



## Transparent and comparable outcomes

Development and testing of the B2 examination format for the nursing professions to demonstrate German language skills alongside the procedure for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications



### iQ | GOOD PRACTICE in a nutshell

**Addressees for transfer:**  
Ministries, professional associations for specialist health occupations, competent authorities for the recognition of professional qualifications, nursing colleges, training institutions.

**Strategic approach: development and testing of the B2 examination format for nursing occupations**

In coordination with the IQ Competence Centre for Work-Related German Language, the work-related German language subproject in the regional IQ Network Lower Saxony has developed and tested three learning progress measurements for the nursing field, and documented these in a brochure. According to the requirements of the Lower Saxony Ministry of Social Policy, language level B2 is necessary for professional recognition. The development of the scenarios was therefore organised with the involvement of two nursing colleges. The scenario-based learning progress measurement is heavily guided by language and communication requirements in the field of nursing and meets the criteria required for learning progress measurements.

**Project:**  
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**Provision:**  
The brochure (in German) "Lernfortschrittsmessung auf der Grundlage von Szenarien" is available at: [www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/VHS\\_Braunschweig\\_Pflege\\_2016.pdf](http://www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/VHS_Braunschweig_Pflege_2016.pdf)  
All previously published IQ Good Practice examples can be found at [www.netzwerk-iq.de](http://www.netzwerk-iq.de).

### Starting point/challenge

In Lower Saxony, taking a practical examination was possible as a means of providing evidence of language skills at level B2 necessary for recognition in the area of nursing. While some guidelines did exist for this examination, there were no content specifications or standardised assessment criteria. The aim was for the development and testing of three scenario-based learning progress measurements for determining language level to result in transparent and comparable outcomes. In order to achieve the broadest possible acceptance and dissemination of the measurements, relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Social Policy and nursing colleges, were to be involved in the development process at an early stage. Determining a learning group for testing the scenarios and preparing for and supporting this process also posed some challenges.

### Implementation of the development and testing of the nursing occupations examination format

The scenario method involves the simulation of typical communication situations in the workplace. As part of this, the relevant speech activities involved—such as looking after patients, describing nursing activities, providing information for colleagues, writing reports—build upon one another in a realistic process. This produces a sequenced series of steps initiated by a trigger for the activity in the form of a specific reason, a problem case or a frequently occurring issue which then leads towards a potential solution or a reasonable outcome. It is important that the individual steps in the speech activity are not dealt with in isolation but are incorporated within the context of the situation. Reference is therefore also made to a connected chain of speech activities modelled in a meaningful and easy-to-follow way on a realistic workplace situation. All stages of development towards



the three developed scenarios took place in the context of an interdisciplinary discussion between language and nursing teachers. Following discussions with staff at the Ministry of Social Policy, it was possible to begin determining language requirements. On the basis of this, what learners needed to be able to demonstrate at levels B1 and B2 was formulated, thus creating the basis for the three scenarios. Specialist support was provided to prepare both the learning group as well as the teachers for the examination format. Following the testing, the result was documented in the brochure "Scenario-based learning progress measurements".

### Conclusion

The scenario-based learning progress measurement is heavily guided by language and communication requirements in the field of nursing. It is a viable format in this professional context and also meets the requirements of learning attainment measurements. The approach was accepted among experts and found its way into the paper "Guidance on the examination of German language skills necessary for professional practice in specialist health occupations" from the Conference of Health Ministers.

# Paediatric care “with plenty of sugar and cream”

The importance of the scenario method for the evaluation of work-related German as a second language

One example from the brochure “Scenario-based learning progress measurements” is the fictitious story of 15-year-old overweight Tobias Braun. At his birthday party, he ate five large pieces of cake with lots of sugar and cream. He is woken by a sharp stabbing pain on the right-hand side of his lower stomach. He just about makes it to the toilet where he is sick. His parents call the out-of-hours doctor and Tobias is sent to hospital with acute appendicitis. He has to have an operation immediately. “The scenario enables learners to practice typical communication situations in the workplace,” explains Wilhelmine Berg, project leader for the IQ subproject “Work-related German lan-

guage” in the adult education centre Volkshochschule Braunschweig. “A sequenced series of steps is initiated by a trigger for the speech activity in the form of a specific reason, a problem case or a frequently occurring issue, which then leads towards a



potential solution or a reasonable outcome.” The brochure describes precisely which nursing and medical measures need to be taken and which speech activities are needed in order that the overweight Tobias Brown does not come away with any health problems resulting from eating habits in his family. The brochure documents three scenario-based learning progress measurements which can provide evidence of language skills at level B2. These language skills are necessary for vocational recognition. The process was received so positively by the Conference of Health Ministers of the federal states that they explicitly recommended the expertise of IQ in a draft paper on the health professions.

Three questions for Wilhelmine Berg, head of project “Work-related German language” in the IQ Network Lower Saxony.

## “Instrument already intensively used by nursing organisations”



### *What is innovative about the scenario method for measuring language level?*

The scenarios provide a tool for occupational-specific learning programmes and employees for determining linguistic competency. Communication requirements in the vocational context form the basis of this. There has been a significant rise in demand for this due to the increas-

ing numbers of language courses for work purposes. The examination setting had previously not been developed or used in foreign language courses, however it can be used as an example for further developments.

### *Can the process also be used elsewhere or for other occupations?*

The process is tested for developing and implementing learning pro-

gress scenarios and can also be transferred to other occupational fields without any major changes. The brochure itself is already being used intensively by nursing organisations. The national transfer itself is gathering pace, particularly with reference to the expertise of IQ in developing and implementing scenario-based methods for determining language level in the draft paper of the federal states’ Conference of Health Ministers.

### *What can the learning progress measurement achieve over the long term?*

With the development, training and documentation of the level B2 examination format for nursing occupations, a viable network was developed as a result of interdisciplinary collaboration. This network will also support the implementation of the process going forward. The learning progress measurement tool also makes an important contribution to the long-term integration of foreign care workers in the labour market and therefore also to the urgently needed recruitment of skilled workers in the care sector.

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#### **Network IQ**

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