

From Autodidakt to hold a BA degree by VPL

Translation of Work Experience into a Diploma in Public Administration – an actor-network approach

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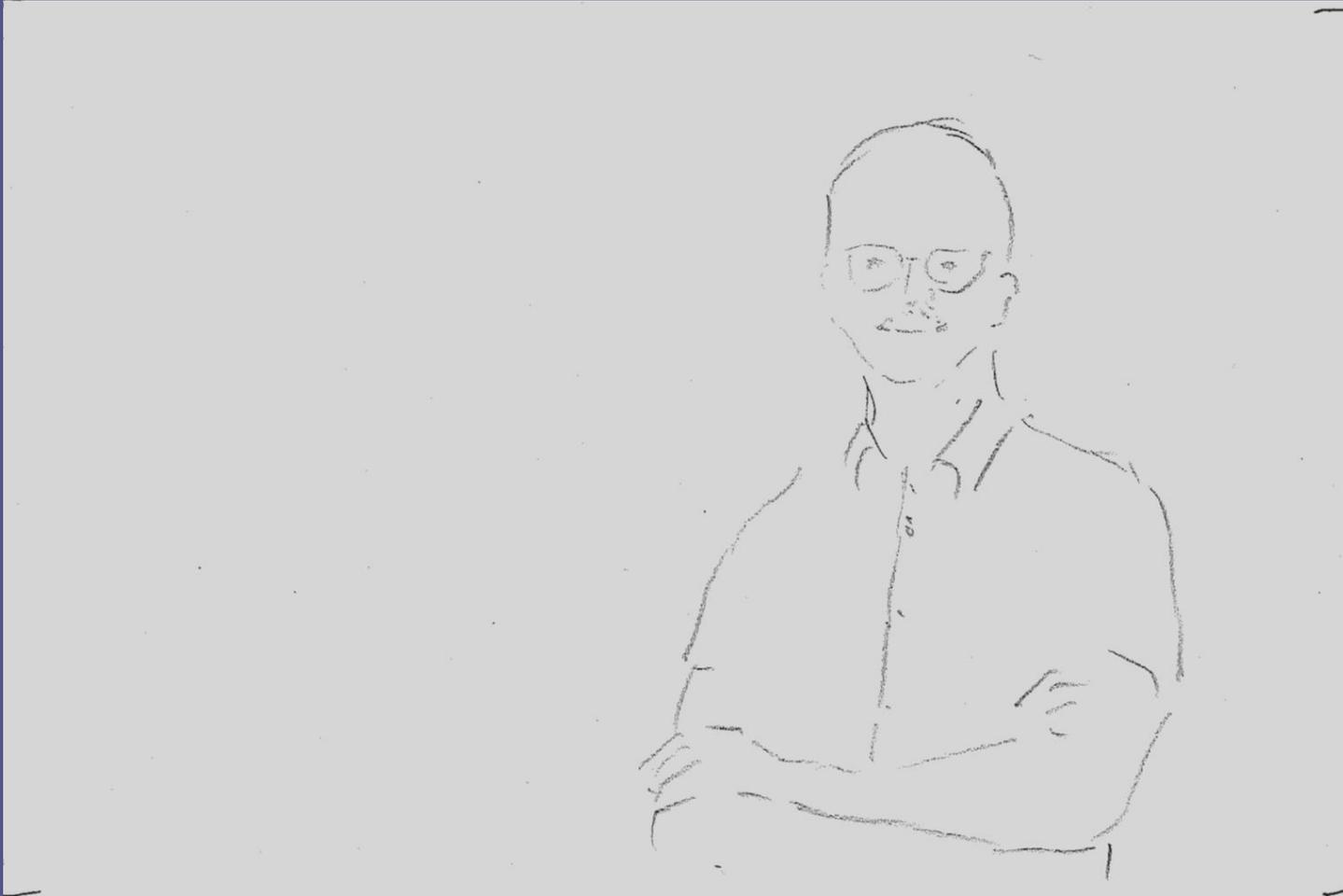
Content

The case – how could it be successful?

Follow the candidate through the validation

- His workplace
- The VPL network and the Diploma of Public Administration at VIA
- The VPL process
- His documentation and reflections
- Concluding on the assessment and process

The actor-network approach will appear through the presentation and is summarized in the final slide



The case

“For the last 15-20 years I have said that I was autodidact. Now, just of sudden I hold a BA degree”

(The candidate quoted in the trade union magazine HK-Kommunalbladet April 21st 2016)

How could it happened?

