

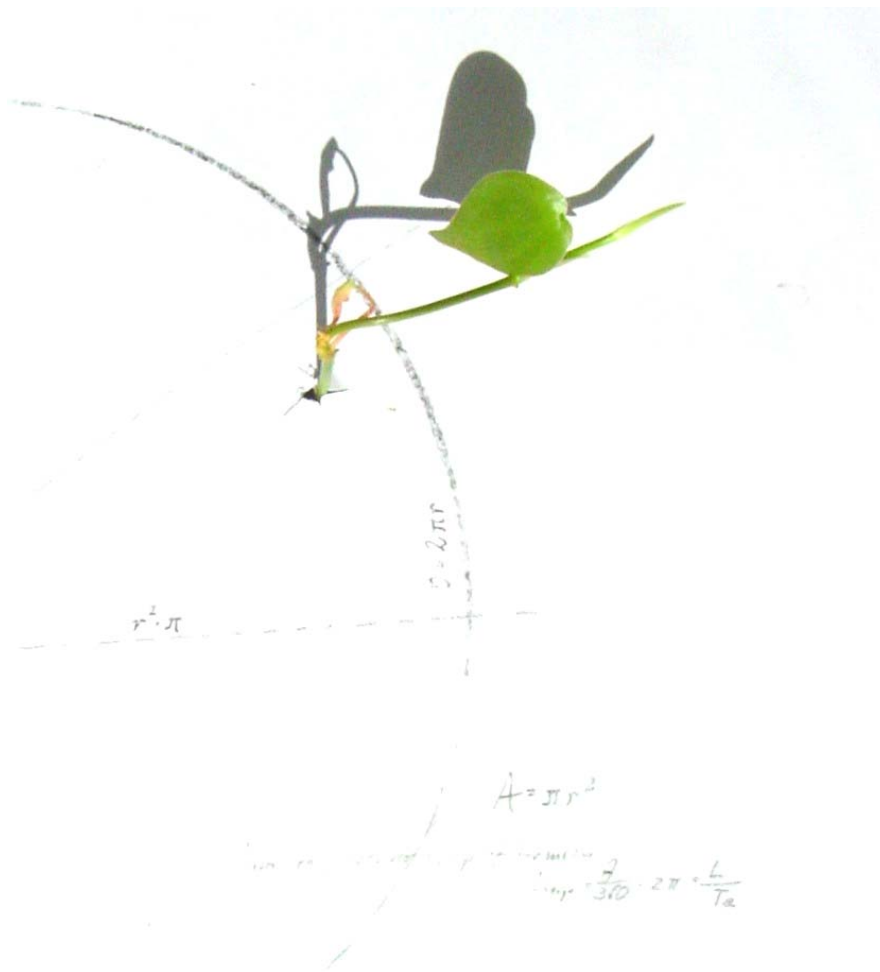


Leonardo da Vinci



# LETTING LEARNING OUT OF THE BOX

Comparative study on  
facilitating learning in SMEs



APRIL 2006

Leonardo da Vinci Project  
“Competencies Development through Self Learning in SMEs”  
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# CONTENTS

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<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.</b> Methodological approach	<b>7</b>
<b>GINNY IN A BOTTLE.</b> Understanding of Key Terms within “Learning” in SMEs	<b>12</b>
Manifestations of Learning in SMEs	<b>13</b>
Facilitation of Learning	<b>16</b>
Self-Learning	<b>19</b>
<b>FINDING NEVERLAND.</b> Barriers and opportunities for enhancing learning in SMEs.	<b>21</b>
Are they Able to Fly? Obstacles for Learning in SMEs	<b>22</b>
“Thinking Happy Thoughts” How to Optimise learning processes in SMEs	<b>28</b>
<b>SCHRÖDINGER’S CAT?</b> Looking into Working Profile of Facilitators of Learning	<b>31</b>
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>LITERATURE</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Researcher Teams</b>	<b>42</b>

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# PREFACE

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The following report presents results of comparative survey on state-of the-art within facilitating learning in SMEs in 6 European countries: Denmark, Germany, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia. The survey is a part of the project “Competencies Development through Self-Learning in Service SMEs” (CompServ) supported by Commission’s Leonardo da Vinci programme.

In the context of overall EU lifelong learning policies the project aims to develop and test a package of instruments addressed learning in small and medium sized enterprises. A Facilitation Guide for the facilitators of learning and a set of self-learning instruments shall be developed with a twofold objective: empowering/raising the competencies of the SME workers in service sector and through it to improve the quality and the work organisation towards a learning organisation.

Ample researches and surveys on competence development in SMEs were conducted already. The survey in the CompServ project uses a qualitative methodological approach in order be supplementary in relation to the existing findings in the area. The following transnational report utilizes material from 6 national reports which are published separately.

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# SUMMARY

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Both in SMEs and in continuing vocational training there is a growing demand of finding new process-oriented ways of learning at the work place that on one side could respond to patterns of organising work which no longer tend to follow functions and on the other could overcome the typical obstacles for effective learning especially in small and medium sized enterprises.

The project CompServ intends to work on combined facilitation techniques and “self-directed/organized” processes of learning in SMEs. In this context there are two target groups who need to be qualified in order to “facilitate” this type of learning:

- *external trainers* coming typically from training providers
- *internal trainers*, working within SME who are responsible for (non-technical) “problem solving” and respectively “learning”-tasks

This report presents the findings of transnational qualitative survey conducted in 6 countries where 93 persons were interviewed representing both 2 facilitator categories. The purpose of the survey was to give knowledge of how to introduce new learning techniques (facilitation of learning, self-learning) into company environment.

## **Key terms within learning processes in enterprises.**

Using right terms without any demotivating connotations does have importance when introducing educational projects in enterprises. “Competence development” and “problem solving” make more positive associations than “learning” which can refresh negative experiences of formal school system.

There is a rather common understanding about the “facilitation” as supporting a learning process. “Facilitator of learning” should be able to “*accompany*” learning process instead of “directing” or “teaching”.

The terms of “facilitating”, self-learning” and generally new ways of perceiving learning process are vaguely familiar to trainers from educational providers and not used widely. Generally, introducing the terms, is met with scepticism – partly due to lack of practical knowledge of their utility value, partly due to existence of overlapping concepts such as “coaching” , “mentoring” and “process consultancy”.

Facilitation of learning and self directed learning, if happens, is ad-hoc and not part of systematic approach. Companies still focus on off the job courses predominantly wanting traditional and formal syllabuses and so were relatively ignorant of the informal learning possibilities accessible to them. However, since increasing number of companies expect educational response to new developments on labour markets, an approach of blended learning was deemed most beneficial

### **Obstacles and potential for strengthening learning in SMEs**

The obstacles for learning in enterprises can be collected in 3 categories: at personal level, internal (in company culture) and external factors (collaboration with training providers).

One major element for enhancing motivation for learning is self-esteem and self-confidence where “learning culture” is not existing at the work place. When changes are introduced into the enterprise the individual worker cannot find understandable strategies and transparent objectives which can be transferred into her/his concrete job function, which have negative effect on learning and even can result in resistance to changes.

