



Transparency and Self-employment
for migrant workers through
Assessment Center

GIVE COMPETENCE *a* CHANCE



ASSESSMENT CENTER FOR ANALYSING COMPETENCES OF FEMALE MIGRANTS

Methodological Basics – Recommended Practices - Transfer



Project:

GC-AC Give Competence A Chance

Transparency and Self-employment for migrant workers through
Assessment Centre

Agreement n...:

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1. Basics

1.1 Competences and how they are analysed – definitions

The European Commission understands 'competence' as the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and/or personal development¹. Competence is understood in this context as an action competence. Competent action includes the application of knowledge, cognitive and practical abilities just the same as social and behavioural components (attitudes, feelings, values and motivations).

From a methodological standpoint, a distinction is made among the following types of competence:

Professional competences designate specialised competences that are limited to specific fields; largely the same as specialised professional qualifications.

Social competences take effect during interactions between different people, e.g. team skills, conflict handling skills, interpersonal skills.

Methodological competences refer to the ability to adapt one's work methods and use them to achieve objectives, e.g. working routines, problem-solving skills, precision.

Personal competences are apparent in the various forms of an individual's self-organisation, e.g. motivation, capacity.

In assessing competences, one can distinguish between two different methodological processes:

- *Subject-oriented process*

¹ In: European Commission: Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament of the Council on the Establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Brussels, 5.9.2006. Online URL [as of: 11.11.2009] : http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eqf/com_2006_0479_en.pdf

- *Demand-oriented process*

Subject-oriented processes focus on the biographies of the individuals as well as their acquisition of competency and possible development paths. Demand-oriented processes start from specific workplace needs and compare these with the profiles of applicants. Assessment Centres make use of demand-oriented processes.

The workplace has fundamentally changed over the past decades in Europe's industrialised nations. Social and methodological competences play an increasingly important role.

At least since the 1980s, those active in personnel selection have recognised that professional competences on their own are not sufficient to meet the complex demands of the workplace. Companies, organisations and individuals are all presented with the task of developing a new culture of self-organised learning, which overcomes the complexity of roles and responsibilities, and facilitates social and solution-oriented action. This requires that individuals have a high degree of readiness for learning and reflection.

Knowledge and understanding of work processes in their entirety is even expected of low-skilled workers. They should be able to recognise disruptions within the work process and promptly make correct decisions for solving the problems.

Today, those with careers as manual labourers or in the engineering sciences can no longer rely solely on specialised knowledge. They must also have communication skills so that they can work in a team setting or respond to wishes of customers and complaints; presentation skills so that they can introduce products or the results of their work; flexibility, stress resistance, etc.

These key competences have become more and more important and also represent the key to the workplace for the target group of the 'Give Competence a Chance' project.

1.2 Operating Ranges of Assessment Centres

Initially, Assessment was used solely as an instrument for personnel selection. The first impetus for using Assessment to select suitable personnel came during World War I, when the focus was on recruiting aircraft pilots. It proved highly problematic, given the new and complex demands involved, to deliver armchair prognoses regarding the suitability of candidates. An instrument was needed, which provided the possibility for simulating how the candidates would actually act in extreme situations. Since the 1980s, Assessment Centres have been used by nearly every major company in Europe and the USA for the selection of managers. After all, Assessment processes can provide precise indications of the leadership and key competences of applicants and therefore serve as much better tools for assessing competence in terms of 'soft skills' than conventional recruitment tests or interviews.

Since the 1990s, Assessment Centres have also been used as instruments for professional orientation and career counselling. The simulation of real job requirements makes it possible for those seeking advice and their advisors to recognise individual strengths and potential within a relatively short timeframe and then to connect these with their professional profiles. In the Netherlands, Assessment Centres are used by employment offices across the entire country for judging the potential of young unemployed job seekers. In Germany, more and more vocational training institutes make use of this method within the context of career orientation to determine the strengths and competences of unemployed people, young and old. Since Assessments have seen increasing use in career orientation and counselling, quality criteria for their development and execution have been formulated. The method presented here is also oriented according to these criteria.

1.3 Description of the Method

In an Assessment Centre, individuals tackle a series of tasks, which simulate critical situations from the professional world. In the process, they are watched by trained observers in connection with defined requirements and the associated set criteria. The focal point of the observations and evaluations is placed on the individuals' competences.

An Assessment Centre functions as follows:

Individually or in small teams, the participants run through a series of exercises – role-plays, design exercises, presentations, simulations, in-tray exercises – which are meant to simulate reality as closely as possible. The exercises (Assessment activities) take between 15 and 45 minutes. During this process, they are observed by trained experts. In order to exclude the possibility of skewed perceptions as much as possible, each participant is watched by two people, a primary observer and a co-observer (dual control principle).

