TESE –
Thesaurus for Education Systems in Europe

English version

Edition 2009

In today's online age, we are surrounded by information, but finding exactly what we need can be a wearisome task, especially when searching for reliable quality resources on a particular subject. This dilemma is inherent to the ambiguous nature of language: language and words contained in a text do not always convey the intended meaning. Similarly, the absence of a word doesn't mean that a document is not about the missing word. Therein lies the limitation of full-text searching: based on exact word matching between user and document language, it can be an inefficient system for gauging ''aboutness'', often leading to incomplete, imprecise and irrelevant search results.

A well designed thesaurus is one of the most powerful indexing tools to gain control over search results when performing subject searches. As a controlled vocabulary, it offsets the ambiguities of natural language, such as homonymy, polysemy, synonymy, and it ensures that the same terminology is used consistently across an information system. Thus, the use of one precise descriptor should retrieve all records that were indexed under the subject described by that descriptor.

The Thesaurus for Education Systems in Europe (TESE -- 2009 edition) is a multilingual thesaurus and a robust information retrieval tool focusing on European education systems and policies. It is specifically designed to cover the indexation needs of the Eurydice network and to facilitate information retrieval on Eurydice's central website. It can also serve as a model for information management in other systems.

Guaranteeing easy navigability of our products, which are both multilingual and transnational in nature, and easy retrievability of information is thus the main impetus for our continued effort in the development of TESE. The thesaurus' multilingual feature adds to the general advantages listed above.
The potential to search in preferred languages and retrieve original documents, along with their translations, will be further extended as new languages are added. In addition, it makes the comparison of descriptors in different languages possible at the click of a mouse. Endowed with numerous scope notes and definitions, the thesaurus therefore extends its usefulness beyond the field of information retrieval, to assist in translation and work with specific terminology in the covered field.

This second edition has been carefully designed to keep up with, and reflect, the latest developments in the fields of educational policies and systems in Europe, taking into account both the common aspects of the systems covered as well as their distinctive features. Like its predecessor, it is the product of intra-network cooperation between the national Eurydice units and the central Eurydice unit - which is now located in unit P9 of the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). This unit is responsible for the development of conceptual, terminological and organisational aspects of the thesaurus and the update of the English language version. The TESE Management Group, consisting of representatives from selected Eurydice National Units, acted as the final arbiter in editorial matters. Finally, the Group for Linguistic Equivalents, consisting of one language specialist for each of the TESE languages, assumed the responsibility for finding the most suitable language equivalents.

TESE 2009 is therefore the result of intensive collaboration between international experts in education, thesaurus development, knowledge management, languages, information science, and terminology. I believe that it remains a powerful tool for information retrieval on European educational policies and systems for both researchers seeking information

about Eurydice products on our central website, as well as for information specialists, system designers or all those who wish to integrate TESE into their own information system.

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