations of the client and the organization; *produced quality*, i.e. all the characteristics of the product and of the service delivered; *perceived quality*, i.e. all the user’s representations about the service or the product delivered. In its radical form, that expressed by T.Q.C. (*Total quality control*) or T.Q. (*Total Quality*) control, the model defines “negative quality” as a *non-conformity* or, more in general, any negative shift of the performance of the product or of the service with respect to the expectations of the users, whilst any positive shift with respect to these expectations is defined “positive quality”. “Competition” is thus played out around the minimization of “negative” quality” until

it is reduced to “zero” and the maximization of the “positive quality”, especially that perceived by the user. The *process quality* is considered as something more than the *product quality*: the former is defined the “means” to obtain the result, the latter is only “one of the results” (efficacy), as the other results are *improved efficiency* (minimum costs and time of production) and the *increased flexibility* (ability to adapt rapidly to change). Alongside these models, there is one which was given great emphasis, particularly in the early 1990s: that of “Quality defined by standards”¹³, and which was by some considered irreconcilable with the previous ones. The standard was developed to protect the interest of the “client” and – the sole point of contact of this model with the others – the culture and the practice of quality are seen from the user’s perspective. Unlike the other models, however, which theorize an idea of quality inspired by *proactivity*, i.e. aiming for continuous improvement, the model of “Quality defined by standards” theorizes an idea of quality linked to the need for *control* and *certification of conformity with predefined standards*.

Evaluation in these models is therefore of two types:

1. *Evaluation for the purpose of improvement (or self-evaluation)*
2. *Evaluation for the purpose of control*

Through *self-evaluation*, which represents the central element of the evaluative procedure, it is the company (not a

13 The family of “standards” for quality came into being in the military field with the aim of guaranteeing the quality of the supplies and was subsequently extended to the space, nuclear and energy fields and in general to the vast area of purchase transactions regulated by a contract. In the extensive history of standards, three different generations corresponding to three different approaches to the subject of the quality of organizational systems can be identified (Perla, 2004).

client or an external body) that intends to evaluate itself. The term self-evaluation, however, must not give rise to misinterpretations: the company must not express opinions of value on itself, but make users and players speak and, above all, *be able to listen*.

Evaluation for the purpose of control, on the other hand, is of the “external” type and, whilst having as its objective the improvement of quality, acts through *accreditation* and *certification*, promoting comparison with a system of standards and competition between different subjects through *ranking* (i.e. the different positioning in a classification of merit). Usually, the two types of evaluation reach *certification* and *accreditation*¹⁴. In this way, evaluation provides an explicit and public recognition of the quality levels ascertained (which can consist of, for example, granting funding or admission to a public tender). The evaluation model, in this case, has the task of predetermining the requisites unanimously deemed necessary (*agreed standards*) to guarantee the desired levels of quality, which companies must necessarily possess in order to be accredited.

All the *standards* taken as a whole represent the “minimum threshold” of accreditation, which the companies can supersede but never disregard, on pain of losing their accreditation.

There are three essential aspects of a system of certification and accreditation: the presence of standards of quality/quantity (*agreed standards*); *cyclical evaluation* and the *published statement*.

Wishing to summarize, whilst improvement evaluation is

14 A definition of accreditation that is exemplary in its clarity is taken from the CRE-Lisbon document: *Accreditation is a formal, published statement regarding the quality of an institution or a programme, following a cyclical evaluation based on agreed standards*. Source Ministry of Education and Universities, Final report by the “Accreditation of courses of study” working group, June 2001, p. 1.

characterized as a dynamic process, as it tends to analyse/point out the weak and strong points of a process, in order to identify their causes and provide indications in the direction of change, certification and accreditation are “static” procedures as their objective is to state the existence of a conformity with respect to a standard. This model has been very successful and is widely used in the evaluation of organizational contexts of public and private companies, schools and universities and social education.

As an evaluation framework for AE staff, the model presents both strengths and weaknesses.

The *strong points* include: an interpretation of quality as a dynamic construct and not as a universal parameter (the culture of quality gives priority to the design/evaluation more than to the control; to the process-efforts relationship rather than to that of objectives-results; it is built up in time and evolves according to the personal and material investments that an organization can offer); the attention to the users of the service/product; the importance assigned to the processes and to working out a method which makes improvement faster; making the most of the “human capital” and personal commitment and qualities; incentives on results; investment in innovation; the organization as a strategic variable of improvement (educational management).

The *weak points* include: the concrete risk of a mechanistic interpretation of educational work: the quality system was created for companies and has to be adapted with critical intelligence to the context of educational relations, processes and products; an economistic vision of quality, which leads to excessive dependence on the “third pole”, i.e. the *market* and which is based on the principle of competition and on the continuous improvement of the service/product in order to “dominate” the latter; the interpretation of quality as a “competitive strategic variable” and not as a value in itself; “complexity”: the efficacy of evaluation lies in succeeding in

involving all the members of the AE staff but also, contextually, the other variables of the context, including the stakeholders.

Goal-free evaluation model (author M. Scriven 1967, 1991, 2007): the syntagm “goal-free evaluation” is an extreme position where it is better for the external evaluator not to know the goals of the project and the objectives of the planning, in order not to narrow his vision and to better investigate the effective outcomes of the process, rather than those planned. The investigation concentrates on the activities carried out, on the effects produced and on the overall impact of the programme, evaluated not in relation to the objectives of the project but according to their relevance and significance from a social point of view. For Scriven, evaluation is understood as attributing value to a programme, project, product, performance: it is the process that can determine “merit” (the quality of the object evaluated in accordance with the specific standards of the sector concerned), “worth” (i.e. the value connected with the benefits of the sector concerned) and “value” (i.e. the coherence between the intervention carried out and the needs that originated it) (Torre, 2010, p. 14). Scriven states the importance of global evaluation focused on the multi-dimensional nature of the evaluatee.

There are several aspects worthy of note in his model and we will refer to them by points.

- Having identified two of the most important functions of evaluation, initially coined by Scriven in relation to the “social” evaluation of a programme of development and then successfully “imported” them into the field of educational/ training action: the *formative* function and the *summative* function of evaluation. In Scriven’s original interpretation, the former, i.e. the *formative* function, has to be understood as support and progressive (and improving)

construction of a project of development that is increasingly suitable for the need of the user. The *summative* function, on the other hand, is exactly the sum of the effects that the programme has produced in the direct and indirect consumers. It is an operation that certifies the impact of the programme on the user.

- Having identified as a central construct of the evaluation not so much the decision but the *judgment of value*, at the basis of which there has to be the analysis of the needs and of the values of the users (whom he defines “consumers” of the educational service).
- Having assigned greater importance to the addressee of the educational actions and to the *effects* of the evaluation on the latter. The evaluator is not so interested in observing the points of view of the subjects involved in the process, or the intentions of the project, but the impact of the latter on the addressees. The focus on the evaluation system is on the *user* of the educational-didactic offer, on the *consequences* that the implementation of the didactic project produces and on the *processes*, implemented to meet the demand of the “consumers” of education.
- Having released evaluation from the objectives of the planning. The evaluator, for Scriven, should not even know what the objectives of a project are, as his evaluation should be oriented towards investigating the effective outcomes of the process, not the planned ones: knowing the latter, on the contrary, would produce only a dangerous conditioning on the evaluator. This is why Scriven’s proposal has been defined *goal-free evaluation*.
- Having increased the objectivity of the evaluation investigation: the evaluator is not included in the field of observation and should keep his distances from the evaluatee, estranging himself from the context of observation, reducing to a minimum contacts with those in charge of the

project, in order to reduce that involvement in the process which would end up by nullifying his “impartiality”.

- Having been amongst the first to draw up a system of *check-lists* to evaluate the impact of the product on the consumer. Scriven recommends the use of check-lists to succeed in reaching a judgement that is concretely analytical and comprehensive of all the dimensions evaluated. An adapted example is shown as follows:

<i>Analysis of the needs:</i> in order to show that the educational product <i>being evaluated</i> will contribute to improving the system
<i>Analysis of the resources</i> available to evaluate the product
<i>Analysis of the consumer:</i> who is he and what does he expect from the educational offer?
<i>Analysis of the product:</i> is it suitable for meeting the consumer's need?
<i>Analysis of the process:</i> checking the educational process complies with the standards established in response to the demand and referred to the product to be evaluated
<i>Compared analysis</i> of the performances of competitive products
<i>Analysis of the effects:</i> goal-free evaluation of the <i>outcomes</i>
<i>Analysis of the cause-effect relations:</i> to show that the effects derive directly from the use of the product
<i>Analysis of statistical significance</i>
<i>Analysis of the educational significance:</i> which improvements does the product make to the educational system?
<i>Analysis of costs:</i> estimate of the economic and non-economic costs and comparison with similar educational products
<i>Analysis of the maintenance supports of the product:</i> how to maintain the need for education? How to control the potential of disappointment of the user?
<i>Analysis of the forms of report:</i> relative to the communication of the results of the evaluation

The *Key Evaluation Checklist* by M. Scriven (2007) indicates different criteria including: background and context, detailed description of the programme, effects of the programme on the direct and indirect users, financial and social resources,

values analysed, positive and negative results, costs, comparisons with other models, generalizability, needs of the stakeholders. Scriven speaks of *meta-evaluation* and its criteria: validity, utility, credibility, efficacy linked to costs, legality, attention to ethical rules, protection of the human rights of the subjects.

Scriven's model supports an idea of evaluation understood as certification of product quality that should meet precise specifications, more than as an "internal" process of constructing the evaluation judgement. Where the pragmatist models of quality focus the evaluator's attention on the process and on the decision, here the evaluation object is only the product and its ability to correspond to the needs of a hypothetical user. The criterion for the choice of the evaluation standards, i.e. the rules for determining the "success" or "failure" of a pathway or of a programme, is not given in this case by the objectives, but by the needs and the expectations of the users. As a consequence, the evaluation structure significantly highlights the time of checking and observing the judgements of value of the stakeholders, capable of contributing to triggering off improvement dynamics of the quality of the process/product offered. Operations such as the detailed and specific descriptive analysis of all the components of the product, the estimate of the effects of impact and the comparison with similar products, therefore take on great importance. The person of the evaluator, the only one who can manage the evaluation procedure and inform on the outcomes of the operations, takes on great power.

Scriven would seem to follow an epistemological model of the positivist type, but this is not the case. This atypical position is probably the cause of all the methodological ambiguities that have been attributed to him. Scriven refuses experimental approaches but also phenomenological ones; he is not interested in knowing the intentions of the project or the opinions of those who are involved in it. Only the evaluator has the credit

– and the power – to succeed in observing reality and developing a valid and reliable judgement of evaluation. Is this possible? According to many critics of Scriven, it is not. If the reliability of evaluation must not be conditioned by the objectives, it can, however, be influenced by the subjectivity of the evaluator. “The evaluator possesses in any case his own ideas and opinions on which he constructs hypotheses and conjectures; he has personal ways of reading and interpreting reality and it is on this basis that he organizes information. In other words, if it is not the objectives of a project that condition the fidelity of an evaluation, then it can be the preconceived ideas of the evaluator” (Tessaro, 2000, p. 74). The problem exists and Scriven does not offer any answers for clarification. He is not able to go beyond a perspective of an evaluation approach understood as a mere “service” to the user (and conversely to the “producer” who has every interest in “selling” a product). It is curious that the scholar of evaluation who has gone down in history as the father of *formative evaluation* actually conceives of evaluation in a sense that is not fully “formative”, at least according to the meaning that today tends to be given to the term; i.e. constant verification of the educational pathway, in order to accompany the student in a personalized way and orient their subsequent developments. If Scriven’s formative evaluation has as a reference the product and is carried out in the course of doing a programme, in order to acquire information useful for improving the programme whilst it is still under way, today formative evaluation coincides with the same didactic process that assumes as the privileged reference the person being education in order to support, promote and guide them. If in Scriven, formative evaluation “lives outside” the educational process, today it tends to be included in the process, of which it becomes the self-regulatory dimension par excellence.

It is precisely the *self-regulatory dimension*, in the evaluation processes of AE staff that is the most important legacy today that can be borrowed from Scriven’s model.

CAF model - Common Assessment Framework: the CAF is the result of the collaboration between national experts of the EU and the European Network of Public Administration (EUPAN), when they met at the 1st European Conference on Quality in Lisbon, in May 2000. It represents a real common European tool for quality management for the public sector and was developed by the public sector itself. Over the last 10 years, almost 2000 organizations of the public sector throughout Europe have adopted this model and the number of CAF users is still growing. In the first years, the model was mainly used to introduce the principles of *Total Quality Management* (TQM) into the public sector and it was gradually adapted and personalized in various sectors, such as justice, local administration and education. As a tool of Total Quality Management, the CAF is inspired by the EFQM mode of excellence of the *European Foundation for Quality Management* (EFQM) and the *Speyer* model of the German University of Administrative Sciences. The CAF is based on the principle that excellent results relative to organizational performance, citizens/clients, personnel and the company are obtained through a leadership that guides policies and strategies, personnel management, partnerships, resources and processes. The CAF considers the organization from various points of view simultaneously, according to the holistic approach of analysis of organizational performances. A pilot version was presented in May 2000 and a first revised version was launched in 2002. On the decision of the DGs, a CAF Resource Centre (CAF RC) was established in Maastricht, at the EIPA (European Institute of Public Administration). With a strategic perspective, the EIPA indicated its intended role and objectives as CAF RC. The CAF has been designed to be used in any sector of the public administration, at all levels: national, regional and local. It can be used, depending on the circumstances, both as part of a systematic programme of reforms and as a base to direct the improvements actions in individual public organizations.

The CAF has four main aims: to introduce the public administrations to the principles of TQM and guide them progressively, through using and understanding the process of self-evaluation, from the current Plan-Do sequence to the fully integrated Plan-Do-Check-Act sequence; to facilitate the self-evaluation of a public organization in order to obtain a diagnosis and undertake actions of improvement; to act as a bridge between the various models in use for quality management; to facilitate *bench-learning* between the organizations of the public sector.

Various elements have been studied in depth in support of these aims; the structure with 9 criteria, the 28 sub-criteria with the examples, the diagrams for the evaluation of the qualifying factors and the results, the guidelines for self-evaluation, the improvement actions and the projects of *bench-learning* and a glossary. The structure with nine criteria describes the main aspects that have to be taken into consideration in the analysis of any organization: the qualifying factors of an organization (what the organization does and the approach used to achieve the pre-established results) and the results obtained in relation to the citizens/clients, the personnel, the company and the key performances, through measures of perception and indicators of functioning. Each criterion is divided into sub-criteria, which identify the main dimensions that have to be considered when an organization is evaluated. They are illustrated with examples, which explain their contents in detail and suggest the possible areas to take into consideration, to explore how the organization meets the requisites expressed in the subcriteria. As the CAF is a tool that is suitable for all the areas of the public administration, its personalization for the different sectors is encouraged, as long as its constitutive elements are respected: the 9 criteria, the 28 sub-criteria and the score system. The examples and the process of self-evaluation, as described in the guidelines, are flexible, but the key passages of the guidelines should be

taken into consideration in order to keep an important function of the model unchanged: to promote a common culture among the European public organizations, acting as a bridge between the various TQM models and fostering *bench-learning*. The CAF model is widely used in the evaluation of organizational contexts, including educational.

Servqual model (authors Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1985): also known as the model of “gaps”, measures in a standardized way the opinion of clients and the expectations of the users in relation to the quality of the services. Structured in 22 questions structured into two repeated groups, concerning respectively the expectations of the users on the service and the opinion on the various aspects of the service (or distributed in compact form in a unique series of questions), the Servqual model allows measuring the perceived quality and the expectations separately, narrowed down to 5 dimensions deemed indispensable to judge the quality of the service:

1. Tangible elements (aspect of the physical structures, equipment and personnel)
2. Reliability (ability to dispense the service promised reliably and accurately)
3. Ability of response (willingness to help clients and promptly provide the service)
4. Ability of reassurance (competence and courtesy of employees and ability to inspire trust and security)
5. Empathy (caring and personalized assistance which is reserved for clients and users)

These dimensions include a set of characteristics such as communication, security, competence, courtesy, ability to understand the needs of the client, possibility of access to the service focused mainly on the relationship, the characteristic component of every service relationship.