The observation is based on clearly defined criteria oriented towards professional demands in the key qualification areas, e.g. working routines, communication skills, capacity for teamwork, problem-solving skills. While the Assessment tasks are being tackled, observers make notes about the participants' actions and statements, which are reproduced in as detailed and faithful a fashion as possible, without interpretation.

Afterwards, the primary observers compare their notes with those of the co-observers, evaluate them according to pre-set criteria and record the results in competence reports. Meanwhile, the participants write a self-Assessment of their actions based on the observational criteria.

During the subsequent feedback discussion, the observers report back to the participants on their findings, compare them with the corresponding self-Assessments, and jointly draw conclusions together with the person they observed about future professional steps.

1.4 Methodological Considerations

Qualifications can be called upon in separate, standardised test situations and are a reflection of current knowledge levels. Competences, on the other hand, describe the ability to actively make use of this knowledge in practical situations. Competences are a form of attribution. Based on observable behaviours, we attribute certain dispositions as competences to individuals, who are participants in an Assessment Centre. It isn't possible to verify the attributions until during the feedback discussion. This process requires a methodologically precise transfer of the observation into an evaluation. A high degree of methodological competence is required of observers in the Assessment Centre. They must be trained in the application of target-oriented and standardised micro-observation. The basis for micro-observation is the strict separation of perceptions and interpretations. During the observation phase, as many actions as possible should be recorded and notated. There should not, however, be any effort made to classify these records during the observation. Classification does not occur until after the Assessment task.

In order to avoid the danger of observers using their own personal understanding of the observation criteria as a basis for evaluating the competences, every single observation criterion must be defined as precisely as possible. This is achieved using items, which give a precise description for every competence as to how it is manifested in an active setting. The competences and the corresponding items are not only made known to the observers, but also to the participants. If no item can be associated with an observed action, then it is irrelevant for the evaluation.

A borderline situation should be simulated in the Assessment Centre for each participant by placing slightly excessive demands upon them. If this step is successful, the participants are surprised by their own behaviour; after all, no one can say precisely how they would react to a borderline

situation or under trying circumstances. This presents an opportunity for self-realisation and growth in one's own scope of action.

Before and after the Assessment tasks, the participants are given the chance to discuss their different strategies for action, learn about the solutions of others and learn from one another. The interplay of individual experiences and group experiences facilitates self-reflection regarding one's own behaviour and widens participants' horizons for alternative courses of action.

1.5 Quality Standards

The quality standards formulated here refer to the quality standards of the country-wide national Assessment Centre study group, which has joined together many of the best-known users of Assessment Centres.

- The process should be action-oriented. A significant quality standard for Assessment tasks is their action-orientation. Assessment is not a test or a discussion about a situation; the participants actually put themselves in the situation and during the activity, they act as though the simulated situation were real. A well-constructed Assessment task must create the illusion of a real situation.
- The process should be competence-oriented. Every step of the process should be focused on determining and documenting strengths and competences, not weaknesses and deficits. For migrants who participate in this process of identifying competences, the positive effect lies not only in the increased clarity regarding a career path, but also in increasing their feelings of self-worth.
- The process should be demand-oriented. The Assessment of potential picks up on typical critical situations, which confront people entering into the professional sphere. It integrates the demands of various occupations into the simulations.

- The process should be transparent. The participants are informed of the objectives, method, and observation criteria. This aspect of the Assessment Centre is valued particularly highly by participants. It leads to communication taking place on an equal footing between observers and participants.
- The process should be one element in a larger system. It is used during a transitional time in terms of qualification, education and career, and must therefore be integrated into a system with follow-up action. The results of the Assessment will be recorded in a final report and are then made available to participants and career counsellors to plan the future career path.
- The process should guarantee controlled subjectivity. In the interest of providing objective results, the subjective factor, which is always an integral part of behavioural observation, must be controlled to the greatest possible extent. This is achieved by:
 - Dual Control*, i.e. every participant is watched by two observers during each task so that two different observational perspectives are combined into each evaluation;
 - Rotating observation*, i.e. every participant is observed by as many different people during the Assessment Centre process as possible;
 - Uniformly defined observational criteria and items*, that are made known to both participants and observers;
 - Structured observation and evaluation* according to a standardised method²;
 - Trained staff*.

² The Assessment process is carried in accordance with the standardised OWCQER process: Observation, Writing down, Classification, Qualification, Evaluation, Report. This process is based on a strict separation of observations and evaluations. Every Assessment task is carried out according to this process.

1.6 Demand-Orientation of Assessment Tasks

In order to ensure a demand-orientation to the Assessment Centre, one should use the Critical Incident Technique³ (CIT) when developing tasks, namely with the following steps:

In the first step, working in cooperation with career and job-market experts, events and situations are collected, which are ‘typical’ – in the sense that they frequently occur – to the job requirements that the process seeks to determine.

