

JOBPICS

- A PICTURE-BASED VOCATIONAL
INTEREST TOOL



PRACTICE REPORT

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THE ASSIGNMENT

In connection with the EU/Leonardo project “Jobpics Europe” the Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises wanted a report on experiences with the use of the picture-based vocational-interest tool Jobpics in Norway. It was not intended as an evaluation, but as a report that documents experiences with the practical use of Jobpics. The assignment was given to the Work Research Institute and carried out by researcher Angelika Schafft.

It is a qualitative study. The data consist of semi-standardised telephone interviews with ten career counsellors who have experience with the use of Jobpics (see interview guide attached). The informants were recruited as follows: The Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises, represented by vocational psychologist Arne Svendsrud, provided a list of twelve career counsellors who were willing to be interviewed. One ambition has been to describe the variety of background variables that may affect use and results, and we have therefore tried to recruit informants from different types of businesses and schemes that use Jobpics with different target groups and in different contexts. The interviews were carried out in accordance with rules and regulations concerning privacy and data protection, which among other things means that the information was treated confidentially and anonymised. The interviews were conducted before and after the summer break in the period from 9 July to 28 August 2012.

Since the informants were recruited through the same organisation that sells the Jobpics material and provides training, the selection may be biased in the sense that the informants may be those who are most enthusiastic about Jobpics, and that possible negative experiences therefore are insufficiently illustrated. We tried to control for this by asking the informants to describe the process rather than their own judgements, and by asking questions that address both advantages and disadvantages with this tool. However, we cannot disregard the possibility that negative experiences may be underreported.

THE INFORMANTS

Of the ten counsellors¹ who participated in this study, three worked in rehabilitation/growth enterprises, six in various county career centres/adult education or follow-up services, and one was a counsellor at a lower secondary school. Most had university and/or university college education as teachers, pedagogues or social workers, with additional training in career counselling/guidance. Some also have training in communication and/or coaching.

When asked about their training in Jobpics, most of the informants said that they had an introduction to Jobpics or participated in a course by vocational psychologist Arne Svendsrud in connection with studies in career counselling or guidance. Training in Jobpics was usually a part of the training in various vocational-interest tools and the theory behind them.

All the informants have used Jobpics for at least one year, and several have used it since it came on the market in 2009. The frequency varies somewhat, but most have used Jobpics approximately 1-2 times per week, some use it more rarely and some use it slightly more often.

JOBPICS

Jobpics² is a picture based vocational-interest tool for use in career guidance that was developed by work psychologist Arne Svendsrud in cooperation with the Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises. This tool is based on a model that was developed by the American psychologist John L. Holland in 1959. Holland described six vocational personality types that he labelled Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional, from which he derived the acronym RIASEC. There is no categorisation or test of personality types in connection with Jobpics, but the system is used to identify and categorise interests and vocations. In Jobpics the RIASEC codes are therefore described as interest categories rather than as vocational personality types.

Jobpics is owned and sold by the Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises, and since it was developed in 2009 450 copies have been sold in Norway to customers involved in career guidance, such as schools, Nav [The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service], career centres, special schools, adult education, immigrant programmes etc. In addition, the Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Enterprises has received EU grants for a Leonardo project to spread the methodology to other European countries. No certification is required, but a four-hour introductory course is recommended to provide a thorough exploration of the theoretical basis for the tool and its use.

1. Some have the job title “career counsellor”, some are “communication advisors”, “consultants” or “teachers”. For the sake of simplicity, all are described as “counsellors” in this report. Their “customers”, “clients”, “students” are called “career seekers”.

2. <http://karriereverktoy.no/produkter/jobpics/>

Jobpics consists of a suitcase with 184 picture cards and five process cards. On each picture card there is a photo of people in situations that are typical of various jobs. On the back there are two additional pictures of people doing the same job, as well as a list of ten similar jobs. On the back of the cards there is also the RIASEC code that indicates which interest categories are associated with the job in the picture, as well as a number that indicates the educational level required for this vocation (1 means unskilled, 2 means secondary education and 3 means higher education).

