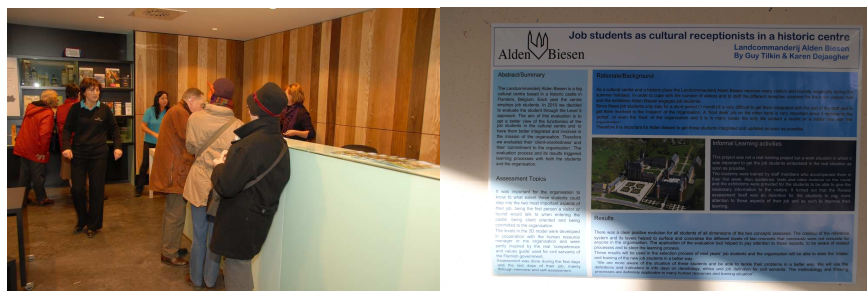


7 Case study BE

Title: Job students as cultural receptionists in a historic centre.



Introduction

The Landcommanderij Alden Biesen is a big cultural centre based in a historic castle in Flanders, Belgium. Each year the centre employs job students. In 2010 we decided to evaluate the students through the Level 5 approach. The aim of this evaluation is to get a better view on the functioning of the job students in the cultural centre and to have them better integrated and involved in the mission of the organisation.

Since these job students only stay for a short period (1 month) it is very difficult to get them integrated with the rest of the staff and to get them thoroughly involved in the 'mission' of the organisation. A 'front desk' job on the other hand is very important since it represents the 'portal', or even the 'face' of the organisation and it is in many cases the only life contact a tourist or a visitor has with 'the organisation'.

Therefore it is important for Alden Biesen to get these students integrated and updated as soon as possible.

This project was not a real training project but a work situation in which it was important to get the job students embedded in the real situation as soon as possible. It turned out that the Reveal assessment itself was an incentive for the students to pay more attention to these aspects of their job and as such to improve their learning.

Setting

As a cultural centre and a historic place the Landcommanderij Alden Biesen receives many visitors and tourists, especially during the summer holidays. In order to cope with the number of visitors and to staff the different reception counters for the main visitors' hall and the exhibition Alden Biesen engages job students.

The project took place in the castle from 1 June till 15 September 2010. In this period 4 job students were engaged and assessed. The students were in higher education or about to start higher education.

Project Activities

In a first meeting the European project manager and the human resource manager of the organization discussed the needs for an assessment and better monitoring of the functioning of the job students. Since we were clearly dealing with an informal learning situation we opted for the Level 5 approach.

The students were trained by staff members who accompanied them in their first week. Also guidelines, texts and other material on the castle and the exhibitions were provided for the students to be able to give the necessary information to the visitors.

Level 5 Evaluation Scheme Applied to the Project

It was important for the organisation to know to what extent these students could step into the two most important aspects of their job, being the first person a visitor or tourist would talk to when entering the castle: being **client oriented** and being **committed to the**

organisation.

The levels in the 3D model were developed in cooperation with the human resource manager of the organisation and were partly inspired by the real 'competences and values guide' used for the civil servants of the Flemish government, actually doing the job the students were standing in for.

Assessment was done during the first days and the last days of their job, mainly through interview and self-assessment.

Project Impact

There was a clear positive evolution for all students of all dimensions of the two concepts assessed. The creation of the reference system and its levels helped to surface and concretise the different levels of two concepts that previously were not concrete for anyone in the organisation. The application of the evaluation tool helped to pay attention to these aspects, to be aware of related processes and to steer the learning process.

The students certainly have the impression they are more aware of certain aspects of their work. Applying the system also generates an awareness about work, ethics, informal learning and evaluation processes that are beneficial in a broader context.

The impact of the application of this system should not only be measured in direct terms but also in terms of thinking processes generated and an introduction of a culture of evaluation and learning.

The organisation is more aware of the situation of these students and is able to tackle their problems in a better way.

Discussion & Perspectives

The results will be used in the selection process of next years' job students and the organisation will be able to steer the 'intake' and training of the new job students in a better way.

"We are more aware of the situation of these students and be able to tackle their problems in a better way. We will use the definitions and indicators in info days on deontology, ethics and job definition for civil servants. The methodology and thinking processes are definitely applicable in many human resources and training situations".

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The 3D-stage system is definitely a suitable approach to describe competence development provided that the stages are described in a correct way and that the evaluation is done accordingly. External consulting is definitely needed in grass-root projects but an organisation could work independently in later stages.