In the second step, situations are selected, which are particularly difficult to handle, i.e. not typical situations, but rather critical ones.

In the third step, the behaviour that would lead to success or failure is described for each typical critical situation.

Based on these concrete behavioural descriptions, in a fourth step the competences that lead to corresponding successful behaviours are determined.

In addition, the critical typical situations are also the raw material for Assessment simulations, which are developed in a fifth step.

1.7 Assessment Centre for Migrants

Among migrants, there is generally a great degree of uncertainty about the value of their competences on the job markets in the receiving countries – even more so when speaking of social or personal competences. In their countries of origin, career advancement is mostly dependent on professional and methodological knowledge. While social and personal competences are obviously part of the work process, they are neither explicitly requested by employers nor listed and emphasised by employees. When carrying out the Assessment Centre process with migrants, an explanation of the term competence is needed as well as the

³ The Critical Incident Technique was developed in the 1940s by J.C. Flanagan in the USA. The CIT proceeds from the basic assumption that a system is most apparent measured by its limitations. Accordingly, the most incisive demands are those that push up against the limits of a person’s internal system and when disruptions appear in the daily routine. In the Assessment centre, these disruptions or “critical incidents” form the basis for Assessment tasks. An Assessment task must therefore simulate not only typical demands on a person, but also critical situations.

importance of professional, social and individual competences in the receiving country's workforce.

As described previously, Assessment Centres simulate occupational demands and on this basis are able to understand competences that would be tested in a similar way in the workplace. Participation in an Assessment Centre process therefore always signifies an intense confrontation with the working environment. For migrants, this Assessment Centre takes on the function of an intermediary between different (work) cultures. The participants learn about important aspects of the recipient country's work culture in a "safe place" and can test themselves in realistic situations. Their experiences during the Assessment help them to assess the norms and codes of the recipient country's working environment and help them to take this into account when looking for a job.

An additional aspect of the Assessment Centre that is advantageous in working with migrants is the action-orientation of the process. The emphasis is not placed solely on talking about competences; instead, focus is placed on demonstrating competences, experiencing demands, and learning to assess and reflect on these experiences. This gives participants who have not yet mastered the language of the recipient country the opportunity to demonstrate their competences and test them. Participation in the process requires basic knowledge of the recipient country's language. Even though this excludes some participants, language competence is a requirement for integrating into the job market. Language problems are part of daily life that migrants need to learn to deal with during career counselling, job interviews and in conflict situations with their bosses. The language barrier is intentionally inserted into Assessment simulations. If a participant, for example, does not understand her partner when playing the role of a head cook, she must ask for clarification. This is also a typical critical demand that women with migration backgrounds have to deal with when entering the workplace.

2. Carrying out an Assessment Centre Process

Programme				
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
a. m.		Assessment of the behaviour seen by the observer Competence Reports Observer Conference	Assessment of the behaviour seen by the observer Competence Reports Observer Conference	Assessment of the behaviour seen by the observer Competence Reports Observer Conference
p. m.	Introduction	Individual Feedback	Individual Feedback	Individual Feedback
	Orientation programme Explanation of the observational criteria	Orientation programme Explanation of the observational criteria	Orientation programme Explanation of the observational criteria	Evaluation by the Participants
	AC Task	AC Task	AC Task	
	Self-Assessment by the Participant	Self-Assessment by the Participant	Self-Assessment by the Participant	

An Assessment Centre follows a standardised schedule and includes set elements, which must be taken into account during the planning and presentation.

An Assessment day (Assessment module) consists of the following elements:

- The orientation programme and explanation of the observational criteria
- The Assessment task completed under professional observation (the observation is carried out according to defined observational criteria, which are also made known to the participants)
- The subsequent self-Assessment by the participant
- The written competence report drafted by the observers, and the observer conference

- The individual feedback discussions during which the observers inform the participants of their perceptions and evaluations.

In the following section, the specific elements are described in greater detail:

The orientation programme takes place prior to each task. It should pique the participants' curiosity about the upcoming task, but not remove their anticipation. For this reason, we do not introduce the simulation in detail, but instead give an outline what sort of situation it will be. The orientation programme also serves to build a bridge between the competences observed during the task and the demands of the work environment. In order for the participants to be open to the critical situation in the simulation and to make optimal use of the associated opportunities for learning and development, they must be able to gauge the actual relevance of this situation to the work environment.

When: Before each Assessment task

Duration: Ca. 1 hour

Objective: Linking the task with professional realities

In connection with the orientation programme, there is an explanation of the observational criteria. In order to successfully cope with a critical situation, the participants must know which specific competences are being observed during the task. A differentiated self-Assessment will also only be possible if they know and understand the criteria according to which they are being assessed.