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE CARDS

Interest categories	Number of cards Level 1	Number of cards Level 2	Number of cards Level 3	Total
R - Realistic (Practical)	35	38	4	77
I - Investigative (Theoretical)	-	-	12	12
A - Artistic (Creative)	-	9	5	14
S - Social (Helpers)	6	11	9	26
E - Enterprising (Persuaders)	24	9	2	35
C - Conventional (Systematic)	10	6	4	20
Sum	75	73	36	184

With the help of the process cards the career seeker can sort the cards in five categories. These categories are:

- 0 – Not interested
- 1 – Somewhat interested
- 2 – Interested
- Wish to know more about
- Avoid

HOW IS JOBPICS USED?

The counsellors who were interviewed use Jobpics in several different ways and in different contexts, depending on the career seekers' needs and qualifications and the purpose of the guidance. There are differences not only between the counsellors, but the individual counsellor can adapt the use of the material to varying needs and situations.

Sometimes Jobpics is used primarily as a conversation tool, to explore possibilities, other times it is used more purposefully to identify an interest category. Some counsellors use Jobpics “somewhat sporadically and piecemeal”, others have a thorough discussion and use all the cards. Sometimes the career seekers are left alone with the material, other times counsellors discuss with them while they lay out the cards. When counsellors are pressed for time they may advance more rapidly and take more control than when there is more time available. Some use it mainly in a single session; others use it over several sessions with homework in between. Sometimes it is used in groups and other times individually. Some places the cards are used in language training.

One counsellor says:

“Sometimes I use it just to inform about certain jobs, sometimes we discuss it more thoroughly, get to know several of the jobs and then we sort the cards again, and maybe combine it with an online interest test. Sometimes I spend quite a lot of time on the last part, on what happens next, and keep using the cards quite far into the process. Other times we are quicker, almost just to confirm what we have already assumed, sort them rapidly.”

Several of the counsellors emphasised this flexibility as a great advantage: “there are many different areas of application here, that’s what’s so great with JP, that they can be used very creatively and freely.”

In the following sections variations in the use of Jobpics in practice will be illustrated through a number of examples.

USE OF TIME

Variations in use also imply variations in the use of time, both with regard to the time spent on an individual Jobpics session and whether it is used in several sessions over time. Some counsellors typically spend 45 to 60 minutes on an individual Jobpics guidance session, but several say that they set aside more time, from one and a half to three hours. The duration of a Jobpics session does not only depend on how rapidly or slowly a career seeker sorts the cards. It also depends on the way the counsellor uses the possibilities inherent in the material. For instance, whether and how the jobs on the backside are explored, or whether and how the RIASEC codes are discussed, and whether the whole material is used or just parts of it. Some counsellors tend to use all the process cards, others just lay out the cards “Not interested”, “Somewhat interested” and “Interested”, i.e. they leave out the cards “Wish to know more about” and “Avoid”. And finally, how much time is spent also depends on why Jobpics is used, its intended purpose. It is true that the cards are mainly used for interest mapping, but some counsellors also use them when teaching foreign-speaking adults, and some use them with students in lower secondary school. The way Jobpics is used depends on the time a counsellor has available for each user. Those who receive many career seekers for one-off sessions and have less time for each, as is common at career centres, often use a “light” version, whereas others who have

follow-up and extended contact over time, e.g. as counsellors in a labour-market scheme or as teachers/course counsellors tend to expand discussions about the cards, or they pick out a selection of cards at a later time, discuss them more thoroughly and ask follow-up questions.

TARGET GROUPS

The counsellors who participated in this study have different target groups. The target groups vary with the counsellors' institutional affiliation: Some work only with foreign-language speakers, some with school students or school drop-outs, and others provide guidance to people who need to find out what job or education they should choose.

None of the counsellors use Jobpics with all their career seekers. Some of the career seekers do not need or cannot use this particular tool. For instance in the choice of academic-level careers for career seekers who will attend university or university college counsellors prefer other tools, such as WIE³ and Yrkeslisten[the vocation list].⁴ "With those who've almost reached their goal and don't need to open up about anything, those who know who they are, I go to the Yrkeslisten straight away, or they go out and talk to somebody in the job they're interested in," one of the counsellors explains. With career seekers who have already decided and know what they want the counsellors do not necessarily use time-consuming tools such as Jobpics, although some use Jobpics even in these cases to "double check" career wishes or to explore potential alternatives. **One of them said:**

"I have never felt that it was badly suited for anyone, but you have to adapt it. You have to use it in connection with a discussion combined with counselling. Once there was a very young boy who put away all the cards except one. This was the only thing he felt that he could handle in life. Everything else was things he thought he could not manage. He'd been sitting at home and been alone all his life. If I had taken this single card as my starting point and said that that's what he should do, it would have been wrong. It was not what he wanted, but it was the only thing he felt that he managed. Together we went through the cards he had put in between. In the end he got out and started at a folk high school."