The VPL Law gives each individual right to have her/his learning experience validated in relation to specific goals of adult education including a full higher education

But since the law went into force in 2008 only very few persons have got a diploma based on validation

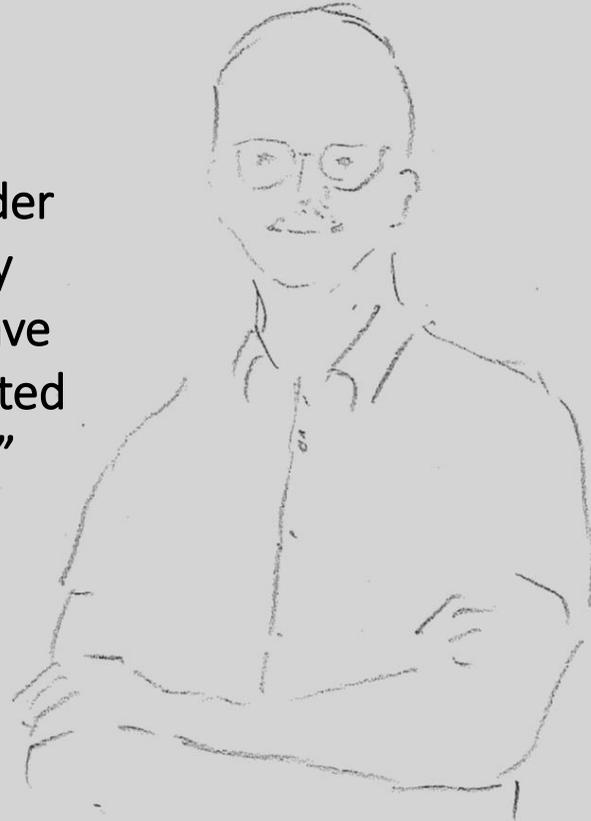
So how could the validation be successful in this particular case?

i.e. success form the candidate's point of view, he got a diploma and a higher wage

And from a perspective of promoting validation

“my VPL started in conversations with my leader and my shop steward. They suggested I got a VPL to have my work experience validated in relation to an education”

(The candidate in *My Experience with VPL*)



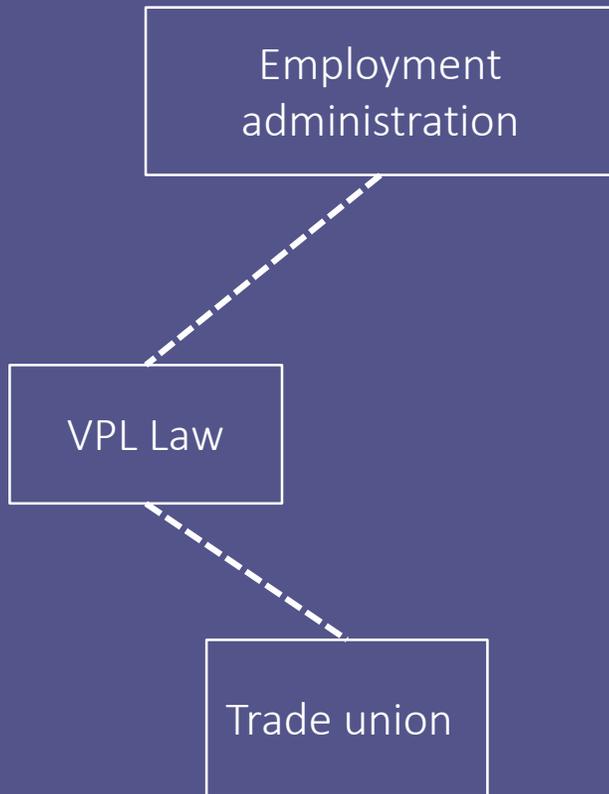
His story

Staff official at a municipal employment administration

Job: Economic analysis, writing strategy papers, implementation projects

But his wage did not match his job-performance

Wages in the public sector are determined in collective agreement and related to educational level