When: Before each Assessment task, after the orientation programme

Duration: 20 – 30 minutes

Objective: Learning about the relevant key competences and reflecting on culture-specific differences

The self-Assessment by the participants is an important element in the Assessment of potential. This takes place directly after each task. The

participants are given the assignment of writing down the strengths (and weaknesses) that became apparent to them will addressing the task. For this assignment, they should use the observational criteria for orientation. The items classified under each criteria should help them to describe their own behaviour based on this key competences being observed. During the self-Assessment process, the participants not only learn to judge their own behaviour, but they also deal intensively with the observational criteria and learn to connect their own actions with the corresponding key competences.

When: Following each task

Duration: Ca. 15 minutes

Objective: Assessing individual behaviour, in-depth analysis of key competences

After every task, the observers write individual competence reports for the participants. The observations noted during the tasks are classified, i.e. arranged according to the relevant observational criteria and items. For each observational criterion defined in the task, quantitative characteristics and a qualitative evaluation are formulated, which result in the overall picture of each participant's competence profile for the respective task. During the evaluation, a focus is placed on strengths, not deficits, and the competence report should be formulated accordingly. If one limits oneself to purely positive statements about the observed behaviour, however, there is a risk of levelling out the personal profiles of the individuals. It is particularly in these profiles, where the results of the Assessments of potential provide the basis for further counselling, that the advisors require indications of weaknesses and needed qualifications. These should also come from the short reports, when they are identified during the Assessment tasks.

When: After every task

Duration: Ca. 1.5 hours per report

Objective: Creation of an individual competence profile for each participant

During a daily observer conference, irregularities, problems and questions that may have arisen during the implementation and Assessment of the task are discussed and the competence reports are coordinated with the co-observer. This coordination with the second observer should control for social dynamics between the observer and the participant. If necessary, discriminatory or falsifying attribution tendencies can be identified and avoided.

When: After each task

Duration: Ca. 1 hour

Objective: Ensuring controlled subjectivity

The competence reports serve as the basis for the individual feedback discussions, which take place the day after the corresponding task. The focus here is on precisely detailed feedback regarding personal strengths, which the participants exhibited during the previous task. The self-Assessment of the participants is just as important a topic here as the external perception provided by the observer. The feedback discussions also serve to identify the weaknesses and needed qualifications and to jointly look for other strategies and alternative courses of actions.

When: On the day after the task is completed

Duration: 20 – 30 minutes per participant (the discussions are carried out in a one-on-one situation)

Objective: Reflecting on strengths and needed qualifications, development of alternative courses of action, and recommendations.

3. Adaptation of Methods

The adaptation of methods to fit the needs of assessing competence was carried out in three phases in the *Give Competence a Chance* project:

1. Identification of the professions / occupational areas for which the Assessment Centre should be developed;
2. Creation of specific job profiles and competence requirements for the selected occupations (using CIT);
3. Development of Assessment tasks corresponding to the job profiles and competence requirements.

The foundations for the first phase were provided by the studies of the country-specific job market conditions and specifics of the target group, which were created in the WP 1⁴.

Tourism and gastronomy sector services were emphasised in all of the studies as being relevant to employment.

The following occupations were selected:

- Cook assistant (*addetto/-a alla cucina*)
- Service staff member in restaurant or bar (*addetto/-a sala e bar*)
- Receptionist (*addetto/-a al front office*)

To further define the specific occupational profile and necessary competences for the occupations listed here, use was made of the '*Profili professionali e standard minimo di competenza*', which were approved in 2008 by the *Giunta Regionale* of the Umbria region and published in December 2008 in the *Bollettino Ufficiale*⁵.

In order to detail the specific task profiles and necessary competences for the selected occupations, during the second phase, an expert workshop was conducted in Perugia corresponding with the Critical Incident Technique (cf. Chapter 1.6). Six experts from the three selected occupational areas participated in this workshop. The objective of the

⁴ cf. Project Outputs - Work package 1, National Reports on Labour Market Needs Assessment

⁵ cf. Supplemento straordinario al «Bollettino Ufficiale» - serie generale - n.12 del 18 marzo 2009, page. 409, 423, 473

workshop was, firstly, to collect a series of typical critical situations from the experts' professional experience. Secondly, competences were supposed to be identified, which are indispensable to the three listed occupations.

Typical critical situations given for kitchens and service included:

– *The moment when meals are served*

The moment when meals are served is the time of greatest tension for the kitchen and service staff. The cooperation must be perfectly coordinated, workers must be capable of executing parallel tasks concurrently, and all of this occurs in a climate characterised by extreme time and performance pressures.

– *Considerably more guests come than registered*

This critical situation frequently arises. The kitchen and service staff must react with lightning speed to this new challenge. In the service sector, communication competence is needed when addressing customers.