Regalia and Bruno (2000, p. 18) describe the differences, which represent important obstacles in offering a service of quality, that can be observed in an evaluation according to the Servqual model:

- *Difference between expectation of the consumer and perception of the management* (difference 1): the managers of the service companies and the teachers do not always identify in advance the characteristics that connote high quality in the eyes of the client. Those offering services do not always succeed in understanding what the consumer expects from a service.
- *Difference between perception by the managers and specific qualities of the service* (difference 2): the difference between perception, by the management, of what the consumer's expectations are and the specific qualities of the company's service ends up by having repercussions on the quality of the service in the eyes of the consumer
- *Difference between specific qualities and effective supply of the service* (difference 3): this is the crucial phase of the "front office", in which the personnel in their different components – management, administrative and operative – come into contact with the client.
- *Difference between the quality of the service and the external communications* (difference 4): the advertising and the other communications issued by a company can influence the expectations of the consumer. In addition, these communications can also influence the perception of the service provided
- *Difference between the service expected and the service perceived* (difference 5): the key to guarantee a good quality of services lies in satisfying or exceeding what the consumers expects from the service (also in terms of illustration of the meaning of the service provided). The quality observed in a service depends on the entity and the direction (lesser

or greater) of the difference existing between the service expected and the service received.

The quality of the service perceived by the client depends on the entity and direction (positive or negative) of difference 5, where $S\% = f(S1, S2, S3, S4)$. The quality of a service can be situated on a continuous line that goes from ideal quality to totally unacceptable quality. Satisfactory quality will be found at some point on this scale (Regalia & Bruno, 2000, p. 18).

3.1.3 The *constructivist* approach

The *constructivist* approach values the subjectivity of the players involved in the evaluation process and aims at interpreting and understanding, by *hermeneutic evaluation* (Perla, 2004), more than *measuring* the phenomena and the actions, which are the object of evaluation. At the centre of the models included in this approach, there is attention to the qualitative dimension of evaluation, the pluralism of values held by the various stakeholders, which requires a process of negotiation, phenomenological understanding of the meanings, languages and cultures emerging from the community in which they are inserted (Galliani, 2014). The model of educational evaluation underlying the constructivist approach is of a procedural type. It sees evaluation almost as an *act of communication*, which can be interpreted and negotiated, characterized by continuity, recursivity, creativity, unforeseeability, progressiveness, collaboration, cognitive and metacognitive regulation of the quality of individual learning and organizational systems (*ibid*, p. 35; Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

This is an approach that is closer to the possibility of understanding the implicit elements of processes that are not grasped by the methodologies of traditional evaluation. However, it is not always possible to guarantee generalization and

the use of the knowledge and results obtained. In this case too, there are multiple models: the CIPP model (Stufflebeam, 1967, 1983, 2003); the Responsive Evaluation model (Stake, 1975, 1988); the Multi method model (Patton, 1990, 1997); the Model of reflection in the course of action (Schön, 1983, 1987); Model of formative evaluation (Calonghi, 1992; Hadji, 1995).

CIPP model (author D. Stufflebeam, 1967, 1983, 2003): this was developed by Stufflebeam in 1967 on the grounds of three basic convictions: evaluation must be inclusive of all the components of a context of education (and therefore focus on the processes as well as on the products); all the comparative approaches, i.e. focused on the objectives-result relationship¹⁵, are insufficient to evaluate the quality of “formative objects/subjects”; a good evaluation must in the first place help to make “good decisions”. By putting evaluation at the service of the decision, the author distinguishes four different types of evaluation, correlated to taking specific decisions.

1. *Context Evaluation*
2. *Input Evaluation*
3. *Process Evaluation*
4. *Product Evaluation*

15 Cf. Provus's discrepancy model (1973), Tyler's “*rational*” model, the experimental model of Campbell and Stanley (1985).

TYPE OF EVALUATION	OBJECTIVE	TYPE OF CORRELATED DECISION
<i>Context Evaluation</i>	Knowledge of the context in which the programme and analysis/definition of the needs is intended to be applied	<i>PLANNING DECISION</i> Identification of the objectives and strategies appropriate for the context
<i>Input Evaluation</i>	Determination of the resources and the potential available to achieve the project	<i>STRUCTURING DECISION</i> Choice of the strategies and finalization of the planning
<i>Process Evaluation</i>	Collection of information on the trend of the project; identification of the strong and weak points, monitoring of the processes; comparisons	<i>IMPLEMENTATION DECISION</i> Decisions relative to rebalancing interventions of the pathway
<i>Product Evaluation</i>	Collection of the judgements on the formative outcomes; comparison with the outcomes of previous programmes.	<i>RECYCLING DECISION</i> Decisions on the opportunity of continuing, modifying or terminating the programme; whether to redefine the structure of the project and how

This is one of the first and most successful formalizations of a comprehensive and genuinely formative evaluation. Stufflebeam invites us to pay attention no longer only to the outcomes of an educational pathway but also to the context, the processes, the changes that can be induced “on the way”, on the basis of a nature decision-making reflectivity. On the other hand, the evident *formative* function of evaluation is emphasized here: the evaluating actions make *sense* if they provide the deciders with useful information, not only for a summative purpose but also to improve and guide the pathway.

The model also has a high degree of flexibility and dynamism, which seems to have greatly anticipated some acquisitions relative to theories of a programming-curricular type, which are much later. The author brings into focus the global design that an evaluation system ought to have, whilst he is less concerned about providing indications on the procedures and instrumentation to have to translate it into practice. The reference to the structure and an eclectic use of methods more than to the procedural criteria seems almost implicit.

Stufflebeam does not seem to place much importance on the epistemological option (whether for “quantitative” or “qualitative”) but the possibility of reaching a sufficiently clear, comprehensive and procedural observation/interpretation of the object *being evaluated* which must not be “enclosed” in rigid and pre-defined frameworks, but observe and monitored in its evolution in order to mature decisions. “Decision-making” is the objective of evaluation for Stufflebeam. It appears in line with the “philosophy” of a phenomenological and hermeneutic approach to the subject of evaluating the quality of educational work.

In the most updated version, the model proposes a *Cipp Evaluation Model Checklist* (2007), for a summative evaluation of the intrinsic and extrinsic value, of moral integrity and honesty, of the importance and significance of the programme as a whole. It is focused on: evaluation of context, needs, resources and problems (collection of information, interviews with those in charge of the programme and the stakeholders: those who have an interest at stake), evaluation of the input, i.e. of the resources, of the strategies, of the work plan, of the budget, evaluation of the process, documentation and monitoring of the planned activities, evaluation of the product, divided into evaluation of the impact (effects of the programme); of the efficacy (quality and importance of the results); of the sustainability (degree in which the effects produced by the programme are constant in time); of the transferability to a different context. At the end of every phase, a report is scheduled to be given to the client. In these phases, “meta-evaluation” is important; the evaluation of the evaluation focused on the documentation of the whole process.

The CIPP model reflects an evaluation of an educational/formative type that has aims of improvement and guidance and considers the evaluatees in their context, in the process of change, in order to make decisions. Applied to the evaluation of AE staff, it allows seizing elusive dimensions of

educational work and bringing into focus functions which, in educational contexts, do not appear to be very formalized. The essential characteristics of the proposals are expressed well in Stufflebeam's famous phrase "not to prove but to improve" (Stufflebeam, Shinkfield, 1985), i.e. that evaluation must not "test" but above all "improve" the processes under way and, in this direction, it would accentuate the hermeneutic dimension of the evaluators themselves.

Responsive evaluation model (author R. Stake 1975, 1988): i.e. which is developed from the needs and questions asked by the stakeholders, by the context, by the players involved, according to a *bottom-up* logic. This is an idiographic model focused on the individual concrete activities of the programme and on the judgements and personal interpretations of the programme triggered off by those who operate in it, which recovers the diversity of the perspectives. R. Stake's responsive evaluation takes a further step in the direction of a phenomenological, hermeneutic and reflective evaluation marked out by Stufflebeam. Stake, by starting from an epistemological position with a clear subjectivistic-phenomenological matrix, maintains that the *value* of a programme or of a performance cannot be expressed by a score, but by the best "description" and "interpretation" of the programme by the direct beneficiaries; he therefore invites giving up the precision of measuring to the advantage of the *meanings* attributed to the evaluating actions by the people involved. The essence of the evaluation lies in acquiring information that is truly useful for understanding the complexity of the educational-didactic undertaking as it is performed and this information can be brought out in the first place through the analysis of the points of view and the opinions of the "players" involved in the didactic situation.

Stake's position evolves in time and matures through two phases of theoretical elaboration: the first is formalized in

countenance evaluation; the second arrives at *responsive evaluation*. In *countenance evaluation*, the objectives are still the important parameter of the evaluating actions Stake, however, identifies others (beyond the traditional objectives relative to the programme and the results): objectives relative to the context, to the organization of the teaching actions, to the didactic “methods” etc. The aim is to reach *countenance evaluation*, i.e. an evaluation which expresses as far as possible the didactic reality and not only some of its parts. Later, Stake integrated the structure of the *countenance evaluation* into *responsive evaluation* which is a fully-fledged *Evaluation in situation*. Anticipating the coordinates of later theories (constructivism and evaluations focused on organizational development), *responsive evaluation* focuses the responsibility of the main players of the didactic in building up the evaluation structure.

The main assumptions can be summarized as follows:

1. The importance of the context in which the educational actions take place;
2. The inadequacy of a comparative evaluation (objectives-results) to be able to understand (and evaluate) the *quality* of the educational actions;
3. The opportunity that the evaluation is oriented more directly towards investigating the actions and meanings that a programme takes on for the people involved rather than the “intentions” of those who drafted the programme;
4. The need that the evaluation is developed from the nodes of conflict, the needs and the questions deemed significant by the participants and by the observer, i.e. from the issues;
5. A good evaluation must aim at bringing out the different systems of value that guide the actions of the people involved;
6. The use of “triangulation” as an elective tool of validation in the observations and opinions collected.

Stake's *responsive* evaluation challenges the rational frameworks typical of the previous models which tend to reduce the evaluating process in the educational context to a mere measuring technique and to subject it to purposes of an exclusively pragmatic nature. The greatest merit of Stake lies in having highlighted the *singularity* of the evaluating action and the holistic, systemic and hermeneutic character of every evaluation process, especially if started in an educational context. Evaluator and *evaluee*, educator and trainee, are placed in the same field of relations and observations and both take part in a process which makes them grow *together* and which should guide them in the direction of a permanent reflectivity/self-reflectivity.

One important aspect which emerges in Stake's model is the need to represent *all the points of view* in the opinion. Evaluation can be said to be such, for Stake, only on condition of recovering the diversity of the perspectives and promoting the qualitative growth of those who, even if located in reciprocally distant positions, are involved. This is the only way to give meaning to evaluation and to foster innovation. Evaluation, therefore, is conceived of by R. Stake as a "formative" and "qualitative" way for innovation. To these aspects of positivity we cannot help adding a comment. The only one, but an important one: the complexity of the actions of building up criteria of judgement that are really comprehensive of all the subjectivities involved in the evaluation process; the difficulty of negotiating meanings, of reconciling the multiplicity of points of view of the different *stakeholders*, of the translation of the many voices into a harmonious "melody". Evaluating is not only understanding and interpreting, but also succeeding in making a judgement which, unfortunately, seldom expresses unity of positions. Stake, while not offering "pragmatic" answers to the problem, invites us to consider the problem from another point of view: not that of the need to reach a *single* opinion, but the need to represent *all the points of view* in the opinion.

People (and their opinion) are taken as the main references of the process: the evaluating action is built up thanks to the interpretations of each stakeholder and evolves according to the argumentative and critical competence that each offers. The evaluator is the director of this dynamic: he does not have “positivistic” interests, i.e. he is not in search of generalization. His interest is of an almost prevalently *hermeneutic* type: to bring out what has value for the various *stakeholders*, to stimulate awareness, to collect and document knowledge that is the result of listening to everyone and the expression of the experiences and expectations, revelation of the meanings that each person attributes to the situation to be evaluated. According to Stake, therefore, any educational project should come into being on the basis of the issues of those directly concerned and the involvement of everyone, including the designers and the evaluators, in the same field of actions. In this sense, we could say that *responsive* evaluation gives great credit to the person and to “thinking”: it is entrusted to the responsibility of those who are involved in the evaluation path and their critical capacity, their authentic interests in changing for the better.

Multi-method model (author M. Q. Patton, 1990, 1997): evaluation, according to Patton, consists of the systematic collection of information on activities, characters and results of a project that can form opinions on it, to improve its efficacy and direct future decisions. According to Patton, evaluators must be able to use and choose a variety of tools flexibly, adapting the search to the different questions of evaluation and the needs of the context. In the *Qualitative Evaluation Checklist* (Patton, 2003), evaluation has to be planned with particular attention to its practical consequences and its real use by the subjects that belong to the context evaluated, without being structured from a theory or a pre-established model, but identifying together with the subjects involved

the most suitable methodology for an evaluation process suitable for the context.

A famous book by M. Q. Patton has an emblematic title: *Utilization-focused evaluation* (1998); in the evaluation of AE staff, the methodology according to this model teaches to “think like an evaluator” and therefor to orient the educational actions already in the direction of how they can be evaluated. Patton thought a great deal about the utility and the usability of evaluation for the professionalism involved in evaluating actions: the techniques and the procedures should not be confined to a hermeneutic specialization, known to a small “caste” of evaluators, but have to be mastered by all the players involved; and the term *face validity* indicates precisely this: reaching a validity evident for the players. Evaluation has to be a process made to measure for the players, using their languages and where they can find a trace of their values.

*Reflection in the course of action model*¹⁶: in the reflective conceptual picture, it is also possible to understand a series of

16 According to this theory, in the reality of professional practices – and therefore of evaluation as well – we have to face two realities: the first is the singularity of each practical situation and the second is that the problems in practice never appear as already given. They “have to be set” in situations dominated per se by uncertainty and conflict of values. “When we set the problem,” writes D. Schön, one of the most representative authors of this theory, “we select those that we will treat as ‘objects’ of the situation, defining the borders of our attention, and we impose on them a coherence that allows us to say that is wrong and in which directions the situation has to be modified” (1993, p. 68). “The situations that are face in professional practice are characterized by unique events... and the case that is presented as unique requires an art of practice that could be taught if it were constant and known, but it is not constant” (pp. 44–45). For Schön all the models that can be ascribed to an approach of technical rationality are unable

models of evaluation for which quality is not an external parameter to which processes and products are to be referred, but a dynamic construct which comes into being and is structured from inside an organizational context through the negotiated sharing of actions and objectives. We speak of *negotiated sharing* to refer to the fact that evaluation, in the theory maintained by these models, puts on the table all the aspects which deserve reflection, operating a mediation between the various players present in a context in order to gradually obtain the best result possible. In this last aspect, reflective evaluation presents analogies with the model of *Company-Wide Quality Control* but, unlike the latter which admits the existence of objective criteria with respect to which qual-

to “understand” or to solve the problems of the “practice” as they are based on the presupposition that these can be solved by applying theories and techniques with a scientific basis. More effective, however, is the recourse to an *epistemology of practice*, implicit in artistic processes and more suitable for situations of uncertainty, uniqueness and conflict of values. What are the nodal points of this epistemology? The first: knowing is in our action (*Knowing in action*). An expert action often cannot be “said” but reveals a much wider cognitive activity than can be expressed. The second: reflecting in the course of action (*reflection in action*). The professional expert succeeds in thinking about what he is doing as he does it. The third: reflecting in practice. Professionals reflect on their knowledge in practice, they do not depend on categories consolidated by theory and technique, but each time build up a new theory of the unique case. “The dilemma between rigour and pertinence can be removed if we are able to develop an epistemology of the practice which places the technical solution of the problems in a wider context of reflective investigation, which shows that reflection in action can be rigorous for its own merits, and that relates the art of exercising practice in conditions of uncertainty and uniqueness to the art of research which is proper to the scientist. It is therefore possible to increase the legitimacy of reflection in action and encourage a wider, deeper and more rigorous use of it” (p. 95).

ity can be compared, reflective evaluation takes quality as a dynamic and problematic construct, to be achieved through processes of the *autopoietic* type.

Evaluating *reflectively* means activating an internal process of monitoring the formative path in which the evolution, initially not very visible, is made the systematic object of reflection: “doing” is intercalated with the observation/analysis of what is being done and the logic is not of opposition between knowledge, action and reflection, but of dialectic and reciprocal correlation between the three moments. This is why we prefer to speak of reflective evaluation rather than of *self-analysis* or *self-evaluation*, to underline the recursivity existing between theory and practice and the perfect identity between the roles of protagonist of the formative actions and subject appointed for the evaluation expressed by the process (even when recourse is made to evaluators “external” to the context).

The “educational work” “object” is thus taken as the “place” of structuring of an all-round reflective conversation with the experience of research and education, with its subjects and its “problems”, whilst the focus on the dimension of the *formativity* of evaluation is accentuated. Self-evaluating oneself (*evaluating oneself reflectively*) means growing in awareness and meta-cognitivity, looking with greater depth at the motivations with which the main players enter the experience and develop their contents, considering the elements of decision-making which intervene in the relationship and which involve all the protagonists, bringing out the meanings that each one attributes to the formative situation.

