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Abstract

Teaching English at the Danish service academies centers around classes fully integrated within the officer training programs. The respective English curricula mirror the subjects cadets go through, like logistics and tactics at the Army Academy; navigation and bridge management at the Naval Academy; air operations and leadership at the Air Force Academy. Our teachers are “slotted” into one specific service, allowing them to become experts on service-specific terminology, and very knowledgeable on tactics and mindset.

This means that English teachers recruited face a very steep learning curve from Day One. Our approach to continuous professional development therefore starts with recruitment.

We deliberately seek candidates with the right professional profile (**green** points on slide 4); manifested in academic credentials, solid teaching experience in adult learning environments, preferably with some experience in ESP. These are aspects that are relatively easy to verify through CVs and prior employment data.

We also make serious efforts to match this with candidates having the right personal profile (**red** points on slide 4); manifested in realistic expectations of the challenge ahead of them, resilience coupled with ambitions, and willingness to suddenly be outside their comfort zone. These are aspects that are very difficult to ascertain.

We are frank. We tell hopeful applicants that it will take up to three years for them to start feeling comfortable. Initial continuous professional development focuses on “surviving” in the classroom. We support, mentor, advise, and guide them (the **crutches** on slide 5).

After that initial period, continuous professional development starts to veer towards individual priorities. This means that development tends to be less focused on classroom practice, and more on personal interests. Development becomes a tool to develop a personal/professional identity as a teacher of Army/Navy/Air Force English (the **springboard** on slide 6).

It seems to work. Teachers stay with us for a long time.