

Key Competencies – the Challenge KC 2007

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Signalling Success - workshop

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This workshop will explore the use of paper-free approaches to recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA). It will draw on the practice examples from the implementation of the RARPA process set up by Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in England and pilot projects recorded by NIACE. The principles and practices will be considered with a view to their application to key competences.

Background

In 2001/2002, in England the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) was asked by the LSC to devise a method to recognise and record progress and achievement in non-accredited learning, in the absence of formal assessment. In addition, NIACE looked at the views and perceptions of learners on approaches to identifying and evaluating learning outcomes. The joint report to LSC proposed a stages process aligned to the common inspection framework and an internal quality assurance programme to support this.

The five elements of the staged process are:

3. Course aims that are clearly stated.
4. Initial assessment of learners' starting points and needs.
5. Discussion and negotiation to identify appropriately challenging objectives.
6. Formative assessment, checking on progress and giving feedback.
7. Final recognition of progress, recording and celebration of achievement

Initial piloting of the staged process led to the development of a number of paper-based tools for its implementation. The RARPA report had actually advocated the exploration of paper-light approaches and the LSC provided pilot funding through NIACE for this to be undertaken during 2004-6.

Paper-free approaches to recoding progress.

At the heart of this approach is the underlying value that assessment and collection of evidence of progress should be undertaken primarily for the benefit of the learner. In practical terms this means that any data collected should be available to the learner and that they should be made aware of any use that would be made of it. This is of course particularly important when 'data' includes digital images, video, audio and personal reflections on learning.

Techniques and Methods explored

These have included use of digital still images, audio recordings and video. Electronic text examples have included use of a Blog as a learning diary and use of Wikis. Online quizzes and tests have been administered via a learning platform as stand alone tests or to great effect using handheld voting devices in a classroom.

The challenge for building key competencies

The workshop session will include a presentation of practice examples of use of technology to address the stages of the RARPA process.

We will then explore through discussion, the application of this practice to acquisition of Key Competencies. One definition of key competencies was established by the European Commission as:

- 1) communication in the mother tongue;
- 2) communication in foreign languages;
- 3) competences in maths, science and technology;
- 4) digital competence;
- 5) learning to learn;
- 6) interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, and civic competence;
- 7) entrepreneurship;
- 8) cultural expression.

(European Commission Recommendation to European Parliament Brussels, 10 November 2005)

The discussion can particularly focus on the value of learner centred formative assessment to address learning to learn (5) and the contribution this can make to meta cognition by learners.

References:

Greenwood M and Wilson P (2004), *Recognising and recording Progress and achievement in non accredited learning*
Evaluation report on RARPA pilots April 2003 – March 2004
NIACE and LSDA

Clark A and Hussain S (2006) *Signalling Success – Paper free approaches to recognising and recording learner progress and achievement.* NIACE

Web links

Good practice website for RARPA
www.lsc.gov.uk/rarpa