Formative evaluation model (authors L. Calonghi and C. Hadji): Calonghi and Hadji, in Italy and France respectively in the middle of the 1970s, aimed to emancipate evaluation from any form of pragmatism or functionalism and tried to establish it as an “educational dimension” for the promotion of man and piloting educational actions (Perla, 2004, p. 87).

The ultimate goal of evaluation ought to be promoting self-regulating competence and the passage from evaluation to self-evaluation. The reflection by the French author starts from an assumption: every act of evaluation in the educational field is *over-determined and multi-dimensional*. To realize this, writes Hadji, you only have to ask the question “who does what?” to observe the pervasiveness and specularity of every action of evaluation.

Let’s now bring into focus the main features of the articulated proposals of Calonghi and Hadji.

The first: the “epistemological” effort of clarification of what evaluation in the educational and training context is. If for Calonghi, evaluation has to tell us to what extent we are close to the ultimate goal and when the intermediate stages are reached, for Hadji there is evaluation every time someone makes an effort to observe a reality to say its value. Evaluating means making an oriented interpretation of reality. As to why we evaluate, the question leads to consider in both authors the intentions that emerge through the relationship that unites the evaluator and the evaluatee. Taking up again some principles of C. Rogers, A.H. Maslow and Don Bosco, Calonghi shows how evaluation has to always express the confidence that the educator has in the possibilities of the evaluatee and has to be implemented in such a way as to infuse confidence and optimism in the life project that the evaluatee is making specific to himself and those around him.

According to Hadji, the evaluator’s intentions are of three types and can be translated into: weighing up or measuring the object; appreciating it; understanding it. In the first case, following J. Ardoino and G. Berger, Hadji speaks of *estimative* evaluation which bases the judgement on measuring the performance with respect to certain intentions or certain pre-defined objectives. The resulting judgement is the result of a comparison not to a standard (referred to an absolute standard) but based on criteria, i.e. resulting from the comparison

of the performance to criteria, intentions and objectives defined before the work of evaluation. In the last case the evaluation is carried out to *understand*, to make reality more intelligible and to try to interpret it: in this case it is not so much the objectives and performances that are placed at the centre of the evaluating actions but the reflection on why this is the point that has been reached. This evaluation tends to involve all the people involved in the evaluation process.

As far as the answer to the question “*for what do we evaluate?*”, if Calonghi makes explicit reference to the purpose of human maturity intended not only as education and cultural training, but also as ethical maturity, as an exercise habitually and morally supported by freedom, Hadji introduces the concept of “pedagogical utility” of the evaluation. Overlooking the evaluations of an implicit and spontaneous type (meaning those which, although without a foundation of reflectivity in the “strong” sense, nevertheless allow most of us to decide how to act), Hadji thematizes the “instituted” evaluation (moreover, already thematized by J. M. Barbier, 1985, p. 34), or that explicit one which terminates with a certifying judgement. It has a precise social function which is defined by the use that can be made of the judgement of value. This use depends on the type of decision that can be taken depending on the results of the evaluation. The different functions of evaluation can also be derived from the different way of using the result of the evaluation. L. Calonghi, resuming and extending a subject of Acriven, distinguishes between *continuous*, *formative* and *overall* evaluation. The first accompanies the didactic process and is carried out at the end of every learning sequence. Overall evaluation is when stock is taken of the activities for various purposes; such as an examination at the end of a course, to attribute eligibility, to certify admission to the next course. Formative evaluation is, on the other hand, the premise to projects of educational intervention and follows them step by step: evaluation is done to better educate,

to improve the interventions, the structures and the people implicated. According to this model, there are three stages and six tasks of the evaluator:

1. SPECIFICATION OF THE EVALUATION PROJECT
 - a. To specify one's intentions as an evaluator
 - b. To specify what is "expected" from the object evaluated
2. MAKING EXPLICIT THE PROJECT OF ACTION
 - a. To specify the system of purposes and values which give meaning to the project for action
 - b. To indicate the "spaces" of evaluation
3. ACT OF EVALUATION
 - a. To make a forecast of the expected effects
 - b. To look for indicators that show the success or the failure of the action carried out.

With respect to the evaluation of AE staff, this model presents some interesting peculiarities: having highlighted that formative evaluation is indissoluble from the educational process and therefore, the close relationship existing between *planning* and evaluation, between educational action and evaluating action.

Evaluation cannot be separated from the dynamic in which it is placed, i.e. the educational action, nor can it be reduced only to the conclusive moment of a pathway. It is, on the other hand, at the service of educational actions and accompanies them from the beginning to the end; having rooted evaluation in a paradigm of an anthropological type; any evaluating action must not lose sight of the purpose for which it is carried out (which model of man do I want to evaluate and therefore educate?) and the functions which it must fulfil (of facilitation, accompaniment, regulation piloting of formative actions); having clearly defined what has to be meant by *formative evaluation*. Thanks to Calonghi and Hadji

the meaning of formative evaluation is made explicit in the terms of encouraging guide/accompaniment in the educational pathway; the reference, especially in Calonghi's proposal, to the importance of the assessment for evaluation; to the need for the strictness of a "critical" docimology that is not limited to a descriptive contribution but which ensures continuous control and valid, reliable and coherent documentation for the evaluation; insistence on self-evaluation: the directional movement of evaluation ought to go from the outside towards the inside: from formative, writes Hadji, evaluation ought to become *forming* and promote the self-regulatory value of what has been evaluated.

3.1.4 *Certification and evaluation of competences in adult education*

After having identified the three main approaches of evaluation, reference should be made to the one which, although it does not represent a real scientific "model" of evaluation, includes a set of procedures – many of which are being experimented in the field – which are verifying the possibility of validating and certifying the informal and non-formal competences of European workers in AE. As is generally known, the goal of the Europe 2020 strategy is to reach intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth. It is in this direction that the Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Council on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Brussels 05.09.2012) should be read, which repeated the invitation to all the Member-States to establish as soon as possible a homogeneous system of certification and evaluation of competences, to allow recognizing competences matured during adults' professional lives. The White Paper of the Bauer Committee already pointed out, as early as 1997, the need to establish a better system of recognizing and defining non-formal competences (cf. Cedefop Glossary). At European level,

the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on the validation of non-formal and informal learning was published on 20/12/2012, with which the Member-States were urged to set up national systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning by 2018. The urgency was felt at the same time to promote the development of methodologies for evaluating competences acquired outside the standard contexts of education and training, i.e. in non-formal and informal learning contexts. The recognition of these categories of competences would make mobility and re-employment of workers on the job market easier. This is also a necessary action in view of the growing need for new professional profiles in some sectors such as services to the person (known as *white jobs*).

3.2 Aims of the evaluation: why the evaluation?

*by Kleio Koutra, George Kritsotakis, Lina Pelekidou,
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Why evaluate? What does evaluation in contexts of adult education aim at? Answering these questions is not simple and entails referring to a multiplicity of interconnected elements. The aims of evaluation in adult education can vary enormously, as it is a process linked to numerous variables, including the characteristics of the context of reference, the heterogeneity of the subjects involved in the contexts where the evaluation takes place, the complexity of the activities and the aims of the organization, the dynamics of power inside and outside the context, the relations with the local area and the interests of the stakeholders.

Some of the main functions of evaluation are:

Managerial function of the evaluation as control. One function of evaluation is managerial and organizational control, “i.e.

that process that can influence the behaviour and the results of the human resources with regard to the aims of the organization” (Fadda, 2013, p. 77). Managerial evaluation¹⁷ addresses optimizing the use of public resources and improving the policies and decision-making. From this point of view, evaluation is one phase in the organizational control process, which ascertains the *performance* of individuals and the attainment of the aims previously established by the organization. This function is associated with the *rewards system* of human resources, linked to measuring the results with respect to the aims defined in the planning phase (Flamholtz, Das & Tsui, 1985; Noeverman & Koene 2012). The meanings attributed to the concept of *evaluation*, in this sense, refer to *ascertaining that the planned aims have been reached*, responding to a logic of *control*, in which the evaluation is mainly implemented by subjects outside the experience that has been evaluated (cf. section 3.3.2.2 *The Audit*), to ensure and attest that the formative results have been attained. It is therefore evaluation oriented towards *measurement*, which mainly uses standardized/objective tools and techniques, in a *top-down* logic.

The reporting and rendering account function of the evaluation.
Evaluation documents and renders account of the activities,

17 Martini and Cais (2000) distinguish the concepts of *policy and programme design* – concerning the phase of collecting the initial information in order to select the programme before submitting it for its approval – of *compliance* – corresponding to the phase of control, inspection and checking behaviour in order to identify those that are illegitimate, negligent or not standard – and of *management control*, corresponding to management control by those who are at the top level in an organization. This control aims to keep under control the internal functioning and the crucial aspects of the activities of an organization (Bartezzaghi, Guerici & Vinante, 2010, pp. 59–60).

processes and products in an organization, transforms the educational work into procedures and rules to be respected, protects personnel in the case of accidents, problems or unforeseen occurrences (as it allows reconstructing the processes, the actions, the subjects involved, the roles and responsibilities) so that an educational context can take on a uniform and appropriate internal organization.

The meaning attributed to evaluation, in its reporting function, is that of *accountability*, concerning “having to render account” – by the person in charge of the organization – of the choices made, the activities and the results reached to outsiders (Humphrey, Miller & Scapens, 1993; Roberts & Scapens, 1985).

Evaluation also enables the operators to *document* the daily activities (Biffi, 2014) and is therefore indispensable for two main categories of reasons:

- to make explicit the processes and professional practices which would otherwise remain unexpressed at an implicit and latent level (Perla, 2010) and could not be communicated inside or outside the contexts of work;
- to maintain and foster relations and communications between the different players involved in the evaluation process: institutions outside the service, entities in the local area.

The planning function of evaluation. Evaluation is indispensable to reconsider planning choices. It has the function of redesigning the educational work: planning and evaluation can be considered as part of a recursive circuit (Lipari, 1995), as they both refer to contexts structured in objectives, decisions, specific actions of the intervention and results. Evaluation also allows understanding what has happened following the approval of a local law, understanding whether the solutions are useful for solving the collective problem, bringing

to the light causes of malfunctioning or administrative inefficiencies in the implementation of regional policies. The results of a process of evaluation or self-evaluation are always useful for planning, re-adapting, an educational intervention or programme to make it as effective as possible.

Formative and transformative/improving function of evaluation. Evaluation, if used as a *critical view of action* (Turcotte & Tard, 2000) and a tool of reconsidering the educational work, emerges in its *pedagogical* function (Perla, 2004), linked to the formative, transformative/improving potential, of constructing the educational paths of users and the well-being of the group. Evaluation, which has a consultancy potential, can become a tool investigating the professional practices and the values of an organization, allows starting self-evaluative and reflective cognitive processes that can orient reflection in professional teams, create a *mirror*, an external snapshot and a *space for thinking*, which helps understand the causes of the difficulties inherent in any work group (Ulivieri Stiozzi, 2013; Riva, 2013). The *formative* function is clarified as a reflective action, as an opportunity of analysis of the educational work, a search for meaning and clarification. Evaluation can also take on the essential function of legitimizing, clarifying and improving the educational practices. “Through evaluation, the work of professionals who operate in educational services on a daily basis can be given greater value and recognition, as the results and the outcomes become visible and can also be communicated to the exterior” (Pandolfi, 2012, p. 13).

In conclusion: beyond the different shades of meaning attributed to the functions of evaluation, it always comes from a *pragmatic interest for improvements*, often linked to problem-solving or to the selection of a decisions to be taken, using the judgement on the value and quality of an object – whether a programme, an action or a project (Torre, 2010).

Evaluating adult education staff or activating self-evaluating processes of adult education staff allows:

- to compare and to negotiate the values of all stakeholders in educational activities, to promote in staff a mentality of evolution and change after reflection and to introduce new professional processes and new internal dynamics;
- to foster mediation, often difficult, with other institutions;
- to understand the desired or unwanted effects of an intervention, its obstacles and the possible strategies of improvement.

3.3 Criteria of the evaluation of the educational work of AE staff

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“Criterion of evaluation” refers to a general concept which conditions and directs the evaluation in a given area and which determines the perspective of the evaluation. Each criterion is broken down into *dimensions*, i.e. more specific properties linked to the object that is to be evaluated, classified and/or measured thanks to *indicators*, classification, organization and measurement tools which allow operationalizing the properties of the objects (Bartezzaghi, Guerri, Vinante, 2010, p. 63–64). Literature in the sector, based on the different approaches and theoretical paradigms of reference (cf. section related to the *Theoretical framework: theories and models of evaluation*), reports different classifications of possible criteria that can orient evaluation. Some of these are recurring and can certainly be valid for the EDUEVAL model as well, on condition that they are contextualized to the specificity of the adult education sector:

- *efficacy*, understood as the capacity to reach pre-established objectives, is certainly a criterion that can be used in the evaluation of the educational work of AE staff, if we think of the training projects and actions they have implemented. These actions are effective when they are intentionally planned, capable of bringing about change and supporting the awareness and full development of the potentials of the users (in this case the adults addressed by the educational action);
- *efficiency*, the ability to reach the pre-established objectives “optimizing the resources” necessary, which is an important element to understand and evaluate the work of the service and of the organization, which is efficient in relation to the resources and the constraints of the context. Evaluating the efficiency of the educational work of the staff in adult education does not only mean “measuring the cases of success” but also, for example, the accuracy of the staff in managing the work, the clarity in the definition of the organizational roles, the transparency in the communication of functions and actions to be done;
- the *transferability* or reproducibility of the action in other contexts which underlines, in the evaluation of the educational work of the staff, the ability to create positive circuits, the sustainability and the feasibility of the proposal, the validity of the action even beyond the logic of the contingent emergency: i.e. considered useful because *intrinsically* of quality and support for professional development;
- *innovation*, which is translated into the ability to introduce change and new practices into a context of adult education, but it is not limited to that. Innovation also means the ability to read and interpret the context not using standardized or routine strategies but activating resources and strategies in a new and creative way, conceived by listening to the context;
- *equity*, which does not only mean adopting fair and correct

behaviour, but also *respect* for the points of view and styles of work of colleagues on the staff, *inclusion* and acceptance even of those who have a “different point of view” (including the users, in a perspective of shared evaluation), multicultural validity and being respectful of gender differences of the proposed action.

These are only some of the possible “filters” that allow orienting the evaluation of the educational work of AE staff, but other criteria can without any doubt be thought of which reveal the quality of the educational action. It is a question of translating the criteria of evaluation – general concepts – into concrete indicators which allow measuring their presence or absence in real contexts. It will be seen in the following sections how to make the aforementioned evaluation operative.

3.4 Methods of evaluation: how to evaluate?

*by Loredana Perla and Viviana Vinci*¹⁸

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The complexity of the evaluation of the work of adult education staff entails, as has been made clear in the previous sections, the importance of using a *triangulated* approach, capable of understanding a reality characterized by multiple dimensions – as is educational work – through different perspectives of analysis and points of view. Superseding *a single model* of evaluation of educational work, in favour of the *triangulation* of different and complementary theoretical perspectives, is also reflected on the methodological level.

How should the educational works of adult education staff

18 Loredana Perla is the author of sub-section 3.4, Viviana Vinci of the sub-sections 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.2.1, 3.4.2.2 and 3.4.2.3.

be evaluated? Through which methods, levels, criteria and tools of evaluation?

Echoing the theoretical structure based on triangulation, a structure built up either on the qualitative or on the quantitative method should be suspended from a methodological point of view as well, in favour of the perspective of *mixed methods evaluation* (Bamberger, 2012; Bledsoe & Graham 2005; Greene, Benjamin & Goodyear 2001; Mertens, 2010), based on the mixed use of qualitative and quantitative data and methods of evaluation. With this perspective, greater value can be given to the diversity of points of view, the participation of different social players (evaluator and evaluatee, but also the stakeholders) and the evaluation research can take on greater social utility, validity, credibility and completeness (Bryman, 2006). The use of a perspective with a *mixed methods design* (Hesse-Biber & Johnson 2015; Tashakkori & Teddie, 2003; Creswell 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark 2011) implies the possibility of drawing from different techniques, tools and sources, in order to give greater validity to the results obtained and not to use reductive or limiting evaluation perspectives, especially in complex social contexts.

