

SDE College in Denmark

Project No. DE/07/LLP-LdV/TOI/147036 COMMET

Transfer of new methods to identify competence shown by the example of the mechatronic and metal cutting technician.

Report on work package VI: Interviews conducted in companies in the regional and national metal industries to examine the practical applicability of the competence grids developed by the **SDE College** in Denmark

The interviews in which the selection process was discussed took place in Denmark in September 2009. (Our ambition was to gain as varied a picture as possible, given the relatively small target group of five companies). Generally, and with regard to the business landscape, it has to be admitted that we have smaller companies in Denmark – in view of size; this is why education and teaching competences have been delegated to Technical Colleges. Companies rely to a large extent on the ability of their relevant associations and other professional representations to influence the development of students' skills, and hence competences, so that employers find appropriate employees.

That is why we selected four small companies from our region, which are partly situated in rural areas, partly in the region around the capital. Furthermore we decided on interviewing the Union for Metal Workers. The reason for this interview is twofold. Partly because the Union plays a vital role when it comes to design and ongoing development of the educations, partly we wanted to draw the attention to the project and set off its circulation.

The following companies were chosen in Odense:

- **Carl Hassing A/S 5250 Odense SV**
- **Vemmelev Aluminium ApS 4241 Vemmelev**
- **Herfølge Kleinsmedie A/S 4681 Herfølge**
- **Svend Hansen & Søn A/S Maskin- og Værktøjsfabrik 8700 Horsens**
- **Dansk Metal Odense 5000 Odense C**

The interviews were not recorded, but notes were taken, and we discussed the results immediately after the interviews. Generally we had to explain the companies the meaning and reason behind each question and thus may have influenced the understanding of the specific meaning. In the following we will dwell on each question and explain the answer in more detail. We were using the below mentioned questions – translated into Danish. An interesting additional result could come about by observing the cultural differences between the participating partners since in both professions there are clear cut differences in coping with competences, business ethics and intercultural discrepancies.

- Have the spheres of activity (taken and compiled from the vocational education framework plans and curricula for vocational training) been correctly drawn up and demarcated?
- Have the process phases (parts of the complete activity) been correctly described?

- Are the competence dimensions (specialist competence, methodological competence, social - and personal competence) plausible?
- Are the competence grids suitable, for instance, as certificate supplements for the *Europass*?
- Are there other fields of HR management where the competence grids can be used?

The majority of companies replied that the dimensions of the vocations are sufficient, which we interpret in the sense that the companies in their everyday life dealings with students are of the opinion that there is sufficient coherence between the skills and competences indicated. One company observes that there is a remarkable difference between younger and older students, and that they were only recruiting the mature ones. In general the companies we interviewed had the feeling that able and competent students mostly came from colleges. Most companies were of the opinion that the ratio between the described qualifications and the actual result came partly up to the expectations and the needs within the companies.

All companies in this survey agree on the competences being correctly represented, with the majority admitting that there could be some more. One company observes that there is an immense difference between young and older students and that they are only interested in recruiting the more mature ones. This behavior is an expression of the fact that the more competent the student is – in its broad dimension – the more irrelevant the question becomes, because the topic of competence does not even come up, if an employee is autonomous.

The companies generally say that for them the most important issue is professional competence. This is not surprising since that is exactly what most companies expect. During the interviews there was little evidence that the social- and personal competence played a significant role. The reason for which is very simple; these competences are considered as an integral part for a “normal” apprentice.

Due to the size of the companies they ignore the existence of the *Europass*. (This does not mean that they are hostile with regard to mobility, it merely shows how complicated it is to launch these initiatives!) Also the size is the dominant obstacle with regard to the last question; at least for giving a sufficient reply to this question. The companies are simply too small to have a department dealing with HR-issues.

In the following the companies are described in a very short form and a very brief summary of some of the questions is shown.

Carl Hassing A/S 5250 Odense SV

Carl Hassing A/S is a pure Danish trading company with offices in Odense and Svendborg. The company was founded in 1913 and in 1972 it was converted into a joint stock company. The company repairs, produces and maintains the iron and steel industry.