When counsellors were asked about the characteristics of career seekers who they believe will benefit from Jobpics, i.e. who they see as its target group, the following factors were mentioned:

- * Those who have little career knowledge and a poor understanding of the Norwegian labour market. These are young people who have little or no work experience, young people who have dropped out of school.
- * Normal students at the secondary level who do not know what they want, and who "need to start thinking". Those who do not have a clear picture of what line of work

3. WIE (Work Interest Explorer) is a web based interest exploration tool. (<http://karriereverktoy.no/produkter/work-interest-explorer-wie/>)

4. <http://karriereverktoy.no/produkter/yrkeslisten-papirformat/>

they are interested in, those who are unable say anything about their interests, those who are very unsure, or those whose ideas point in all directions.

- * Career seekers who are uncertain about what they want to do next and curious about exploring more options.
- * Adults who have been in the same job all their life and do not know anything else and do not know what other possibilities exist.
- * Refugees who have grown up in a different culture and who have not had any contact with the Norwegian labour market, even those who have higher education, but who are new to Norway and do not know the Norwegian vocational system.
- * People who have difficulties understanding the language and/or poor reading and writing skills.
- * Those who are not comfortable with the use of internet-based tests.
- * Those who feel that the more text-based tools are complicated and difficult to understand.
- * School students with special needs.

Some also point out that it would be useful for the correctional services, many of the inmates will choose education and craft certificates.

PREPARATIONS

When asked how they prepare a Jobpics session, a number of the counsellors answer along the same lines as the one who said: “What’s so good about this tool is that it doesn’t require any preparation. You just get the suitcase and go ahead. There are different things you can do with it, but I have to decide there and then, not in advance.”

Jobpics is a tool that counsellors often use at the start of a guidance process, but not necessarily in the first meeting. Many of them say that they never use it in their first meeting with the career seeker. They tend to start the guidance with a “get-to-know-each-other session”, maybe they look at the CV and try to find out more about the individual’s needs and expectations. If the counsellor thinks that Jobpics is relevant, they explain how it works and what it does and agree to use it the next time. **This is how one of the counsellors describes how he uses Jobpics:**

“I introduce the concept and explain the background a little, what it’s for and how it works. That it’s not a test tool that provides answers such as ‘you’re going to be a baker’ and so on. I call it a discussion tool. A tool that can give a clue about what you want to be. I follow the instruction I got at the introductory course. ‘When you pick up a picture, don’t think too much about all the pros and cons, but follow your heart and be quick. Don’t set any limitations’.”

At the start of an individual Jobpics session the counsellor usually leaves the career seeker alone for a while to start sorting the pictures, but remains available so that s/he can interfere if necessary. One reason to interfere is for instance if the counsellor sees that someone places very many pictures on one single process card or if the career seeker does not get started with the sorting.

JOBPICS IN GROUPS

Most of the counsellors who were interviewed use Jobpics only for individual guidance, and many of them only have one guidance session with the career seeker. However, some of the counsellors who use Jobpics individually can also think of applications in group settings. One of them thinks that group work with Jobpics would be very good e.g. for single parents in Nav.

Some counsellors use Jobpics both individually and in group settings. “In groups I may use just a selection of the cards, spread them out. It can last 3-4 days. We leave them until we get to where we take them out and talk about them.” Here are some examples of how Jobpics was used in such a setting:

One of those who use Jobpics both individually and in smaller and bigger groups describes the process as follows:

“We have many students, and there’s a limit to how much individual guidance I can give. We start out in bigger groups of approximately 10-20 students and then we see after a while who needs more individual guidance. If they have matching interests or codes we use this as a starting point for discussions. They may have chosen the card because they wonder about something or we may simply use a card as discussion tool, e.g. when we talk about the educational system, or to generate more facts. Individual use of Jobpics usually comes as extension of the group sessions. E.g. when they were down to the three cards and perhaps there were great discrepancies.”