“A mixed methods approach by definition includes facets or components drawn from different evaluative traditions and methodologies. A mixed methods approach, therefore, offers important opportunities for meaningful engaging with difference in the service of better understanding and learning. Like a walk along the jet way, learning from mixed methods evaluation can be about the methodological differences. More important, because each methodology is directed toward understanding something about an evaluand, like an educational program, it is enhanced learning about the evaluand that is the most important contribution of a mixed methods approach to evaluation” (Greene, in Ryan, Cousin, 2009, p. 324).

Talking about *mixed methods* in evaluation means, for example, being able to flexibly and rigorously integrate methods of qualitative research – such as those used in an ethnographic study or in action research (observations, case studies, phenomenological research, interviews, conversations, focus groups) – with questionnaires, grids and matrixes that offer the evaluator a quantitative and numerical element as well as the ability to analyse, through computational analysis software, qualitative text data.

However, it also means being able to integrate different methods and levels of evaluation, conceived in a synergic and complementary way. This is what has been done in the EDUEVAL model of evaluation, based on the triangulation of the *subjective*, *objective* and *intersubjective* dimension of evaluation which is methodologically translated into the levels of *self-evaluation*, *external evaluation* and *evaluation of the context*. Let's have a look at these specifically.

3.4.1 Levels

The EDUEVAL model of evaluation has been built up, as stated, from the triangulation of *self-evaluation*, *external evaluation* and *evaluation of the context*, with three forms of evaluation having precise and different meanings, which we can summarize as follows.

External evaluation means a level of evaluation designed and implemented by an evaluator or team of expert evaluators, not belonging to the organization responsible for the action or service evaluated. This level usually completes the process of self-evaluation, which the institution already implements, and can be of support in guaranteeing the validity and impartiality of the results, precisely thanks to an *external view*. It is of great help to the organization in establishing the merit,

the value, the efficacy, the impact and the conformity (with respect to pre-established standards, objectives declared by the organization, procedures laid down by rules and regulations inside and outside the service) of a programme/action/procedure.

Through external evaluation, on the one hand, greater impartiality, independence of judgement and credibility can be attributed, reducing the self-referentialism of the organization. On the other hand, however, some risks should be stemmed: these relate both to the overlapping of the evaluated subject with the client of the evaluation (who has an interest in keeping the service credible and who implicitly opposes resistance to the evaluation process, which requires an inclination for change) and to the lack of familiarity that the external evaluator has with the context and with the internal dynamics of the organization, which cause mediated and indirect access of the evaluator to the sources of information.

The process of external evaluation differs from certification and accreditation, although they share substantial analogies. Certification “bases the attestation of following the standards of the process, whilst evaluation seeks to extend the panorama of its judgement with reference also to objectives (of policy/programme/action) and to subjective needs/necessities of the addressees. Accreditation is also an attestation of conformity (of structural, technological and organizational) requisites but issued by a national body (e.g. the Regional Council, the National Health Service) which authorizes the structures to exercise in the area. A role is also played in certification by the *conformity* of the services (or parts of them) to pre-established standards. “The certification can be issued even if it attests one or more non-conformities of the service with respect to the requisites” (Bezzi, 2012, p. 26).

The main tool through which external evaluation takes place is the Audit (see further details below).

Self-evaluation is understood as the evaluation which aims to identify the strengths and the areas for improvement, in an organization, through self-analysis of the work, by those working in the context. Defined as “a comprehensive, systematic and regular review of an organization’s activities and results referenced against a model/framework, carried out by the organization itself” (ESS Quality Glossary 2010, Unit B1 “Quality; Classifications”, EUROSTAT, 2011), self-evaluation is a systematic process of self-reflection based on data. It supports the improvement of the organizational performance, such as that of implementing the indications in external evaluation and in the audit process, and is particularly appropriate with the introduction of a new policy or procedure, or when the results reached by an organization are not sufficiently documented or when a problem has to be tackled, such as that of implementing the indications in external evaluations and in the audit process.

The main function of self-evaluation is of the formative type, i.e. to help produce knowledge, reflection and awareness in the operators, who act in the first person in the design and management of the formative actions and can, thanks to the self-analysis of their work, transform the knowledge acquired into changes and strategies for improvement. This particular formative function makes self-evaluation a particularly useful in the evaluation of AE staff, almost a *starting point* on which to subsequently graft the external evaluation and/or the evaluation of the context. For this reason, it will be discussed in further depth later, in relation to some tools (for example the portfolio and e-portfolio) on which the EDUEVAL model can be compared with previous European projects and experiences, such as Validpack for example (see relevant section).

Another function of self-evaluation, in addition to the educational one, is that of *rendering account*, as it allows making known externally the outputs achieved and the value of a project/action that has been enacted.

Self-evaluation often precedes the external evaluation, with which it is in continuity and circularity: self-evaluation supports the documentation of the working processes and the process of the main players of the action as they become aware, therefore it is also functional for the improvement and communication of the “internal” processes to the stakeholders. External evaluation, which often follows on after the process of self-evaluation, helps stem – thanks to a rigorous methodology of evaluative research – the risk of self-referentialism of the results produced.

Evaluation of the context is understood as the level of the evaluation which has as its purpose the interpretation of an educational context, in its complexity, from the intersubjective analysis of the processes, of the environment, of the activities and of even the most intangible factors that are hard to quantify, such as emotions, cultures, structural, symbolic and qualitative dimensions that characterize it. Defined as a set of “procedures of attribution of judgement referred to abstract entities, objects that are not single individuals, but rather complex educational phenomena located at different systemic levels and interacting with one another” (Bondioli & Ferrari, 2000), evaluation of the educational context is a professional skill that has to be built up, taking into account both the educational purposes of the context and the nature of the act of appreciation, of its models and its practices, its tools and its particular techniques, characterized by basic orientations which have to be made explicit.

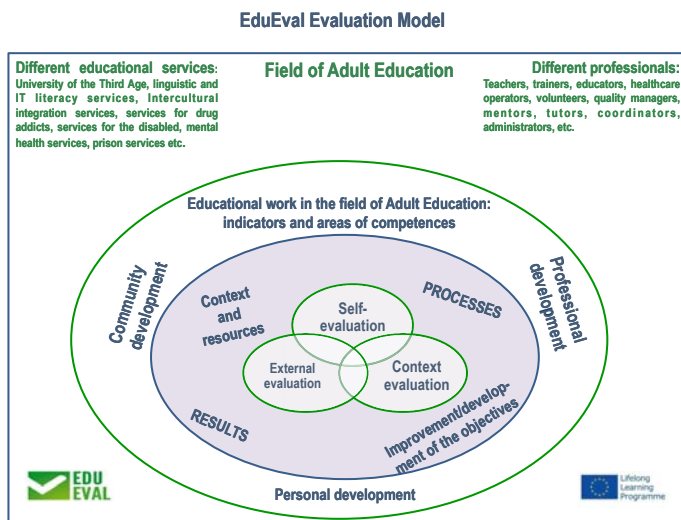
This is an intersubjective analysis, which takes into account the perceptions of the players who belong to the context, and which allows fostering the professionalism of all the figures that operate in adult education services, triggering off processes of growth inside the service. It involves the internal users in processes of self-analysis, comparison with other social players and designing an improvement plan to be system-

atically reviewed. Through the evaluation of the context, it is possible to identify not only outcomes and products of the activities of an educational service, but also to describe and understand the contexts in which these experiences take place and how these processes are structured, in the awareness of the ecological variables at stake – man and the environment cannot be conceived of as separate (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) –. The educational context includes a heterogeneous set of elements, i.e. all those material, human and symbolic resources which an organization implements for the purpose of producing a formative outcome for the addressees of the educational action: the physical, inter-personal, social environment, the actions, the interventions, the educational strategies, how the work is organized for the operators, the relations with the families of the users, the professional activities of the operators, the relations with other educational agencies and the relationship with the local area. Which indicators of the educational context could be described and evaluated?

The context, in the first place, is evaluated in the extent to which it determines and/or conditions the action of the adult educator and must be described in the first place paying attention to some aspects which relate to the type of service (a brief history of the local and social context in which it operates, the main services provided), the main partnerships established and the main (internal and external) stakeholders of reference, the organization chart, the mission (policies and institutional mandate), the vision (the strategic objectives of the service/context), the strategies and resources of the context (both as a structure and as professionalism).

There is more: the context can also be evaluated by looking at the skills (of the operators) implemented in a context, the educational processes and the interactions that take place in the educational context between educator-learner, between equals (learners, users of the service) and between col-

leagues, the environment, the physical and symbolic space of the action – which includes the furnishings, the materials, the times –, the educational activities, the actions, the routines, the professional gestures and the implicit beliefs (Perla, 2010).



These three levels of evaluation, according to the EDUEVAL model, cannot be conceived of hierarchically or in a clearly separate way, but intersect, are intertwined and at times overlap.

It is sufficient to think of how they are intertwined in an adult education service, where, for example, an external evaluator may check the compliance to the procedures through an audit visit (external evaluation) or each educator (or the staff) evaluates their own work through a portfolio (self-evaluation) or the coordinator – or an operator which is nevertheless part of the context – has to evaluate their own context. This is an intersubjective evaluation, which takes into account several variables and the perceptions of all those who operate in the context (evaluation of the context).

None of these three forms of evaluation, on their own, is sufficient to guarantee an evaluation process that is really of use for improving a service and the organizational culture in an Adult Education context. As can be seen from the cases given as examples and the diagram, external evaluation, self-evaluation and evaluation of the context are part of the same process, conceived of with continuity and flexibility. External evaluation for example, can be based on materials from a process of self-evaluation. In the same way, the tools must not be associated univocally with a form of evaluation but can be used differently, depending on the aims of the evaluation. For example, the portfolio is a tool that can be used both in the process of self-evaluation but also as a tool of evaluation of the context or as an audit portfolio which includes the documentation selected by the institution for the audit visit. The rubric can be used as a tool of self-evaluation or external evaluation of the context.

In conclusion, the levels of evaluation of the EDUEVAL triangular model should be conceived in a flexible and circular way, with the tools and methodologies adapted to the special conditions and the uniqueness of the different educational contexts in which the evaluator (or, better, the team of evaluators) will be operating.

3.4.2 *Tools*

There are multiple tools for evaluating the work of adult education staff: precisely due to the triangular approach based on mixed methods, a wide selection of tools deriving from the observational and narrative methods, also used more in general in social research (Corbetta, 1999) can be considered, such as observation grids, log books and other forms of professional writing, interviews and focus groups, the analysis of the documentation of the service, portfolios, rubrics, questionnaires, the audit etc.

Well aware that the tools used to evaluate educational work have to be selected, each time, according to the requirements of the evaluation (of the target, of the nature of the service, of the number of users, of the problematic issues that have emerged, of previous experiences of self-evaluation of the staff), thanks to the expertise of the evaluator, the choice has been to focus in particular on three tools. They do not represent the *only tools possible* to evaluate educational work, but are considered the most representative of the EDUEVAL model, based on the evaluation of the context, self-evaluation and external evaluation: they are the rubric, the portfolio and the audit.

3.4.2.1 The evaluation rubric

The rubric is a tool used to evaluate the quality of products and performances (McTighe & Ferrara, 1996), especially in the scholastic context, where it is common for evaluating the competence of pupils through a definition of the dimensions that make it up, of the expected levels of mastery and the “evidence” referred to real situations (Castoldi, 2012). It consists of a scale of pre-established scores and a list of criteria that describes the characteristics of each score on the scale (Castoldi, 2006) and appears as a table with two columns. It “is built up by breaking up a complex task into essential elements, identifying for each one of them a series of descriptors of the actions required, with ordinal or numerical values with which to translate the judgement into a raw score or a mark” (Baldassarre, 2015, p. 232; Arter, 1994). The criteria of evaluation of a complex performance, a competence or a product, are expressed in levels of quality that are clearly defined and can be expressed through observable, measurable and concrete behaviour (not through general concepts). The performance that is the object of evaluation is analysed through some

fundamental features, which make up the components of a rubric:

- the *dimensions*, specific characteristics that distinguish the performance (they answer the question: *which aspects do I consider in evaluating a certain performance?*);
- the *criteria*, the educational aims, the conditions that each performance or competence has to meet to be adequate and successful (they answer the question: *according to what can I appreciate the performance?*);
- the *indicators*, which provide concrete feedback on the achievement of the target and the satisfaction of the criterion, identifying what to look at to judge (they answer the question: *which observable evidence allows me to measure the degree of presence of the pre-chosen criterion of judgement?*);
- the *anchors*: concrete examples of performance that can guide translating a criterion or indicator (they answer the question: *in relation to the indicator identified, what is a concrete example of performance in which the presence of the criterion considered can be recognized?*);
- the *levels*, in the last place, specify the degrees reached by the criteria, considered on the basis of an ordinal scale arranged from the highest level to the lowest one.

3.4.2.2 The audit

The *audit* is a documented, systematic and independent inspection visit, aimed at highlighting the non-conformities, with respect to pre-established criteria, of products, processes, systems and programmes in an organization (Storti, 2006). It takes place through collecting objective *evidence*, i.e. information that can be verified and traced back to concrete situations, and for this reason it is also useful for providing significant data to the highest levels of the organization, for

future decision-making. The information that can be verified through an inspection visit in loco can be collected using different methods, including interviews with the personnel, observation of activities and the work context, the analysis and re-view of the documentation of the organization, the statistics, and information from subjects external to the organization. The phases for conducting an audit process are somewhat standardized and include:

- a phase of planning the audit, in which its objectives, the field and the criteria are defined;
- a phase of reviewing the documentation of the service to be evaluated;
- a phase of preparing the work documents and forms to record information/data;
- a phase of planning the programme of the audit;
- an opening meeting, in which to present the method of conducting the audit and the criteria;
- a phase of audit in the field, in which to collect the evidence;
- a phase of preparing the audit report, which includes the non-conformities and the recommendations for improvement;
- a closing meeting, where the audit report is presented (*ibid.*, p. 23).

Used as the tool of choice of the Quality Management System in conformity with the requirements of the UNI EN ISO 9001: 2000 standard and as a form of external evaluation for the purpose of an accreditation system – with the definition and verification that an organization requesting the attestation of accreditation, for example required so that an institution can provide training courses accredited by the local authorities, is in possession of the minimum requirements –, an audit allows not only highlighting non-conformities, in-

efficiencies and discrepancies, it also allows describing some recommendations to improve the organization and to record conformities and good practices.

3.4.2.3 The portfolio

The *portfolio* is understood as the annotated documentation of a training or professional path, curated by the individual or by a work group. It is built up by selecting a series of materials considered significant (photographs, documents, products, films, essays, texts, articles, case studies, course materials, evaluation tools, tests, certificates of membership or participation in groups, notes, performance evaluations), but is not limited to the mere “collection” of documenting material. In order to be able to talk about a portfolio, these materials have to be critically analysed through the identification of merits and limits and situated in the educational experience, interpreting the overall meaning of the experience.

Borrowed from the scholastic and training context, it is also considered a valid tool for evaluating educational action (Paulson & Meyer, 1991) as, in addition to being a final product and inventory of documents, it also represents *documentation of a process*, a narrative practice aimed at reflection and self-evaluation of one’s professional, formative and personal experience. The portfolio allows tracing back the knowledge matured through experience and acquiring awareness of the competences gained, it fosters a growth of awareness by the subject and a more mature construction of identity, it allows the subject to become aware of their learning, their limits and their potential (Castoldi, 2012). The portfolio thus represents self-evaluation through the characteristics of significance, authenticity, processuality, responsibility, promotionalism, recursivity, dynamicity, globality and metacognition.

This tool will be considered in greater depth below, in the

section 3.6.1.3, where a possible exemplification of portfolio for the self-evaluation of the educational work of AE staff will be described.

3.5 Indicators in an evaluation process

by Pilar Escuder-Mollon, Roger Esteller-Curto,
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3.5.1 Introduction

Defining indicators in an evaluation process helps staff and managers to define the details of what is important for the institution or for the success of the educational activities of the institution. Once indicators have been defined, we then know what data needs to be collected, what is important, and the effectiveness of our activities. Indicators are necessary to be included in the evaluation process, better if they are defined formally. We should not forget other indicators, not formally established, created from the experience and expertise of the practitioners.

When creating indicators for evaluation, it is necessary firstly to understand their purpose and justify the need for them (*Figure 1*), and later how the indicators and the results obtained will be used. Secondly, the indicators should be integrated into the evaluation process, therefore they will be linked to a methodology and in the end, used for assessing, therefore, the indicators themselves should fulfil some characteristics (*Figure 2*).