Collective agreement relating wages to level of education



His workplace

A municipal administration

- In the public sector wages are related to educational level

His leader knows what VPL is and can do

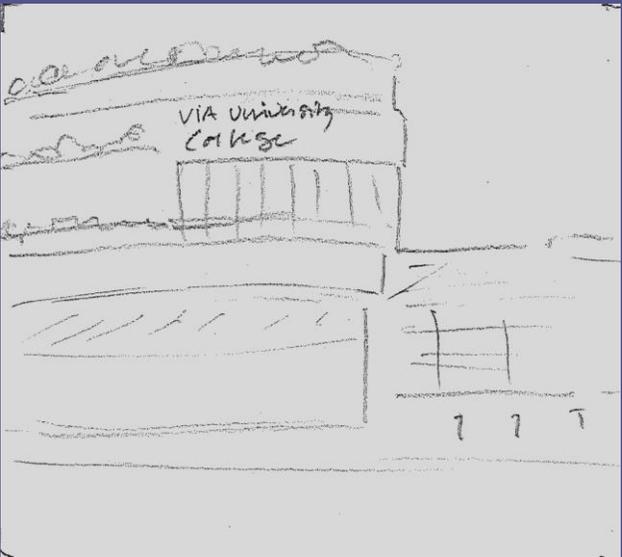
- as Executive Administrator of an employment administration she knows legislation related to employability

His shop steward knows VPL

- The trade union he represents is very much aware of VPL



Support from faculty management



He contacts VIA Faculty of Continuing Education (VIA)

Asked for validation and meet a quite strong organization for VPL

A dozen academic staff and administrative partners working with VPL, practicing validation, undertaking projects og research (human actors)

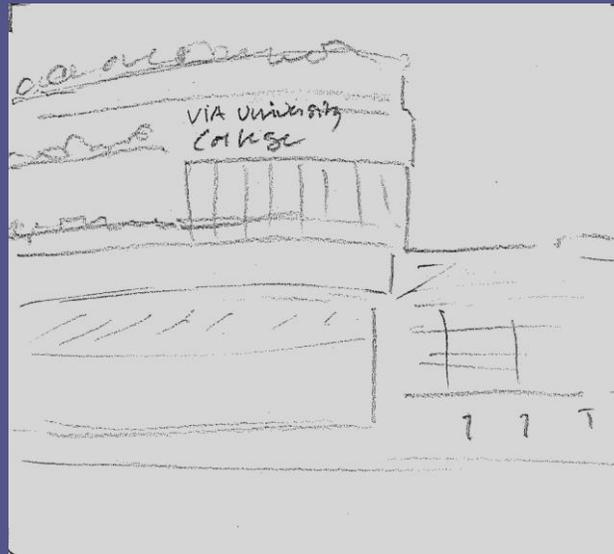
Compliance to the VPL law (non-human actor)