Some counsellors work with foreign speakers, both young people and adults, who participate in extended training/courses. One of them describes a three-step model where step 1 consists of classroom teaching of concepts that are regarded as necessary for the students in order to apply for jobs or an education, such as “competence”, “working hours” or the difference between “job” and “vocation”. Jobpics is introduced in step 2: The teacher decides what concepts they should work with, and after a while the concepts are repeated and applied in connection with the pictures. Step 3 is the conclusion. When the students have their RIASEC code and all the words they have written down, they must use them actively when they make their CV or go to interviews etc. They should use what they have learned about themselves with the help of the cards as actively as possible to get a job or an education.

The counsellor explains it like this:

“We use Jobpics in a bigger context: as a way to get to know Norwegian worklife, a way to get to know the educational system and what it takes to become this or that. Learning concepts is a part of this.”

At another adult education programme, a one-year course offered to foreign speakers, they have used Jobpics in groups. The groups counted around 10 people each and were heterogeneous with regard to mother tongue, Norwegian language skills and educational level. There were two counsellors for the groups, the career counsellor and a Norwegian teacher. Jobpics was used at the start of this course, spread over three weeks with two sessions per week, for a total of approximately six hours. The focus of these classes was Jobpics and the theory behind it. Furthermore, the cards were used as input when relevant to various topics throughout the whole year. After the course the counsellor also helped those who went on to work practice to find employers in their chosen field of interest.

One counsellor says:

“Some foreign speakers from other cultures have difficulties distinguishing between their own interests and their family’s expectations. In those cases Jobpics is very well suited in order to deal with issues and work through it in a group where they get feedback from others. They can become more secure through the feedback they get from others in the group than they would from my feedback.”

One of the counsellors says that he had good experiences with Jobpics in individual guidance of students regarding choice of further education. Moreover, a project was carried out where Jobpics was used as part of a teaching programme about career interests for a group of 9th grade students. The programme started with a general introduction to RIA-SEC. Then the students found their own RIASEC code on the basis of a questionnaire. Later they sorted the cards in stacks based on the RIASEC codes and the students went in groups for each letter and studied the cards there. The Yrkeslisten was included, too. Afterwards the students were asked to choose three careers and continue their career exploration individually online. Finally, the students discussed the experience together. The plan now is to repeat the process with students in the 10th grade.

THE PICTURES

Jobpics consists of a total of 184 pictures. But it varies whether all of these are used or just a selection. Most of the informants said that they use all pictures every time, and some comment that it does not take long to go through all of them. But sometimes the counsellor selects some pictures in advance. There may be different reasons for using just a selection of the cards. **One of the counsellors explains:**

“I ask them if they would like to see all of the cards. Some do. Sometimes I only use the cards that don’t require formal skills for those who don’t want to or are unable to get an education. This applies for instance to some of the refugees who just want a job, no matter what. How many cards I use will also depend on what people say. Some have been in psychiatric care for many years, then we only look at a few particular cards. I decide this as we go along.”

One of the counsellors who uses Jobpics in adult foreign-language groups says: “We have explored different approaches. For the weakest it may be too overwhelming, and in those

cases with the help of the teachers we have identified who they are. If there are many with basic education, we don't lay out all the jobs that require higher education."

A different variation: In some cases the career seeker has already been through a different type of interest mapping in advance and thus got his RIASEC code. If this is the case, the counsellor only uses the cards that belong to this code.

THE PROCESS CARDS

The process cards are used to make the career seekers choose and prioritise between the different picture cards. Some use all the pictures, but not all the sorting categories every time. For instance a number of the counsellors tell us that they only lay out some of the five process cards (Not interested – Somewhat interested – Interested – Wish to know more about – Avoid). For some it is a matter of time: If you are pressed for time you sort in fewer categories, for instance you use the categories "Interested" and "Not interested", or you use "Interested" and "Somewhat interested". If the result seems doubtful the counsellor can lay out the cards that had been put aside. **For instance one of them says:**

"Normally I only lay out 'Interested' and 'Somewhat interested'. But sometimes I also pick up the ones I have put aside. Once there was a foreign man who put away almost all the pictures. When I asked more about the cards he had discarded he answered 'that's only for women'. That way we identified an issue that we could discuss further in the guidance sessions. 'Is it true,' I asked 'that only women work in the health and care services?'"

Other counsellors comment:

"Generally, I use all the process cards. But the career seekers may become a little confused and don't always understand for instance the difference between 'Somewhat interested' and 'Wish to know more about'."