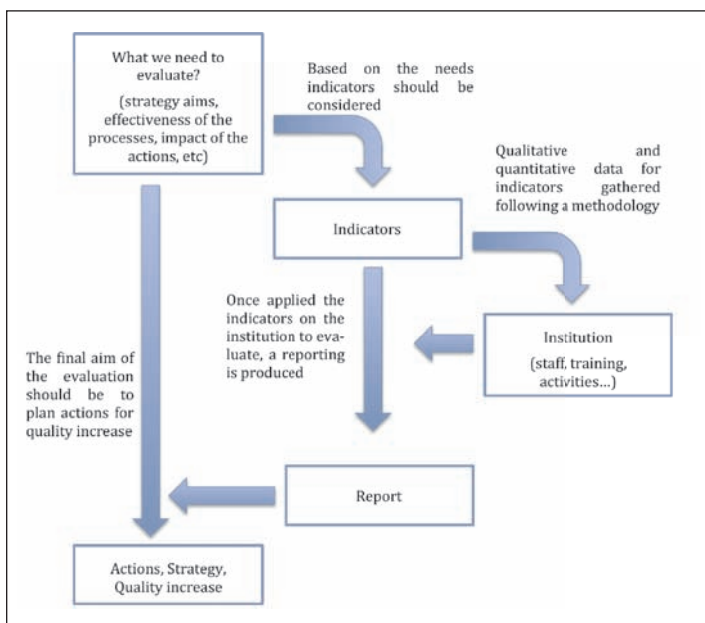


Figure 1. Context of the indicators in the flow

Relevant	Comparable
Useful	Economical
Convenient	Quantifiable
Understandable	Agreed
Reliable	Announced

Figure 2. Attributes that a good indicator should fulfil

Indicators could originate because of internal needs or external regulations. An example of an indicator that is originated by a policy regulation could be to consider the “Number of students that finish the degree compared to those who start.” If the indicator is created because an aim exists in the institution, then it could be the “Average score of learner satisfaction in extra-academic activities”. It does

not matter whether the indicators have been originated because of internal or external needs: a need always has to exist.

The indicators should be **relevant** to the strategic aims of the institution, objectives or policy-level requirements. From now on, we are not going to differentiate whether the source of this need is internal to the institution or external.

It must be **useful**; some indicators are mandatory because of policy-level requirements, others could provide management information about the quality level of what is being evaluated or help for decision-making.

Convenient, that is created because of a need, based on the strategic or operational aims of the institution (internal need) or because of a policy-level requirement (external need).

By creating an **understandable** indicator we will make it possible for people to accept it more easily. Simplicity here is an advantage. Complex indicators should be avoided; it is difficult not only to understand their meaning but sometimes, to know how to apply them.

A good indicator should be **comparable**. If so, then it is possible to know the evolution over the years, or between departments or institutions.

The best indicator would be the one that originates faithfully from the strategic aims of the institution or the policy regulations, but sometimes, when doing that, the result is an indicator that is difficult to process or obtain. It could involve a long term process, gathering a lot of information that is difficult to access or process or, even, involving so many people that it makes the indicator very expensive to obtain. An **economic** indicator should have a good benefit/cost ratio.

An indicator can be quantitative and qualitative but, in any case, a value should be obtained. A **quantifiable** indicator makes later post-processing easier (such as grouping indicators or comparing them over the years) but also communicating with management or the members of the staff

By **agreed** we mean, that as far as possible, the indicator definition and how it is to be obtained should be agreed by all the people involved. When this agreement is not possible, they should at least be appropriately informed and the selection of the indicator is justified. The evaluation and quality management involve in the end human resources. They will be more motivated for improving and participating in the evaluation process when they agree with the indicators chosen.

In the whole evaluation process, indicators should not be confidential but **communicated**. When results of evaluation are reported, the way the evaluation has been made should not remain obscure, but transparent. Only this way will the staff trust the results and place their confidence in the conclusions of the evaluation report.

Indicator should be defined trying to fulfil previous attributes, and should include information about how it should be calculated, when, who, and which the source of information is.

Indicators are created and defined because there is some kind of requirement. This supposed need could have several origins and the following are the most common:

- strategic aims of the institution, or operational objectives for a specific department or service. Firstly the indicators can be used to verify that the aims or objectives are fulfilled. Secondly, indicators can also provide information about quality and progress, begin a source of information for decision making. Example of a strategic aim is: *We should target excellence on the pedagogy-based technology*. It is then possible to create several indicators, such as: *Average number per year of courses/conferences that staff attend related to technology-enhanced teaching*, or *The drop-out rate in e-learning courses*;
- policy regulations. There could be some aims that are mandatory because of policy regulations or contracts among institutions, for example, there could be a regulation saying that

- at least 1/5 of the classes should be in English, then the indicators can be used to verify that this is done correctly;
- the institution offers a charter of services. This is a document where an institution informs the users about the services that it offers and the quality of those services. It can be seen as a commitment between the institution and the clients or users. Example of an item in a charter of services is: *We will give a reply to any user inquiry in less than 3 days*. This item in the charter of services would then originate an indicator: *Average time when answering a question, suggestion or complaint made by a user*.

3.5.2 Process approach

In a process-oriented approach, all the activities and resources within an institution are seen as processes. A process has inputs, activities and outputs (*Figure 3*).

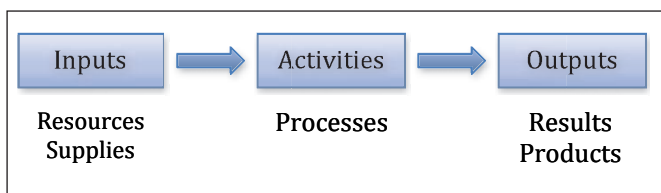


Figure 3. Activities in a process-based flow

In an educational institution, there are a lot of educational activities (such as teaching–learning), but there are also activities related to management, course design, training of trainers, dissemination, evaluation, control, etc. The staff in this kind of institution is the main input. So it is understandable to focus on this kind of input; the trainers, tutors, facilitators, heads of studies, supervisors, etc. are the main key actors here.

3.5.3 *Indicators during Evaluation*

Evaluation is one of the main processes in an institution (such as training, management, accounting, human resources coordination etc.). Sometimes, this evaluation process is used to increase quality, for accreditation, assessment or management, among others, no matter the scenario, we always use indicators, but sometimes they are used unconsciously in their daily routines by managers, coordinators, heads of departments and other staff with experience.

Those indicators are used as clues that allow knowing that something is going wrong, something can get better and continuously take decisions. Try to define indicators and use them to assess, understand and improve the processes of your institutions. Think on indicators as tools that will help your evaluation process, not as something that restricts you. They will also help to justify and prove to others (as decision-makers, accreditation offices, society) the work you are doing and the impact.

3.5.4 *Continuous improvement*

The plan-do-check-act (Moen & Normal 2006) is a cycle in the production processes of factories, which we can take as a suggestion. In accordance with this plan, a product is first designed, then produced, tested and based on the results of the test, a new version of the product is designed with greater quality (*Figure 4*).

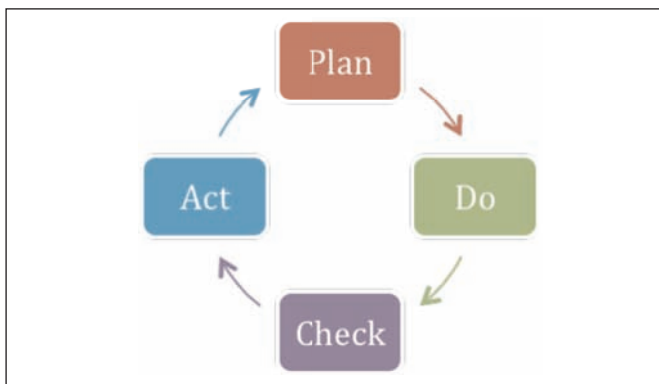


Figure 4. PDCA flow (Plan, do, check, act)

This plan highlights the need to consider evaluation as a resource for the continuous improvement of the educational work of the staff, the work of the individual operator and of the context.

In this sense, the indicators as described above are very useful for controlling and monitoring the evaluative process and its final aims.

3.6 Adult educators' evaluation indicators

*by Velta Lubkina, Gilberto Marzano, Tamara Pigozne,
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In assessment methodologies some main *indicators* have been identified:

- an integrative approach (*lesson structure, content, teaching methods, unified content, themes complementing each other*), emphasizing the principle of the unity of form and content;
- compliance (*ability to use appropriate methods for adult education, a balanced proportion of theory and practice*);

- innovations (*essential topicality of the course program theme, technical equipment appropriate to the requirements of contemporary requirements and the ability to use it; applied creative solutions*).

Profile codes	Content (conceptual) codes	
	Meta-codes	Multiple codes
▪ adult education policy makers ▪ adult education policy implementers	▪ understanding	▪ process
		▪ result
		▪ process result
	▪ goal	▪ quality
		▪ sustainability
		▪ needs
	▪ evaluation	▪ self-evaluation
		▪ external
		▪ consolidation
	▪ competence	▪ methodology
		▪ communication
		▪ management
		▪ motivation

Table 1. Code structure

Figure 1 shows the structure of the assessment of the evaluators of adult education staff.

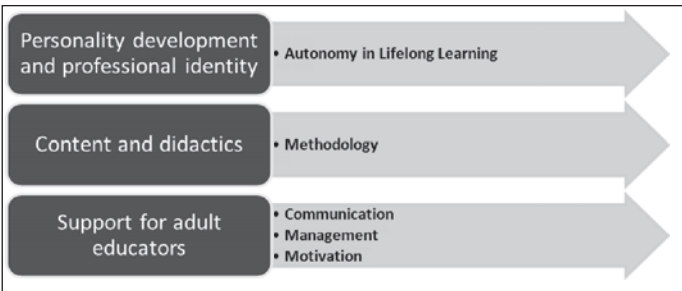


Figure 1. Structure of the assessment of evaluators of AE staff

3.6.1 *Competences in the evaluation of adult educators*

The topical issue in the context of the evaluation of adult educators is the definition of the characteristics and properties, which characterize education both as a process and as an outcome of continuous improvement that comply with the changing requirements and needs of individuals and all other interested parties (Fernãte, 2014, p. 12).

Differences have been observed in understanding and evaluating the quality of adult education among the persons involved in the educational process (both professionals – educators/teachers – and beneficiaries – the adults –): educators and adults (learners and beneficiaries) relate educational awareness, as well as the evaluation, to individual interests, needs and abilities, while employers emphasize compliance with the needs of the labour market and national socio-economic development (Fernãte, 2014).

Accordingly to a pedagogical view, evaluation is a person's targeted activity, which reveals personal, intellectual and social development. Accordingly, one of the key indicators of education quality is the educators' quality (Paņina, 2007).

Within the framework of the *AGADE - A Good Adult Educator in Europe* project (2006), a set of criteria and competencies for adult educators (see Figure 2) was developed. AGADE focused on two dimensions: the personal development/ethical dimension and the professional development dimension. These dimensions have been divided into three stages: organization (knowledge), performance (skills), evaluation (*organization*) (Carlsen & Irons, 2003; Jääger & Irons, 2006) (see Figure 3).

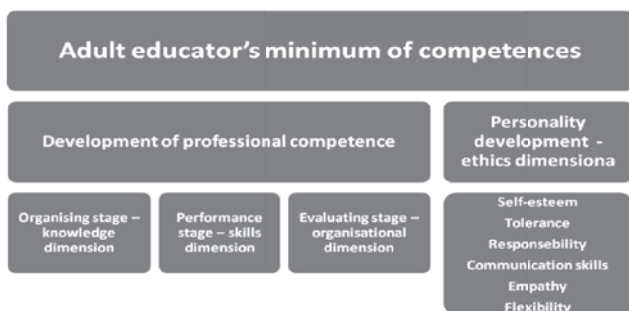


Figure 2. Minimum competences of adult educators

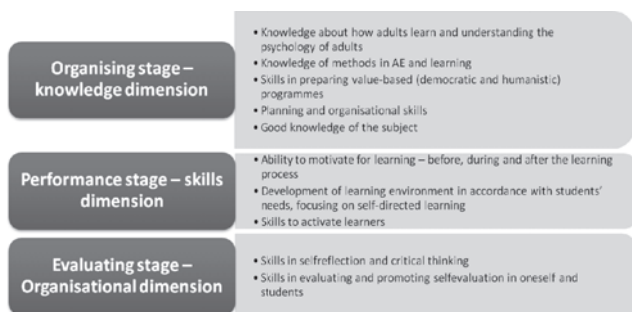


Figure 3. Stages of the assessment of adult educators

Within the framework of the *Qualified to Teach* project (2009) an international qualification system for promoters of adult education in adult initial training and continuing education in Europe was developed, structuring qualification descriptions in 3 domain areas (see Figure 4), where the pedagogical triangle as an analytical category reflects 3 key pedagogical elements that must be combined in pedagogical activities:

- content and didactics (basic competencies connected with the goal);
- personal development and professional identity (basic competencies related to the promotion of learning);

- learners' support (basic competencies related to the adult beneficiaries/learners) (see Figure 5).

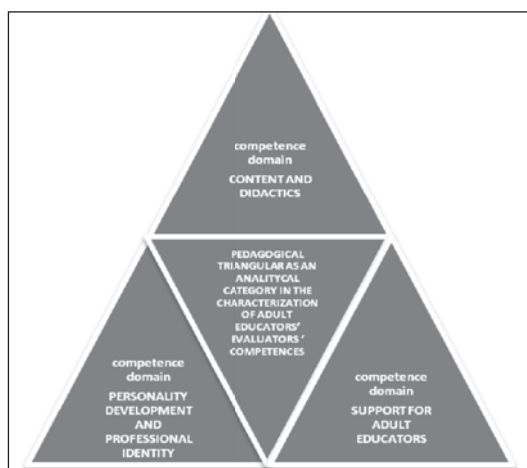


Figure 4. Assessment structure of the competences of adult educators (according to Qualified to Teach, 2009)

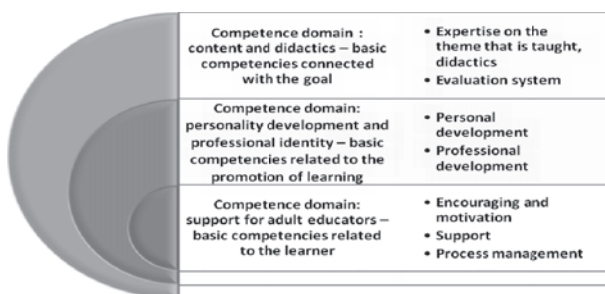
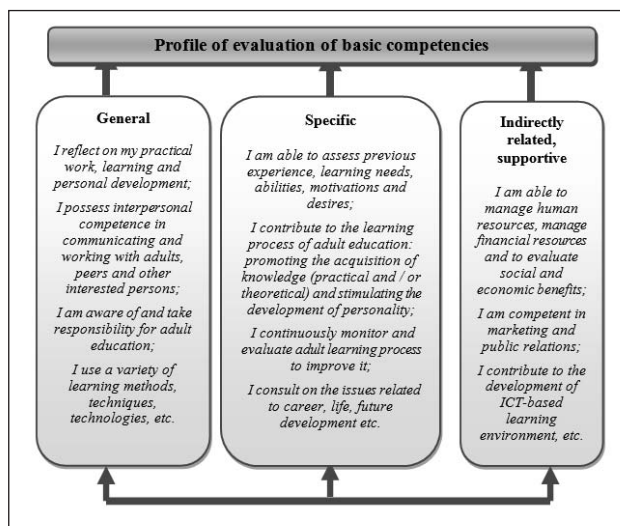


Figure 5. Criteria for the competences of adult educator (Research voor Belied, 2010)

Indicators have been developed (Research voor Belied, 2010) for the self-evaluation of the basic competences of adult educators (Figure 6).



**Figure 6. Profile of the evaluation of basic competences
(Research voor Belied)**

3.6.2 Validpack

VALIDPACK is a package of validation instruments, unique of its kind at European level and it was considered an example of good practice by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). The Handbook & Evaluator's Guide contains useful guidelines and instructions for adult educators on how they should approach this validation process. The instrument creates a framework for the documentation and evaluation of real competences of adult educators, no matter whether they have been acquired in formal, non-formal or informal learning contexts. VALIDPACK is an instrument coming from the VINEPAC project. The components of adult educators' competence model elaborated by L. Garrido, G. Levi, A. Medina and E. Mendeza (Gar-

rido, Levi, Medina & Méndez, 2014) are institutional affiliation, innovation, research, evaluation, motivation, planning, professional identity, media integration, methodology, communication, tutoring and intercultural communication. It is emphasized that adult educators' competence is an important factor in evaluating the quality of adult education (EAEA, 2006).

Evaluation criteria is an essential condition for qualitative self-evaluation (Santos & Pinto, 2014), which, in the authors' opinion, is one of the main forms of adult education evaluation. Quantitative or criteria evaluation is the determination of quality using criteria; its alternative is the determination of quality through subjective experience, using a description, analysing success/merits and shortcomings/failures (Stake, 2004).