Support from faculty management

National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning

Support from
Education
management

Diploma in
Public
Administration



VIA

Diploma in Public Administration

Recently established at VIA

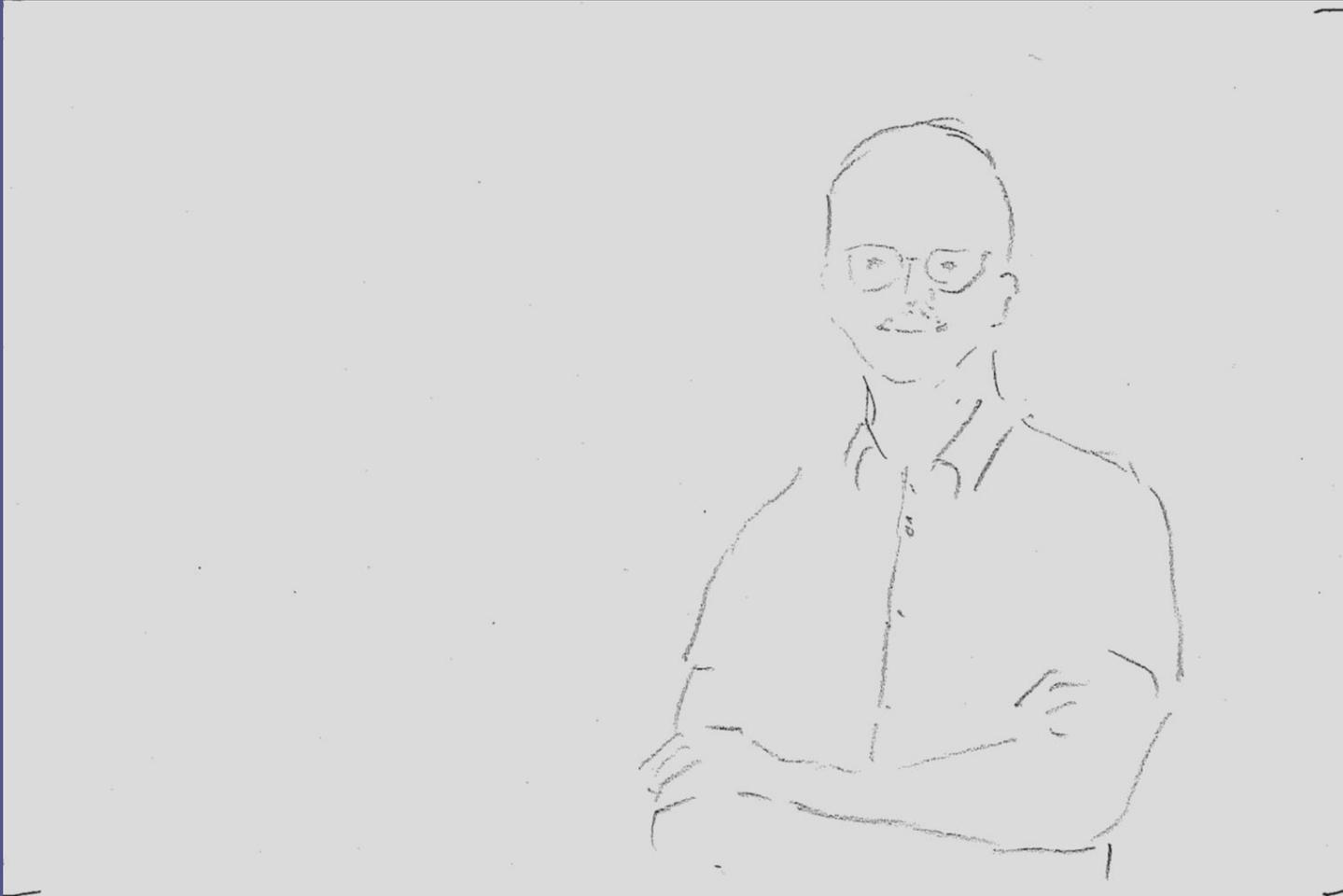
‘Pioneer spirit’

Qualified lecturer to undertake
a validation

Diploma based on prior learning
does not pose a risk of losing
potential students

Compliance to VPL Law

Open to VPL



CV

Upper Secondary School
Leaving Examination

Folk High School

Various jobs as shop clerk and
clerk

Deputy head at a clinic for
treatment of obesity, PR,
participating in research
projects, teaching, policy
papers

“Started from the bottom” at
the Municipal Administration

The validation process

“My experience was a straightforward and relative manageable process”

The formal procedure:

Counselling

1. Screening
2. Documentation
3. Assessment
4. Certificate (diploma)

On going documentation and assessment

A preliminary meeting, a screening meeting and an assessment meeting

Involving the counsellor, then the coordinator of validation and finally also a lecturer from the Education of Public Administration

