

Case Peter

RPL – access to social educator education, Denmark

Background

When applying for access to a social educator education in Denmark it is possible to enter through an individual assessment of a person's knowledge, skills and competencies, if you do not meet the formal admission requirements.

The assessment must be built on information about the applicant's overall knowledge, skills and competencies regardless of where they have been acquired. The assessment concerns only the institution that has carried out the assessment.

The person in the following case has been admitted to social educator education. He has been through a process consisting of two sessions (pedagogy and health, body and exercise). The applicant had to write an essay about the 2 sessions, he had participated in and eventually an interview was held starting with the written assignment.

Case Peter

Peter is 34 years and applying for access to a social educator education through a prior learning assessment.

He does not meet the entry requirements for the education because he has no formal education beyond primary school (ninth grade)

When Peter went out of primary school he was tired of school, among other things because he had been bullied. He entered the Armed Forces, where he graduated as a telegraph operator. In his spare time he was a scout leader.

After 7 years he had to leave the Armed Forces because of bad ankles. He was not sure of how he should spend his life. He had not a mind to take an academic education, and did not start a practical training such as carpentry.

By chance he got a job in Paris. Here he worked for two years with computer games. Much of the work was about guiding children and adolescents.

Peter got much out of his stay in Paris. He was happy working in an international environment, there were people from several different countries and cultures employed at the office. He had widened his horizons, and was challenged in his understanding of the world. He was forced to speak and write English. While Peter worked in Paris, he discovered

that he now had a mind to take an education as a social educator.

Peter has always liked working with children. Over the past 15 years he has been working with children in one way or another. Based on his own experiences, he has worked in "Save the Children Found", in a project "Drop bullying". He has been to schools giving lectures. He has been active in Save the Children Fund's summer camps with children, he has been a scout leader and is now helping to run a youth club on a voluntary basis.

Home on holiday in Denmark, he contacted the student counselor at the social educator education. He was made aware of the possibility of applying for recognition of prior learning, since he did not meet the formal requirements of the qualifying examination. Peter was very pleased and surprised at this opportunity. He did not want to spend 2 or 3 years at a high school education before he could be admitted to this education.

Peter started with the RPL process. He had to meet 2 evenings for classes.

Peter did not experience the activity as teaching, more like a kind of self-evaluation in order to understand where he stood in relation to education.

In the subject health, body and exercise, he did not experience any problems, it was more difficult to take notes in pedagogy classes. He found it difficult to catch the essential things, but he photographed the board, and could use this in the following written task. He was not sure whether he got it all, but he thought it probably made sense later on.

Peter really liked the following interview. For the first time he saw that someone was interested in what he wrote. He felt acknowledged for what he had done and he thought he maybe was not as stupid as he walked around and thought. Just before Christmas, Peter was told that he had been admitted, the best Christmas present ever!

Peter has now started his training, and he is happy about it. He finds that he is accepted by his fellow students and that he every day wants to get up and start. He finds that he has got over the bad experiences with school bullying and low self-esteem.

Peter is aware that he has not so much theoretical experience. He makes sure to mix with students who have experience working with theory, and he feels that he brings essential elements to the cooperation because of his practical experience. These experiences are recognized and can be used in teaching.

Peter is doing the practical experiences well. He has many experiences from different types of institutions. He must work consciously to see himself as a student.

For consideration

Is it possible to have focus on all Peter's competencies by using the mentioned procedures? Would other methods be more useful?

How can the tests the applicants have to pass be useful both for the applicants and the assessors?

Peter puts much emphasis on the recognition he has experienced in the process of admission. Consider how it can be assured that the applicants get this experience.