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DARE + Workshop II: Train-the-Trainers

New trends in competence development

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Outline

Setting the stage

1. Role of the Economic crisis
2. Wider acceptance of competence approach in Higher Education
3. Integration of domain / subject specific and generic competences
4. Shift in the type of generic competences to be developed
5. Contribution of non-formal and informal contexts to competence development



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1. Role of the economic crisis

- ✓ High level of unemployment (26 million in Europe)
- ✓ Vacancies / job openings: experience required
- ✓ Tenures / Jobs for life have become exceptional
- ✓ Life Long Learning: Mismatch capacities and needs: role of companies / organizations
- ✓ Tendency to prolong studies: knowledge related, less skills and wider competences but in contrast also more intense studying and avoiding part time work
- ✓ Social cohesion of societies challenged
- ✓ Individual tolerance and self-confidence under pressure

Are there other relevant tendencies not mentioned?



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According to research of the Vlerick Business School (based on a longitudinal panel study of 21 organizations) since 2007:

Employers perspective: “All of the organizations that the authors have surveyed emphasize that investment in employee competency development is a long-term engagement. Even in times of budget cuts, cost-savings and lean business, investing in developing employee competencies remains a priority.”

Five trends in the ways Flemish organizations are approaching competency development:

1. Looking for creative and cost-effective ways to develop competencies
2. Stimulating competency development across departmental boundaries
3. Tailoring the approach to the individual employee
4. Making competency development a strategic choice
5. Creating a learning culture in the organization

What does this imply for us?



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2. Wider acceptance of competence approach in Higher Education

- ✓ Required modernization process develops very slowly
- ✓ Most degree programmes still not student centred: expert/teacher based not student based
- ✓ Discourse of the relevance of generic competences has spread
- ✓ More attention towards number of basic competences: analyzing and synthesizing, writing and oral skills
- ✓ Use of instrument of (work) placements is growing
- ✓ Development of competences such as entrepreneurial skills, creativity, teamwork, project work, leadership, intercultural competences, conflict management obtain still no or very limited attention

Main challenge: How to train and assess many of these competences
Knowledge base and experience is missing



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3. Integration of domain / subject specific and generic competences

- ✓ Well understood by now that graduates need generic competences and these need to be trained; however, academic staff is missing the expertise; staff development not being a priority
- ✓ Only sensible way forward is to relate generic competence development to a domain of knowledge: forces academic staff to re-think their modes of teaching, learning and assessment

Is there an alternative approach? Suggestions?

- ✓ Bringing in external experts? Employers? Graduates?
- ✓ Implication for informal and non-formal contexts



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4. Shift in the type of generic competences to be developed

- ✓ Flexible labor market requires different type of competences than in past:
 - ✓ Planning and time management
 - ✓ Capacity for applying knowledge in practice
 - ✓ Capacity to learn actively
 - ✓ Will to succeed
 - ✓ Capacity to adapt to new situations (flexibility)
 - ✓ Capacity to generate new ideas (creativity)
 - ✓ Decision-making
 - ✓ Ability for self-management
 - ✓ Problem solving
 - ✓ **Project work**
 - ✓ Critical and self-critical abilities
 - ✓ Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team
 - ✓ **Intercultural competences**
 - ✓ **Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit**
 - ✓ Leadership
 - ✓ **Conflict resolution**

PRIORITIES?
CLUSTERING?



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5. Contribution of non-formal and informal contexts to competence development

Limited time available to develop a growing number of relevant competences as a result of the economic crisis in formal contexts

Alternatives? Looking for non-formal and informal settings

- ✓ How do we organize acceptance / recognition for competence development outside the formal sector (which has problems to develop these competences itself)

Options:

- ✓ Free space / windows in degree programmes; alternatives to placements?
- ✓ Less focus on (subject specific) knowledge acquisition and development
- ✓ Certificates?

Challenges:

- ✓ Assessment and recognition



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Setting the stage

Will we succeed to come up with applicable models?

How do these models / approaches look like?

- ✓ Learning communities inside and outside the class room?
 - ✓ Framed entrepreneurial initiatives?
 - ✓ Framed social, organizational and leadership activities?
 - ✓ Others?
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- ✓ How to deal with time constraints?

Wider setting: Also applicable to recognize learning of displaced persons / refugees?