– *Unforeseen breakdown of machines, tools or other aids*

Workers must be prepared to carry out small repairs themselves; this critical situation requires a resistance to stress and a talent for improvisation.

– *Injuries and accidents*

Workers must have quick-witted reactions and remain calm. This critical situation often comes hand in hand with the following situation.

– *Unforeseen staff shortage*

Workers must make accommodations to address the situation, improvise, and cooperate to fill the gap left by the missing person.

An additional critical situation for receptionists:

– *Complaints from customers*

This typical critical situation also arises for service staff and demands communicative competence in dealing with guests, patience, and the ability to reconcile conflicts.

Using these typical critical situations as a basis, during the third phase, the methods for adapting the Assessment tasks are developed. These tasks should simulate the previously listed demands and make it possible for the competences required for the occupation to be clearly observed.

Four tasks were developed, three of which would be used in each
Assessment Centre:

- The Poster (*Il Cartellone*)
- The Super Menu (*Il Supermenu*)
- The Wedding Meal (*Il Pranzo nuziale*)
- A completely normal day in the La Vela Restaurant (*Un giorno qualsiasi nel ristorante La Vela*)

3.1 The Observational Criteria with Exemplary Items

In agreement with the experts, eight key competences were selected for the chosen occupations, which would then be observed in the Assessment Centre. In the next section, the respective competences are listed with three exemplary items each:

- **Working routine**
 - Gets an overview of the task and objectives of the assigned work
 - Sets priorities
 - Monitors work process and result
- **Communication skills / contact with customers**
 - Exhibits initiative in approaching others and speaking with them
 - Emphasises verbal communication with gestures and facial expressions
 - Contributes to establishing a cooperative work climate
- **Problem solving**
 - Analyses conditions
 - Exhibits a range of ideas, proposes original solutions
 - Improvises when unforeseen events happen
- **Stress tolerance**
 - Works in a goal-oriented fashion under stress and time pressure
 - Remains calm in the case of personal attacks
 - Tries again in the case of failure
- **Ability to work in a team**
 - Incorporates others into activities
 - Makes recommendations for division of work
 - Openly discusses conflicts and problems

- Precision
 - Conform exactly with the guidelines and directions
 - Handles materials and tools with care
 - Careful not to endanger oneself or others
- Responsibility
 - Abides by appointments
 - Assumes responsibility for the work process and its result
 - Aware of one's own limits
- Presentation skills
 - Exhibits self-confidence
 - Exhibits enthusiasm and evokes it in others
 - Makes use of visualisation

3.2 The Assessment Tasks

A group task, a presentation exercise and two role plays were developed for the Assessment Centre presented here. A summary of the tasks and their requirement profiles is described in the following section.

The complete description of each task including all its components can be found in Chapter 5.

The Poster (Group Task)

Groups of 4 - 6 people each will work in parallel on this task. Each team must manage under time pressure a series of 12 different tasks, which require a wide range of different talents: draw a picture, write a poem, fold paper flowers, solve a tricky puzzle, create a menu, etc.

Some of these tasks can be dealt with by different individuals, but others require a consensus from the team. All of the work must be written down or pasted on a poster. In the end, the observers assess the result.

Duration of task: 45 minutes

Requirement profile for this task

The processing of the team assignment requires a variety of abilities, which the participants must come to an understanding with one another about in the beginning. They are only able to complete all of the tasks within the time provided if they divide up the work. This requires the ability to coordinate and direct work and team processes. At the same time, the task places high demands on the team members' ability to form a consensus, since some assignments can only be fulfilled if everyone is in agreement with one another. Throughout the entire task, every participant is confronted with the question as to which group decisions she should try to influence with her opinions and for which decisions she should remain in the background so that the common objective can be achieved.

In addition, the task requires a highly effective working routine, because it can only be successfully completed if the participants follow the directions precisely.

Observed competences:

Ability to work in a team, communication skills, working routine, responsibility

The Super Menu (teamwork and presentation)

For the "Super Menu" task, two participants are supposed to take on the roles of waiters/waitresses and plan an elaborate menu for a graduation party of approximately 30 people. The planning is made more difficult due to various additional demands (some guests are vegetarians, others don't eat fish, the children only eat certain dishes). The menu's price per person is set, and the maximum level of 35 Euros should also include a small guest present. Since the family is still uncertain as to which restaurant they would like to celebrate in, the task is not only to prepare a particularly attractive offer, but also to present it in a convincing manner to the family, which is expected to arrive in 30 minutes. During the presentation in the task's second part, some observers take on the role of family members

and attempt to put the waiters/waitresses to the test by posing questions and with unexpected wishes and orders.