Only formulation of development strategy for an enterprise with integrated human resource development and with resources behind it (finances, time) can build a genuine commitment which can be implemented in collaboration on all employee levels. The crucial

element is in how the management level finds the necessity of changes and their subsequent consequences.

Training provides perceive lack of deep-going commitment (visible in established strategies and devoted resources) in enterprises as a major obstacle. The smallest enterprises learning need constitute a formal problem for training providers. The specific need can be so fragmented that it would be extremely difficult to establish a homogeneous participant group which can fulfil profitability criteria established by schools.

### **Facilitators tasks and working profile.**

Working profile for facilitators can be summarized as: using communication and pedagogical skills, flexibility, knowledge about the concrete work place for supporting/accompanying diversity of learning processes in enterprise. Facilitating methodology consists mainly of analytical tools (competence assessment, scrutinizing enterprise culture), learning management and pedagogical tools. Diversity of tools should be adapted to concrete situation.

### **Optimising learning projects in enterprises:**

- competence development project should be a part of an overall development strategy
- learning project should be thought through, i.e. motivation behind the project should be genuine and include respective resources
- there should be commitment and action on all levels in an enterprise – down to the individual work place
- development objectives should be realistic and understandable in all the contexts in the enterprise – down to the individual plan where the worker should see her/his place in the upcoming change
- learning objectives should be set up for development in formal, non-formal, informal and self-directed context
- introducing of new tools measured vs. effective use of the existing tools according to their utility value
- the tools should be balanced in terms of simplicity however at the same time not simplifying the relevant aspects; should be context oriented and target group sensible

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Methodological approach

The overall objective for the project survey was to map state of the art re. facilitating learning in SMEs in order to define more precisely the scope of the development work in the project. When having to do with different national settings it was furthermore important to describe the common understanding of key terms within the field of action.

As a method a qualitative survey with comparative transnational elements was chosen – due to a substantial number of existing quantitative researches on the subject. The method sets limits in relation to validity and for drawing significant correlations for state of the art of facilitating learning in SMEs in the partner countries, however it gives a good opportunity for giving input to the existing knowledge on the subject, to development processes in the project: elaboration of facilitation guide and self learning instruments. The primary group of users for the first product are facilitators, originating typically from training institutions. The primary target group for the second product are employees responsible for learning processes in SMEs mainly in service sector.

The CompServ project focuses on new competence profile of persons responsible for learning (facilitators of learning) who have to be able to use and support the learners in using the self-learning instruments.



In this context 3 problem fields were defined for the survey :

- Concrete understanding of the key terms within competence development and their manifestation in SMEs
- Perceived barriers for learning in SMEs seen from the internal and external perspectives
- Perceived need for learning support for internal and external facilitators

To achieve the objectives the following methods were used: qualitative focus group interviews, individual phone interviews according to common transnational interview guide , supplementary desk research

2 interview guides were prepared - for internal and external learning facilitators. Both interview guides comprised 4 levels where the 1<sup>st</sup> part gave information on the interviewee and the others gathered opinions on the chosen thematic questions seen from the internal and external facilitators point of view:

1<sup>st</sup> level: **data on the interviewee** and the description of the work tasks in the service SMEs/ or in training/consultancy provider

2<sup>nd</sup> level: **Term understanding**: personal and corporate view on the key term of learning and how it appear in the specific work place

3<sup>rd</sup> level: **Perfect practice**: view on opportunities for enhancing learning at work place

4<sup>th</sup> level **Perceived learning needs**: mapping the needs for learning tools, perceived barriers of learning and experiences in problem solutions

5<sup>th</sup> level (optional): national specific problem field

Both interview guides are constructed as a reflection of each other, in order to compare the views of the 2 interviewee groups on exactly the same research subject.

**Target groups/interviewees:**

1. INTERNAL FACILITATORS (interview guide 1): supervisors, leaders, HR responsables, apprenticeship/placement responsible, job training responsible, mentors **exercising their functions internally in SMEs** , functioning as **internal facilitators of learning**
2. EXTERNAL FACILITATORS (interview guide 2): supervisors, consultants, trainers, apprenticeship/placement responsible, job training responsible, mentors **working for SMEs externally**, employed e.g. by training institutions , i.e. functioning as **external facilitators of learning**

**Characteristics of the sample:** In total 93 persons were interviewed in focus groups, individual face-to-face and telephone interviews. 13 persons answered on-line questionnaire and 6 persons via ordinary mail.

Gender composition: 56% male and 44% female interviewees, which meets well the established gender balance criterion.

44 external facilitators, typically trainers and consultants, were interviewed within the following VET and consultancy fields:

- Organisational development
- soft skills
- service;
- hotel/restaurant
- organisational consultancy

Table1. Interviewed external facilitators according to company size

<b>Company size= no of employees</b>	<b>% of interviewees</b>
1 - 5	16
6 – 10	25
11 – 50	36
51 – 250	23
251 or more	0

49 internal facilitators were interviewed and typically their function was on managerial level (middle management and directors), the next second category was HR responsible.

One of the assumptions was to make the branch profile diversified in order to get different views on the subjects in question. The sample was diversified to high degree as for the enterprise size and occupational profile.

Table 2. Internal facilitators according to company size

Company size= no of employees	% of interviewees
1 - 5	16
6 – 10	10
11 – 50	45
51 – 250	24
251 or more	2

Table 3 . Internal facilitators – sectoral distribution

DENMARK	GERMANY	MALTA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Care sector for elderly</li> <li>▪ Cleaning</li> <li>▪ Green areas</li> <li>▪ Banking</li> <li>▪ Forestry</li> <li>▪ IT service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social-pedagogical institution including school, kindergarden, vocational training workshops etc.</li> <li>▪ Foundry creating moulds of wood, plastics, metal for master-taylored machines</li> <li>▪ Restaurant, including bakery, biological wine trading plus offering various cultural events</li> <li>▪ Merchant of electronic elements</li> <li>▪ Cooperative organisation offering house keeping services to private households</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mechanical/testing service</li> <li>▪ Health &amp; beauty</li> <li>▪ Electrical &amp; mechanical, building service control</li> <li>▪ Landscaping services</li> <li>▪ Financial investment consultants</li> <li>▪ Hospitality</li> <li>▪ Retailing</li> </ul>
PORTUGAL	SLOVAKIA	UK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trade and Marketing</li> <li>▪ Production and commercialization</li> <li>▪ Vocational Training</li> <li>▪ Consultant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ tourism</li> <li>▪ trade</li> <li>▪ industry (focus on construction sector)</li> <li>▪ consultation services and IT services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Childcare</li> <li>▪ Charity</li> <li>▪ Voluntary</li> <li>▪ Consultancy</li> <li>▪ VET</li> </ul>

In presentation of the results of the survey we will hold the results against the work of the Observatory of European SMEs which was established by the Commission in December 1992 in order to improve the monitoring of the economic performance of SMEs in Europe. Observatory's findings within theme of learning were published in the report **2003/1:Competence development in SMEs**. This report provided an analysis from 19 European countries on how SMEs develop their in-house competence and acquire external expertise. It also focused on the main attitudes, on the benefits and barriers that SMEs face in this activity<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Observatory of European SMEs, 2003, No. 1. Competence Development in SMEs

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# GINNY IN A BOTTLE.