Carl Hassing is a nationwide provider of products for production, repair and maintenance in the iron and engineering industries. Carl Hassing A/S is a professional company with a focus on quality, both in terms of services, products and delivery.

Vemmelev Aluminium ApS 4241 Vemmelev

Vemmelev Aluminum ApS was founded in 1984. Since then it has been expanded several times. The company has got several departments with CNC-controlled machines. Vemmelev Aluminium ApS supply products to many branches, for example: electronic, automotive industry, construction, article of furniture and advertisement.

Vemmelev Aluminum's competence is mechanical processing of aluminum profiles, aluminum sheets, montage, and packaging on requests.

Herfølge Kleinsmedie A/S 4681 Herfølge

A world of steel ... The blacksmith trade combined with new technology. They carry out solutions, traditional blacksmith craft combined with modern tools and knowledge. Specialty: Water jet cutting, laser cutting, rolling, bending and traditional blacksmith work.

Herfølge Kleinsmedie A/S was founded in 1979 by Karsten Richardt. Since Herfølge Kleinsmedie A / S has expanded their business and competences they are known as one of Zealand's largest and leading companies. Herfølge Kleinsmedie A/S currently employs approximately 55 employees.

Svend Hansen & Søn A/S Maskin- og Værktøjsfabrik 8700 Horsens

Svend Hansen & Son A/S was founded in 1949 and has been developed into a modern, well equipped machine and tool factory.

Today Svend Hansen & Søn A/S is managed by the 3rd generation that took over the ownership of the company in August 2007.

Dansk Metal Odense in 5000 Odense C

Metal Odense is a department of the Danish metal worker association. They are the relevant organization for all individuals with an education as metal worker, ship's carpenter, technicians and those with an education in the field of IT-industry and Digital Media. Also trainees within these trade groups may join them.

Carl Hassing A in S 5250 Odense SV

- They are good enough.
- Referring to the level there should be more.
- The specification of a level is different; the technical/professional level is the most important.
- They use the SQF for the technical profession.
- The students come from technical colleges.
- The students get certificates from their schools. (vocational training school)
- No
- This company has a management group that decides on the tasks of the students and the job rotation within the company. It also decides on the time students spend in the different departments. Each student has its own contact person.
- This is an additional benefit.

Vemmelev Aluminium ApS in 4241 Vemmelev

- This company has only adult students; therefore the competence dimensions are good enough.
- The different levels are unimportant, most important for this company is that the students are doing a good job.
- The technical competence is most important.
- The company cannot use the SQF for these phases.
- The students get certificates in their schools.
- The instructor is taking care of the students and decides on the tasks; also with a job rotation between the different departments.
- The SQF does not irritate them, but this is a small company of 25 employees and they are not working with the SQF.

Herfølge Kleinsmedie A/S in 4681 Herfølge

- The competence dimensions are different, but it is good enough.
- Referring to the level, there could be more. But in most instances the students have been in the company for an internship before.
- Not all specifications of a level are important for them; most important are the social competences.
- The company cannot use the SQF for the coming phases.
- No
- No
- They get certificates for their schools.
- Yes
- They have a management group, which decides on the tasks of the students. They also have job rotation in the company for each student.

- The SQF does not irritate them, but this is a small company of 50 employees and they are not working with the SQF.

Svend Hansen & Søn A/S, Maskin- og Værktøjsfabrik in 8700 Horsens

- The competence dimensions are good enough.
- Referring to the levels there could be more.
- The technical competences are most important.
- This company does not use the SQF for these phases.
- The company is looking for students at technical colleges, in case they need trainees
- No
- No
- Yes
- They have a management group, which is going to decide on the tasks of the students and the job rotation.
- It does not irritate them.

Dansk Metal Odense in 5000 Odense C

- In connection with the national dimensions, they are appropriate.
- Referring to the level, it could be more.
- All specifications of a level are important.
- This company does not use the SQF for these phases.
- No
- No
- They get certificates from the schools.
- No
- Yes
- Job grading / leveling is individual in this company, but they are working with a job rotation.
- This is an additional benefit.

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