



**Case Study Denmark 2008: Authentic ways methodology, Jette's case**

The case study, the story	Evidence, material, content
<p><b><u>The context</u></b></p> <p><i>The case study is called "Autentiske problemstillinger" which could be translated into English as "Authentic ways of presenting a problem or an assignment in the RPL process"</i></p> <p><i>The project was started in 2001, and has made the basis for further developmental work. The project is funded by the Danish Ministry of Education</i></p> <p><i>The case study is a description of a joint R&amp;D project involving DEL – The Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers. - and 3 vocational schools in the region of Aarhus, the second largest city in DK.</i></p>	<p>The presentation of the project is hosted at the homepage of Aarhus Tekniske Skole: <a href="http://www.tso.dk/Reform2000/5.2_autentiske%20problemstillinger.htm">http://www.tso.dk/Reform2000/5.2_autentiske%20problemstillinger.htm</a></p> <p>DEL is a sector specific, independent institution providing services to the vocational educations and labour market training centres: <a href="http://www.delud.dk/">http://www.delud.dk/</a> and <a href="http://www.delud.dk/filer/0/Company%20Profile%20DEL.833668981554660.doc">http://www.delud.dk/filer/0/Company%20Profile%20DEL.833668981554660.doc</a></p> <p>The three schools involved are:          Aarhus Tekniske Skole: <a href="http://www.ats.dk/?side=1202">http://www.ats.dk/?side=1202</a>          Aarhus Købmandsskole: <a href="http://www.aabc.dk/sw2263.asp">http://www.aabc.dk/sw2263.asp</a>          AMU Østjylland – from 2003 merged with the above mentioned Aarhus Tekniske Skole</p> <p>These vocational schools offer a wide range of educational programmes at different levels both in the mainstream education system and in the adult vocationally oriented education. See the overall chart of the Danish system: <a href="http://eng.uvm.dk/factsheets/Adult%20Education_Training%20System%202004.pdf">http://eng.uvm.dk/factsheets/Adult%20Education_Training%20System%202004.pdf</a> and the latest official description in English: <a href="http://pub.uvm.dk/2008/VET2/">http://pub.uvm.dk/2008/VET2/</a> <a href="http://eng.uvm.dk/factsheets/VET.htm?menuid=2515">http://eng.uvm.dk/factsheets/VET.htm?menuid=2515</a></p>

*The Danish Educational system*

The aim of the project is to address the key question of transfer between learning environments. How can the educational institutions assess the competence, knowledge, skills and experience developed outside the educational system, in case the workplace? How can you as preparation for the assessment of an individual's prior learning present or formulate questions or situations which give the individual the optimal conditions for demonstrating or producing evidence of a given competence.

The project is set within the regulations and possibilities of the so called GUV-programme, Basic Adult Education. The programme is aimed at low skilled or unskilled adults who wish to become skilled in their field of work. The programme was introduced in 2000 aiming at making education attractive for adults by being flexible, individually organized and actively making use of the prior learning of the individual.

The entry requirements are:

1. Min. 25 year of age
2. Min. two years of relevant work experience
3. Qualifications equivalent of the level of secondary school in subjects relevant to the basic adult education in question.

The basic adult education must be completed within 6 years and with a final examination corresponding to the final examination of the mainstream upper secondary vocational education (according to the act of vocational basic education and further education, § 7.1) The basic adult education is organized as a part time or a full time education between periods of work. Prior to the education the educational institution is responsible for making an individual competence assessment on the basis of which an individual study plan is made for the whole educational programme Individual competence assessment is mandatory and forms the basis for a similarly mandatory individual educational plan.

