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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE

Youth, Education and Erasmus+
Schools and multilingualism



EVALUATION OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS TO SUPPORT ATTRACTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CAREERS

Background

'Evaluation' is one of the first topics explored by the ET2020 Working Group Schools 2018-2020 cycle as one part of the group's broader work on policies to support the **career development of teachers and school leaders** within an **attractive and sustainable profession**. The discussions and sharing of examples at Group meetings and an expert Seminar have raised a number of key ideas on the potential that evaluation has for supporting sustainable and attractive careers and considers how to carry out evaluation in a meaningful way for the individual.

An expert Seminar (3-4 December 2018, Brussels) explored aspects of evaluation, using the key question: *'How can **staff evaluation** contribute to attractive and sustainable careers for teachers and school leaders?'* Members benefitted from the input of key researchers and stakeholder representatives and brought key discussion points back to the rest of the Group via an internal report and presentation.

This work – from both the Seminar and full Group Meetings – has been synthesised by the Commission into the following interim output on this topic.

The potential of evaluation to support sustainable and attractive careers

Evaluation has a significant (and often overlooked) potential to support attractive and sustainable careers of teachers and school leaders. If carried out in a way that also takes into account a number of risk factors¹, it has the potential to:

- contribute to increased recognition/acknowledgment of the individual in the profession;
- enhance the individual's sense of professionalism and help them stay passionate and engaged;
- lead to teachers' potential salary advancement (in some countries). Rewards other than salary (e.g. an opportunity for study leave) can also be motivating and help enhance the prestige of the profession;
- lead to the individual developing new competences/expertise in a specific domain enabling him/her to take up new roles and responsibilities.

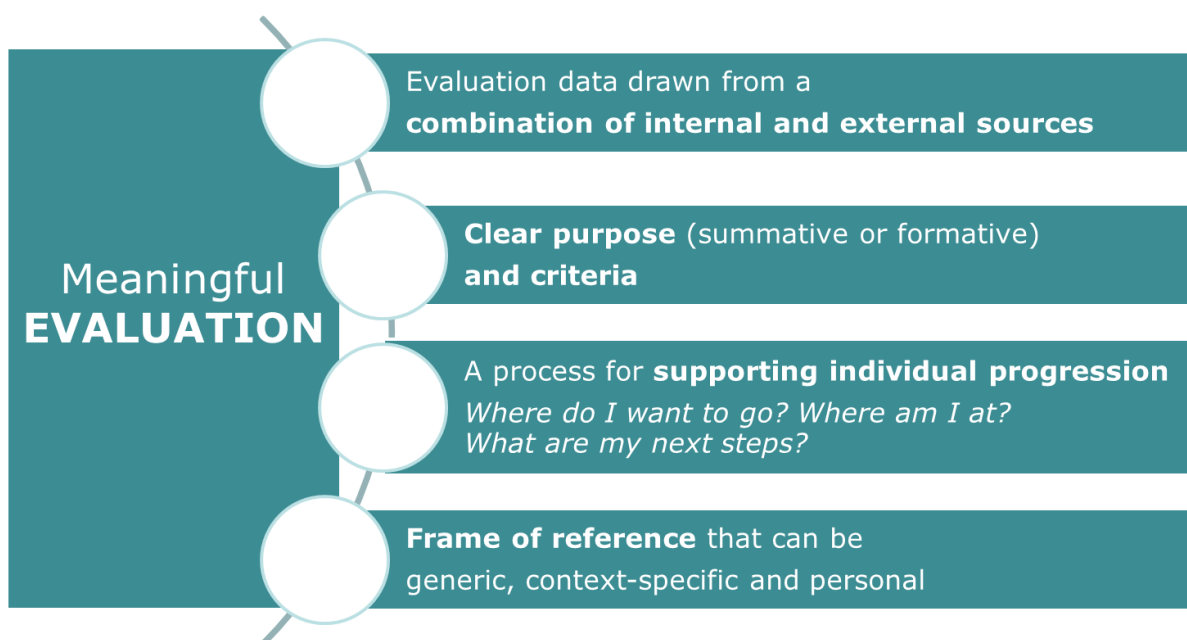
¹ For further details, see the Evaluation Seminar report, circulated internally to ET2020 Working Group Schools members.

Discussions on how to carry out evaluation focused mainly on the latter point as the opportunity to take up new roles and responsibilities provides a clear link between evaluation and progression along a career path.

