

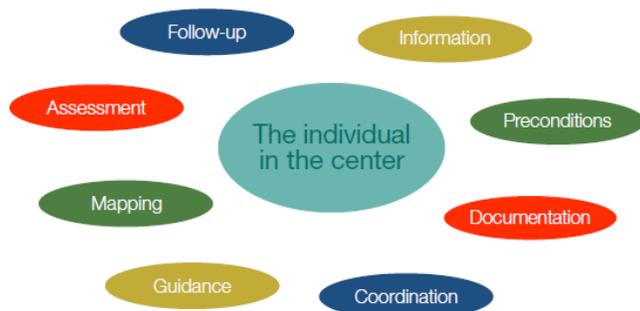


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Nordiskt nätverk för
vuxnas lärande

Quality in Validation

A Nordic Study 2015 - 2017



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When and who?

- Experts from Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark decided in 2012 - 2013 to develop a common quality model.
- The development of the model was funded by Nordplus (www.nordplusonline.org/).
- A case study of quality work in validation based on the Nordic Quality Model was decided 2015 and is carried out in 2016 – 2017
- The study is funded by NVL (Nordic Network for Adult Learning) www.nvl.org
- Researchers are from University of Turku, FIN; Linköping University, SE and VIA University College, Aarhus DK

Why?

- The aim of the study is:
 - to identify if and how the Nordic Quality Model is useful and will strengthen the work of quality in validation.
 - to identify factors in the context that influence the quality work in validation

What did we do?

- The study of quality work employs an interactive approach
- We have worked in interaction with 3 institutions in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden (all with extensive experiences of VPL and working in VET)
- Together with representatives for the selected institutions, we have established a common understanding of the quality model.
- We have defined areas for development work within the respective institutions.
- The institutions have worked on improving quality in validation within these areas
- We have met several times for discussions on experiences and results that far, with an option to redefine or adjust the agreed development areas
- We have made documentation of the quality work – e.g. in group interviews

Quality in VPL/RPL - what?

**“The establishment of an environment and the implementation of policies, processes and assessment practices that maximise individuals’ opportunities to fully and accurately demonstrate relevant knowledge, skills and competencies (Van Kleef, 2011b)”
(Van Kleef, 2014, p. 208)**

A shared understanding needed for quality. The social nature of assessment has to be recognised, and the candidates should get help in positioning their prior learning in the new context. (Van Kleef, 2014)

Quality related to goals and stakeholders

Depends on **purpose** of activity, context, and perspective of stakeholders.

Not only validity and reliability, but also a matter of negotiation of meaning.

The **goal** of the specific process is central for deciding what quality is in a certain context of VPL/RPL e.g.

- Formative
- Summative
- Predictive
- Transformative

Quality - two faces

- **Flexibility**, individualisation, judgement

- **Standardisation**, reliability, measurement

Quality at 3 levels

- **Ensuring organisational quality**

- Through a holistic approach for institution's work with VPL/RPL
- Through an evaluation and improvement initiatives at all levels