Duration of task: 30 minutes (working in a pair); 10 minutes (presentation)

Requirement profile for this task

The task consists of two parts: working with the partner to plan the menu and presenting the menu to the audience. During the first part, the focus is on exhibiting creativity and teamwork under time pressure. The candidates must make recommendations, discuss their opinions with their partner, and to arrive at a jointly agreed upon result. In the second part of the assignment, the proposed menu is supposed to be presented. This requires a self-confident performance, eloquence and a talent for improvisation, since the audience has been instructed to pose uncomfortable questions and to put pressure on the candidates by coming up with unexpected wishes and orders.

Observed competences:

Communication skills, problem solving, stress tolerance, presentation skills

The Wedding Meal (role play)

During this task, three participants are supposed to take on the roles of assistant cooks in a restaurant's kitchen, who are working under time pressure to prepare a number of ingredients for a wedding meal (wash and cut vegetables, form the decorations for the wedding cake). During this process, they are continually interrupted by the head cook, who rushes into the kitchen to give new directions and monitor their work like a hawk. He pushes the candidates to work more quickly and with more precision. With half of the time remaining, the catastrophe comes: someone has left the refrigerator door open and the ice-cream cake has melted. The head cook suspects that one of the assistant cooks is

responsible and reacts accordingly with irritation. He asks all three participants to think up an alternative as quickly as possible.

Duration of the task: 40 minutes

Requirement profile for this task

The task places considerable demands on the participants' stress tolerance levels, since the head cook interrupts them again and again with new directions. He demands precise accordance with hygiene regulations and exactness in executing their responsibilities. The participants must be able to address different tasks simultaneously and to react to spontaneous demands without losing control or sight of the larger objective. They must exhibit self-control and communicative competence in their contact with the head cook. They must comply with the head cook's directions, but also offer recommendations and work independently if necessary.

Observed competences:

Precision, stress tolerance, communication skills, problem Solving

A Completely Normal Day in the La Vela Restaurant (role play)

This task takes place in the gourmet restaurant *La Vela*. The two participants take on the roles of waiters/waitresses. The head waiter has withdrawn since the lunchtime period has passed. The two waiters/waitresses have been given the task of bringing the restaurant into order and making all of the preparations for dinner. The moment of peace is "disturbed" by a series of guests, who enter the restaurant one after the other and stress the waiters/waitresses with their requests. Since it is impossible to contact the head waiter, the two participants are left to their own devices. They are supposed to make decisions, which extend beyond their decision-making powers and must consider what they should do.

Duration of the task: 40 minutes

Requirement profile for this task

The task simulates a typical situation in the daily life of a waiter. The participants must react in a professional manner to unforeseen circumstances and find a quick solution to every challenge. This must prove their communication skills when speaking with customers and accept the complaints of guests. In accordance with the different types of people they will have to deal with, they must also make use of a variety of communication strategies.

Observed competences:

Working routine, communication skills/ contact with customers, problem solving, stress tolerance

4. Training on being an Assessment Specialist

During the training on being an Assessment specialist, the participants learn about Assessment methods and apply them by themselves taking on all of the roles in an Assessment Centre, one after the other: they are the subject of observations, they conduct observations, they present the agenda. They also learn about the methods used in the four tasks described here, which they will also later perform with their target groups.

4.1 Structure and Contents of the Training

The training is structured as follows:

A. Theoretical and Practical Fundamentals of Assessment (40 hours)

1. **Theory: Introduction to the methods and theoretical basics of Assessment of potential:**

- Introduction of the competence model
- Basics of human perception; incorrect and skewed perceptions
- History of the Assessment Centre
- Fields of application, target groups
- Quality standards
- Assessment of potential as an instrument for identifying competences
- Systematic micro-observation according to OWCQER
- Structure and sequence of an Assessment Centre
- Feedback

2. **In practice: Observational training based on predefined Assessment tasks⁶,**

in which the participants not only learn to apply micro-observation methods, but also take on the role of the one being observed, enabling them to gain the experience of being the observed participant at an Assessment Centre.

The training teaches:

- The application of micro-observation methods
- How to prepare competence reports and final reports
- How to conduct feedback discussions

B. Practical Testing (32 hours)

In the second part of the training, the participants conduct an Assessment Centre with migrants. During this practical phase, the training participants are supervised by the trainer and receive differentiated feedback. The specific learning objectives for the practical testing are:

⁶ cf. Chapter 3.2

- Delve into the micro-observation methods and apply them with certitude
- Independently create short reports and final reports
- Independently organise and moderate the Assessment Centre
- Moderate observer conferences

4.2 Training Programme

Monday

09:00

Start of training

Introduction of the participants and trainers
 Introduction of the programme and schedule
 Assessment methods as an instrument for evaluating competence –
 Theoretical background

Coffee break

Systematic micro-observation according to OWCQER
 Separating perception and evaluation of human behaviour
 Quality standards