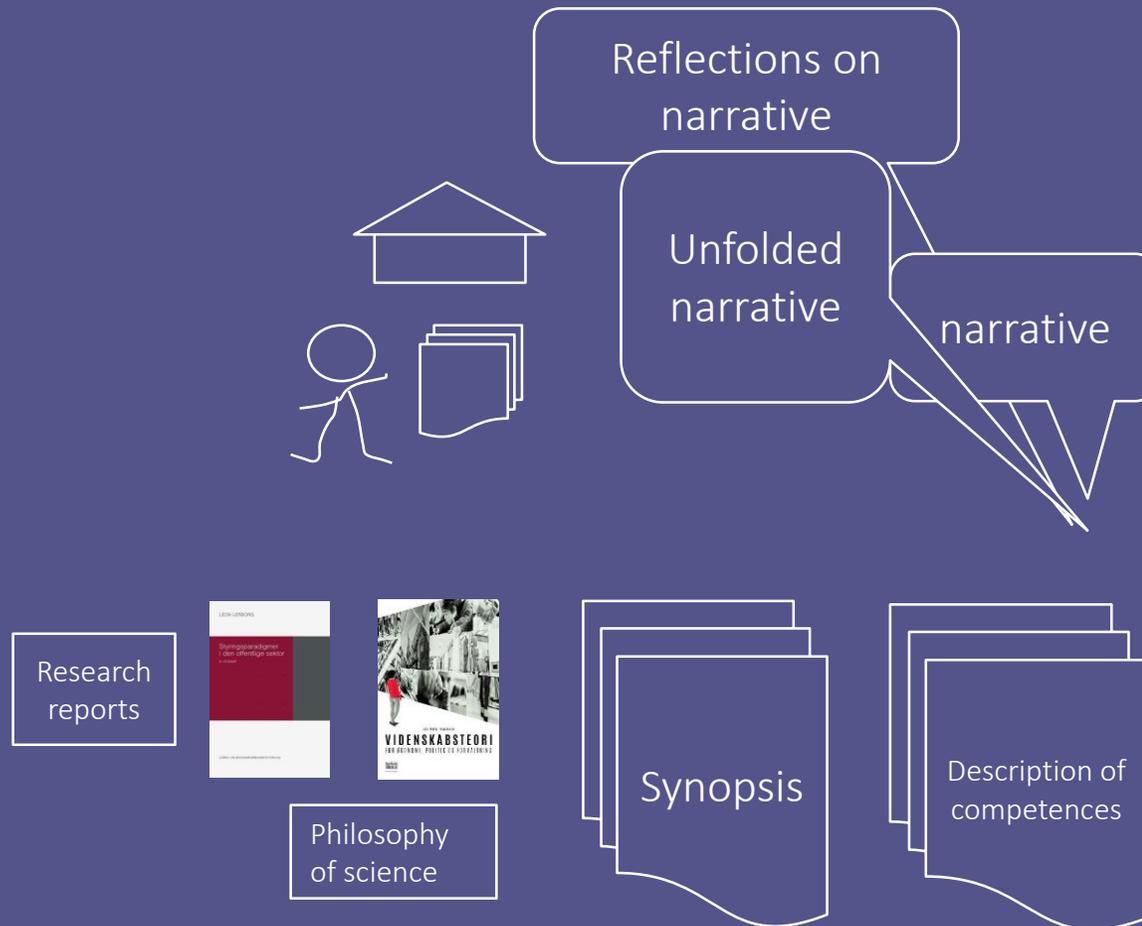
The documentation

Biographical narrative

- Unfolding the narrative, including projects, places, own products, partners,
- Reflections on narrative

Description of competences

Synopsis: Analysis of employment policy and description of a comprehensive budget project



“I spend a lot of time to reflect on and document my previous work .. and put it into an educational framework. I was of great value for me to see it in this perspective”

“I am used to write for politicians and citizens. The aim is to write understandable for laymen. Therefore it was a huge challenge to write an “academic” paper”



Translations

He translated his previous work into competences fitting to the learning goals of the Diploma in administration while he wrote the text – a durable document

He transformed his way of writing, widened his knowledge and put together a story of a complex project to write the synopsis

Conclusion 1

The validation was an assessment of

a) a comprehensive biographical narrative prepared to and developed during the initial meeting and the screening meeting - a translation of a life story - and

b) a written description of competencies - a reflection on a translation of work experience into an educational framework

c) a synopsis – representing a learning process of academic writing, increased understanding of policy issues and own practice

i.e. an expansion of the actor-network of the candidate and connection to VPL and to academic standards

Conclusion 2

This validation was successful because

- the candidate was able to present and develop the documentation
- in combination with a strong VPL - network at VIA,
- an education open to VPL with back up from education and faculty management,
- acquaintance of VPL at his workplace and wages related to level of education

Shortly after another candidate got a Diploma in Project Management by VPL at VIA

Actor-network theory in brief

An actor is anything making a change (Latour, 2005 p. 71)

There a human as well as non-human actors (ibid., p. 107)

An actor is constituted by its relations to other actors, i.e. a network, an 'actor-network' (ibid., p. 46)

An actor-network transforms by relating to other actors and by change in relations – it is an on-going process (ibid. p. 108)

There are no levels of analysis – the plateaus are tangled (ibid. 177; Hernes, 2008, p. 68)

The ontology is processual (ibid., p. 60)

Literature

European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (2015). Cedefop reference series 104. Publication Office of the European Union

Hernes, T. (2008) *Understanding Organization as Process. Theory for a Tangled World*. Routledge

Latour, B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford University Press