## Understanding of Key Terms within “Learning” in SMEs

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When talking of improving of competences and skills in enterprises several perspectives can be taken<sup>2</sup>. The project CompServ is in particular interested in examining when and how learning is manifested in work place and to what extent this process can be supported by facilitation and self-learning tools. In order to capture the practical perception of the term of learning were scrutinized from the personal and corporate point of view.

Both perspectives involve the notion of **change** where the learning process is most effective in the given enterprise setting when the individual plan can find its relevance in the corporate frame.

### **Learning from personal point of view**

The interviewed internal facilitators emphasized the learning features as improvement of personal skills, connected with carrier changes and professional development along with the concept of approximate the academic background and the professional experience. Development of the individual through knowledge, skills and experience to achieve objectives previously unattainable<sup>3</sup>.

The external trainers perceive learning more as a response to some gaps between the present performance and the required or potential performance.

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<sup>2</sup> cf. Discussion on the term of comptences presented in Observatory 2003, pp-12 ff.  
Also Eurostat, Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS2), Luxembourg, 2002

<sup>3</sup> Cf. CompServ National Report Portugal, pp.10-11

From the **cooperative point of view** learning is perceived as day-by-day practice, since is implicit in culture and organizational climate and is expressed in the transfer of rules, knowledge and procedures<sup>4</sup>.

The external facilitators focus on role of learning in the acquisition of the business goals and business results. Learning is related to the mission and organizational values and also to the promotion of conditions to learn inside the organization as the support and orientation of supervisors, for instance.

Learning is anything in an enterprise that raises the knowledge or understanding of such issues as business, performance, markets, competitors and technical factors thus leading to the development of organisational competencies through knowledge, skills and experience that increase an organisations ability to compete and deliver high quality services/products

Term of “learning” is usually understood by enterprises as “competence development” and on this way giving limitations in perceiving the diversity of forms and potential of informal learning. The term is also not used in enterprises due to the “pedagogical” and “school environment” connotations. When used the term can provoke some negative stereotypes or connect to bad experiences from school time.

The term “competences” used in the context makes learning put in certain frame. The term of “praxis near” competence development is even used in the newest concepts to underline this practical view of learning.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Compseiv National Report Portugal, p. !!, Compseiv National Report Germany p. 6

## MANIFESTATIONS OF LEARNING

When having “competence development “ as a frame learning happens in the following occasions :

Table 4. Percentage of SMEs using different methods for developing the competences base of their human resources, by enterprise size<sup>5</sup>

	0-9	10-49	50-249	average
Visits to expos/trade fairs	57	70	78	58
Courses/seminars/conferences provided by external trainers	39	56	70	41
Promote reading of professional literature	36	39	58	37
Cooperation with consultants and advisers for developing internal competence	21	32	39	22
Meetings amongst personnel for knowledge exchange	32	46	56	33
Courses/seminars/conferences provided by own personnel	19	38	54	21
Study visits	17	22	41	18
Job rotation (in-house or in other firms)	8	17	29	9
Tutor/mentoring activities for staff	10	20	27	11
Other activities	4	5	5	4
% of SMEs not involved in any of the suggested methods	20	9	4	19
% of SMEs not having formal training activities	61	44	30	59

The table shows connection between the grade of non-formal learning instruments and the size of enterprise. Small companies tends to prioritise it more often than bigger firms.

Since the CompServ project focuses on the potential of facilitating learning interviewees were asked to reflect on instruments used to establish processes of learning . Here mainly informal learning culture at the work place is pointed out as an important space for personal and professional development. Elements ad **feed back** and **dialogue**, **review of commissions**, **exchange of experiences** (partially in teams), internal and external evaluations were mentioned .

Many interviewees sees learning predominantly being visible in enterprise in system of quality management and in recruitment procedures (typical for German interviewees). Quality circles for instance or any other problem

<sup>5</sup> Source: 2003/1 Observatory, p. 20

solving techniques leading to learning are considered helpful. Smaller companies employing fewer than 100 persons tend to apply training in the job situation more often than larger companies, and the training is especially applied in connection with new employment – as a predominant motivation factor for starting “learning project” in relation to an employee.

Furthermore broadly understood corporate philosophy or vision are mentioned. The conclusions from the Observatory report are confirmed in the interviews, where there is a dependency between the extent of the HRD system and the size of companies. Rather rarely fully developed competence developed system can be found in small enterprises. Only 18% in average has a written plan within HRD, the percentage is at 16 in small enterprises and increases to 35% at medium sized (10-49 employees) and 47% (50+ employees)<sup>6</sup>.

In some case learning elements could be found as follow up on marketing strategies. Learning effectively happens also through literature reading or transfer of information from a worker that visited a training seminar to the others.

Regarding the size of enterprises the experience from VET providers show only little difference between different sizes of enterprises as for their participation in “learning projects”. There are however 1 striking feature emphasized by external facilitators in the Danish interviews: learning need grows almost explosively for enterprises growing fast and typical when achieving 15 employees there is visible need of pervasive learning approach for the all levels of the personnel, beginning from the managerial level

Renewing of skills and qualifications of personnel in service enterprises is typically caused constantly changing standards, in subsectors such as in

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<sup>6</sup> cf. 2003/1 Observatory and other quoted papers:

- Schläfli, A., Ph. Gonon, Kooperationspotenziale zwischen kleinen und mittelständischen Betrieben und Bildungsinstitution in der Weiterbildung (Co-operation potentials between small and medium-sized enterprises and training institution in continued training), KTI (Commission for Technology and Innovation)/Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung (Swiss Association for Further Training), Zurich, 2004.

- Matthews, C.H., S.G. Scott: Uncertainty and planning in small and entrepreneurial firms: An empirical assessment, in: *Journal of Small Business Management*, pp. 34-52, October 1995.



childcare<sup>7</sup> New regulations, technologies and systems are another typical incentives for learning either initiated by an individual or an enterprise.

## **FACILATIION OF LEARNING**

Both internal and external facilitators mentioned experiences in facilitating learning processes. In enterprise this role is assumed by the director of the companies or the RH responsible (for the SME's with 1 to 5 employees) and by the coordinator/ supervisors (for SME's with more than 10 employees)<sup>8</sup>.

Facilitation of learning is defined from the enterprise point of view as helping people learn for themselves by unlocking their own ideas and bringing out, reinforcing, confirming and identifying things they already know. This involves them taking ownership for their own learning by the creation of effective opportunities for self development and self fulfilment, assisting the individual to access development opportunities both on and off the job so they can augment their own knowledge and skills.

External trainers underline potential for facilitating of learning when combining evaluative looking on the past actions with planning of future activities Often this involves concepts such as 'idea of the month', 'buzz words', preferred learning styles narrowly focused on specific techniques.

The term of facilitation is used in different context and meaning. Firstly as facilitation of meetings and workshops , where there are short courses , mainly for managerial level, on this subject.

Facilitation of learning, according to external facilitators, is always vital within social economy enterprises. It was identified that workers tend to stay in their own small groups and so need to apprehend how they can impact the rest of the organisation through their work, fitting in with the 'bigger picture'<sup>9</sup>.

