Abstract

This contribution follows the descriptive review of Weigel, Mulder and Collins regarding the use of the competence concept in the development of vocational education and training in England, France, Germany and the Netherlands. The purpose of this contribution is to review the critical analyses brought forward by various authors in this field. This analysis also remarks on the most important theories and critiques on the use of the competence concept in the above-mentioned states. The systems of vocational education within the four states covered in this study are: the National Vocational Qualifications in England, the approach to learning areas in Germany, the ETED and the bilan de compétences in France, and the implementation of competence-based vocational education in the Netherlands, and these are the respective focal points for the critical assessments of the competence concept presented here. These critiques encompass such aspects as the lack of a coherent definition of the concept of competence, the lack of a one-to-one relationship between competence and performance, the misled notion that employing the concept of competence decreases the value of knowledge, the difficulties of designing competence-based educational principles at the curriculum and instruction levels, the underestimation of the organizational consequences of competence-based education, and the many problems in the field of competence assessment.

Keywords

Competences and education vocational training, vocational qualifications, learning process, evaluation.