"It varies a little what I use. They sort the cards into all the categories, but then we put away the 'Not interested' and start with the ones in the 'Interested' category, possibly also 'Somewhat interested' if there are few cards in the 'Interested' category."

"If they pick a lot of cards, I have to ask them to sort them once more. I say: you can't use more than 30 cards. I never set a time limit; I say that they can take as long as they want."

Some counsellors also like to explore what is behind the negative categories. One of them explains:

"'Not interested' and 'Avoid' are very interesting categories where you clearly see the issue of limitations. Many times people tend to have limitations that don't necessarily need to be there. Often they are artificial limitations that you might as well

get out of the way, so they see that it's possible after all. In a guidance setting it is interesting to bring that out, too. It's nice that you can actually focus on just these vocations, too, and scratch a little at the surface."

"I use 'Avoid' when the career seeker has a physical disability to check out and discuss what they see as realistic or not and what they possibly need to tackle a physical challenge."

One counsellor told us about a case where the career seeker made up his own sorting system with the categories "exciting/challenging", "safe" and "creative", which were then used as a starting point for a discussion about excitement versus safety.

The process cards are used in different ways and for various purposes. Whether or not you use all the process cards and how you use them may depend on the time available. A full discussion of all the categories is time consuming. You need more time to go through issues relating to limitations and sort these out. It is necessary to address this more thoroughly in order to avoid oversimplified conclusions that can be even more limiting.

BACKSIDE VOCATIONS AND PICTURES

The backside of the cards allows further discussion about the vocation in the picture and also mentions other jobs that are related to the vocation on the front. The backside vocations are used intentionally to expand the number of possible jobs beyond those on the front, which gives a total of 600 vocations to explore. These, too, are used in different ways.

The backside vocations are discussed for instance if only a very small number of wishes and fields of interest emerge. The counsellor can use the backside vocations to start a dialogue about other jobs. **To the extent that counsellors use the backside vocations actively, it is often towards the end of a Jobpics session:**

"Usually, I won't let them read the backside vocations until they are finished, 'cause otherwise there'll be too many jobs to think about. Sometimes they put 20 pictures in 'Interesting', then it's a lot if you go through all the backsides. But others pick out just one or two cards, then it's good to read the backsides."

"I often start out by leaving them alone to sort the cards, then I come back in towards the end and then we sit together and work some more with each card."

"Some students may make an unrealistic choice. When they sort the cards, this card is of course also in there. But along with it come some more alternatives. If we hadn't used Jobpics, they would only have had this one, nothing else, because they can be so hung up on one single thing. If the cards are there, it's nice to have some alternatives."

Some say that they often do not use the backside pictures. It may be because it takes too much time, or because they find the Yrkeslisten more suited to find related jobs. One counsellor says: “It’s more like I say, you can have a look at the back, there are some related jobs, but it’s not that often we manage in the time I have available.”

Another reason not to use the backside vocations may be that the career seeker does not have sufficient language skills to understand the texts: “I only use the backside jobs on the highest Norwegian levels. It’s confusing to those on the lower levels,” one counsellor comments.

RIASEC CODES

On every picture card a RIASEC code is printed, i.e. an interest category which is associated with the represented career. The categories are: R – Realistic, I – Investigative, A – Artistic, S – Social, E – Enterprising, C – Conventional.

The RIASEC codes and the descriptions of these in the manual can be used during counselling to establish a more general terminology within each interest category, a terminology which can be used for reflection. It allows us for instance to explore the congruence between career seeker and the content of the categories. The RIASEC code is also used to expand the search for alternative careers.

RIASEC codes can contribute to reality orientation, to avoiding wrong choices. One counsellor explains:

“A young girl wondered very much if she should go to nursing school or not. When she arranged the cards, however, there was not a single one on S. She did not choose a single career which had to do with care or social services. In this way it became very clear for her that she should obviously not train to become a nurse.”

The RIASEC codes are not used in all Jobpics sessions either, furthermore and it also varies in what ways they are used. Some counsellors always look at the RIASEC codes and explain to the career seeker what they mean when they go through the “Interested” pictures with them. Others only use the RIASEC codes occasionally and when needed: “If the career seeker is interested in gaining knowledge about himself or herself, we use the RIASEC codes and when it comes to finding out what opportunities he or she has, we use just the pictures”, says one counsellor. **Another speaks of using just the “light” version or a “heavier” variant of Jobpics:**

“With the light version I use all the pictures and education codes, but not RIASEC. The heavier variant becomes more delving and personal, where one touches on the personality, and then I use RIASEC, often right away, because then it becomes a natural part of the conversation. But the education codes are very important when assessing whether education is an option or not.”