The participants can receive a fixed allowance financed by State Grant System for Adult Training (VEU-godtgørelse), in connection with RPL, counselling of applicants and for making the individual study plan and for subsidizing the educational programme itself (according to Act on open education §6 and Act on subsidy in connection with participation in vocational adult and further education § 2.9 and § 4)

The RPL is to secure that the applicant will be offered an educational programme at the exact level of competence suitable for the individual. The learning outcome of the programme and the professional level of the student will be corresponding to that of a student graduating from a mainstream upper secondary vocational education. Thus the standard of the RPL is the goals or defined learning outcomes of the mainstream vocational education.

A new task was defined for the schools and they addressed it by a large number of the R&D-projects regarding competence assessment/ RPL.

<p><i>The service assistant education</i></p>	<p>The service assistant education at Aarhus Technical College</p> <p>Aarhus Technical College is a vocational school offering vocational education to young people and to adults according to Danish regulations and acts. The school has many years of experience in offering mainstream and continuing education and training within the service sector.</p> <p>The school has developed a close cooperation with regional hospitals about education and training. A group of persons from the hospitals in charge of educational matters meet on a regular basis several times a year with the headmasters, coordinators and consultants of the school in order to define new educational needs and to evaluate the educational programs on which the partners have cooperated on.</p> <p>Within the duration of two years the mainstream vocational training program alternates between school and work experience placement. In contrast the Basic Adult Education Program is solely a school based education as it is expected that the participants have the competences within the specific field that in the mainstream educational program is developed during work experience placement. Still it is possible to add to the study plan that the individual must go back to his or her workplace to do certain things that need to be developed to a higher degree before the final examination.</p> <p>The possibilities in the Basic Adult Education are to tailor a program that meets the needs of the individual, the workplace and the school with respect to where and when which elements of the program are taking place. Sometimes more than one school is involved.</p>
<p><i>Areas of employment</i></p>	<p>The service assistant education is aimed at employment in private enterprises or hospitals and it gives competences in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cleaning and security</li> <li>- Health, nutrition and home economics</li> <li>- Quality and service</li> <li>- Communication and cooperation</li> <li>- Society and environment</li> </ul>
<p><i>Subject areas</i></p>	<p>The school based part of the education is consisting of the following subjects, when individuals are aiming at becoming hospital service assistants (according to the old ministerial order – a new order with new subject is effective of January 2009):</p>

- Commercial/ institutional cleaning in practice
- Work plans and planning of work
- Quality assurance
- The hygiene of cleaning
- Danish
- Cleaning in a societal perspective
- Transportation of patients and moving of patients
- Cooking and serving food, diets
- Diagnosis
- Working in a hotel for patients
- Psychology
- IT tools
- Transportation of patients and lifting

**People**

*Presentation of Jette*

Jette is 57 years old. She is born and raised in a little village in Western Jutland. She left school after seven years of primary and lower secondary education. The first years after leaving school she made a living by being a maid. She continues her working life in factories by doing unskilled work in the fields of electronics, textile and food production. At one time Jette is the shop steward of one of her workplaces.

When she gets married and has children she works for a number of years as a child minder. After some years she wants to change path, but most of the possibilities she is dreaming of require an education. She completes a Basic Adult Education Program (in Danish: AVU) and continues at a commercial college. At 49 years of age Jette graduates from the Basic Commercial Program (duration: 2 years, in Danish: HG).

Jette does not take up employment in the field of business, but ends up working on an oil rig as a (unskilled) service assistant. When the rig is moved to the Netherlands she chooses to stay in Denmark. Instead she wants to work as a hospital porter at the local hospital. When she applies for the job she gets told that the function has been changed into the work area of service assistants. To get hired as a service assistant requires as a minimum a 5 weeks adult vocational (labor market) training (course) in the field of hospital service assistance. As she cannot get accepted in the specific training course without being in employment she is advised to start with a number of single subject courses in cleaning and moving and transportation of patients. After a while and after finishing some courses she succeeds in getting employment at the hospital.

*Motivation for VPL*

During the next years she and some colleagues participate in the training program for hospital service assistants. Furthermore, at work, she has become guidance counsellor for students in work experience placement related to their vocational education and training to become service assistants. While doing this she discovers that skilled service assistants get a better pay than she does.