How can evaluation be carried out in a meaningful way for the individual?

Internal and external

Evaluation can, depending on the purpose, be carried out either **internally** in the school (based on internal sources e.g. a combination of feedback from school board/school leader/colleagues via classroom observations, student/parent surveys, student performance test scores as well as self-reflection), **externally** (e.g. by an inspectorate) or by **mixing the two**. Evaluation data drawn from a **combination of internal and external sources** (e.g. through a 360° instrument) is considered desirable as the perspective of those who know the school best is undertaken at the same time as consideration of **objectivity** is allowed.



Clear purpose and criteria

Evaluation can vary from focusing on **summative assessment** of performance (often aiming at school/system improvement through accountability), to focusing on **formative assessment** (often aiming at supporting the professional development of the person evaluated) or a **mix of the two**. The purpose and the process of the evaluation should always be absolutely clear to the individual being evaluated as well as the evaluator.

Depending on the purpose, the **sources** used, the **constellation of persons involved** as well as the evaluation **criteria** will vary, but it is key that the criteria used are **clear, objective and evidence-based**. Standardisation of evaluation is not considered desirable as contextual differences appear and the process should allow for diversity in the tools used for evaluation in order to tailor-make it to the specific context.

A process for supporting individual progression

When the purpose of the evaluation is on supporting **career paths and development for a particular role or responsibility**, the focus should be on reflection and growth of the individual concerned, rather than on quality assurance, although they are not necessarily separate.

When the individual has real **choices** in shaping their own career and deciding their next steps, the development is self-directed by the individual (“career crafting”).

When a career is considered as a “one-way ladder”, and in which the decision regarding progress on the ladder mainly lies with the employer, the emphasis will rather be on **selection** rather than choice. However, in both cases, the evaluation should support the individual’s development through “career guidance”. The evaluation can be seen as being part of a 3-stage **learning process**, in which **ownership** of the individual is essential at all stages:



1. **Orientation:** aiming towards an intended level in terms of the necessary qualities/competences needed for a particular (current or future desired) role/responsibility. This can be indicated according to a **frame of reference** (see below). In order to ensure ownership, the frame of reference needs to be **meaningful** to the individual;
2. **Actual evaluation:** reflecting on how the current quality of actions or available competencies relate to the frame of reference; i.e. a “reality check”. The evaluation process should enable the teacher to identify the potency and quality of their own practice as well as the scope for development. To ensure ownership, the individual needs to be able to recognise him/herself in the collected data. They need to feel that it will do them **justice** and that they will be able to have a say in how it operates and is used. This process must, therefore, be based on mutual trust.
3. **Consequences and follow-up:** identifying the gap between the target level and the current situation as well as what is needed in terms of development and support. The process should enable the individual to act (“self-management”) upon the evaluation results, as well as enable those with the power of making decisions regarding selection, recognition, and reward and give shape to career guidance. Ownership is created if the individual is able to **direct** the next steps. In situations when the career choices depend on the decisions of others (e.g. being judged for a specific role), the issue of objectivity and transparency becomes particular important. Yet, in these situations, the element of ownership still matters.

Frames of reference for specific roles/responsibilities

Currently, it seems that only a few specialised frames of reference (e.g. descriptions, mappings, profiles) exist that offer a sense of the **opportunities** teachers could orientate themselves towards and build their individualised career path. Most existing instruments focus on the pedagogical-didactic acts of teachers, or are a collection of separate **professional competences**, and focus very little on career orientation and assessment towards a holistic understanding of a teacher that transcends the basic notion of teaching pupils.

When the purpose of evaluation is orientation and selection for a specific role – for example, a subject specialist, a head of school, a mentor or ‘critical friend’ to another teacher or school - the frame of reference should be adjusted to **fit the specific role** and thereby point towards the most appropriate evaluation approach.

In developing such reference frames – which may be developed centrally/nationally or at a more local level - it is important to **involve various stakeholders**, not only to achieve a good balance of content, but also to ensure the ownership of different stakeholders.

The fact that acting in a specific role always is determined by the context in which the act takes place, means that a localised frame of reference needs to contain three different elements:

- a **generic** element, based on the insights from research (i.e. what is required of and possible for any teacher in this type of role);
- a **context-specific** element, based on the specific local situation and conditions of the individual (specific role/function, level of experience) as well as the opinions on where the person should/could aspire to go;
- a **personal** element, based on the individual’s own priorities, in line with their personal vision and ambition in shaping the role in question.

