

Q-KULT: QUALITY CULTURE IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Workshop for members of EQAVET National Reference Points

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RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP

Contributions of Participants I

The advantage of the instruments is that you get a consolidated statement, a common sense of where you stand as a school - and it is not about assessment but about the beginning of a process (incentive!).

There are always dimensions that you lose if you use a certain model. And what about time - things change - with a model you get a historical picture.

As for T/U and OCAI it is critical who chooses the group - who wants/does not want to take part?

Definitions of terms "quality" as well as "quality culture" are missing. And what is the difference between school culture and quality culture?

It is a challenge to make the instrument as practicable as possible so that schools can handle it - feasibility is the question. We have to find schools that are fit enough to do this - and they have to want it.

The instruments might be very useful for schools with a new management or where there are different departments - separation - (mergers?).

It is a diagnostic tool - but still, you are going to do something with it - the development must take place.

Input presentation Ida Konggaard (Silkeborg Business College, DK) on testing of U-Procedure

Discussions are very different depending on which school partners (board, teachers, companies ...)

DK is struggling with decreasing numbers of VET students.

Q-KULT: tested the U-Procedure teachers were asked to write a pedagogical "protocol" - how we do things at this school.

There were concerns what will be done with the results.

U-Procedure first part of the U - there was high energy in the group - it was a complex concept to manage, because they usually don't work with quality - we really needed the moderators - but their influence was high - keep them to the topic - moderation is necessary.

Problem: short-cut - jump to conclusions - solutions - the "Now- Ought to be" was hard to manage, it was hard to focus them on the current situation.

Now-Situation was easy for them.

Later in the process the energy went out (in the other part of the "U", the "should be" part).

In the "larger group" it was an issue to say something, this group was heterogeneous while the small groups were homogeneous - the groups could not meet in the end - saw things very differently - in the "should be" they divided, they did not speak the same language at all.

It is a suitable instrument in our Q toolbox.

Next step: SCEQ with all teachers - but in teams (departments).

OCAI we will use in strategic group.

With SCEQ we want to see if the separation between the two departments from the U-Procedure is really true.

Contributions of Participants II

Instruments need support structure - facilitators, moderators, time...

At provider level - you have first to come to an understanding - what is quality culture and what are we trying to do - you have to evaluate if you have to modify the tool or use it as it is.

Particularly in Finland the recommendation is to focus on strengths of the instrument - you have to convince people of the added value - the benefit if it is voluntary - convince the management and role-out by management (Scotland).

SCEQ might be more feasible - because it has the wide scope (all can participate).

The risk is the team level - it might come to a negative spin - moderation has to be very competent and be able to keep it positive - if you don't take any use out of the results it is risky - doesn't make sense at all.

Risk of misuse of the instruments - if you have certain detention at management level to get certain results for example.

Feedback from Participants in the aftermath

(we sent out a brief questionnaire)

FINLAND

The Q-KULT instruments supposedly do meet provider needs but there is a need to find instruments to promote positive quality culture.

According the quality strategy it should be up to the VET providers to choose the methods and tools of quality assurance and quality improvement -> there should be a voluntary approach.

The instruments could support merging processes of VET providers (-> two or more providers become one).

HUNGARY

From among the presented three instruments supposedly the SCEQ would best fit to the (needs of the) VET providers in Hungary as this can be easier understood and aligned with the QA/QM approach used by these schools. Actually during the self-assessment exercise they evaluate the SCEQ instances, they are part of the self-assessment model criteria against which the schools evaluate their practices and performance on regular basis.

Some selling arguments and also recommendations for which situation the respective instrument fits best would be welcome as - as a key factor - the management of the VET institutions have to be convinced.

NETHERLANDS

It could be interesting to test the instruments in some VET providers in the Netherlands. They would be interested in the topic. But the aim and added value needs to be very clear, there needs to be common understanding of why this is good to do, it needs to be practical and not too theoretical and also not too time consuming.

VET providers in the Netherlands are big institutions. Thus it is not likely to involve the entire staff, rather work with an existing team. It is good that the instruments can contribute to the discussion about quality culture, on national and provider level. It could be useful if it was possible to integrate the instruments in other instruments of QA.

A risk is that it only will be a diagnosis and that it stops there. People will feel that they lost their time. It is necessary to carefully think about the follow-up, but that could be the responsibility of the school itself. It could be good if there is more clarity about the possibilities of changing culture. What is the perspective when you know more about the culture?

NORWAY

The instruments meet some of the needs of the providers and they create new needs.

The four Q-KULT instruments we will discuss and follow the further developments of Q-KULT. If the tools also can be used outside the project, and if the ideas can be transformed to our settings, we might use a local version of the instruments in Norway.

ROMANIA

The instruments developed in the Q-KULT project fully meet VET schools' needs in diagnosing the state of art of their quality culture. They have the potential of being well received by the VET

schools, as they result from a significant research followed by a pilot exercise and this concept is always well received in the teachers' world.

The instruments developed in the Q-KULT project are extremely usable and useful as a diagnosis tool. It is however foreseen that the VET schools will also ask for guidance and tools in improving their quality culture based on the results of the diagnosis.

Risks:

_the use of the Q-KULT instruments is not enough to lead to improvements; VET schools have to develop their own approach on using the results of the diagnosis tools to improve the institution's quality culture, which implies further efforts and work, for which VET schools might not be prepared for

_the success of the application of the diagnosis tools depends significantly on the way it is managed and on the moderators' capacity to coordinate the discussions

_getting the support of the staff should not be taken for granted, as it is always challenging to convince Romanian teachers, especially those with a recognised professional background, to do things in a different way

SLOVENIA

Schools would need a strong counselling support in using these instruments. It would be great to prepare a piloting project for Slovenia.

WALES/UK

Any process which helps to improve quality is obviously to be welcomed. The use of the instruments being investigated in the current project could be promoted through the CollegesWales (ColegauCymru) network and would be of interest to all organisations.

SCOTLAND/UK

There are potential opportunities for the Q-KULT instruments to be used by VET providers in Scotland and have an initial discussion with the Chief Executive of College Development Network regarding the workshop. He is interested in the project and its outcomes. From our initial discussion he thinks that colleges would be interested in using them as part of a self-assessment process to assist them in showing that they meet the Education Scotland requirement. (How well is the college led and how well is it enhancing the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders?)

AUSTRIA

The opportunity of the instruments is to trigger a "quality culture development" and get a neutral view on the status quo. The risk is that quality culture could be decreased if tools are used in a wrong way or the process (T/U-procedure) is not well moderated.

A combination of two of the suggested instruments might make a lot of sense. The instruments look quite good in terms of usability. The consultants who know the instruments very well and support the schools while doing the assessment are crucial for the success of the processes (and the instruments).

It might look too complicated and too time-consuming for some schools therefore it's very important to always emphasize the benefit for the school, the better performance, etc. so that every school sees the advantage of using the instruments.