Facilitation understood as supporting learning processes is used as a part of the concept of "learning organisation" – where the managers get a coach

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<sup>7</sup> Cs. CompServ National Report UK, p. 12

<sup>8</sup> CompServ National Report Portugal, p. 11

<sup>9</sup> Focus on social enterprises in CompServ National Report UK

and facilitator role in relation to employee groups. In this meaning of the word the term “process consultant” is used more often.

Furthermore more often terms as “coaching” and “mentoring” are used as description of different forms of supporting learning processes in enterprises or within counselling.

The term of facilitator gets even more into linguistic and contextual turbulence. This word is used in its original from English as it does not have its equivalent in national languages. As a substantive it appears among other functions assigned typically to trainers and consultants working with learning processes- “process consultant”, “coach”, “mentor” are most common.

Though different concepts exist (partially being influenced by strategies derived from management training like “coaching” and consultancy) there is a rather common understanding about the “facilitation” needed, summed up in the term “*Lernprozessbegleiter*” in German or “proceskonsulent” in Danish. In literal translation this “facilitator of learning” should be able to “*accompany*” learning process instead of “directing” or “teaching”. This idea of “accompanying” processes of learning is closely related to concepts of self-directed/organised ways of learning, of “action learning”, experiential learning and, of course, to learn as close to or integrated in reality (including “learning from one`s own problem”)<sup>10</sup>

**Facilitators role** is that of creating a space and environment for learning can take place. When creating a “space” the following factors should be taking into account:

- Culturally dependent frame, e.g. power relations in the given enterprise
- Nature of the process
- Resources: time, staff input, financial means

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<sup>10</sup> CompServ National Report Germany, p 6

The project CompServ intends to combine facilitation techniques with “self-directed/organized” processes of learning in SMEs. In this context there are two target groups who need to be qualified in order to “facilitate” this type of learning:

- *external trainers* coming from training providers in order to “help” enterprises;
- *internal trainers*, meaning workers/mid-level chefs or owners within SME (especially small ones), who in some way and to some extent are responsible also for (non-technical) “problem solving” respectively “educational/training”-tasks. They are supporting the learning process of other workers in order to face the day-to-day needs of the company.

In all probability those two groups of trainers work out of different personal (educational), vocational, organisational and national/cultural backgrounds. Most probably they also do work out of different problem-situations <sup>11</sup>.

The main output of the facilitating learning is the feeling of ownership for one’s own learning given to participants (empowerment in learning). It is one of the most delicate tasks for a “facilitator” to analyse “problem-situations” in terms of “learning situations” – though these are not conceived to being learning-situations in most enterprises in the first place. He needs to discover and detect situations, which usually are considered to be of technical, organisational etc. nature – and are “managed” in this way. He needs to develop a “feeling” for the chances for learning being imbedded (mostly hidden) in actual, relevant work and problem-situations.

As far internal trainers are concerned, for example, facilitation will most probably be closely linked to the kind of leadership this very person conducts: Is it a kind of “leadership by strict advice and control”, or is it “leading by creating and cultivating opportunities to learn”, by being a mentor who is in charge of empowering his colleagues to cope with their tasks, to master change and the problems within the enterprise etc.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. CompServ National Report Germany, p 6 for further reflections on this aspect

External trainers, in contrast, have no leadership-functions and presumably will have a harder time to really detect and relate to the day-to-day-needs and problems. "Instructional" training, however, would be comparable to a "leadership by strict advice and control"<sup>12</sup>

There is a visible scepticism on the possibility of introducing facilitation of learning and self-learning by enterprises. It is partly caused by lack of knowledge of the term and partly because of existing of already known process-supporting techniques as mentoring and coaching.

The facilitation process, if happens, is coincidental, and not as conscious methodical choice in planned and tailor-made project meeting the SME needs. This coincidental character of facilitating learning is visible both when examining status quo in enterprise and in training providers<sup>13</sup>.

Furthermore there is an eminent paradox in the interviews with training providers where there is good awareness of different process supporting possibilities, however they are typically not implemented when collaborating with enterprises (see further comment on this phenomenon in the chapter on the perceived barriers in enhancing learning in SMEs).

## **SELF-LEARNING**

All the above mentioned learning forms contain an element of self learning and learning by doing. People learn on their own, achieve routines, and discover new tricks of the trade by conducting the work themselves.

However the interviewed internal and external facilitators are rather vaguely familiar with concepts of self-learning and self-directed learning and the potential of using it as a part of a facilitation process. The companies are, more generally, also relatively ignorant of the informal learning possibilities accessible - still focusing on off the job courses predominantly wanting traditional and formal syllabuses<sup>14</sup>. The terms of self-directed learning and self-organized learning are understood rather as a set of tools used by

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<sup>12</sup> CompServ, National Report Germany, p. 7

<sup>13</sup> cf. CompServ National Report Slovakia, p. 8

<sup>14</sup> cf. CompServ National Report UK, p 13

managerial level, e.g. for strengthening planning or organisational skills. Using more structured tools for low-skilled employees presumes prior existing of learn-to learn skills and , according to the experiences for interviewed VET trainers, is not a common feature<sup>15</sup>. It means that the developed tools should be precisely targeted a certain employee profile if they are supposed to be effective.

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<sup>15</sup> the problem raised by external facilitators in Denmark

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# FINDING NEVERLAND

## Barriers and opportunities for enhancing learning in SMEs

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Competence development in small and medium sized with its limitations and possibilities is scrutinized by number of studies. However, one has to be cautious with the conclusions and level of generalisation on this subject. In some cases lack of visible competence development strategies can mean an implicit learning culture (typical e.g. in small family firms), using non-formal ways of strengthening needed competences (e.g. networking, contacts with other entrepreneurs etc<sup>16</sup>) or simply matching the business needs in an enterprises with existing personnel competences<sup>17</sup>.

This is why the overall theme for this thematic field in the CompServ survey was both barriers and opportunities, even “perfect practice” where expectations to optimal learning environment could be expressed.

The Observatory of European SMEs uses Danish surveys, where there is a distinct connection between the size of an enterprise and the reasons for not initiating formal competence development projects.

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<sup>16</sup> cf. 2003/1 Observatory, p. 24 ff

<sup>17</sup> Cf 2003/1 Observatory p. 35 with references

Table 5 : Main reasons for not carrying out formal training activities in Denmark 2001, by enterprise size<sup>18</sup>

	1-9	10-49	50-199	200+	Average
Lack of time	54	46	63	52	54
Insufficient budget	25	25	24	43	30
No relevant courses on the market	17	17	17	5	13
Lack of knowledge of the choice of courses	12	4	8	5	7
Lack of motivation with management	12	13	15	11	13
Lack of planning	12	10	27	16	18
No relevant courses nearby	4	10	10	3	7
Cancelled courses	4	4	12	8	8
Lack of motivation with the employees	8	15	5	7	8
Lack of guidance	4	6	5	0	4
other	8	5	14	13	13

The quoted factors are supplemented by the CompServ interviewees for more detailed explanations including non-formal and informal learning environment as well.