One counsellor says:

“A career seeker who has worked in the same business for 15 years had to find something new and wanted preferably something that did not require a long education. He had no idea whatsoever about the direction in which he wanted to go. We used Jobpics to find out in which fields he had an interest. First we went through the categories “interested” and “a little interested”. Then we arranged them by RIASEC codes, read the descriptions. He scored very high on the job he had, but by asking questions about the careers he had chosen, other things emerged, too, such as security, care, working with people etc. Then we looked closer at the codes and the level of training. Still, he put away the ones that required higher education, but we talked about these anyway: I asked: ‘What is it about them that is so attractive, what do you really know about them?’ and so on. He realised that perhaps it was better to get some more education. Now he is in a process where he will use the next year to assess his opportunities concerning education and the local work market. He had a few epiphanies that he cannot just start a new career without any formal training.”

One counsellor, who gives group-based guidance to foreign-language speakers with relatively good knowledge of Norwegian, presents the following plan:

“In the first meeting we lay out all the pictures. Then the pupils are told to pick three cards in 20 minutes. Then they go to smaller groups with all the others who have the same RIASEC codes. There they can figure out what they have in common etc. In this way they also get more Norwegian training and establish new networks.”

Another counsellor describes the following alternative use of RIASEC in groups:

“We made separate PowerPoint presentations with pictures of different jobs, which they could discuss between themselves and put the RIASEC codes on them. They also put the code on each other. We focused a little on the theory behind them. When they started the exercise they knew well what it was about. That was very interesting in this connection, but we also had plenty of time. I thought, I will try this in a wider setting. We made PowerPoint presentations of pictures without codes. Then the students had to discuss between themselves in groups what you need in this or that business, who among us is this right for etc. It worked very well. That we could spend so many hours on it and that the management gave us such free rein to use it in this way was pure luxury.”

In other words, one does not necessarily have to stick to the RIASEC system to use Jobpics. Even if it can be an advantage in some settings, there is no requirement. Some counsellors say that Jobpics work fine without using RIASEC. In some settings, however, RIASEC is precisely a theme which inspires reflection and learning.

THE CONVERSATION

Most of the interviewed counsellors emphasise that Jobpics is well suited as a “conversation tool”, and that looking at pictures with the career seeker makes it easy to start a dialogue on different topics, not necessarily just about the specific careers that are represented. One can dig deeper and talk about emotions, experiences, expectations, desires and concerns.

“I like the improvised, unstructured conversation. I bring out the form by and by. I may well use Jobpics in quite different connections to start a dialogue, particularly with youth and minority speakers,” says one counsellor. Another says: “Having a picture of something very specific is a good starting point for a conversation between me and the pupil and between the pupils themselves.” Another: “By sorting careers by pictures we get the opportunity to talk about what emotions the different pictures provoke and why they might do that.”

Some counsellors say that the pictures and the conversations about them can arouse curiosity and interest, start mental processes, inspire and open up for completely new opportunities and ideas, not just for the career seeker, but also the counsellor, whether they talk about a few careers or many. **Here are some descriptions:**

“When they have chosen a career, I ask ‘What is so attractive about it?’. We talk about it, how you will like the work tasks, do you know anything about it, how will it suit you etc. I approach it from different angles. There is much information about what the person enjoys or doesn’t enjoy and what personal skills they have. Then we might go on the internet (utdanning.no) to get more information.”

“It takes time to talk about pictures. Sometimes with young people I use the pile of “likes” and ask, what attracts you to this career, and the answer may be for instance ‘they have a nice uniform’. Then I ask what contributes to “dislikes”. I write down everything. After this exercise a lot of information about the person has been disclosed. It gives a lot of knowledge about people.”

“If the idea is to get employed quickly they can browse through fairly rapidly to get an idea for instance of whether they should choose a social, service or a crafts education. I talk a lot about why they want to avoid such and such careers. It could be a young person who struggles a lot, there may be a lot of social noise around this person, and to get him or her active quickly we might choose a quick variant just to get some indications. And then in the process we can see how it works out in the kind of business where this young person is, and then call them back in. Then I often proceed in more detail.”

