

NIACE Research and Development



Key Findings



Photos © NIACE

Developing a European Credit System

Abstract

To establish the basic structures of an accreditation system for adult learners built on the principles of transnational credit accumulation and transfer, extending the model of OCN accreditation to a limited number of localities in Finland, Ireland and Switzerland.

To produce in each locality a set of documents, guidelines and procedures, supported by informed and committed adult educators that would be transferable to other similar groups across Europe.

Partners

Finnish Association of Adult Education Centres (KTOL).

Community and Voluntary Accreditation Forum – Mainie Jellet Project), Ireland.

Schweizerischer Vereinigung für Erwachsenenbildung (SVEB), Switzerland.

Research methodology:

- ❖ Set up small teams of adult educators in each locality, supported by identified mentor Open College Network in the UK.

Key Findings

The main conclusions of the project are:

- ❖ The process of developing a future European credit system for adult learners must respect the particular ethos and principles of adult education in member states.
- ❖ The process of developing a future European credit system for adult learners must be located within the particular frameworks for recognising the achievements of adult learners that exist or are under development within individual member states.
- ❖ Credit systems must demonstrate that they are able to contribute positively to national and local strategies for improving the quality of provision for adult learning opportunities.
- ❖ The particular collaborative, peer-group approach to accreditation operated by OCNs lends itself well to the process of developing credit systems.

- ❖ Credit systems permit the development of curriculum diversity within a common framework for recognising achievement.
- ❖ Credit systems must be seen to be learner-centred, rather than based on the need to measure outcomes for funding purposes.
- ❖ The links between the model of OCN accreditation and the validation arrangements of universities is seen as broadly positive in relation to the future development of credit systems.
- ❖ The broad portfolio of OCN-accredited programmes creates an attractive and potentially transferable database of units than could be an important resource in developing future credit systems.
- ❖ There are conceptual differences between different European languages that make the direct translation of some key technical terms difficult.
- ❖ Credit systems are seen as appropriate to support both electronic and on-line delivery systems for 'small bits' of learning.
- ❖ Credit systems are seen as supportive of other initiatives related to the modularisation of delivery of learning opportunities for adults. Modularisation in itself was seen as relevant both to community-based learning opportunities and to more formal vocational education and training.
- ❖ The future development of a European Credit system will need to engage organisations in member states that are appropriately located and empowered to be able to adopt the requirements of the credit system that are consistent with other aspects of relevant systems for recognising achievement within individual member states.
- ❖ The future development of a European Credit system for adult learners is dependent on striking an appropriate balance between the necessary shared specification to underwrite the value of credit as a transferable currency and the individual contexts of each member state.

Recommendations

- ❖ Credit systems must demonstrate that they are able to contribute positively to national and local strategies for improving the quality of provision for adult learning opportunities.

Output

- ❖ Report: Developing a European Credit System for Adult Learners
<http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/findings/dexalreport.htm>

Funder: Socrates-Adult Education

Duration: November 1998 - October 1999

Project Manager: Peter Wilson

Email: peter.wilson@niace.org.uk

Requests for 'Key Findings' in other formats, such as large print, are welcome. We would be pleased to consider your request.



21 De Montfort Street
Leicester LE1 7GE

Tel: +44 (0)116 204 4200/1
Fax: +44 (0)116 2854514
Website: www.niace.org.uk

A company limited by guarantee.
Registered no. 2603322
Registered Charity no. 1002775