13:00

Lunch

14:00

Introduction of the competence model and competences relevant to
 Assessment
 Development of items
 Micro-observation exercise in small groups
 Presentation of results

17:00

End

Tuesday

09:00

Exercise on separating perception and evaluation
 The systematic documentation of competences
 Quantification and qualification of competences – ‘The Ton Model’
 The short report: structure, composition and phrasing

Coffee break

Execution out of a systematic micro-observation using the ‘**Poster**’ task
 as an example
 Application of the OWCQER method: ‘Classification’ of the observations
 carried out independently

13:00

Lunch Break

14:00

Application of the OWCQER method: ‘Qualification’ and ‘Evaluation’ in
 groups
 Presentation of the results

17:00

End

Wednesday

09:00

The Johari window: theoretical basis for feedback
 Rules for feedback in Assessment Centres

Coffee break

Execution out of a systematic micro-observation using the '**Super Menu**'
 task as an example
 Application of the OWCQER method: 'Classification' of the observations
 carried out independently

'Qualification' and 'Evaluation' in groups

Presentation of the results

13:00

Lunch break

14:00

Creation of competence reports in small groups
 Presentation and discussion of the competence reports

17:00

End

Thursday

09:00

Subjective perceptions during observation, classic observational
 mistakes during Assessment and demands on controlled subjectivity

Coffee break

Execution out of a systematic micro-observation using the '**Wedding
 Meal**' task as an example
 Application of the OWCQER method: 'Classification' of the observations
 carried out independently

'Qualification' and 'Evaluation' in groups

13:00

Lunch break

14.00

Creation of competence reports in small groups and feedback for the
 observed participants
 Discussion of experiences and results

17.00

End

Friday

09:00

The final report: structure, composition and phrasing

Coffee break

Hints for presentation and organisation of an Assessment Centre

13:00

Lunch break

14:00

Integration of the methods into the system of professional orientation and
 qualification
 Planning of future activities within the context of the training
 Evaluation of the training by participants

17.00

End

5. An Example of an Assessment Task

In the following section, the “Wedding Meal” Assessment task is presented with all its components as an example.

The following materials comprise

- Presentation recommendations
- The Assessment task that the participants receive
- Directions that the participating role-players receive
- The observational criteria and items

Observers, role-players and the moderator must all familiarise themselves with the materials prior to the task being carried out.

Corresponding materials are available for all four tasks and are available to the Assessment specialists on the project’s online platform.

The Wedding Meal

5.1 Task for the Participants

You and your two colleagues are assistant cooks in the *La Vela* Restaurant. The restaurant is famous for its wedding meals, not only because they are well-organised, but also due to the quality of the meals.

You should prepare some ingredients for tonight's meal.

Specifically:

- 3 onions, diced
- 3 carrots, cut into thin strips
- 2 lemons, peeled with the white skin removed and cut into small pieces
- Parsley, chopped finely, but only the leaves – no stems
- 2 potatoes, peeled and cut into strips of equal size (for French fries)
- 2 decorative figures for the wedding cake (made out of modeling clay)

Caution:

- You must pay absolute attention to compliance with hygiene regulations. Whenever you prepare a new vegetable, you must first wash your hands, the knife and the cutting board so that no taste is carried over from one vegetable onto another.
- After each vegetable is peeled and cut, it must be kept in its own container. Under no circumstances should it ever touch the other vegetables.

You have 40 minutes to prepare everything.

Good luck!

The Wedding Meal

5.2 Tips for Moderation of the Task

Requirements profile for the task

The simulation places considerable demands on the participants' stress tolerance levels, since the head cook interrupts them again and again with new directions. The task requires precise accordance with hygiene regulations and exactness in executing their responsibilities. The participants must be able to address different tasks simultaneously and to react to spontaneous demands without losing control or sight of the larger objective. They must exhibit self-control and communicative competence in their contact with the head cook. They must comply with the head cook's directions, but also offer recommendations and work independently if necessary.

Organising the Task

For this task, groups of three people each must be created. The composition of the groups should be decided by drawing lots. In order to avoid long waiting periods, two groups should carry out the task simultaneously. This requires, however, that there be two rooms available.

To make the execution of the task realistic, it is advantageous if you have access to a restaurant kitchen or at least a room with sinks and countertops. Otherwise, the washing of the cooking utensils and hand washing has to be improvised with tubs of water.

The plastic bottle for the head cook's "aromatic liquid" (water) must be prepared with a number of small holes so that the bottle loses some water due to continuous leakage. The candidates must then consider a solution for collecting the precious liquid.

It is recommended that the role of the head cook be filled by an experienced expert (if possible, by a cook).