“We look at the different careers, talk a little about the different cards, arrange them, perhaps write down a list together of possible alternatives.”

COMBINATIONS WITH OTHER TOOLS

Most interviewed counsellors have participated in the introductory course on Jobpics and/or learnt about Jobpics in specialisation in career guidance and counselling. Here they also get a thorough introduction to other vocational interest and career guidance tools, such as the web-based WIE (Work Interest Explorer), the SCI form (Structured Career Interview), the mapping tool Profråd or the Yrkeslisten (karriereverktøy.no). In addition different information sources on careers and education online (jobbfeber.no, vilbli.no) and some mapping methods developed in-house are used. Many of the informants use several of these tools, either separately or in combination.

There are different ways in which Jobpics can be combined with other tools. One counsellor says that sometimes, when the career seeker has taken the web-based WIE first and had a RIASEC code, the counsellor picks out just the Jobpics cards which have the same code. WIE is more demanding for the career seeker. It requires the ability to work independently with a web-based tool, and they must have relatively good language and reading skills. Some counsellors ask the career seeker what they like best, looking at pictures or reading a text online. Sometimes the counsellor uses Jobpics first, and then WIE, because, as one counsellor put it, “Jobpics can be a bit superficial”. **Others comment as follows:**

“Sometimes, if the RIASEC codes point in very different directions, I use the category descriptions, which can also be found in WIE and help the career seeker to find the most correct code.”

“Usually I combine Jobpics with other tools. Most use WIE. That gives a slightly different approach. Sometimes I use Profråd, too, which is a career interest test.”

“The only thing I have linked JP to successfully is the site from the Ministry of Education and Research, vilbli.no, an information site on careers and education. When some careers emerge that the person “wishes to know more about”, and I do not know that much about them, we can find information there. I use ‘Yrkeslista’ a lot, too, because there are a lot more jobs there than in Jobpics.”

For pupils in lower secondary school SCI-S may be useful to combine with Jobpics – in a somewhat modified form, i.e. slightly simplified in terms of language adapted to pupils, says one counsellor. The tool is primarily aimed at students.

For career seekers who are unable to use tools such as WIE, the counsellors use for instance jobbfeber.no, which gives a quick overview of educations and careers. Several counsellors show the career seekers websites which might be useful, for instance utdanning.no or the sites of different course organisers.

FOLLOW-UPS

Counsellors in the county career centres usually have only one or a couple of conversations with the career seekers to chart their interests and opportunities for work or education. Follow-ups beyond this are not part of their tasks. For them it is therefore often difficult to know how things turn out for the career seeker after the counselling. Other counsellors, for instance those who work in adult education, in labour market measures or in schools, stay in contact with the career seekers/pupils over longer periods of time and also follow up actively. These differences obviously influence the way the counsellors speak about how Jobpics is followed up afterwards.

An individual Jobpics session usually ends with a list of careers that the career seeker may take home and work on further. **A concrete summary is described as follows:**

“I fill in the summary form. We talk about the different careers, I ask if there is anything they want to include on their list, they talk and I take notes. When we have summarised which careers the career seeker wants to explore further, we summarise: What now, what do you have to do now etc.”

For some career seekers Jobpics is the beginning of a process where they make a new appointment with their counsellor, and then they make for instance a top-three list and continue the next time. Others are happy with the input they have had and prefer to proceed on their own.

Some get “homework” to seek more information about these careers. They must find the competence requirements, the local labour market, geographical conditions and challenges related to realising these career wishes. They have tips on which websites they can use, they are encouraged to talk to people in the business, perhaps contact the schools and talk to them.

Then there are the guidance sessions where they go through what they have found out about the different lines of work, what is left on the list and what has been dismissed, what is realistic and useful to do next.

Counsellors who follow people over time bring the results from Jobpics into the further guidance process, for instance in order to find a suitable job or education. **One counsellor comments as follows:**

“One should not help to helplessness. They are tasked to find a number of businesses in the field we have found. They can do this on their own at home or here. Thereby they become participants in their own process. When this is done either they or I call, most people prefer that I call, and ask about the possibility of a work experience placement in a workplace. And that is a beginning.”

OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS

CONVERSATION TOOLS

When asked what Jobpics is suited for and what the most important advantages are, most say that Jobpics is a very good conversation tool. It is considered a good start to a guidance session where one can talk about knowledge and possibilities, get one's bearings in the landscape of opportunities and start discovering one's field of interest, in terms of both choice of education and choice of career.