## **ARE THEY ABLE TO FLY ?**

### **Obstacles for learning in SMEs.**

3 categories can be distinguished : at personal level (obstacle within person) , factors internally in enterprises and at training/consultancy providers (i.e. in collaboration process with SMEs):

#### **Personal level**

Very important precondition for adult learning is the interest and willingness of people to participate in learning. There are several motivation strengthening features and motivation decreasing factors<sup>19</sup>. In many interviews lack of motivation is called “unwillingness to change” or to participate in changes. The reasons for resistance against changes can be

<sup>18</sup> Source: IFKA, Det danske kursusmarked - kompetenceudvikling i den private sektor, (The Danish Supply of Courses - Upgrading of Competences in the Private Sector), Copenhagen, 2002, quoted in 2003/1 Observatory

<sup>19</sup> Jyri Manninen, Motivation of Lower Qualified Workers for Lifelong Learning, ESREA 2004, in “between Old and New Worlds of Adult Learning”; cf. also Leonardo da Vinci project Lifelong Learning and European Reality. Learning Motivation of Lower Qualified Workers – Qualitative Study in Eight European Countries. (concluded in 2005)

different. Typical personal reason can be lacking tradition of education in personal life or environment or having bad experiences with formal education (typically primary schools).

Another typical motivational obstacle is connected to the weaknesses in the formulated strategy for change (e.g. enterprise strategy for competence development ) where the individual worker cannot find understandable objectives which can be transferred into her/his concrete job function. It means that the resistance against change increases when the individual cannot find her/his place in it.

Lack of learning culture at the work place can be motivational obstacle on the personal level as well. "Peoples opinion", how the competence development is seen by co-workers is very important issue especially how seriously managerial level is involved in the process of acknowledgement of one's achievements in the field of learning. Lack of transparent promotion and career paths connected to one's competence development is a typical demotivating factor. Other typical constraints for "learning culture", mentioned in the interviews, are if one's initiatives are ignored and some important areas of competences are not used or achievements are not recognized by colleagues and management level.

An important barrier is viewing oneself as only a wage earner. When working under the time pressure every day and not having higher level of independence in decision making, the workers do not take learning initiatives and leave the competence assessment and decisions on learning to the managers in the enterprise.

The next obstacle when it is due to work pressure hard to find time reserve, there is a question of values and priorities – choosing between work life and family.

The interviewees experiences show that it is easier to initiate the training activity within general qualifications (e.g. mother tongue, communication, IT) for the employees with a low self-esteem. It is very fruitful to start with



general education first since it helps in heightening self-esteem and self-confidence at participants.

This observations are confirmed by the quantitative survey made in Denmark on the sample of 2000 enterprises where the main conclusion was that main factors for motivation and learning culture in work place was heightening of basic personal competences as self-esteem, self-confidence<sup>20</sup>. The representatives of employer organisations states in this respect that employees with high self-esteem become an asset, since they take responsibility for their work more consciously, they are good in making decisions and choosing learning development as a part of work place culture<sup>21</sup>. The survey shows that there is an increasing number of enterprises which look consciously on these soft skills as a subject for training courses or facilitation processes. 41% of enterprises states that especially unskilled employees deserve learning support in this area. 36% points out the same need for skilled workers. 42% of enterprises mean that skilled workers should have learning support within communication.

## **Enterprises**

Typical obstacle mentioned by enterprises when dealing with learning projects is **time factor**. It means –seen form the employers point of view - absence or lowered work efficiency of the employee during the “training project”, which is especially problematic for the smallest enterprises.

**Financial costs of competence development** are a typical problem field mentioned in the interviews as well. It can be visible in demanding short-term quantitative effects after the training course, sometimes unrealistic. It can be also visible in pushing employees into self-financing for courses when formulating new qualification areas or changes within the existing profiles as an implicit condition for keeping the job<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Motivation og barrierer for virksomhedernes brug a VEU Voksen- og EfterUddannelse), CARMA, Aalborg Universitet 2006 (Motivation and barriers for use of continuing education and trainingn by enterprises)

<sup>21</sup> Dansk Industri, (Aalborg Stiftstidende 12/04/2006)

<sup>22</sup> the issue raised by the Slovakian survey

The 2 factors together can be interpreted as resources devoted by an enterprise to a learning project. In this perspective they should be perhaps connected to another important barrier - that SMEs are often not able to diagnose their own competence needs effectively and to lack of competence development strategies. When not having all the elements comprising company vision including HRD strategy it is difficult to assess the concrete benefit from a "learning project". Subsequently the resource burden devoted to competence development project seems to be overwhelming. The **resistance to change** at managerial level is overwhelming obstacle to organizational learning. Thus when formulating visions/development strategies or collaborating with training providers the **commitment** for investing in human resources is not real.

In this context the **conflict between „production“ and „development“** is visible. Typically SMEs are fully busy with "themselves" i.e. on "making money" and not on learning and education incl. self-learning . Development of more deep going strategies including human resource development requires time and relevant competences on managerial level<sup>23</sup>.

**Skills drain** is another typical reason for not putting too much effort on competence development. It is demonstrated e.g. in fear of "loosing" of the graduated employee to the competitive enterprises. This phenomenon is particularly eminent in subsectors with high rotation of employees. The problem arises e.g. in social economy projects arises due to the short term nature and fragility of it compared to the continuity and sustainability of work proving difficult.

The next barrier is lack of awareness how the training system and training provider function, which can be typically seen in unrealistic demands or even claim that there is a "lack of qualified learning organisations".

The training provider can offer a standard training module or a tailor made training course base on deep-going need analysis and adaptation to different criteria. There is substantial difference in the two models not only in

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<sup>23</sup> emphasized especially for the Slovakian settings, cf, CompServ National Report Slovakia

the form but also in terms of economy. Typical expectation from enterprises is that the learning projects should be flexible , adapted to their specific needs and at the same time costs not higher than an “ordinary” solution. When confronted with the financial costs of conducting more deep-going learning project the employers typically choose more standard, cheaper, solutions.

This conflict is seen differently from the perspective of an enterprise and from the perspective of a training provider. The interviewed enterprises mentioned as the main obstacle lack of flexibility at training organisations – which usually offer “standard” learning packages whence the enterprise have perceived their own learning need as very specific and not “standard”. The interviewed training consultants perceive this situation as a lack of commitment in enterprises, where the declared learning and development strategies are “empty” since there is not genuine motivation behind it which can be measured in the amount of resources devoted to a “learning project” (both time and money).

This conflict shows again that the initiating force of a learning project should be a genuine and concrete motivation, expressed in the enterprise vision, strategy and objectives – with supporting economical resources behind it. Otherwise the motivation is shallow and not based on deep-going consideration for the company development, but rather on ad-hoc assessments of the training needs among employees.

Another problem met typically is the level of stimulation of participation of different employee groups by senior management level. Sometimes there is feeling of insecurity when the employees get “too much” education – not only because it can jeopardize their position in the company, but also because as a result of training new demands and “irritating” questions appear from the participants. It means pushing towards changes where the enterprise or its management is not prepared for it.

Finally there is expectation of to be presented for very concrete profit from the competence development project compared to their “investment”.