A process and a result are important components of adult educators' evaluation (Jaspers & Schade, 2002). Under the influence of modern pedagogical paradigms, the focus is put on process-oriented evaluation. It helps to see the relationship between causes and consequences, evidence that supports the results or impact of the supportive intervention (Nagao, 2003; Jaspers, 2003; Jääger & Irons, 2006), it provides a more active participation of the interested parties in the evaluation, decision-making and implementation process (Smith, 2005), as well as ensuring sustainability (Hashimoto, Pillay & Hudson, 2011).

Process-oriented evaluation is related to the assessment of the performance, which is defined as the assessment of integrated action and behaviour in the definite situation, which is relevant to the profession (Van Brakel & Heijmen-Versteegen, 2003). In order to assess the competencies that are specific to the profession or have a key role, a testing method is used. Standardized observation is also used in evaluation process. It is done by qualified evaluators who are specially trained to observe, record and evaluate. This will possibly guarantee the highest reliability.

The assessment of adult educators' evaluators is characterized by:

- focus on process;
- focus on self-evaluation;
- development;
- responsibility;
- grade value determined by multiple drafts (Porter & Clelland, 1995).

The method advocated by the *Self-Evaluation in Adult Life Long Learning* (SEALLL) project starts with a modular framework where “self-evaluation as a dialogue in a multiplayer situation” is the key-concept. A dialogue between staff, teachers and learners within the institution and a dialogue between the institution and relevant external actors is the starting point for self-evaluation.

Based on the theoretical statements and results of empirical research, the authors offer a model for evaluation of the competence of evaluators of adult educators, which could be the basis for the evaluation of competence of evaluators of adult educators (see Figure 2), and which analyses the assessment as a process and a result, emphasizing the assessment of performance; goals are related to the provision of quality and sustainability according to learners' needs; competence indicators are methodology, motivation, communication and management; evaluation includes consolidation of self-evaluation and external evaluation. Based on the analysed literature and the proposed model, the authors define the competence of evaluators of adult educators as a meta-competence, where general and professional competences closely synergize with the evaluator's personal qualities and objectivity and focus on the evaluation of the actions and behaviour of educators in the defined educational context, as well as facilitating sustainable improvement of the existing process (activities).

3.6.3 A portfolio designed for the evaluation of adult education staff: indicators and criteria

A portfolio is a targeted collection of materials, which show the competence of adult education staff evaluators and demonstrate their activity, accumulated experience, achievements and progress in one or more areas, the participation of evaluators, selecting content, criteria and evidence of self-reflection by evaluators of adult education staff. Furthermore, a portfolio provides a complex and comprehensive picture of the performance by evaluators of adult education staff in a defined context (Paulson & Meyer, 1991).

The portfolio for adult education staff evaluators is a way to document their progress. Its greatest value is that adult education staff evaluators, when designing it, become active participants in the evaluation process. However, the portfolio is not just a collection of materials compiled in the folder (Figures 7 and 8). Each component of the portfolio structure should be designed and organized in such a way as to demonstrate certain competences. It is a tool for developing the autonomy of the evaluator of adult education staff (Khoosf & Khosravani, 2014).

Goals	Characteristics
assessment of evaluators of adult education staff monitoring the evaluation process presentation of the competences of evaluators of adult education staff (demo folder)	insight, reflection and presentation in the evaluation process an authentic picture of the evaluators of adult education staff space for individual profiling of evaluators of adult education staff a tool for a demand-driven program: based on the needs of evaluators of adult education staff evaluation, using a variety of sources that are included in the Portfolio a tool for monitoring and evaluation feasible, well-grounded modern dynamic content-oriented focused on results, which contribute to increasing the quality of assessments and personal career development contains diverse evidence of competence interactive longitudinal (repeated from time to time)

Figure 7. Portfolio goals and characteristics

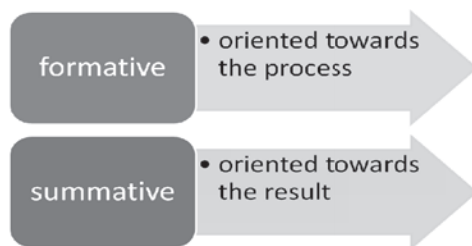


Figure 8. Types of Portfolio according to their content

3.6.3.1 Digital portfolio

Technological development opens up portfolio digitization facilities, thus becoming electronic media, supplementing the multimedia environment and providing the opportunities for evaluators of adult education staff to easily and effectively collect, compile and manage their own artefacts, not only images, but also audio and video files without any space and time constraints, as well as feedback and making them available to the wide circle of society (Wall & Peltier, 1996; Heath, 2002; MacDonald, Liu, Lowell, Tsai & Lohr, 2004; Knight, Hakel & Gromko, 2008). An electronic portfolio is not a haphazard collection of artefacts, but rather a reflective tool that demonstrates growth over time (Barrett, 2000). The portfolio will have a significant educational value, if it is used and developed in a way that promotes the evaluation experience and provides valid assessment. With the portfolio concept, reflection is dramatically increased due to the continuous exposure to past work. “In this capacity, portfolios become vehicles for reflection in which learners examine where they have been, where they are now, how they got there, and where they need to go next” (Porter & Cleland, 1995, p. 34).

- The following Figures show:
- The main methods for the development of portfolio (Figure 9);
- Portfolio structure (Figure 10);
- Portfolio criteria (Figure 11);
- Portfolio evaluation (Figure 12).

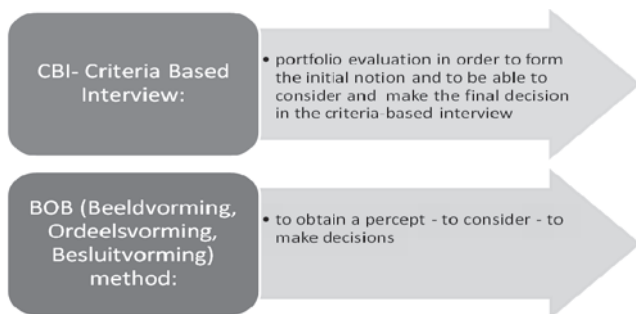


Figure 9. Main methods for the development of portfolio

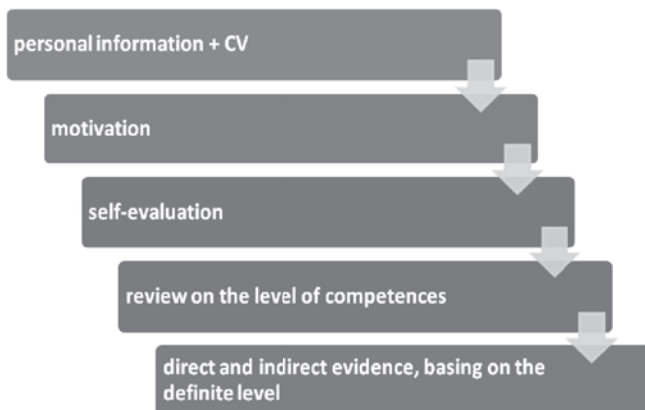


Figure 10. Portfolio structure

	stage	criteria	very well	well	well enough	not well	evidences
Domain: Personality development and professional identity							
Purposful and planned development of personality and professional improvement: autonomy in lifelong learning	1. The development of adult educators' assessors' personality - ethical dimension	■ consistency ■ interest in personal and professional development ■ voluntary nature					
	2. Organizational phase – knowledge dimension: <u>knowledge</u>	■ andragogy and adult education specificity ■ psycho-social profile of adult educators and evaluators of adult education staff ■ methodology of evaluation of adult education staff ■ personal role in the institutional environment ■ opportunities for personal and professional development in professional practice ■ content of the field					
	3. Activity phase – skills dimension: <u>skills</u>	■ use theoretical knowledge and latest findings on development trends in adult education, adult educators and the psycho-logical profile of evaluators of adult education staff, methodology of evaluation of adult education staff and content of the competence areas ■ to carry out self-reflection					
		■ critical thinking skills ■ to see and use opportunities for professional growth					
 Domain: Content and didactics							

Methodology – the use of different evaluation methods, techniques and technologies in assessment of adult educators' previous experience, learning needs, skills and motivation in adult education process	1. The development of adult the personality of evaluators of adult education staff - ethical dimension	■ confidence in applying different types of assessment, methods, techniques and technologies						
		■ openness to changes, applying new assessment methods, techniques and technologies						
		■ positive, but critical view of the use of new evaluation methods, techniques and technologies						
	2. Organizational phase – knowledge dimension: <u>knowledge</u>	■ learning and assessment forms, methods, techniques and technologies, including the media and e-environment in the context of adult education in accordance with the respective field of competence						
	3. Activity phase – skills dimension: <u>skills</u>	■ integrating theory into practice in the evaluation process						
		■ using a variety of approaches and different teaching and assessment methods, techniques and technologies, including the media, e-environment in evaluation of adult educators and their achievements according to quality criteria						
		■ ability to see new opportunities and a critical awareness of their usefulness in self-evaluation and evaluation of adult education staff						
	Domain: Support for adult educators							
								

Communication - cooperation with adult educators, colleagues and other interested parties in the assessment process: communicator and "team player"	1. The development of the personality of evaluators of adult education staff - ethical dimension	■ integrity ■ trust ■ shared responsibility ■ empathy ■ tolerance ■ dignity and respect ■ a positive attitude towards the assessment process and the parties involved						
	2. Organizational phase – knowledge dimension: <u>knowledge</u>	■ ways and strategies to create a trusting relationship with adult educators, colleagues and other interested parties						
		■ knowledge of the types and techniques of applied and constructive forms of communication (verbal, non-verbal)						
	3. Activity phase – skills dimension: <u>skills</u>	■ to cooperate with adult educators, colleagues and interested parties						
		■ to work in a team						
		■ to exchange information, knowledge and experience, both orally and in writing						
		■ timely identification of problems, offering a possible solution						
		■ to give, receive and use feedback in the improvement of professional practice						
		■ to use and evaluate non-verbal communication						
		■ to create a positive psychosocial environment						

Management – the use of the field-related knowledge and available resources; promotion of ICT-based supportive learning environment for adult educators: expert	1. The development of the personality of evaluators of adult education staff - ethical dimension	■ openness ■ flexibility in accepting the non-traditional and innovations ■ creativity					
	2. Organizational phase – knowledge dimension: <u>knowledge</u>	■ various resources (time, human resources, environment, education) to be used in the assessment process ■ IT-based learning environment opportunities and limitations ■ support measures for adult educators, their access and application options ■ planning ■ stress management ■ internal and external regulatory requirements					
	3. Activity phase – skills dimension: <u>skills</u>	■ to evaluate the choice of different resources and compliance with the content and context ■ to use in practice the experience gained in the field of competence ■ to plan personal and adult educators' activities in the assessment process and to implement these plans ■ to use IT-based environment and to evaluate the effectiveness of e-environment ■ to upgrade and expand resources ■ to cope with stress ■ to make decisions in accordance with internal and external regulatory requirements					
							

Motivation – support for adult educators in the assessment process, inspiring them to improve, develop and have autonomy in lifelong learning: motivator and inspirer	1. The development of the personality of evaluators of adult education staff - ethical dimension	■ willingness to invest in further development ■ interest in improving the adult education process and using outcomes in practice					
	2. Organizational phase – knowledge dimension: <u>knowledge</u>	■ adult psychology ■ ways how to use assessment results in order to improve adult assessment process in own practice					
	3. Activity phase – skills dimension: <u>skills</u>	■ to promote adult educators' interest and involvement in assessment process					
		■ in collaboration with adult educators to review a career / professional development plan and to develop guidelines for professional growth					
		■ to motivate and inspire adult educators' personality and development of professional competences					
	4. The assessment phase - organizational dimension	■ systematic self-reflection on personality development, practical activities and professional development;					
		■ systematization analysis, interpretation, presentation of assessment results, and their use in personal development and career development, emphasizing the dynamics of growth					
							
Evaluation methods (Jaspers, 2003; Zutven, Polderdijk & Volder, 2004; Jaspers & Heijmen-Versteegen, 2004, 2005; Jaspers & Zijl, 2011)		■ coaching ■ mentoring ■ diary / reflective report ■ colleagues' critical assessment ■ Individual Development Plan ■ Individual Action Plan ■ 360° feedback ■ effort-based agreement ■ discussions ■ criteria-based interview ■ Progress tests ■ test on learning styles ■ personality test ■ practice test ■ essay ■ comprehensive test ■ knowledge quiz ■ case study ■ practical "station" exam ■ a selection of works ■ simulation (imitation) ■ qualification test ■ oral (e.g., presentation) ■ oral exam / final project / thesis ■ exposition ■ exhibition ■ concert ■ road map					

Figure 11. Portfolio criteria

Strengths	Weaknesses
Structured database of evaluators of adult education staff Self-evaluation Finances Time savings Self-organization	Emotions Digital skills Scope
Opportunities	Threats
Opportunity to summarize own experience and to get to know the experience of others Supervision, based on self-reflection and critical evaluation of activities	The desire to create a portfolio Lack of time Scrupulousness Safety

Figure 12. Portfolio evaluation

In order to assess the competence-based learning and educational environment, testing methods are based on the model created by M. Jaspers and I. Heijmen-Versteegen (Jaspers & Heijmen-Versteegen, 2004) that is based on testing functions (monitoring and evaluation, the role of feedback) and focuses on testing (process and results). In order to provide supervisory functions when developing a digital portfolio, coaching, personal development and action plan, reflexive report, the test on progress, learning style, personality and practice should be used, while for the provision of evaluation functions, the feedback, evaluating discussion, the criteria-based interview method, an essay, a knowledge test, case studies, simulations, qualification test, presentations and the final project / thesis should be used. Self-evaluation, peer evaluation and joint evaluation are the basis for monitoring testing methods that are oriented to both the process and the result.

3.6.4 Checklist of indicators for the evaluation of adult education staff

A check list for adult education evaluation has been defined¹⁹.

1. Why evaluate?
 - Purpose of adult educators' evaluation
 - Types of evaluation
 - What to evaluate
 - When to evaluate
 - Evaluation delivery mode
 - Who would benefit from the educators' evaluation activity?
2. How do we evaluate adult educators?
 - Using frameworks or forms
 - Contextualising the frameworks
 - Identifying the strongest effects of evaluation
 - Effects on learning?
 - What specific suggestions do you have for changes that I can make to improve the education activity?
3. Evaluating the physical and learning environment
 - Are the physical facilities provided for this educational activities appropriate (e.g. classroom space, structure and furnishing)?
 - Is the number of participants in the training activity acceptable?
 - Are all the materials required for the training activity available?
 - What is the general climate like (poor, good, very good)?

¹⁹ It has been used for evaluating the EDUEVAL training activity in Latvia.

4. Evaluating the activity of the educators
 - Are the educators appropriate for the specific training level?
 - Do they use well organized contents/materials?
 - Do they clearly know the training objectives?
 - Is the training content correlated with the training objectives?
 - Are the training materials clear and easy to understand?
5. Evaluating the tutor's activity
 - Is the tutor a good teacher/educator?
 - Does the tutor provide enough time for questions and discussions?
 - Does the tutor use concrete examples to explain concepts?
 - Is the tutor able to simplify difficult material?
 - Is the tutor well prepared for tutoring?
6. Evaluating training effectiveness
 - Knowledge acquired
 - Skills acquired
 - Motivation, morale, values, etc.

3.6.5 Conclusion

Adult education is a very wide area which encompasses different scopes, pertaining not only to the world of work, but also to peoples' physical, social, and mental well-being throughout life (active ageing), as well as to the education of people with special needs (prisoners, adult migrants, refugees, the disabled, etc.).

Nevertheless, evaluation is a complex process that applies to a variety of contexts. It can be used to support decision-making, and at the same time, to test the effectiveness of national and international programs in different fields, education included (Mertens, 2014).

In this chapter we focused on the evaluation of adult educators illustrating some specific aspects, such as indicators, the portfolio and the digital portfolio. We also presented the Validpack model, highlighting its usefulness in the evaluation of process of adult education staff.

We are convinced that the evaluation of adult educators implies the study not only of the models of evaluation, but, above all, the contextualization of the process as well, since the field of application covers a very differentiated spectrum of teaching/learning activities and related competencies, depending on the purpose, situation, content, modality, type of learner, and so on. For this reason, we included in this chapter the portfolio structure and a checklist of indicators of evaluation of adult education staff. They represent a practical framework that can be adapted/improved according to the different operative contexts.

