

Language learning on the job

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Abstract

About two percentage of the European labour force work a part of their lifetime outside their native land, it demands large communicative competences living and working in another country. For participation in society an elaborated language is needed for daily communications and work. It is a big challenge to provide and facilitate learning possibilities. New technologies create opportunities for developing adequate pedagogic methods in second language learning.

We are always learning. In formal education as well in informal learning situations as work, but it differs what you are learning, how fast and how much you are learning. The formal education is excellent for introduction, reflection and training of language and culture. On the other hand formal education is not adequate for teaching technical languages, slang and social norms varying from working place to working place. ICT creates new possibilities for learning based at authentic communicative situations. With a cell phone or a dictaphone the learner records instructions and conversations, which following are subjects for formal learning. Bifrost developed together with languages schools and firms a digital material for language teaching closely linked with a given workplace. (Dansk på arbejde - Danish on the Job) The pedagogic aim of the material is to create frames for learners to improve their competences of observations and reflections towards language- and culture issues. ICT is an important tool and Danish on the Job includes a 'toolbox' with various methods of using ICT in language learning. The material also describes how mentors can support the learners' informal language learning in working situations and instructions for teachers in how to prepare learners for the initial meeting with the workplace, and subsequently evaluate and integrate the experience from the actual working situations on the job. The project was financed by the Danish Ministry of Integration.