## Training providers

Quality of learning processes in enterprises is often lowered by **servicing “standard” “shelf items”** by training providers. There are various reasons for this phenomenon. Firstly the price: the enterprises typically are not ready to devote larger resources for tailor-made competence development projects designed according to deep-going preparatory need or cultural analysis. herefore a cheaper standard training solution is more common when implementing the cooperation with enterprises.

Secondly there are obstacles in the national **financing structure of VET** activities where the enterprises can get refunding major part of the training costs when it is a formal system training concept (e.g. AMU) whence they have to pay the full price for tailor made concepts (EDV)<sup>24</sup>.

In the training institutions there is , furthermore, typically **lack of innovative culture** where new concepts and ideas are supported. On the opposite there is overweighting pressure of the “drift” side, i.e. the trainers effectiveness are measured according to the number of conducted courses and not according to the “development indicators”.

There is **lack of formal “opening” for flexible approach in relation to small enterprises** – mainly because of the economical limitation in relation to the minimal size of the class (12 persons) The specific need can be so fragmentised that it would be extremely difficult to establish a homogeneous participant group which can fulfil profitability criteria established by schools . In this case another pedagogical methods as differentiated teaching and open workshop are suggested, however it is organisationally difficult and meet resistance from less flexible training providers (or their teachers).

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<sup>24</sup> cf. CompServ. National Report Denmark

## **“THINKING HAPPY THOUGHTS”**

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### **How to optimise learning processes in SMEs**

The interviewees were asked to describe “perfect practice” which, according to their experiences and knowledge, could help in overcoming the typical learning obstacles and enterprises. The defined factors can be perceived as a set of overall objectives to achieve for HR responsible when working strategically with a learning culture in a company. The external facilitators can use the list for forming training strategy for enterprises.

- Existence of overall development strategy for enterprise which includes elements of competence development, i.e. learning and competence development approach in company cannot be insular
- Formulation of development and learning objectives for all staff level in the company. The objectives should be transparent, clear and understandable from the managerial level down to a level of an individual work place.
- Visible commitment for learning and development (training as an asset). Can be visible in willingness of offering time and financial resources in learning projects
- Existence of learning culture which can be defined by the following elements:
  - Constant communication and feedback
  - Performance appraisal
  - Continuous training : in-house and external
- Recruitment procedures being a part of the overall development strategy. Having formalised facets such as an induction pack as well as the more general job shadowing, ‘check ins’ and continual meetings both with internal and external stakeholders

- Delegation of responsibilities
- Time-factor consideration – balance between training during business hours and training outside business hours.
- Juniors trained by more senior staff as role models
- Training should not hinder business performance or customer satisfaction
- Ensure staff are supported and encouraged to develop in their role: Independent and self-initiated learning will play a major part within the learning process and should be emphasised as a priority
- Existing of conscious learning processes including non-formal and informal environment potential. Dependent on the need and situation a good mix between formal, non-formal and informal learning course should be prioritized.
- allowing experiments and experiential learning
- giving more time to newcomers to exchange of experiences
- A mixture of learning elements according to the needs, for instance openness to learning.
- Initiation of inter-departmental pilot groups to reflect about the problems and respective solutions as a knowledge management and communication exercise moderated by a facilitator who provides structured support to the groups.
- Project oriented learning through simulations or real situations and room for exchange within the qualification/training schemes eventually supported by e-learning schemes and mentoring processes.

- To differentiate explicit and implicit knowledge from skills within the company (knowledge management exercises and formal training).
- Training/learning offers so close as possible to the practical needs and qualified and experienced trainers.
- Offers according to the needs, value given to the present solutions and transparency on the expected usefulness for the company.

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# SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT ?

## Looking into Working Profile of Facilitators of Learning

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Out from the suggestions given in the transational survey this chapter intends to depict working profile of facilitators of learning, what competences and skills they should preferably have and what tools they should use.

The project CompServ intends to combine facilitation techniques with “self-directed/organized” processes of learning in SMEs. In this context there are two target groups who need to be qualified in order to “facilitate” this type of learning:

1. INTERNAL FACILITATORS: supervisors, leaders, HR responsible, job stewards, apprenticeship/placement responsible, job training responsible, mentors **exercising their functions internally in SMEs on daily basis** , thus functioning as **internal facilitators of learning**
2. EXTERNAL FACILITATORS: supervisors, consultants, trainers, apprenticeship/placement responsible, job training responsible, mentors **“helping” SMEs externally**, employed e.g. by training institutions or consultancy firms, i.e. functioning as **external facilitators of learning**



Enterprises use in general several types of external expertise and knowledge enhancing sources where training providers are only one of the possibilities. Networking and external cooperation are regarded by many small enterprises as very useful when having concluded on lack of knowledge within certain area.

The ENSR Enterprise Survey illustrates main sources of external competence for SMEs<sup>25</sup>.

Table 6 Percentage of SMEs using different sources of external competence in the last three years, by enterprise size, Europe-19

Number of employees	0-9	10-49	50-249	Average
Recruitment of personnel with required new competence	13	27	48	14
Auditors & Banks	14	20	26	14
Consultants	18	24	35	18
Clients and/or suppliers	33	34	40	33
Other entrepreneurs (no business relations)	13	12	16	13
Training centres/Universities (public or private)	15	27	35	16
Business and Trade Associations	20	26	36	21
Public authorities	8	9	17	8
Other actors	5	3	4	5
Don't know/no answer	1	2	2	1

More than one answer allowed.

Source: ENSR Enterprise Survey 2002.

The CompServ project focuses mainly on external facilitators coming from training providers as a most conscious “match” with learning responsible inside companies. The collaboration between the 2 groups can result in very effective learning projects with blended methodology involving non-formal and informal learning.

Those two groups of trainers work out of different personal (educational), vocational, organisational and national/cultural backgrounds. Most probably they also do work out of different problem-situations. However in the survey facilitators were characterized with the same “core” skills independently of being internal or external to the company.

The main difference between the two categories was pointed out when describing the needs for specific tools. The external facilitator, not originating from the specific enterprise culture, should be able to analyse

<sup>25</sup> 2003/1 Observatory, p.25

the given work place culture, enterprise objectives and could interpret the findings in form of holistic learning project where all the staff groups are involved. Furthermore the difference lies in the use of the evaluative tools: since an external facilitator is obliged to fulfil the obligations coming from the external system as well (training provider, consultancy firm objectives, specific project requirements if it is a part of a external funded project etc.).

There is ample variety of working tools for working with learning processes. They have to be of course customised to a large degree to the settings of a concrete learning project<sup>26</sup>. When introducing new tools there to main points which should be made:

- introducing of new tools should be supplementary in relation to effective use of the existing tools according to their utility value
- The tools :
  - Should be balanced in terms of simplicity however at the same time not simplifying the relevant aspects: on one side some tools already in existence were too complicated and so consequently nobody uses them, on the other there is a danger of over-simplifying and thus dumbing down the whole learning process. Individuals need to be able to respond to specific needs as there are no wonder cures or quick fixes<sup>27</sup>.
  - Introduced tools should be context oriented and target group sensible

Both internal and external facilitators participating in interviews gave their view on the optimal way of executing facilitating of learning and on target set of qualifications and skills needed for this function. Their opinions are gathered in the following table.