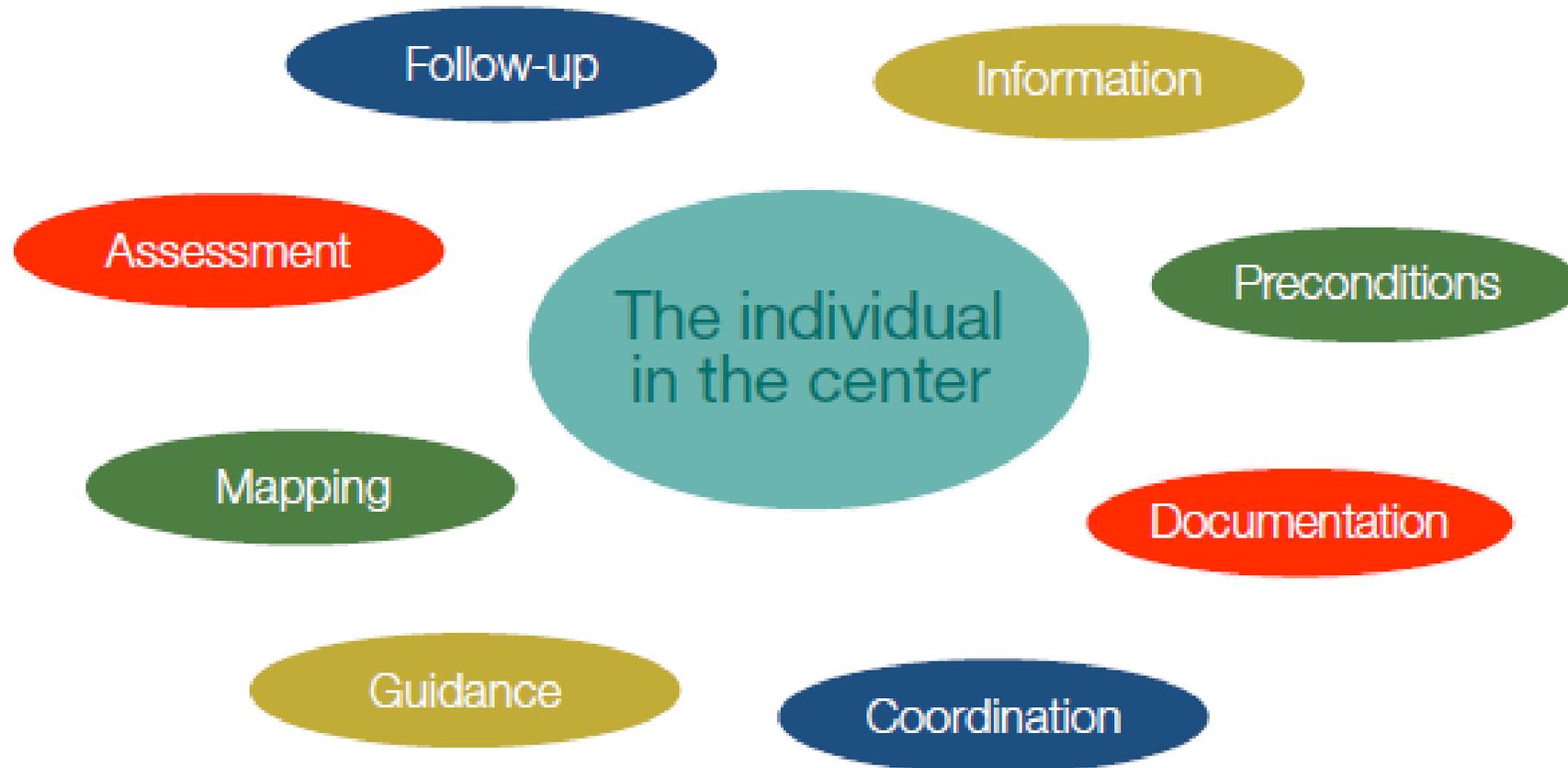
- **Ensuring procedural quality**

- Through distinct responsibility and role distribution (who does what when for whom)
- Through presentations and information
- Through professional filing and document handling

- **Ensuring assessment quality**

- Through distinct criteria
- Through substantiated methodology
- Through established evaluation and documentation practice

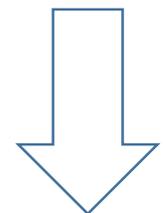
The Nordic Quality Model – 8 factors



Working with the model



- The quality model indicates **8 quality factors**, each linked with a number of **quality indicators**
- The model is a **dynamic quality model**, and the quality assurance must be a dialogic, circular, and recurring process whereby conditions, routines, methodology in the validation is continuously and systematically evaluated and re-evaluated
- The quality factors and the linked quality indicators should be scrutinized on a **continuous basis**, with a view to making improvements



Information

- Information about validation is a key factor for development of quality in validation.
- This applies to information for individuals potentially in the target group for validation and to information from other stakeholders and collaborators.
- The information must include information on who, what, why, how, where, and – it must be presented in a comprehensible and plain language, and be accessible where needed



Preconditions

- Quality in Validation is to do with quality in relation to the framework and preconditions given for carrying through validation in the individual institution
- Preconditions means the regulatory framework for the validation work, national and local policies in the area, if validation activities are funded, and how they are funded, how co-operation with other stakeholders is organized
- If validation is based on standards or competency criteria that are known, you cannot necessarily change the preconditions setting the framework for the validation practice in the individual institutions, but you can reflect on, how preconditions influence the quality of the validations.



Documentation

- Quality in validation is about how a validation process is documented internally in the institution performing the validation in part or in full.
- Documentation of e.g. conversation, agreements, time frames, etc. helps strengthening internal working procedures and coordination of the process, and it also helps supporting the due process protection of the candidate.



Co-ordination

- Coordination and collaboration ensures that the validation practitioner develops and uses methodology, makes evaluations and decisions in a professional environment.
- It ensures a high competency level, and thus supports that the rights of the individual are met and respected.
- Coordination ensures that individuals are treated equally, fair, and in accordance with rules and regulations.



Guidance

- Guidance is imperative for the benefit of the individual.
- A positive and listening approach to guidance of the individual seeking recognition and validation is important.
- The guidance must support the individual through all processes of the validation, and guidance should be an integral part of all validations



Mapping

- The mapping – documentation – of the competencies of the individual is sort of a “developing” process.
- The methodologies used and the guidance attached to them seek to draw an exact and exhaustive picture of the competencies of the individual.
- The individual itself is responsible for the process, and results must be valid.