Duration: 40 minutes

Materials

3 cutting boards, 2 large knives, 3 paring knives, 1 small plastic bottle (water bottle), which leaks water, 1 funnel, 2 bowls, various containers for chopped vegetables, modeling clay for decorating the wedding cake, paper napkins or paper towel for drying

2 lemons, 2 potatoes, 1 bundle of parsley, 3 carrots, 3 onions

The sink can be replaced with 2 tubs of water: 1 for hand washing, 1 for cleaning kitchen utensils.

Observational criteria

- Precision
- Stress tolerance
- Communication skills
- Problem solving

The Wedding Meal

5.3 Tips for the Role-players

Sabatino Gargano, Head Cook at *La Vela Restaurant*

You are Sabatino Gargano and have been working for the past 10 years as the head cook at *La Vela Restaurant*. Even though you have had this position for a long time, you continue to be as passionate as ever about your work. You still enjoy trying out new recipes and these attempts are met with success. Just recently, you garnered lots of recognition at a cooking event in Marseille for your famous “*Acqua aromatizzata*”, which lends a unique aroma and taste to your dishes. The ingredients in your “special aromatic water” remain, of course, your private secret. After all, your competitors never sleep.

During your career, you have seen many cooks come and go and have trained many yourself. You have tried your best, but in order to cook well, a person needs true talent. Even the best trainer cannot help untalented apprentices. You are absolutely convinced of this fact.

Overall, you are a very affable trainer. But anyone who works in the kitchen and does not respond immediately to your instructions and anyone who works too slowly will have to face your wrath. After all, you see slowness as a deadly sin. You are always under time pressure and you pass that on to your apprentices. They need to get used to the stress and the gruff voices in the restaurant kitchen, because this is also part of their training.

5 minutes after the task begins, you enter the kitchen

You are in a hurry and you hand over a small bottle of your precious “*Acqua aromatizzata*” to one of the assistant cooks. While you don’t disclose the ingredients, your apprentices must learn to perfume the dishes with this liquid. Somehow the plastic bottle with the aromatic liquid has started to leak. You can’t address that right now though. You impress upon the cooks that they need to use the liquid carefully and step even

more of the liquid from being lost. Before you can explain to the assistant cooks how they should dispense the water, you are called back into the dining area. While leaving, you impress upon the three assistant cooks once again that they should not waste a single drop of the precious liquid.

10 minutes after the task begins, you return to the kitchen

You monitor how the preparations are coming along. You stand behind each and every assistant cook and look over their shoulder, make critical comments about what they're doing, and correct their knife use. After three minutes, you leave the kitchen again, remarking that the assistant cooks should hurry up and deliver precise results – you'll be back to check on them again soon.

18 minutes after the task begins, you return to the kitchen

What a catastrophe!! Somebody left the refrigerator door open and the ice cream cake for the wedding has melted. You are beside yourself with rage! One of the assistant cooks must be responsible for this. Who else could have acted in such an irresponsible way? A solution must be found immediately as an alternative to the ice cream cake. The assistant cooks should come up with a solution. You will give them ten minutes to come up with an answer and then you expect to see results.

The Wedding Meal

5.4 Observational Criteria and Items

Precision

Ability to carefully execute tasks and closely follow directions

- Closely complies with directions and guidelines
- Observes quality specifications
 - Executes tasks with great precision
 - Continuously monitors time and compliance with specified quantities and design
 - Handles materials and tools with care
 - Makes sure that tools function correctly before using them
 - Observes hygiene regulations and workplace safety
 - Takes care not to endanger self or others

Stress tolerance

Ability to remain capable of action in stressful situations

- Remains patient in stressful and time pressured situations
 - Tries again if unsuccessful
 - Accepts criticism of work results or processes
 - Remains calm in the case of personal attacks
 - Works in a goal-oriented fashion even under stress and time pressure
 - Maintains working methods and communication structures despite disruptions
 - Does not lose sense of humour even under stress and time pressure

Communication skills

Ability to initiate contact with others, state one's own opinion and create a positive work atmosphere

- Approaches others and initiates contact with them
- Expresses one's own opinions
- Shows interest in what others say, listens attentively
- Asks questions
- Contributes to creating a cooperative working climate
- Encourages others to participate
- Share others' happiness/ displeasure
- Emphasises verbal communication with gestures and facial expressions
- Maintains eye contact
- Exhibits attentive body posture

Problem solving

Ability to combine existing connections, to analyse, to develop innovative ideas, and respond flexibly to demands

- Sees problem from an unusual perspective
- Exhibits a wide range of ideas, proposes original solutions
- Analyses conditions
- Recommends concrete solutions
- Involves others in solving problems
- Improvises when unexpected things happen
- Interrupts work if new demands arise, and then re-orient's efforts
- Addresses demands in parallel (multitasking)
- Gets to the bottom of things and looks for the problem's causes
- Does not allow oneself to be distracted from solving the problem
- Poses questions in order to understand / solve the problem



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