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<sup>26</sup> cf tools created for the social economy such as Putting People in the Picture, PQASSO and Grow your Own People, as well as other more general frameworks including Investors in People and The Big Picture which could be adapted to fit particular organisations. Applied correctly, these could be of enormous benefit within social economy enterprises, cf. CompServ National Report UK  
Another example of a "tool" which should be used for its learning potential is Danish Personal Development Meeting (MedarbejderUdviklingsSamtale MUS) which is typically not used effectively. During this meeting there is a dialogue between a manager (typically middle management level) and an employee who prepares his view on her/his own development needs and assessment of the status quo, cf CompServ National Report Denmark.

<sup>27</sup> cf. CompServ National Report UK, p 14

DENMARK	GERMANY	MALTA	PORTUGAL	SLOVAKIA	UK
<b>INTERNAL FACILITATORS</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ building learning objectives,</li> <li>▪ evaluative skills, competence need analysis</li> <li>▪ handling stress and solving conflict situations.</li> <li>▪ to be able to set learning objectives in formal, non-formal, informal and self-directed context</li> <li>▪ to be able to develop/strengthen learn-to-learn skills /motivation for learning</li> <li>▪ good to communicate and motivate others (empowerment)</li> <li>▪ being systematic and to be able to giving structure to processes</li> <li>▪ to be able of balance between the quality of the process and expected outputs</li> <li>▪ provide continuous feed back</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ detecting learning needs</li> <li>▪ establishing a climate conducive to learning</li> <li>▪ empowering workers/colleagues to be able to cope with their tasks</li> <li>▪ structuring learning situations (see: different kinds of "leadership" or educational/training intervention)</li> <li>▪ conducting learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials</li> <li>▪ evaluating the learning outcomes and re-diagnosing the learning needs</li> <li>▪ understanding/interpreting his role as being a mentor, coach</li> <li>▪ specific technical and trade skills", "relating to other people", "establishing contacts", "being objective", "creating confidence". He/she should be "present" and "practical", be able to train newcomers, have organisational skills</li> <li>▪ Good motivator, didactic/new learning forms, good communication skills, coaching and advise workshops, knowledge about the processes, Structured thinking, moderation, good reflection ability, to find the balance between to give input and to stimulate self-learning</li> <li>▪ Trustful position in the company, Convicted about new learning forms, competences based working concept, Good knowledge on learning methods, processes, etc, Discretion and low profile when necessary, Self-reflection and self-organisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good communicator</li> <li>• Good problem solver</li> <li>• Good teacher</li> <li>• Good listener</li> <li>• Needs to motivate and empower</li> <li>• Open minded and unprejudiced</li> <li>• Charismatic and a natural leader</li> <li>• Calm and supportive</li> <li>• Patient and analytic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capacity to solve problems</li> <li>▪ Communication skills</li> <li>▪ Flexibility</li> <li>▪ Knowledge about the business</li> <li>▪ Leadership skills</li> <li>▪ Listening skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To know new needs/materials/technologies;</li> <li>▪ self-confidence, personal growth;</li> <li>▪ company image;</li> <li>▪ empathy, analytical-synthetic thinking;</li> <li>▪ proper use of finances;</li> <li>▪ languages capacity;</li> <li>▪ team spirit and work towards common goals;</li> <li>▪ skills for conflict management and dealing with customers;</li> <li>▪ finding consensus appropriate for all sides;</li> <li>▪ communication skills, ability conducting a dialogue inside the SME and outside SME;</li> <li>▪ presentation skills and knowledge;</li> <li>▪ understanding of the whole society development and in line with this understanding of conditions for qualifications (basic skills, personal skills, general skills, social skills);</li> <li>▪ professional argumentation when dealing with customers;</li> <li>▪ capacity for implementation of new technologies;</li> <li>▪ IT skills;</li> <li>▪ Management of information;</li> <li>▪ Abilities to properly argue and acquire/create new contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good listener, with clarity and focus</li> <li>▪ Knowledgeable, both with specific business needs and relating factors</li> <li>▪ Confident, creative, questioning, analytic and objective</li> <li>▪ Organised, open, respectable, responsive, relaxed and flexible</li> <li>▪ Personal integrity, non-judgemental and honest</li> <li>▪ Ability to motivate and inspire</li> <li>▪ Good group work skills</li> <li>▪ Ability to adapt to and integrate with different learning styles or needs</li> <li>▪ Knowing when to or not intervene</li> <li>▪ Risk taking</li> <li>▪ Sense of humour and enthusiasm – make learning fun</li> <li>▪ Technical competence</li> <li>▪ Desire to help and support the client</li> <li>▪ Emotional intelligence skills – Personality style/climate and environment</li> <li>▪ Willingness to learn</li> </ul>

EXTERNAL FACILITATORS					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ assist with relevant information in order to give knowledge input in the learning processes in the enterprise</li> <li>▪ ability for assessing the competence level and learning gap</li> <li>▪ self-conscious and self-understanding</li> <li>▪ deep-going view of human nature : to understand and accept human diversity and to be able to use it and interpret within pedagogical tools</li> <li>▪ be effective in communication (active listening!)</li> <li>▪ to be motivated and to be able to show her/his engagement to others</li> <li>▪ to be able to read and analyse the different "cultural" factors</li> <li>▪ to be able to "broke down" the stiff work place culture, routines</li> <li>▪ to be able to set learning objectives in formal, non-formal, informal and self-directed context</li> <li>▪ to see difference between facilitating and other forms for trainers roles in formal, non-formal settings</li>   <li>▪ to be able to place the facilitation process and learning process in the cultural context of the company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to listen to others</li> <li>▪ openness for learning</li> <li>▪ adaptability</li> <li>▪ customer orientation</li> <li>▪ analytical skills</li> <li>▪ creativity,</li> <li>▪ to make decisions</li> <li>▪ teamwork ability,</li> <li>▪ good implementation skills</li> <li>▪ identification with the company</li> <li>▪ knowledge management</li> <li>▪ positive and fearless feeling for the job</li> <li>▪ conflict management</li> <li>▪ loyalty</li> <li>▪ punctuality and precision</li> <li>▪ ICT ,</li> <li>▪ Languages,</li> <li>▪ Mathematics,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication skills</li> <li>▪ Flexibility</li> <li>▪ Understanding</li> <li>▪ Competence</li> <li>▪ Personality</li> <li>▪ Professionalism and good knowledge of the subject</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of the client</li> <li>▪ Objective and open</li> <li>▪ Be impartial and recommends what is necessary and not what management wants</li> <li>▪ Assertive</li> <li>▪ A pragmatist</li> <li>▪ Patient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Creativity</li> <li>▪ Experience in the area</li> <li>▪ Leadership skills</li> <li>▪ Need assessment methods</li> <li>▪ Organizational skills</li> <li>▪ Trainers certification</li> </ul>	<p>support; listening; mentor approach; coaching; be well informed about the market needs including labour market; ability to learn (how to learn in order to be able to learn=learn to learn)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Good listener, with clarity and focus</li> <li>▪ Knowledgeable, both with specific business needs and relating factors</li> <li>▪ Confident, creative, questioning, analytic and objective</li> <li>▪ Organised, open, respectable, responsive, relaxed and flexible</li> <li>▪ Personal integrity, non-judgemental and honest</li> <li>▪ Ability to motivate and inspire</li> <li>▪ Good group work skills</li> <li>▪ Ability to adapt to and integrate with different learning styles or needs</li> <li>▪ Knowing when to or not intervene</li> <li>▪ Risk taking</li> <li>▪ Sense of humour and enthusiasm – make learning fun</li> <li>▪ Technical competence</li> <li>▪ Desire to help and support the client</li> <li>▪ Emotional intelligence skills – Personality style/climate and environment</li> </ul>