Finally, we ought to point out that the Validpack model includes both external evaluation and consolidation, this is intended as a comparison between self-evaluation and external evaluation. Nevertheless, we decided to focus on self-evaluation since it is easier to implement and exploit in non-formal and informal environments that represent the most diffused learning modalities in adult education.

The impact of the evaluation of adult education: a European perspective

by Mirosław Grewiński, Joanna Lizut & Stefania Szczurkowska
WSP – Janusz Korczak Pedagogical University in Warsaw

In the European Union, evaluation as a notion and an evaluative, objective quality assessment method, started to widespread since the latter part of the eighties in the 20th century. At that time, the European Community institutions implemented profound reforms of structural policies, for which evaluation became a principal tool of efficient and effective quality assurance of the development programmes which were under way. It was when the European Commission obligated all member countries to mandatory ex-ante, on-going and ex-post evaluation, referring to projects which were co-financed by the EU funds. Simultaneously, evaluation was accompanied by the implementation of other processes, such as: monitoring, audit and control. All of them played a complementary role in order to achieve a more complex evaluation of the programmes, including those in the field of education and social policy. A particular emphasis was put on the evaluation within the framework of reforms concerning the EU public policies which were in action in 1993. Since then, the evaluation had been recommended to be carried out in all programmes and projects, both on the UE and national levels, as well as in those adopted not exclusively in the framework of the economic and social cohesion policy.

Since that time, the evaluation extended over a wide area and not only in the sector of programmes conducted with the support of the EU funds, but also within those of a national and regional character (Grewinski, 2002). It has been

noticed, in a major part of countries, that the evaluation brings various measurable benefits and desirable outcomes, which gave as a result its implementation in many fields and spheres of economic and social state policy, as well as in the activities performed by local governments (Grewinski, 2010). Evaluation, as a research method, began to be used in the assessment of social and educational conditions of various social groups. Originally, evaluation served primarily for the assessment of public programmes which were carried out by the social policy institutions (Szatur-Jaworska, 2010).

Depending on the definition that has been adopted, the evaluation is determined either in a narrow or in a broad context. A narrow approach clearly recognizes its difference from monitoring, audit and control. A broad approach contains other perspectives and it considers evaluation as a widely conceived macro-evaluation or meta-evaluation. On the one hand, macro-evaluation is understood as a holistic, complex quality assessment based on a continuous quantitative and qualitative collection of data and pieces of information. On the other hand, macro-evaluation provides recommendations concerning chances for future achievements of the assumed results at a given stage of the programme or project being under way. Meanwhile, meta-evaluation is an attempt to evaluate the evaluation programmes in order to synthesize and summarize a number of different, detailed evaluative reports. For example, we deal with meta-evaluation when we holistically evaluate huge European or national public operational programmes, within the framework of which thousands of smaller projects are being carried out.

In Europe, during two last decades, thousands of evaluation procedures have been in action, including the evaluation of diverse groups of adults, who were involved in various programmes of educational and vocational training for mature people. As it results from them and also from many other evaluation procedures performed by research institutions, as well

as by the international team of experts working for the EDUEVAL project, among important, advantageous features of the evaluation of adults who are in lifelong learning programmes, the following ones need to be listed in the first place: information feedback and recommendations received by trainers, by institutions as organizers of the learning process, as well as by the course, training or postgraduate studies participants themselves – that is to say by all stakeholders of the educational processes. The above is a particularly significant impact of the evaluation, because other procedures, such as control, supervision or audit are focused more on accountability functions. The evaluation itself, as an additional source of knowledge, contributes to the improvement of the management processes, to a higher quality of educational services being in offer or to a greater involvement and commitment of the recipients of those services. It needs to be stressed, however, that the evaluation research procedures – being plentiful and frequent in the European Union – often face difficulties with the implementation of outcomes. Sometimes, the evaluation is *ticking off* the necessary procedure, without taking into account practical conclusions, recommendations or useful implications. The situation is slightly different in the control procedure, when post-control conclusions are mostly implemented by the entities to which they refer. It indicates that, in certain circumstances, the evaluation is either underestimated, or even neglected, especially if it is about the effectiveness of changes that are supposed to be introduced (Haber, 2007).

The evaluation reveals another important impact in Europe in the institutional context, which means improving the quality of performance of a particular entity or a given service that is offered, due to the obtained results of the evaluation. Many entities engaged in education and training of adults, treating their mission seriously and respecting the recipients of their services, really improve their offer or the quality of training, according to the results of internal and external eval-

uation that is under way. In this place, the very quality of the evaluation itself is of a particular importance. A successful evaluation should present the following characteristics: meticulous planning of the examination procedure, professional recognition of the recipients, efficient and rational reporting (Sternik, 2007). Unfortunately, many evaluation procedures throughout a great number of countries occur in a hurry. In addition to that, the organizations, which conduct evaluation that is commissioned to be carried out by public institutions and from their own funds, may not be fully objective and critical. This raises a problem of partiality and one-sidedness.

The evaluation in the sector of adults presents another significant aspect of an individual perspective referring to the labour market, employment and job decisions. This is due to the fact that the majority of adults who are in lifelong learning schemes in Europe wish to improve their qualifications through courses, other forms of training or postgraduate studies, with the aim to get a better position in the world of work. The evaluation outcomes in the context of labour market programmes indicate that evaluation plays an important role in the acquisition of a new knowledge or new skills, that are like signposts leading to changes of job decisions or transitions to different social roles. That is why the meaning of evaluation seen from an individual perspective is continuously growing, because many adult people search for new job opportunities for themselves, their families and relatives.

Another argument in favour of the evaluation is related with the idea that it provides reliable and useful pieces of information that enable to take advantage of the acquired knowledge by the authorities in their decision-making process. This occurs not only in the context of a particular activity that is examined but, also, in the sphere of planning educational policy on the European, national and regional levels. Knowledge acquired during evaluation can be used in the process of developing future actions, including lifelong

learning public strategies and programmes. It is worth remembering that evaluation becomes an element of a much broader process than just only immediate verification of the assumed objectives and, thus, it leads, for example, to the standardization of actions in education. (Szatur-Jaworska, 2010). Educational standards for adults mean activities which are supposed to answer the question of what might be offered, to what extent and at what kind of level – within a given educational service in favour of particular groups and in accordance with their identified needs which can be sensibly fulfilled (Wajcman, 2012) –. The notion of standard, based on the evaluation, refers to a final outcome of a particular action faced by its recipient. It is substantial that this concept of standard determines the quality of an educational service but, at the same time, it does not always exclusively reflect the level of satisfaction expressed by its beneficiaries (*ibidem*).

A key issue is that evaluation refers to the quality of adult education processes, because it shows a substantial measurable result of educational services with the use of quantitative and qualitative indicators for the assessment of those services, in terms of didactic and organizational values. As regards educational services, the most desirable outcomes consist of: specific knowledge, competencies and skills that are applicable in various social and work-related situations after the completion of services. In this context, the evaluation examines the impact understood, in other words, as expectation or a long-term influence that is verified in the following areas:

- the opportunity to make use of the results: how the recipients of educational services will be able to use the results, also when they are completed, and how their dispositions and attitudes will change;
- the input of a given activity, including educational services, to the existing solutions and the influence upon the development of new services: to what extent the educational

services under examination may contribute to the improvement of the level of knowledge and skills, to the change of the work methods, to the increase of the quality of educational processes;

- the definition of an added value: the inspirations resulting from a given educational process, for example new kinds of activities, changes in local communities;
- the capacity to transfer models of educational activities and implemented principles, etc. into similar kinds of actions, adaptation opportunities, possible implementation in other regions or countries;
- interest from the part of other entities, organizations, partners, including those from other sectors (Sawczuk, 2004).

Summing up, it needs to be stressed that the impact of the evaluation upon adults in the lifelong learning programmes is multi-faceted in the context of their personal development and the acquisition of information feedback. The evaluation has its influence upon the organizers of learning processes: owing to the results of evaluation, they improve the quality of their services and better adopt them to the demands of learners. The evaluation or meta-evaluation also has a broader impact on the decision-making processes and the decision-makers themselves. The latter have a say on innovative programmes and projects in the framework of educational policies for adults, or they decide to continue the existing initiatives. Probably, in the future we shall witness further improvements in the field of evaluation procedures, methods and how to use the achieved results that meet the demands of science and practice. There is enough evidence of a growing popularity of the concept of public policies that follow evidence based practice, where evaluation from the above perspective constitutes a significant analytic tool (*European Social Network Report*, 2015).

Evaluation and professional development of adult education staff

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What does thinking about evaluation as a practice that implements the professional development of staff working in an AE service mean?

Today, more than in other historical periods, the combination of evaluation / professional development is correlated with the challenges linked to building up a social Europe and the possibility of building a model of European Welfare, that is truly capable of interpreting the new needs of groups of weak adults, who have rapidly changing appearances and physiognomies. This can also allow people who start off from disadvantaged conditions to be able to access systems of participation, related to exercising effective citizenship. Today, in the field of social policies, we are seeing a movement in the opposite direction: on the one hand the European Community is acting to foster a model of social equity integrated at European level; on the other, the different Community countries have profoundly diversified models of social policy and welfare systems (Girotti, 1998; Ciucci, 2008).

The conditions of difficult economic circumstances of the services, a changed panorama of needs, correlated with a cultural and social fabric that is increasingly more varied and driven by the challenge of a complex interculturality, are only some of the multiple reasons why evaluation has to be interpreted as one of the most crucial practices in this period of a potential renewal of European challenges in the social sector (Bezzi, 2007). International literature on evaluation also ac-

centuates improving the quality of the processes and products that have been implemented from the perspective of transformation and change (Shaw-Lishman, 2002).

In a global context undergoing constant and rapid transformation, conditioned by frequent changes in legislation and direction of social policies, the competences of educators operating in the sector of Adult Education have to be constantly monitored and implemented by training and evaluation devices, so that they can be up to the needs of the addressees of these actions. At a time of great economic instability, building up contexts and systems focusing on the autonomy and creativity of professionals is one of the paths to be considered with farsightedness as a way to pass through the current state of crisis. Since the 1990s, when a “managerial” culture became established in the social field as well, public administrations have had increased expectations in relation to the quality of services delivered, as far as evaluation, the guarantees of quality and interdisciplinary collaboration in the work staff have been concerned. The idea guiding this process is that the service delivered must not be reliable only technically but also able to meet the expectations of the citizen.

This change has brought into focus the centrality of professional development as a strategy to increase the quality of the offer and the efficacy of the service performed. Professional development means a process that can improve and increase the capacities of the personnel through access to training opportunities in the workplace, throughout their working lives. Professional development is also a process that supports motivation, professional aspiration and the expectations of growth and career of the professionals involved in this sector. Attention to the professional development of staff is situated in this perspective of diffusing a managerial culture sustained by the ideology according to which all the aspects of the organizational life of a service, and in particular the training of the operators, have to be checked and monitored, from the delivery phase of

a service to that of evaluation, to meet the expectations of those who, as clients, benefit from it.

In this sense, speaking about professional development means emphasising training programmes but also a formal system of evaluation which monitors the level of performance of a staff on the job (Locke & Lathman, 1990) and the competences of the individual professionals involved (Boyatzis, 1982; Spencer & Spencer, 1992). The standards considered by accreditation systems, understood both elements supporting the development processes of staff and certifying the path covered as well as the results reached, regulate the acquisition of competences which have to be in line with high levels of quality, in order to guarantee a good level of competitiveness of the offer of the service, which justifies the disbursement of the funds necessary to support the activities.

It is however a common opinion that the standardizing the work processes in this sector if, on the one hand, it has produced a greater systematization of the processes themselves, on the other it has created and creates the risk of levelling out the logic of the educational processes into grids that are excessively rigid. It is agreed that the professionalism of a staff cannot be parameterized to standards, which fragment and break down the profile of these figures. Their peculiar function is to perform complex work, focused on inter-personal and communication competences, which avoid the asceticism of a process of rational objectivation .

The professional development of a staff operating in Adult Education services can, therefore, also be defined as the ability to give meaning – which can be constantly reviewed in time – to the complexity of social work and the contradictory nature of its aims (economic, political, pedagogical), reducing as far as possible the gap between the professional experience in the field and the basic knowledge orienting them. Concretely, for a working group this process implies being able to continually find and acquire new knowledge and skills,

being able to transform them into practice and knowing what to do to improve competences systematically, strategically and adequately, as well as taking an active part in processes of conception and improvement. Like academic curricula, they have to sustain the construction of professional profiles, that are adequate to the complexity of the world where they will be operating: this means that organizations have to constantly reconsider the relationship between the professional expectations of their workers (focusing on boosting their motivation, on reviewing projects and on the framework of meaning of these professionals) and the aims of their actions.

Evaluation, from this second perspective, takes on the role of a practice which supports professional development and orients the training agencies and the local organizations to be allies around a conception of the learning organisation, focused on aims of improving the quality of the processes and products delivered, through an increase in the space of internal reflectivity (Schon, 1999). The need to adopt criteria and standards that allow thinking about a European perspective of evaluation in the sector of Adult Education, has formed the heart of the EDUEVAL project, with the aim of structuring a curriculum that can be useful in outlining a professional profile of evaluator at European level.

The risk of remaining anchored to views that are relatively conditioned by local models or, the opposite one, of building up approaches to evaluation which are motivated by a universalism without concreteness, are the two extremes from which our proposal of a practice of triangulated evaluation – focused on the processes of retroaction between external evaluation, evaluation of the context and self-evaluation – has intended to differentiate itself.

The EDUEVAL project has highlighted the centrality of the formative dimension of evaluation, understood as a progressive process of attribution and self-attribution of value to one's work. It therefore follows that it is the evaluator who, in

the first place, develops in organization and in professional groups processes of self-awareness and cultural integration that are useful for supporting the challenges of world in rapid transformation. As well as a linear logic that understands evaluation of operators as an analysis of competences, which regulates the ability to carry out one's tasks according to the agreed standards and requisites, the evaluator has to adopt a complex view, attentive to bringing into focus not only outcomes and products of the activities of an educational service (external evaluation) but also the capacity to describe and understand the contexts, in which these experiences take place (evaluation of the context), and the ways in which these processes are articulated in the awareness of the ecological variables at play for the individual professionals and for professional groups (self-evaluation). An external evaluator, who has to certify the quality of the processes and products of an organization, performs an implicit formative function just as a coordinator in a Co-operative, who evaluates the work of his/her colleagues does. Both these evaluative functions have important consequences on the professional development of the staff.

For example, an external evaluator who is to perform an audit of a service, on implementing a systematic and documented check of the conformities of the products, processes, systems and procedures in an organization, is also implicitly performing a training function, as he/she goes into the details of some elements of organizational management (relative to the structuring of spaces, time and shifts), which have concrete consequences on the planning of the daily work of the educators. In the same way, a coordinator who, for example, gives his/her collaborators critical evaluations on their work with a user is also contributing to redefining the lines of that educational project, precisely while working on the difference between what has happened and the possibilities that have yet to be taken. It can therefore be understood how evaluation practices can contribute to improving the work of a

group of professionals, acting on their processes of autonomy and self-determination, but above all acting on the ability of a group to “think their own thoughts” (Bion, 1961).

An effective practice of evaluation encourages the area of research in the professional group, connected with the development of their own thoughts, their patterns of intervention and practices, and presents itself as a process at the service of in-depth analysis of individual and group learning. First of all, a professional team has to learn to learn from itself, from the context in which it operates and from interpreting the other members of the group, to take on, in time, the physiognomy of a directing group that can implement its own group culture.

Supporting the professionalism of all the figures that operate in Adult Education services, therefore means working with a view to:

- evaluating to expand the basic knowledge of the operators (identification of ad hoc training paths, implementation of the tools and methodologies in order to be able to perform their work profitably, according to a virtuous circle of theory-practice-theory);
- evaluating to foster internal well-being, the organizational, inter-personal and communicative climate of the operators between them and with respect to the addressees (final clients, commissioning clients etc.). At this level, it is a question of implementing the capacity to work in a team with colleagues, competence in the management of the group dynamics, the ability to collaborate with the stakeholders and with the local area, developing negotiation, mediation and conflict-solving skills;
- evaluating to foster the abilities to perform the educational work more effectively and to reach the educational aims declared: it is a question of acting on those variables (ethical, professional, behavioural, technical and formative)

which hinder reaching an aim and the inter-personal process with a user and/or group of users, in order to be able to correct the action in the event that the work group evaluates its inefficacy. In the context of services and social benefits, it is not at all easy to define and measure the quality of an intervention. It is rather an elusive dimension which is difficult to circumscribe in pre-codified models. The simultaneous production and delivery of a service prevents abiding by prior quality controls. In addition, it is the deep inter-personal dimension itself that characterizes an educational intervention, makes it impossible to replicate a good performance and, at the same time, effectively measures the results obtained. For these reasons, it is necessary to play on the closeness of the work group, the development of their metacognitive, communicative and inter-personal competences and on increasing their emotional stability;

- evaluating to increase the decision-making capacity and active sense of responsibility of a work group and making their work documentable and transferrable, in order to exhibit the visibility of the work processes of a service. At this level, the evaluation can promote more targeted and aware decision-making processes, aimed at a greater recognisability of their work in the face of the political deciders. The ability to understand the contextual value of evaluation – which is always a practice that takes place in a precise space of players, relations, exercises of power and interests – is one of the main aims for an evaluator who wants to work on the professional development of a staff.

