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**VIA University College**

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# Use of blended learning in workplace learning

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# Overview of presentation

- Context of the study
- Blended learning and workplace learning - what is it and why use it?
- “Introduction to social inspection” – the case
- Data and findings
- Reflections and recommendations

# Context and background for the study

This paper presents a study on use of blended learning in the work place  
The study deals with the use of blended learning; the experiences of the participants; and our recommendations for future work place-learning

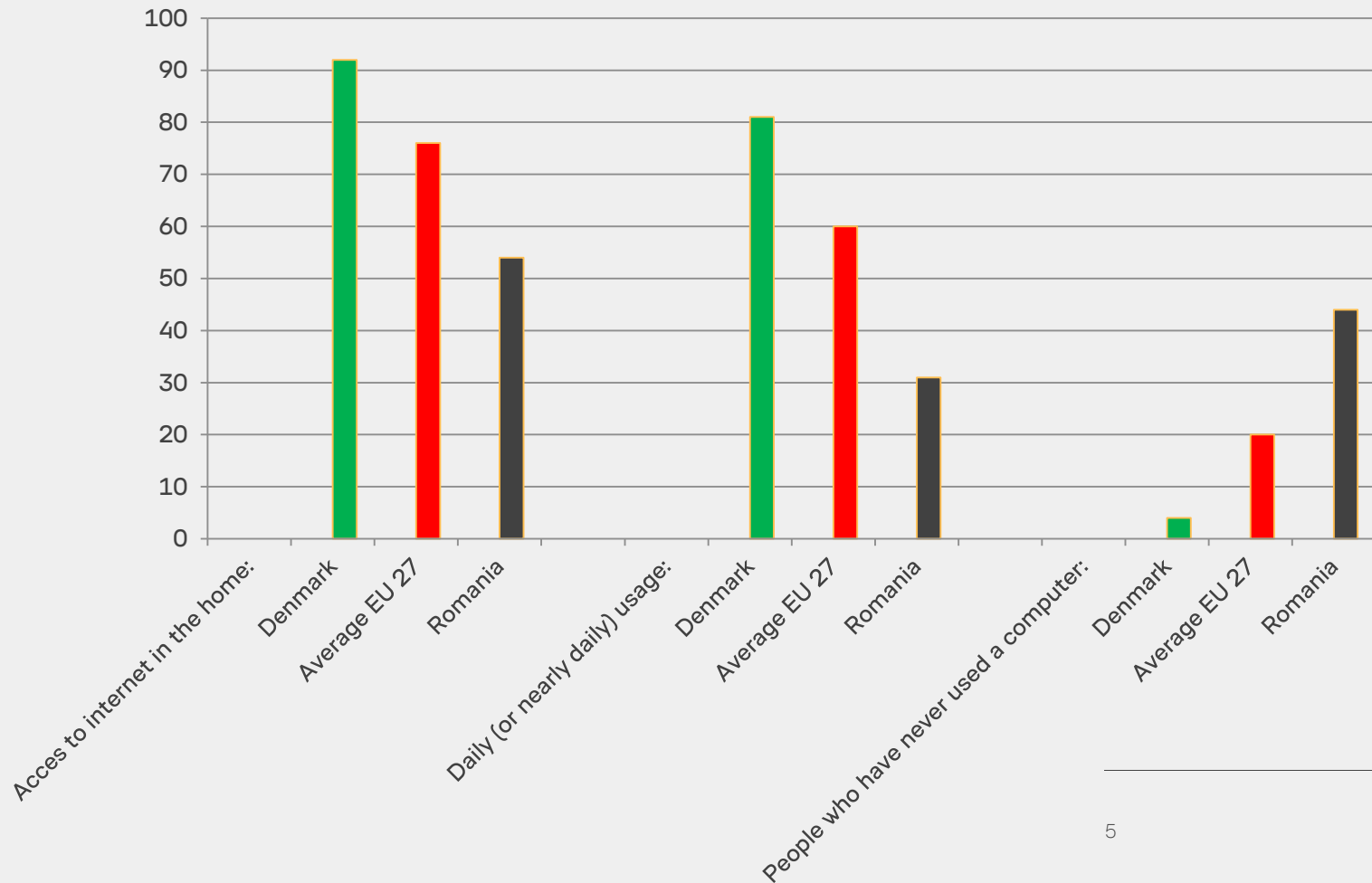
## VIA University College

- VIA is based in the Western part of DK, and the largest university college
- More than 18,000 students a year
- Approx. 2,000 employees
- 5 faculties/schools and more than 50 study programmes

## VIA's role in this project:

- Learning designers
- Content experts/teachers
- Technology providers (platform and support)

# Facts on IT use in Denmark and Europe



# Blended learning – what is it, and why use it here?

- A ‘blend’ (combination) of various elements in the learning design:
  - Different pedagogical approaches
  - Different web-based technologies
  - Technology and face-to-face interaction
  - Teaching technology and authentic work tasks

In this project, we understand it to be:

“a combination of instruction from two archetypical learning environments, the traditional face-to-face teaching and learning environment and an ICT-mediated or e-learning environment”

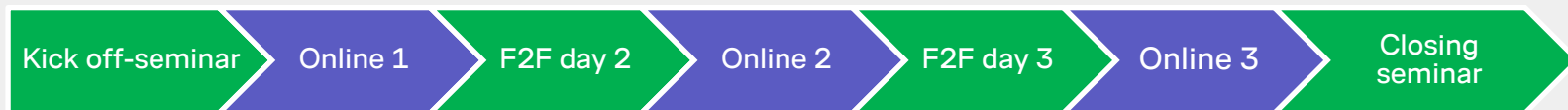
Work place-learning is learning which takes place at the work place and which is related to a formal educational activity

