Assessment of prior learning
in a lifelong perspective

ASEM, 2015.03.08

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Lifelong learning

- One purpose is to improve the existing competences
- Qualifying for a new profession, a new job
- It requires a formal qualification, often described in competences
- Integrating the existing competences
- Assess the competences, both formal, non-formal and informal
Two tracks

- Practical experiences equate theoretical knowledge
- Specific experiences equate specific scholastic knowledge
- Both tracks require assessment of the actual competence to build an adequate training program
Competence in the educational system

- Normally based on knowing that and knowing why
- Normally based on theoretical knowledge
- Normally based on academic tradition
- Often based on formal learning
Competence in practise

- Normally based on knowing how
- Normally based on practical knowledge
- Normally based on real life problems
- Often based on non-formal and informal learning
To use prior learning

• Should competences be assessed according to an occupational standard or according to an educational standard?

• And what happens if the existing competences do not fit with the scholastic standard?

• A challenge: how to equate experiences and knowing how with knowledge and knowing that/why
An example: pineapple mousse

- How to prepare an pineapple mouse
- Don’t use raw pineapples
- Why?: the gelatine will ravel
- Why?: because it contains a certain enzyme
- What is the name of that enzyme?
- How is the chemical process?
- What to do? Cook the pineapple
- What kind of knowledge is needed?
An example: training for a skilled position

- Unskilled workers want a skilled qualification
- E.g. as a carpenter, hairdresser, child care assistant or gastronome (chef)
- How can the training process be shortened based on prior learning?
An example: a chef

- What is needed to be a qualified gastronome (a chef)
- How do students demonstrate their prior learning from five years of practical experiences as catering worker?
- How do teachers assess the students competences
- How do teachers translate the assessment into a educational plan
The actual assessment process

• 21 different competences are required
• Preliminary interview
  – Previous experiences within the occupation
  – The content of the professional activities
• A written test assessing knowing that, why and how
• A practical task
  – Preparation of dishes
  – Questions related to the preparation
• Describe the competence profile on that information
• Develop a training program according to the formal requirements
Challenges

• Reliability of the assessment
• Validity of the training program
• Securing the balance between scholastic and practical knowledge
• Elaborate a specific training program according to the special needs of the student and not just use the existing modules and do what we normally do
Conclusion

- Competence can be elicited through practical performance within the educational system
- When the required competences are well defined
- When knowing how, knowing that and knowing are well balanced
- When the teachers are well trained to make the assessment