
ENABLING FLEXIBLE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING COMPETENCES USING THE EVC-TOOLBOX ELECTRONIC SUPPORT SYSTEM – ABSTRACT

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Learning can take place any time any place both inside and outside institutes for formal education. With the growing importance of lifelong learning and learning across learning networks, the support of informal learning and recognition of competences previous or elsewhere acquired becomes crucial. Concurrently career dynamics require acknowledgment of prior learning and matching a person's competences and ambitions to available learning programmes. For this purpose vocational and educational institutes create assessment of prior learning (APL) offers.

However supportive tools to assist this process don't exist yet. Dedicated tools exist for competence mapping, tools for e-portfolio and descriptions of dedicated APL procedures. The fragmented situation however means that each institute has to put much effort into the APL construction and implementation for their target groups. Therefore the Open University of the Netherlands and the Fontys University of Vocational Education collaborate in the design of an integrated electronic support environment for the organization and implementation of APL.

This instrument, the EVC box, objective is to provide e-portfolio building and APL process support to both the person asking for an assessment of his APL as well as all actors involved at the institute providing APL services. To support the APL applicant as well as the mentor assessor and the management of the APL organizing institute the EVC box is designed to offer both guidance and tooling to enable insight into the need to provide evidence of prior acquired competences to gain exemptions for specific parts of a curriculum, monitor the actual status of the evolving construction of the APL e-portfolio, plus mentor guidance on how to proceed and finally support for efficient and effective assessment of the APL portfolio offered to the assessor for certification of the candidates APL.

The objective of the EVC (EVC is the Dutch abbreviation of APL) box is to enable e-guidance in the portfolio building process to all actors involved in APL procedure for a smooth and more efficient APL procedure.

For this purpose the EVC box provides a quick scan providing insight in the match of the competences the person is asking APL recognition for. It does by mapping the APL competences of the candidate self assessment as to what he can provide evidence for with the competence map of a specific masters programme f.e business informatics. This quick scan offers a full overview of the candidates APL position mapped onto a specific education (MA) programme. Based on this input a taxation can be made of the viability of to start the APL procedure for this programme and this person. Then the EVC box generates information on the criteria the APL evidence has to meet and offers guidance and tooling for the APL candidate to generate and upload required proofs of evidence for respective competences. The indication of the actual status of the candidate's uploaded proofs of evidence and how these proofs match his APL competence map is input for the mentor guiding interactions with the candidate. The scheduling agreed upon between mentor and candidate automatically triggers alerts for the candidate and mentor on new information requests of feedback etc. Finally once the quality and completeness evidence have been reached assessor easily can check the e-portfolio and advice the faculty of the institute to recognize the prior learning.

In our presentation we will present the vision underlying the design of the EVC box, the functionalities implemented in the prototype based on requirements analysis with APL-mentors and assessors (spring 2007). We will then focus on the actual design of the prototype which will be tested in pilots at two Fontys departments (in october-november 2007) and discuss our design rationale and findings with the public.

D7 Evidence of ePortfolio benefits to individuals and institutions assessment of prior learning; competence development; Tencompetence

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