
Flexible learning in adult education

-to support students with neuropsychiatric disorders

Presented by Torbjörn Skarin, founder of Scandinavian Analytics



Today's presentation

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About Torbjörn Skarin, senior analyst and evaluator



- Current, since 2007 I have worked as a independent analyst and evaluator for national agencies and different european projects with a focus on education, labor market and economic growth
- Current, since 2006 I have been a member of the board of The national organisation for e-competence (Sweden)
- Current, since 2018, part of different advisory committees and municipal boards for the swedish conservative party (Moderaterna)
- Background, head of section for the ICT policy strategy group within the Ministry of industry (Sweden)
- Background, coordinator for a governmental study about regional growth in the north of Sweden

Background for the project “Flexible learning in adult education”

- An accessible education must take into account different students’ needs
- The Special Needs Education Agency of Sweden (SPSM), has created tools (2015/2016) to help mapping out education environments and their interaction with students
- When students have different kinds of neuropsychiatric disorders (like ADHD, Aspergers syndrome and Autism) we need to adapt the learning and teaching methods to better fit the students challenges
- A prestudy was made by Dalawux (adult education for 15 municipalities in midsweden) which showed the need for new methods for these students besides traditional education in a classroom, and that competence development regarding ICT was needed for teachers and principals
- A project was funded by The Special Needs Education Agency of Sweden (2015-2016) and also a project funded by Erasmus/Nordplus (2016-2018)

- Link: <https://dalawux.se/projekt-flexibelt-larande/>
- Link: <https://flexibeltlarande.se/handheldelearning/>

What is neuropsychiatric disabilities?

- Neuropsychiatric disorders include ADHD, autistic spectrum disorders and tic disorders
- Neuropsychiatric conditions affect areas such as social interaction, linguistic and non-linguistic communication and emotional and behavioral control
- The symptoms tend to vary from each individual

Stakeholders and participants in the project

- Adult education in 15 municipalities in midsweden took part in the project, at two places
- Teachers and principals participated in the competence development
- Adult students took part in the evaluation of the project



The projects content and goals

- A program for teachers competence development and tutorial was created with a focus on ICT and flexible learning/blended learning
 - Workshops for teachers in the classroom (students challenges, digital tools, cloud services)
 - Creation of digital environment for all teachers
 - Learning network between teachers (project blog, chat, tutorial online)
 - Creation of an e-book with short movies, instructions and examples
- Project goals:
 - To create good conditions for the target group to have increased access to pedagogical support and increased support for lifelong learning.
 - To increase students' commitment and motivation to study and increase the drive and independence of students

Evaluation of the project

- The creation of a evaluation model to follow the students needs and their development
 - What kind of challenges do each student have? New indicators for different disorders.
 - Measurement of the students motivation, belief in the future, results (finished courses)
- The evaluation also looked at the teachers development
 - Need for coompetence devopment, different areas
 - ICT as a tool for development (different steps based on the SAMR-model)
 - Strong and week areas (based of the model Four in balance)

Indicators for different disorders

- Each individual has different needs and different challenges for learning
- A problem is that most students has no clear diagnosis, so we needed a way to understand what kind of support the student needed
- We created indicators (questions) for different challenges connected to each disorder:
 - difficult to concentrate and to pay attention
 - difficult to sit down and work
 - difficult to communicate
 - difficult to interact/collaborate with others, difficult to work in a group
 - difficult with unclear instructions
 - and difficult handling only written instructions

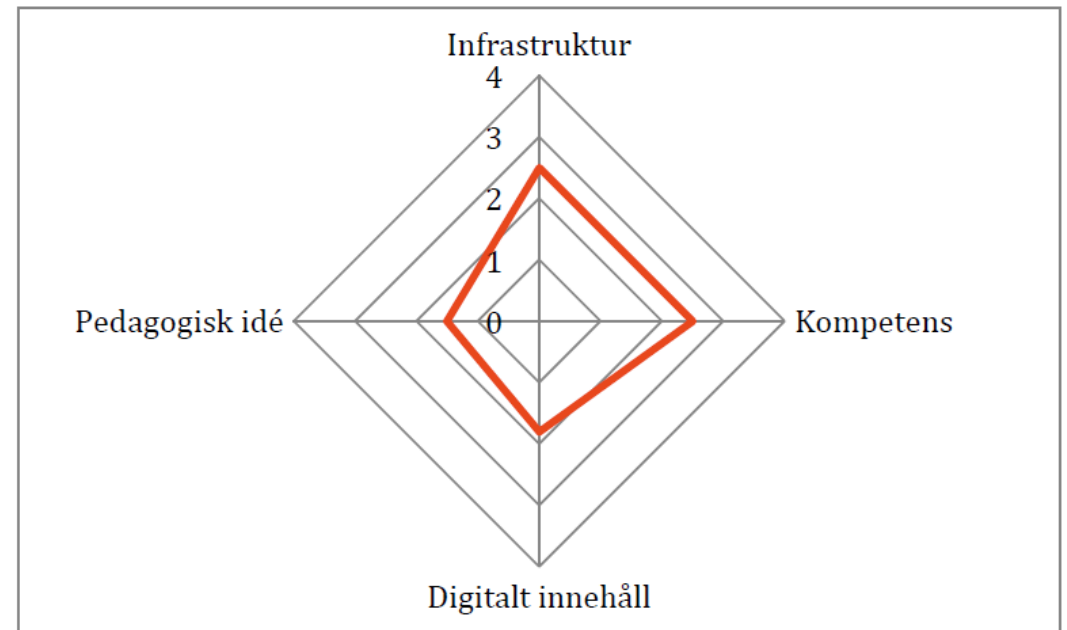
Examples of learning materials produced by the project

-how can the education become accessible to Lisa 26 years?

- Description of Lisa's difficulties: She has difficulty concentrating and focusing on her tasks. Lisa also has difficulty in sitting still during school work for a while. Her symptoms resemble difficulties found in people with the diagnosis ADHD
- Suggested actions:
 - Support and encourage Lisa's interests (like art, music, trains) for increased social participation
 - Opportunity to sit or stand and work alternately can increase her concentration
 - Use clear educational strategies by telling about the purpose of the lesson / task
 - By using Lisa's calendar as a planning tool, it facilitates submission on time to the teacher
 - Use short and frequent feedback to the students work
 - Use recorded instructions (with sound), Lisa has easier to listen to text than reading a text
 - Use a clear structure of the class-blog, makes it easier to navigate for Lisa
 - Use image and movie clips to increase motivation and endurance

Some findings from the evaluation -strong and weak areas (based on the model Four in balance)

- Each teachers gave their view of strong and weak areas, presented in a spiderweb-diagram
- Strong areas: Infrastructure and competence
- Weak areas: Digital content, pedagogical idea



Some findings from the evaluation -success factors for the teachers

- Success factors for the teachers:
 - Participating teachers have had a good digital competence as a starting point
 - Participating teachers have had good access to ICT within their own adult activities
 - There has been a great deal of interest and commitment from participating teachers
 - The project owner Dalawux has been well-established in adult education in Dalarna's fifteen municipalities
 - Project employees have had great knowledge and flexibility, and are well established in the region

Some findings from the evaluation -challenges for the teachers

- Challenges for the teachers:
 - The teachers feel that they have too little knowledge about special education and NPF
 - Not all principals seem equally convinced of the benefits of ICT and blended learning
 - Teachers seem to have different ease of absorbing the new ways of working, and have different abilities to explore the flexible learning
 - There are often no established diagnoses for adults with NPF, which makes it difficult to decide on the right support
 - It is difficult to get teachers to spread their new knowledge to colleagues at the units

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