5.1 Resources and criticalities of evaluation for the professional development of adult education staff

Evaluation is a gesture that takes on its full value of a critical exercise if it is applied, in the first place, to its own shadow areas, to become fully aware of the risks of an arbitrary and excessively uninhibited use of this practice inside the reality of services. The cognition of the role, as crucial as it is potentially invasive, that the evaluator takes on with respect to the outcome of the work of a staff he/she has evaluated, makes us tend towards a high profile of the evaluator, who can exercise his/her task in full awareness of the profound ethical, political and cultural requirements that his/her attitude expresses and conveys.

The psychological and inter-personal experiences that take place in an evaluation process are very wide-ranging and can condition, in a very visible and marked way, the continuation of the work of a group in its numerous variations, illustrated above. It is an agreed opinion that the practice of evaluation is a complex device, that touches on the areas of contact between individuals, groups and organizations (Rouchy- Soula - Desroche, 2010),

An evaluator has to become aware of all those processes that at a personal, group and organizational level act latently, transforming evaluation from a practice of rendering account and measurement into a pedagogical gesture, in which dimensions linked to the unconscious areas of individuals, groups and organizations and to their close inter-relations with the management of power, as an imaginary and operative structure converge. De Ambrogio (2004) counts four areas of resistance to evaluation, both from the point of view of the evaluator and of the person evaluated. For the evaluator, it is a question of tolerating the fears of the intrusiveness, of exercising a sanctioning judgement, of being face to face

with someone who lies, of being out of place and not being legitimized to exercise his/her function. For the person evaluated, it is about having to go through the anxiety of feeling judged as a person, of feeling controlled and punished. Evaluation is effectively a device that activates powerful emotive currents in work groups which, if not managed, can produce in time phenomena of professional stress, of chronic frustration and even phenomena of professional collapse (burn-out, resignations etc.).

It is an effective practice if it is exercised as a device that fosters the growth in progress of individual competences and the ability to be able to put them at the service of the growth of the work group. In this direction, the communicative and inter-personal processes which allow the group to remain focused on the task, to keep in mind the tension towards the intensification of well-being and the quality of life of the users, as well as boosting and developing their residual resources, take on a fundamental importance.

Evaluation must tend towards reinforcing the professional growth and professional empowerment of the educators, supporting their working well-being and keeping their motivation in time: these are elements which have to be monitored from the phase of personnel selection. It is a process which prevents and/or corrects the risk of routine drifting into practices, focusing attention on what is still to be done, on the paths that have not yet been taken, and on professional potential as yet unexpressed in the path of an operator or an education team. At this level, three main dimensions of the action of a staff have to be monitored:

- the performance (what is done or what has been done together and how it was done);
- the position (what has to be done and how, in relation to the responsibility of the role and the operative tasks)

- the potential (what could be done in the future, in relation to the use of the current professional characteristics of the individuals and of the group) (Fontana & Varchetta, 2005).

However, this posture cannot be the result of a personal inclination or even of a spontaneous predisposition of the individual professionals but requires training, which can be implemented only through specific formative devices, aimed at promoting listening and self-listening skills, abilities to know and manage one's emotions in situations of high professional stress.

In line with the evaluation model developed in the framework of the EDUEVAL Project, evaluation can benefit from focusing, in the first place, on self-evaluation, supporting a movement which shifts the fulcrum of the power of the evaluation from the evaluator to the client (Rogers, 1961).

Attention to this dimension would be an essential antidote to the prevention of phenomena of burn-out. Evaluation often shows its shadow area in being expressed as a practice of control and power, driven by unconscious intentions and emotions, which blur its value as a strategy of improvement to make it a tool of arbitrary actions, which undermine the balance of the life of an organization. In these cases, increased internal emotive turbulence, intensified competition and internal struggles, increased widespread anxiety and stress are generated, fostering the onset of phenomena of a drop of motivation and identification with one's work.

As a counter-measure to this risk, the tool of self-evaluation is an important filter for practices of evaluation. It stimulates a work group to take stock of its internal assets: this is a process the repetition of which produces an increase in the confidence in group relations, as well as a sense of belonging to the service. These elements have important repercussions on the motivation of the educators to develop and hone their strategies of intervention.

Therefore, a device of self-evaluation can allow a staff to:

- check and become aware of the transformations of the pedagogical model (individual and of the group);
- take stock of the professional history of the team;
- be understood in an institutional mandate, deepening the dialectic between professional belonging/autonomy;
- investigating learning strategies and improving their effectiveness;
- increasing self-esteem and professional self-efficacy.

In conclusion, evaluation is a process that contributes to the professional development of a work group because:

1. it allows regulating the requisites for access to these professions and monitoring the level of preparation of the professionals at entry level and throughout their working life;
2. it allows periodically checking the competences of operators and developing formative paths targeted to the needs found;
3. it allows checking the processes and performances of the work of a group, identifying the critical areas and planning corrective and improvement solutions;
4. it allows the group to extend the catalogue of models and tools of evaluation in relation to diversified aims;
5. it allows implementing group dialogue, exchange of views and conflict as elements that are useful in creating a sense of trust, cohesion and belonging;
6. it allows taking stock and carrying out processes of revision of the work, that are useful for extending the skills of elaborating the “group mind”;
7. it allows the operators to become aware of the intertwining that is generated between the acts of educating and of evaluating and of the ethical implications of their profes-

sion. Horizons of democratisation in the internal life of the services of a culture of solidarity effectively enacted and shared can thus be fostered. (Kaneklin, 2000).

The Ethics of the Evaluator of adult education staff

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In order to outline the profile of the evaluator of adult education staff, in the previous passages we have already answered the questions: what does evaluating mean and how do you evaluate? To complete the profile of this professional figure, we now ask “who” is capable of taking on the responsibility for and the tasks of the act of evaluation. The subject we are dealing with here is deontology.

Deontology refers to the moral and behavioural code that judges a professional activity, i.e. all the rules on the rights and, above all, the duties and responsibilities of professionals, in their relations with the public and their colleagues. Tackling the subject of ethical deontology in the work of an evaluator of adult education staff does not only imply discussing the values, i.e. listing the acts of the evaluator that can be deemed good, fair, licit and those deemed unfair, illicit improper or bad, but it means having to perform the difficult task of saying according to what this behaviour can be distinguished. Writing something as a moral, or as a list of rules, before having carried out this task, lends itself to drifting easily into a utopia, therefore impossible to achieve, or to false idealizations. Ethics become descriptive if they outline human behaviour, remaining normative or prescriptive, if they only give directions for action. In this sense, they open up to the possibility of acting and not acting. They preserve the space so that every evaluator can exercise his own freedom, i.e. having the possibility to say to themselves and to others: “I cannot.”

Responsibilities of the adult education evaluator

Evaluators are always responsible in what they do and for what they do. Being responsible is what makes them virtuous, correct and suitable. They can be so only because they exercise their freedom, i.e. are free in the exercise of their work.

The term ‘responsibility’ comes from the Latin *responsus*, a substantive linked to the verb *respondere* (to answer). The verb – in the technical philosophical sense – means being committed to answer to someone or to oneself, for one’s actions and the consequences that come from them. Responsible evaluators are not only able to do what they do – knowing how to act – but they also know why they do it or why they don’t do it – knowing how to act like a professional –. Those who act according to their professional freedom are: independent, transparent and irreprehensible in their actions. Above all, they are subjects who do their work and who gain fulfilment from it.

It is the anchoring to adult education and its ways, that allows the evaluator to evaluate the staff in positive terms. It is not a question of saying what can or must be said, when evaluating in the abstract but starting from the context in which one is operating – i.e. education – saying how to really achieve what is about to be evaluated. Education, including that of adults, is a situation that can be known and studied, i.e. evaluated.

The evaluator can be thought of as someone who exercises their power of evaluating as a person who loves their job and takes pleasure in doing it.

Education has to do with people and, in our case, in particular the evaluator has to do with groups of adults, so particular respect and delicacy, together with scrupulousness, are necessary. People do not like it when they are judged to then be sorted or to become elements of an impersonal, bureaucratic or administrative calculation, but they never avoid being

evaluated if it recognizes their skills, even their limits and, above all, produces the effect of having been put in the place where they can give their best. Authentic evaluation leads to satisfaction: it does not exaggerate merits and it does not exalt limits. It leads to self-assertion and self-expression.

Evaluators perform their function because they are needed: when a central or local institution intends to ascertain if the parameters of acceptability are adequate, or when a service/organization wishes those same parameters or standard coordinates to be recognized as valuable, or when users intend to be protected, gratified or simply served. Educators are there for them and they report to them. They are responsible for reporting back to them – the quality of education – thanks to the measuring instruments they use, in the practices they analyse, describe, judge and examine. We can only find out about ourselves from others: the evaluator is no exception: the more he exercises his power of recognizing the other, the more satisfaction he will draw from his work. In turn, he will be evaluated as an authentic evaluator.

Tasks of the Adult Education evaluator

The tasks of a good evaluator are:

1. to always act transparently;
2. to be correct, i.e. tactful but also scrupulous;
3. not to abuse or negate his power but to exercise it;
4. to be impartial: to mediate differences and protect diversity;
5. not to be prejudiced but to suspend what can be recognized as prejudices;
6. to be competent in what he does;
7. always to seek an inter-subjective and reproducible truth without taking it as the absolute truth;
8. to be honest and show integrity;
9. not to let himself impose restrictions, but always to exercise his margins of professional freedom;
10. to always feel responsibility for what he does.

Everyone who does the work of an evaluator, which is delicate and difficult as other people depend on his decisions, can only abide by some elementary moral principles. These are duties or rules that relate to the actions he must do with the way he will act, as transparently and coherently as possible. Therefore, adopting an ethically correct behaviour for an evaluator means knowing deeply, loving and respecting, the subject-matter – with all its obligations and possibilities – of his work.

The question is not to say once and for all what is right or wrong to do, the evaluator must be in the condition to act well, i.e. to work in conformity with the exercise of his functions, and to be able to withdraw when these are compromised. More than following a list of right and wrong actions, the evaluator who knows how and why, moves as a professional, i.e. exercising margins of professional freedom. Ethics therefore not as submission to impersonal moral templates but as an exercise – preceded and based – on the being of the evaluator. The ethical attitude of each evaluator is always the result both of a training course and of a personal subjectivation.

Being able to evaluate corresponds to trusting the evaluation. i.e. scrupulously carrying out all those actions necessary, in order not to avoid or elude one's role. However, we must not believe for this reason that evaluation is the fruit of the truth. It is always an interpretation: that can be perfected, anchored to a story, to a local experience, or to a duty that has people responsible for it. This is why it is so difficult to be able to evaluate well, to assume the consequence of one's evaluation with conviction.

Being able to evaluate brings us face to face with our ability to gain limit experience: for those evaluating and for those who are evaluated. It is an arduous experience, which requires scrupulousness but not exactness, precision but not obsession, otherwise it becomes impossible. Idealizing the act of evaluation and seeking the purity of the result is a way to be distant

from the reality of evaluating. This absolutely does not mean being inaccurate but, rather it requires being able to challenge one's human finiteness, knowing one's mental habits and automatisms and having all one's idiosyncrasies, convictions and beliefs under control. This is not to eliminate them – which would be impossible – but to put them, so to speak, “on hold” and to allow reality to appear in itself, beyond our expectations. Suspending our expectations is the first step to seeing what really happened and therefore to be able to evaluate it. This is an infinite task: a point comes in the professional life of an evaluator when he is completely responsible. That is the moment when an evaluator begins to do his job well: he does not rush to use the instruments necessary for evaluation, giving himself up to them as though they were absolute truths, but he can use them as not valuable mediators for truthful knowledge – which is possible and to be hoped for – of the context.

For this reason, everything he says must be clear and straightforward, circumstantiated and supported by data. Being free and responsible for an evaluator also means being skilful: being able to do his work honestly, to recognize the limits and possibilities of the instruments used. An evaluation must be able to be expressed in a way that can be shared and can be empirically reproduced or duplicated. For an evaluation to be credible and useful, every action must be transparent and straightforward: it cannot be the result of personal reflections or the outcome of sectorial interests. For this reason, the evaluator acts with professional integrity. Respecting the autonomies of the organization hosting him, the confidential information, and being sensitive to the positions in which the members of the group he is evaluating believe. He must be culturally open and not prejudiced.

When he works, the evaluator makes systematic observations, based on empirical and objective data which is both qualitative and quantitative. He has to be competent in what he is evaluating; he has to be prepared, by knowing the sector

where he is doing his job and he has to be able to apply the procedures and use the indicators. He has to be honest and act with integrity when he is engaged in the evaluation process.

This means respecting the people with whom he is involved: giving importance to their dignity, to the commitment and effort they put into their work. In general, the evaluator must be open to all the differences he encounters, but he also has to be inflexible and determined in accompanying the others to see them, in making them explicit and in producing awareness.

Conclusions

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This handbook, which addresses those who want to learn to be an evaluator of adult education staff or want to implement their skills in this field, performs two correlated functions.

On the one hand, it allows gaining a systematic vision of the models, knowledge, methods, tools and procedures that are useful for conducting actions of evaluating adult education staff. Its particularity is to articulate these elements on the basis of a complex model of evaluation, which has been constructed thanks to the EDUEVAL product: the triangulation of evaluation of the context, external evaluation and self-evaluation. This model respects the complexity of functions and therefore of competences and knowledge that an evaluator of adult education staff has to be able to activate, as made clear in the profile of the evaluator.

In the other hand, this handbook has a practical usefulness. It allows access to knowledge, methods, tools and procedures that an evaluator can decide to use according to the specific needs of the organizational context and the staff where he exercises his function. The type of framework that the EDUEVAL model provides allows him, however, to develop a critical and reflective perspective of his action and therefore, on the possible ways of evaluation. Every decision on actions, procedures, evaluative tools, according to this model must question itself on the evaluative logics already present in the context and/or on those to be promoted, as well as on the aims of the evaluation to be implemented.

From this point of view, this handbook is a complex work tool: it does not provide immediate applicative solutions, but

provides the elements thanks to which an evaluator attentive to the particular dynamics and needs of a given context of adult education can build up his evaluation project, suitable for the situation. The handbook provides the framework for the possibilities and constraints within which to exercise an evaluative action: it indicates the dimensions that can guarantee the rigour of this action and shows the possibilities that the evaluation of adult education staff opens up, highlighting both its aims and impact on the contexts of work.

In this sense, this handbook promotes a profile of a *reflective* evaluator, capable of taking up a position of *research* thanks to which it is possible to intertwine knowledge of the context with the wide range of opportunities that specific knowledge, relative to evaluation, offers.

For any project or action of evaluation to be effective in developing culture and the ways of working of adult education staff, on the one hand an exploratory attitude has to be implemented that can understand the constraints and potential that characterize an educational context and a staff in all its dimensions (cultural, organizational, institutional, territorial etc.).

On the other hand, the models and strategies that are deemed *right* for that situation have to be sought from the knowledge already possessed or to be possessed. The evaluator presupposed by this handbook does not impose *per se* given ways of evaluation, but is capable of choosing them.

It therefore follows on from this that the evaluator, as a researcher, has to evaluate his action himself; he has to identify its effects, understand the process implemented, in order to improve it and acquire that “case knowledge” (Schön, 1983) which will allow him in the future and in other situations to refine his capacity for research and choice of more appropriate evaluative models, each time honing his professionalism.

The model proposed here, therefore, is not a closed model, but presupposes a conception of evaluation as a continuous practice: like the practice of constant learning.

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EDUEVAL Handbook is the third of three volumes, based on the results of the EDUEVAL Project - *Evaluation for the Professional Development of Adult Education Staff* (<http://www.edueval.eu>). The three volumes are: *EDUEVAL Curriculum (vol. 1)*; *EDUEVAL How to do Guide (vol. 2)*; *EDUEVAL Handbook (vol. 3)*. Specifically, the *EDUEVAL Handbook*, in its extended version, is the manual of reference for the students addressed by the EDUEVAL training proposal, shown in the *EDUEVAL Curriculum (vol. 1)*.

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