This makes her decide to become a skilled service assistant herself. At the same time she discovers that she via the Basic Adult Education program (in Danish GVU) can reach her goal. The program starts with a mandatory individual competence assessment. To Jette this means that she can get recognition of her prior learning – from earlier training, education, courses, work experience and leisure time activities and it means that she within reasonable short time can graduate as a skilled service assistant.

*The process of VNFL\_IFL*

*Kirsten's role*

*Documentation – collecting evidence*

Jette agrees with the hospital to start the education and in the spring of 2008 Aarhus Technical College, where the education of service assistants is offered, invites her to the first meeting.

- **First dialogue/ Interview**

Jette receives a letter with the date for the first meeting. In the letter Jette is asked to bring her certificates from previous courses and education. Beforehand the hospital has informed Jette about the educational program, but Jette knows of it from her work as a guidance counselor for students in the mainstream education being in work experience placement in the hospital she is working at.

Jette is met by Kirsten who is a subject teacher and counselor at the education with a special responsibility for Assessment of prior learning and the making of the educational plan.

The meeting takes place in Kirsten's office and takes the form of a dialogue or conversation in which Kirsten by way of introduction tells about the contents of the education, the expected learning outcome and the process of recognition of prior learning. For the meeting Kirsten has prepared a document in which all the subjects and elements/ modules of the education are described

- **Documentation/ verifying phase**

During the interview Jette and Kirsten talk about the different educational learning outcomes and Jette is asked questions related to her knowledge and skills in the field.

Regarding Cleaning service one of the defined learning outcomes is cleaning and treatment of wooden surfaces.

Jette is asked by Kirsten:

In your workplace you are to clean the offices where they have different wooden furniture and wooden floors. How would you clean them? Can you tell me why you would do it that way?

Jette does not know anything about cleaning or treatment of wooden surfaces, because they do not have such surfaces in her hospital. Accordingly it becomes fairly quickly clear to both Kirsten and Jette that this learning outcome has to become a part of her individual educational plan.

*The authentic approach to methods*

In the subject Cooking and serving food Jette is asked the following question:  
You are to serve food for a patient in the hospital. You know she has diabetes. What kind of food will you serve for the patient? And a little later: Which kind of food will you pay attention not to serve for her?

You are also to serve food for Mrs. Jensen. She has almost completely lost her appetite because of a long period of being ill. But she needs foods to have a chance for recovering. What would you make sure she gets to eat? How would you serve her food so she will be most motivated to eat?

The last question Kirsten decides to let Jette demonstrate by doing it. They go to the practice kitchen of the school where a group of students are cooking a range of dishes. Jette is as a practical assignment asked to choose items from today's menu and arrange it for Mrs. Jensen.

Finally Kirsten evaluates together with Jette that she needs to take this module of the Basic Adult Education as she knows too little about nutrition and how to arrange the food. It is possible for Jette only to take a part of a subject, if e.g. she needs a brush-up course or if she is familiar with parts of a subject.

Jette has a lot of formal certificates from courses and training that equals the defined learning outcomes of the education. Jette participated in some of these courses quite a long time ago, so Kirsten also ask question to find out how much Jette actually can remember of these subjects and matters.

Kirsten similarly asks some questions to evaluate whether Jette will be able to handle the method of project work or not as the final examination is done by this method. She does this by asking about Jette's previous experiences from the above mentioned education programmes.

The result is that some of the previous courses are recognized as equivalent to the defined learning outcomes for the education of service assistants without further documentation than the dialogue and the certificates presented. This is the case for Jette's papers from the basic commercial education in the subjects Danish and English.

Even though Jette has advanced first aid and a certificate for fire-fighting from her time working on the oil rig in the North Sea she has to do parts of this module again to get her knowledge and skills up-dated.

