

## **Setting a Direction for Flexi-Path**

Creating the Flexi-Path toolkit in 2010 was essentially a very technical process. As a 'Leonardo' project our objective was to review existing toolkits and then produce a new version that took account of the defined grade levels 6 & 7 within the recently established EQF.

### Agreeing our Audience

The fact that these EQF grade criteria appeared quite demanding for front-line staff to evidence, set us along a course to explore the more managerial and developmental roles of professionals in adult education.

Given limited time and resources, it was decided to concentrate on the acquired competences rather than the knowledge base of these more senior colleagues. Part of the rationale for this was that more conventional means exist for assessing knowledge. Also we were aware that such workers tend to stay in post for many years, without any further structured training. Further it was assumed that the expertise that they had derived from such extended experience would be wide ranging and complex. Also that this was unlikely to have been fully recognised by employers or indeed by the practitioners themselves.

### Authorship

It was against this background that, as a group of three colleagues who had variously worked closely together, we started the process of identifying a series of domains within which graded criteria could be established. This was a very pragmatic process and based on our own extensive experience in a range of settings.

### Practitioner Consultation

An initial set of fields of practice was defined and grade criteria with illustrative range statements were established. These were taken to a consultative group of managers in a large, complex, city-wide organisation in the UK. Time had been made available for individual consultations but at their request, the whole senior team met me together. Our discussion was one of the most exciting and satisfying experiences in the whole project because, yes, they said that their training had been years ago and they had since developed extensive new skills and carried far greater responsibilities. Yet they had no structure within which to express this and little external recognition of these qualities.

They were interested in one another's views and said afterwards that they had valued the process. When one person said, 'I can really see myself in this,' I felt enormously satisfied that we were on the right lines.

Of particular significance, so far as I was concerned, was one comment that was agreed by all; that carrying out the exercise in this way had helped them see the balance of strengths within their team. They were clear that this would assist them even more in their future working together.

### Document Design

In parallel with our preparation of the text for the tool-kit, the wider project committee had to consider the format in which it would be presented. It was concluded that, although the intended audience was very experienced and knowledgeable, they would equally be very busy. It was recognised that this fundamentally needed to be an educational resource.

This dictated a number of the design and editorial features: -

- use of graphics where they aid understanding
- keep language direct and straightforward
- remember that the final product will be published in many languages
- use strong headings and other style features to guide users through the sections
- produce structured/interactive pages for participant responses
- make response pages available in digital form
- produce hard copies with strong bindings that open flat, to encourage a relaxed feeling in the reader

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