According to the gathered material the following **core profile** of facilitator of learning can be pictured:

### **WORK TASKS AND TOOLS FOR FACILITATORS OF LEARNING**

- participatory development of a company image and philosophy, introduction of instruments to HR development
- sparring in relation to quality management systems
- creating learning culture at the work place by providing continuous feedback and communication, motivating others (empowerment) and supporting corporate readiness to learn
- “breaking down” stiff work place culture and routines being obstacle for learning
- assist with relevant information (praxis-oriented, technical, general, personal) in order to give knowledge input in the learning processes in the enterprise
- building learning objectives and structuring non-formal and informal learning processes in enterprise in self-learning context
- handling stress and solving conflict situations.
- developing/strengthening learn-to-learn skills /motivation for learning
- being systematic and to be able to giving structure to processes
- detecting learning needs
- empowering workers/colleagues to be able to cope with their tasks
- finding balance between facilitating and other forms for trainers roles in formal, non-formal settings,
- building learning networks internally (team, enterprise) and externally
- evaluating the learning outcomes and re-diagnosing the learning needs

### **TOOLBOX**

- competence need analysis and assessment
- validating of non-formal and informal learning in relation to individual qualifications
- analysis of enterprise culture (visible, invisible) methods of breaking routines
- designing learning process (learning objectives, indicators, evaluation)
- systematic problem solving
- time management
- facilitating meetings and workshops
- stress and conflict management
- knowledge management
- moderation and communication techniques
- team work
- quality
- assertiveness
- methods for working with non-homogenous group
- group dynamics
- evaluation ex ante and ex post

## REQUIRED COMPETENCES

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### Occupational (specific for the given work place)

- having good overview of information within the given occupational area
- having good overview of the given enterprise – its strategies, visible and invisible cultural frame
- insight into quality system, its objectives, indicators, techniques
- effective in communication channels in enterprise (team, management) and with customers/suppliers
- knowledge about the economical framework and practice of the company
- knowledge /experience within diversity of pedagogical methods

### General:

- to be able to place the facilitation process and learning process in the cultural context of the company
- ability of combining different skills – those of a trainer, coach, mentor and teacher
- good overview of labour market trends
- planning skills in relation to learning
- quality awareness
- good ability in writing and documents preparation, project management incl. financial management
- ICT
- languages
- presentation skills
- communication

### Personal:

- self-reflective, self-conscious and self-understanding (i.e. as a starting point facilitator should be able to understand her/himself with strengths and weaknesses in order to being supportive effectively in learning processes)
- deep-going view of human nature : to understand and accept human diversity and to be able to use it and interpret within pedagogical tools
- be effective in communication (active listening)
- to be motivated and to be able to show her/his engagement to others
- to be creative
- empathy, emotional intelligence
- self-confidence
- ability to inspire others
- patient
- task oriented and structured thinking

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

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### **Formal education:**

- Pedagogical education
- “mentor”, “tutor” or “coach” courses

### **Experiential learning:**

- Being consultant within coaching, organisation, learning, different work areas with analytical tasks
- Being teacher or trainer in VET and CVETsystem
- Working as a mentor, counsellor within employment/education
- Working as HR responsible

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# GLOSSARY

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<b>Self-learning</b>	<p>Learning as such is self directed/organized by its nature. Self learning in the formal, non-formal and informal learning processes can be different by the factors of <u>intention</u> and <u>structure</u> (see the definitions below). In this project self learning should be seen in opposition to pure instructional, trainer-directed learning.</p> <p>In self-directed learning processes learners are independent concerning the ways and means of learning e.g. when and how they learn. Still the elements of an instructional (=“teacher/trainer-directed”) type of learning can be present, as their starting point is set or given externally. In most cases also the result of the learning process is planned and structured in terms of time and learning objectives (“curriculum”).</p> <p>Self-directed/organized learning is most appropriate for learning in “open” situations (of continuous change), that is: in situations as close to live, reality, practice (place of work) – and, in order to learn that, it needs “open” situations which are as close to live, reality, practice (place of work)= non-formal and informal learning</p> <p>Intentional aspect of facilitated self-learning asks for a) possibilities to make experiences (base learning on experiences of reality), and b) to “reflect” those experiences.</p>
<b>Facilitator</b>	<p>A person who makes the learning structured for the learners by attempting to discover what the learners’ interests are and then finds the best way to make information provided/available to learners, it means by the provision of knowledge, materials or systems which enable the learner to perform his tasks more effectively. This can be done by listening, asking questions, providing ideas, doing jointly, building up examples, suggesting alternatives and/or identifying possible resources.</p>
<b>Internal facilitators</b>	<p>Typically workers/mid-level chefs or owners, supervisors, shop stewards within SME (especially small ones), who in some way and to some extent are responsible also for (non-technical) “problem solving” respectively “educational/training”-tasks. They are supporting the learning process of other workers in order to face the day-to-day needs of the company.</p> <p>Facilitation will most probably be closely linked to the kind of leadership this very person conducts: is it a kind of leadership by command and control, or is it “leading by creating and cultivating opportunities to learn”, by being a mentor who is in charge of empowering his colleagues to cope with their tasks, to master change and the problems within the enterprise etc.</p>



<b>External facilitators</b>	Trainers and consultants coming from training providers in order to “help” enterprises=facilitate training task. External trainers, in contrast, have no leadership-functions and presumably will have a harder time to really detect and relate to the day-to-day-needs and problems. “Instructional” training, however, would be comparable to a leadership by command and control.
<b>Facilitation self learning</b>	Support to self-learning processes for employees. Facilitation makes informal learning <u>intentional</u> , and <u>structured</u> in terms of learning objectives, learning time (learning process initiated and terminated) and support. Facilitation higher the quality of non formal learning and can lead to further formal learning or validation processes (e.g. certification).
<b>Formal learning</b>	Consists of learning that occurs within and organised and structured context (formal education, in company training), and that is designed as learning CEDEFOP glossary (Tissot, 2000, 2004) Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s perspective.
<b>Non formal learning</b>	Consists of learning embedded in planned activities that are not explicitly designed as learning, but which contain an important learning element CEDEFOP glossary (Tissot, 2000, 2004). It is structured in terms of objectives, time and support and is intentional from the learners’ perspective.
<b>Informal learning</b>	Learning resulting from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is often referred to as experiential learning and can, to a degree, be understood as accidental learning CEDEFOP glossary (Tissot, 2000, 2004). It is not structured (in terms of objectives, time and support) It can be intentional, but in most cases is incidental.

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# LITERATURE

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