- **Authentic ways of presenting a problem or an assignment**

In the course of the assessment the subject teacher uses an authentic way of presenting a problem or an assignment. This means that situations or activities in the assessment are realistic or have a high degree of resemblance to real life work situations.

<p><i>Recognition</i></p>	<p>The aim is to give the applicant the best possible circumstances for showing his or her competences.  The school is well aware of the differences between the conditions and possibilities for learning processes and the types of learning taking place in a school context and in a working life context. Still the school wants to avoid this difference being a barrier that will hinder the individual in getting an assessment of what he or she really is able to do. By using authentic problems or tasks from working life in the assessment of competences the school addresses the complex nature of competences.  When it comes to assessing knowledge and skills other methods such as tests and practical or theoretical assignments are used.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>- The final recognition</b></p> <p>During the dialogue and the testing Kirsten writes the results of her assessment into Jette’s educational document. When the process after 1 hour and 30 minutes is finished Jette receives a summary of which defined learning outcomes and which modules have been recognized and which will be a part of her personal educational plan.  The educational plan will be signed by Kirsten and forwarded to Jette and to the Vocational Training Committee in the field of service (in Danish SUS). The school will file the plan for the counselor and study secretary to use.  Jette and Kirsten agree upon when to start the educational programme, clarify if Jette wants to use the plan at all or rather will go through the education another way – most often the alternative is a 1 year credit based programme.</p>
<p><i>Staff involved</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>- Staff involved in the RPL</b></p> <p>In the process and RPL Kirsten cooperates both with the guidance counselor of the school and the other subjects teachers – e.g. in Danish, English, IT, Nutrition, physiotherapy. She teaches herself more of the subjects and modules of the education, among others Cleaning.  The guidance counselor guides about a broad spectrum of educations, inclusive the Basic Adult Education. Applicants for RPL are informed about how the RPL process is conducted.</p>
<p><i>The result in the form of the individual educational plan</i></p>	<p>The subject teachers are a part of the assessment regarding their own field of subject. Often a long range of subject teachers will be involved during the day of the assessment, as it often is organized so that several applicants are invited for the same day.  All applicants meet for a joint introduction in the morning. Afterwards the individual</p>

*The outcome of the project*

assessment takes place. The applicants will be asked to go to the different subject teachers to be assessed.

All assessment comprise of a dialogue. It can be combined with tests, practical assignments or other methods. E.g. assessment of Danish will typically be a dialogue and a test of the written level. In the dialogue the professional terminology of the field will be used. Practical assignment will be mandatory in certain areas, e.g. in transport and moving of patients.

### **The educational programme**

Jette's education will not be with a fixed group or team of students as all Basic Adult Education students have different educational plans. Typically she will participate together with a group of participant in a continuing training course or students in the mainstream vocational education. It can be quite demanding to meet new people every time she starts a new part of her individual educational programme.

She will be attending school six times in the course of the half year of education she has to follow to pass. The Education is finalized with a big individual project. And then she will get her Basic Adult Education diploma proving that she now is a skilled service assistant specialized for hospitals.

At a principal level the project raises questions such as: Is it possible to reach the same goals/ competences through work and education? Do the differences in explicit goals and conditions of the learning processes in work and education respectively influence the actual outcome?

The basic assumption of the project is that establishing situations as close to real-life work situations forms the qualitatively best RPL-process.

The concrete outcome of the project is a range of descriptions of authentic problems that can be used in the RPL-process in relation to 4 specific vocational educations:

- Office clerk / administration
- Service assistant
- Media graphics designer
- Catering assistant

	<p>By referring to the work of the Swedish researcher Per-Erik Ellström – among others - the project concludes that by using the method of “Authentic problems” you overcome some of the difficulties regarding transfer between the sectors and secures a high level of interaction between the sectors. The method builds on a high level of consciousness about the differences and also addresses the challenge of verbalising tacit knowledge</p>
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