# "Introduction to social inspection"

- Further education/training commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs
- The course in question is called "Introduction to social inspection"
- 340 inspection officers took part in the course from January 9th – March 28th 2014
- The learning design in question is centred on a mix of on line learning using ICT and face-to-face instruction and group work
- Most learning takes place at the work place – five different locations across the country
- Blended learning (use of ICT) was chosen in order to make the course flexible; and to make it possible for participants to collaborate across geographical locations
- Work place learning was chosen to support the integration of course content into the work practice

# The learning design for "Introduction to social inspection"

- Study groups with app. 10 members across geographical sites
- ICT platform for:
  - Distribution of information and teaching materials
  - Communication between participants (learners as well as learners and tutors)
  - Access to teaching and learning resources
  - Repository for assignments, reading materials, etc.
- Presentations by teachers + group based assignments
- Teaching centred around authentic, work related problems, cases, exercises



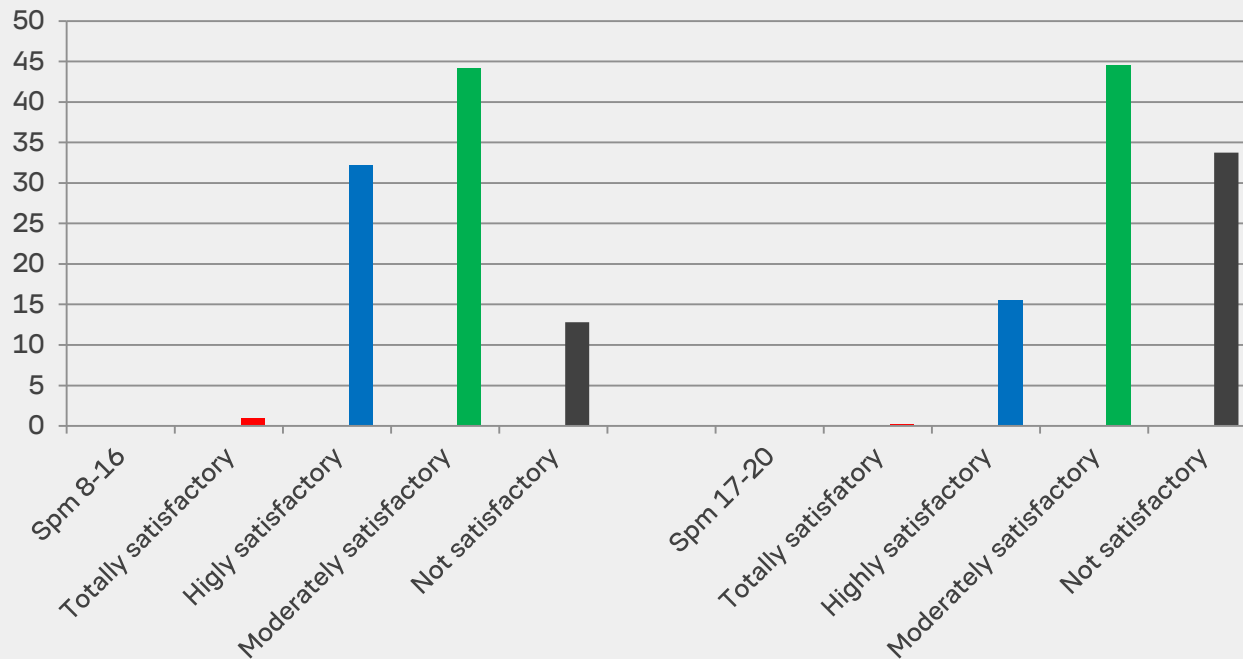


# Data

- Questionnaire; 341 participants; self-evaluation (response rate 71%)
- Themes in survey:
  - Self-evaluation of the learning outcome in relation to specific learning goals (closed-ended; 4 item scale)
  - Self-evaluation of how participants have benefitted from the specific learning design (closed-ended; 4 item scale)
  - Comments on/suggestions for the over-all learning design (open-ended)
- Document analysis
  - Completed (partial and in full) assignments
  - On line activity in study groups (discussions etc.)
- Interviews with managers (heads and day-to-day managers) and groups of participants (planned)
- NB! Preliminary findings!

# (Preliminary) findings

- Participants say in the questionnaire:
  - We did not achieve sufficiently in relation to the learning objectives
  - The learning design did not (sufficiently) support our learning



# Explanations from the participants\*

The e-learning and blended learning is a good idea (and well-designed), BUT...

- “reality gets the upper hand”
- attending to the ‘real’ tasks of the job takes priority over doing ‘course work’

Working in study groups is a valuable element in the course, BUT...

- not enough time was given to get to know the other group members before the on line-periods began
- the level of activity in the study groups is threatened by the variety in local working conditions
- the organisational support from the point of the management is crucial

\* Based on comments and suggestions on the over-all learning design (159 entries registered so far)

# Recommendations for future use of blended learning in the work place

- The commitment and support for the learning activities is important
- The learning design needs to be discussed with management in the work place
- A user-oriented approach to learning design is recommended → one size does not fit all
- The pedagogical approach taken needs to be thoroughly reflected into the overall design → if you emphasise reflection and dialogue over fact learning, your design should support this
- 'Easy to get'-support for the use of ICT/on line platform is very important → don't allow ICT to stop your show

Thank you 😊

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