Assessment

- Assessment of an individual's learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning.
- The decision has legal status and impact on the further training and working life of the individual.
- The assessment is the outcome of the work with the other quality factors in the validation process.
- The quality of the assessment depends on quality, reliability, impartiality, and high competency level among the validation staff.



Follow-up

- Follow-up is aimed at the individual applicant (the individual) and at development and improvements of the full validation process.
- If he or she wants, the individual has the right of complaint and a guiding follow-up on the result of the validation.
- As part of the quality assurance, the institution and the validation professionals are under an obligation to make continuous evaluations and improvements.



Information

How to work with developing quality?



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Quality indicator

Is this indicator relevant for you / in your organization/ institution/project?
Explain

How can we develop quality with reference to this quality indicator?

Information is comprehensible and adapted to different target groups – **Internal and external**. It is explained, what validation is - 'what is in it for me'

It is obvious for whom validation is relevant, and what validation can lead to for each individual. It includes information on expectations towards the candidate regarding time spending, work effort, and procedure.

Information on validation is accessible from the Internet and in other forms – adapted to the target group

It is evident who the candidate or the

Preconditions

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Quality indicator	Is this indicator relevant for you / in your organization/ institution/project? Explain	How can we develop quality with reference to this quality indicator?
Validation is carried out by well educated professionals		
Validation activities are funded		
Concepts and terms will be used, which are generally accepted and in accordance with guidelines and standards		
It is apparent who the external stakeholders in the process are, and what their roles are.		
Assessments are based om standard criteria		

Co-ordination

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Quality indicators	Is this indicator relevant for you / in your organisation/ institution/project? Explain	How can we develop quality with reference to this quality indicator?
There is a coordinator for validation		
Individuals have one entry point for validations		
Coordinator is supported and with clear management references		
Coordination is transparent and is consistent, and there is a clear distribution of roles		
There is time and resources for teamwork for validation professionals/staff		

Guidance

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Quality indicators	Is this indicator relevant for you / in your organisation/ institution/project? Explain	How can we develop quality with reference to this quality indicator?
The guidance helps having the competencies of the individual visualised		
Guidance is an integral part of all parts of the validations process		
The guidance is listening, competent and impartial		
The guidance is based om recognised guidance methods		
The guidance support the rights of the individual e.g. by informing about the complaints system		

Mapping

How to work with developing quality?



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Quality indicators	Is this indicator relevant for you / in your organization/ institution/project? Explain	How can we develop quality with reference to this quality indicator?
The individual is responsible for the process, but guidance and support is offered for the process		
There is full clarity with regard to what counts as documentation		
Documentation standards are visible		
The documentation process is targeted		
The documentation process is dialogical		
A variety of methods are employed and reflect the competencies of the applicant		

Assessment -

How to work with developing quality in validation?



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Quality indicators	Is this indicator relevant for you / in your organization/ institution/project? Explain	How can we develop quality with reference to this quality indicator?
Multiple methods – (Triangulation) Relevant methods (depending on the individual; qualifications, subject area)		
Understandable and measurable criteria's. Equivalence – not equality – of competences.		
Fairness in assessment. Transparency and openness in the assessment.		
Framing the assessment as a learning process // define learning process		

Follow Up

How to work with developing quality?



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Quality indicator	Is this indicator relevant for you / in your organization/ institution/project? Explain	How can we develop quality with reference to this quality indicator?
Results are transferred to the candidate There is an appeal system The appeal system works		
Validation leads to education or work or other explicitly formulated goals There is a follow-up plan		
Evaluations are carried out according to recognized guidelines (e.g. European guidelines) - Internal - external		
We use external resources in our developmental work		

What did we see – this far?

- The Nordic Quality Model for validation seems to be useful for developing a validation system in different contexts
- The eight dimensions are relevant for a holistic approach to validation
- The use of the Quality Model mediated the interaction between the researchers, the managers and the practitioners and helped to identify areas of development
- The use of the model motivated the practitioners (managers and different staff members) for quality management of validation and to identify development areas in their strategic policies and practices

What did we see – this far?

- Systematic documentation is paramount for the individual's case
- Coordination of validation ensures the policies and practices are carried throughout the various branches and fields of study of the institution
- The follow-up dimension can be seen as a broader review of the educational processes related to validation, covering performance in the organizational level

You can read more...

- <http://nvl.org/Content/Quality-Model-for-Validation-in-the-Nordic-Countries>
- <http://vplbiennale.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2017/04/cVBP-11-Aagaard-et-al.pdf>