

National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning - NVR

Case Susan

RPL - Access to the diploma programme, Denmark

Background

In Denmark access to Diploma Programmes are given if you have a short-cycle or a medium-cycle Higher Education and 2 years of experience in a relevant job. Otherwise you can gain access through recognition of prior learning.

The individual has to do documentation as a basis for the assessment. Often the University College will make use of "My Competence Portfolio" In the effort to support the individual making him/herself ready for RPL, the Ministry of Education has developed this clarification tool as a self-evaluation tool, it is called <http://www.minkompetencemappe.dk/Default.aspx>.

In addition to that the individual can be asked to write a case story with analyses and reflections about the individuals experiences, knowledge and skills from work experiences, with a special outline and formulation of relevant problems and themes. The individual will be asked for an interview with the person(s) doing the assessment of the application.

After the recognition of prior learning the individual will obtain a certificate which gives the right to access to this specific diploma education at all university colleges in Denmark.

Access to diploma programme in management.

Susan is 46 years old. She left school after 8 years. At the school she had courses in dance and exercise. When she finished the school she would like to be a member of a dance company. Tired of going to school and with the wish to be a professional dancer and maybe a choreographer, she left the school.

She continued with courses in dancing at an adult education association. She learned to create a dance performance. The dance company got more and more arrangements. She did not earn money enough therefore she got a part time job at a fitness centre.

The dance company worked together with local musicals and theaters.

Susan met Morten, who was also a dancer, at a time when there were very few dance and choreography jobs. Morten would like to travel and try to make money as a dancer when traveling. Susan and Morten decide to write a couple of performances that they can perform on market squares on their journey - and then they leave.

During their journey they come to Africa and encounter different people who work as

voluntary workers in developing countries. Susan and Morten return home and apply for jobs as voluntary humanitarian workers in South America. They stay in South America for 2 years.

When they return home, Susan apply for at job as a dance teacher, and she becomes very pleased with teaching young people in dancing and choreography. Susan and Morten get 2 children. She gets interested in alternative medicine because one of her daughters suffers from allergy. She attends classes in alternative treatment (zone therapy and acupuncture) and gradually she begins herself to give treatments

Over the years she gets into contact with a local dance company for which she is doing some jobs. At the beginning some production jobs, later more administrative tasks. She becomes project manager at an international dance project. Gradually she gets more and more management tasks and eventually she becomes executive director of the dance company. She takes formal courses in management within the Adult Vocational Training (AMU) and commerce (Further Education for Adults (VVU)), but she does not get a total academic education in management.

When Susan turns 45, she evaluates her life. The children have grown up and she has been divorced from Morten. Susan dreams of becoming wiser and studying ethics or philosophy at university. She has, however, no formal education that gives her access to university. She learns through a friend that you can apply for recognition of prior learning from her many experiences.

Therefore she calls the local University College that offers diploma in management. She speaks with a secretary and then with a counselor, both are somewhat vague and hesitating when they hear that Susan left school after 8 years and has very little formal training. She does not give up and asks for an interview. This conversation takes place with another counselor who is responsible for management education. The counselor has experience with Prior Learning Assessment and has carried out a lot of assessments concerning diploma in management.

Susan is motivated and energetic, and the counselor can hear during the conversation that she actually knows something about management and has management training from consultancy. So he is not as dismissive as his colleagues.

After talking to the counselor, Susan can see opportunities in obtaining a diploma in management and going to university to get a master degree in ethics. Therefore she will apply for access to the diploma in management.

She fills in "My Competency Portefolio" and writes a case based on her work experience. She submits the material, and 2 weeks later she receives a positive evaluation and admission to the diploma education in management.

Today, Susan is busy studying and is doing well. So well that she might have received recognition for one or two of the modules in the education (certificates of competence) ,and

thus have shortened the duration of her education . She has, however, refused this because she does not want to miss anything

For consideration:

- Which attitudes toward RPL from the various professional actors are shown in this case?
- What documentation is considered appropriate to demand at an access recognition at diploma level?
- What assessment criteria can be formulated so as to make them clear both for assessor and candidate?
- What guidance and ethical issues are associated with an access recognition?