

Top Level Glossary

The meaning of the terms below will always be contested and dependent upon the context with which they are being used. As such this glossary does not aim to give definitive definitions but rather seeks to give clarity around how these terms are used within the VALUE network.

Accreditation of informal/ non formal learning

The process of formal assessing and then credit-rating of knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning by awarding formal certificates, credit units and by granting equivalence.

Source: Adapted from: APL definition (Accreditation of Prior Learning) and APEL definition (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) used in English practice and on Communication of the European Commission on Life-long learning, COM(2001) 678 final. Also used in the MOVE project.

Competence

The ability to apply learning outcomes adequately in a defined context (education, work, personal or professional development). This extends beyond the possession of knowledge and skills and includes: cognitive; functional; personal; and ethical elements.

Comment: competence is not limited to cognitive elements (involving the use of theory, concepts or tacit knowledge); it also encompasses functional aspects (involving technical skills) as well as interpersonal attributes (e.g. social or organisational skills) and ethical values.

Source: Cedefop, 2004, European Commission, 2006a. Incl in 2008 update

Formal learning

Learning typically provided by a formal education or training institution (like school, university etc.), structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

Source: Adapted from: Communication of the European Commission on Life-long learning, COM(2001) 678 final. Proposed also by University of Liverpool. Also used in the MOVE project

Informal learning

Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family, leisure or volunteering. It is not structured and typically does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or "incidental"/random). Non-formal and informal learning is also referred to as prior learning or prior experiential learning.

Source: Adapted from: Communication of the European Commission on Life-long learning, COM(2001) 678 final EAEA- "Adult education trends and issues in Europe" 2006 And University of Liverpool (OECD definition). Also used in the MOVE project.

Knowledge

The outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. It can be derived from formal instruction or study, practical or professional experience as well as from family, through leisure or volunteering.

Source: Adapted from: EU European Qualifications Framework and definition used by National Qualifications Authority of Ireland. Also used in the MOVE project.

Learning society

A society in which learning is considered important or valuable, where people are encouraged to continue to learn throughout their lives, and where the opportunity to participate in education and training is available to all.

Source: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Government of Australia (www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues)

Lifelong learning

All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, skills, competences for personal, social and/or professional reasons. It encompasses the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Source: based on Cedefop, 2004. Incl in 2008 update and 2001 EC communication on life long learning.

Lifewide learning

Learning, either formal, non-formal or informal, that takes place across the full range of life activities (personal, social or professional) and at any stage.

Comment: lifewide learning is a dimension of lifelong learning.

Source: based on Cedefop, 2004.

Non-formal learning

Learning that is not provided by a formal education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. It is, however, structured, embedded in planned activities and intentional from the learner's perspective e.g. training of volunteers as part of recruitment.

Source: Adapted from: Communication of the European Commission on Life-long learning, COM(2001) 678 final EAEA- "Adult education trends and issues in Europe" 2006 and AVE "Assessing volunteering in a professional perspective" working definition.

Recognition of prior learning

(a) Formal recognition: the process of granting official status to skills and competences either through the:

- award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles); or
- grant of equivalence, credit units or waivers, validation of gained skills and/or competences; and/or

(b) Social recognition: the acknowledgement of the value of skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders.

Source: Cedefop, 2004. Incl in 2008 update

Skills

Proficiency, facility or ability to effectively apply knowledge to complete tasks, solve problems and perform a practical activity.

Source: Adapted from: EU European Qualifications Framework and definition used by University of Liverpool and EAEA- "Adult education trends and issues in Europe" 2006. Also used in the MOVE project.

Validation of learning outcomes

Confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

Source: Cedefop.

Volunteering

Volunteering occurs in a variety of forms across Europe reflecting the diversity of approaches and traditions in the Member States of the European Union. However, common features can be identified. Volunteering is an activity undertaken:

- Out of a person's free will, choice and motivation
- Without concern for financial gain (non-remunerated).
- In an organised setting (within NGOs, volunteer centres, more or less organised groups etc.)
- With the aim to benefit to someone other than the volunteer and to society at large contributing to values of general interest (although it is recognised that volunteering brings significant benefit equally to the volunteer).

Source: CEV working definition. Also used in the MOVE project.

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