“Jobpics is easier than to start with WIE. I can start with that right away, particularly with those who don't have much education already.”

“Some are very difficult to guide, and then you can spend perhaps 10 minutes on Jobpics. That at least is a basis for a conversation. You get a relevant conversation about work at least.”

“In addition to getting some indications of interests, it is a fantastic conversation tool. By keeping the dialogue going the room doesn't go quiet. Have something to talk about or talk around. Much more relaxed and harmless than if you were to come to an intimidating man in an office. Just by starting from these cards these young people say so much about themselves without me having to delve that much.”

“For pupils with special needs it has been very easy to get conversations going with the help of Jobpics. Not necessarily about choice of career, but about how they see themselves, what they notice, what they know about work and education etc.”

One counsellor says:

“A young girl who did not have any other ideas than to become a musician, and otherwise had no idea what she could be, first took an online interest test. What emerged there was that she was very socially interested. When she took Jobpics she was very happy when she saw pictures of children. Jobpics allowed other emotions to emerge, and she became more secure in the knowledge about herself, and if she did not succeed with her education in music, at least now she sees some other good alternatives.”

VISUAL INSPIRATION

One of the main ideas behind Jobpics is to use pictures as stimulus for awakening and exploring interests. Several counsellors emphasise the advantages of the visual aspect.

“It is something we can hold in our hands, and which we can reflect on, visually. It is very immediate. Very easily available and well suited for talking about emotions.”

“You are stimulated in quite a different way through pictures than through text. It triggers different things when you see pictures, particularly in those who don't know that many words, don't know what things are called. You can create stories from pictures; you can have a long conversation going about a picture in quite a different way than if there had only been a sentence there.”

“Without the pictures the conversation may stop a little, you can get stuck. With the pictures in front of us there is so much you can touch on which makes the conversation more fluent.”

One counsellor says:

“A man, aged around 60, had held one line of work for a long time, but had then been ill for several years and struggled to get back to work. He feels ready, but has some limitations in terms of the mental strain he can take. His experience is that he doesn't get any response on his applications because of his age. He is competent in several areas, but doesn't manage to widen his search well enough to get any response. We then decided that he should try the online interest test, but also Jobpics as a different way of exploring interests. The aim was to find new places to apply for work, different jobs he might fit in and which perhaps did not pose such great demands. It was important to have a tool which could give him some new ideas, to look at the pictures and the backside of the pictures. The pictures gave him associations, and then many things emerged which he hadn't thought about before. He worked a little with the pictures on his own, and then we talked about those careers which he had defined as the most relevant. It turned out that he could well imagine doing the same type of job as before, but a few other things, too, were triggered by the pictures, things he had not thought of before. That made us expand the search for other positions, and in the end we had a much wider search. He got a work experience placement where he also had tasks in line with his competence. He will probably get a job.”

REALITY CHECK

Jobpics is considered to be well suited as a reality check and “quality control” of career wishes and thus as a way to ensure a good job match before on-the-job training, or as a way of exploring new opportunities if the on-the-job training turns out to be unsuitable.

One counsellor says:

“Dream and reality do not always go together. We have on offer on-the-job training in a business. Then it is important to find out what kind of business you want to work in. We cannot have a game of chance by trying a bit of this and a bit of that, because it is pretty difficult to get these work experience placements, and the more work we have put into ‘quality control’ of the young people's wishes, the better. We notice such a big difference from before we started using Jobpics. We sat and talked and

guessed, and all the time the pupils came back and said “this was not for me”, “I can’t take this” – this almost never happens now. We have much better hits when the youths get work experience placements in workplaces now. This Jobpics thing has actually unveiled some wishes and things I didn’t think was possible.”

Another counsellor tells the following story:

“One boy of around 19 who hadn’t completed upper secondary school had very vague ambitions. He mentioned something about engines, but it was very lofty, and he couldn’t think realistically. He took Jobpics because it was important to him to see that there might be something that was achievable, that there was something out there which he could train for, that he could manage on his own. I guided him during the application process for upper secondary education, where he listed several alternatives. Then he was admitted to what he wanted and was thrilled with that.”

It is not that common to use Jobpics in primary school or in lower secondary school yet, but several of those interviewed state that it should be used in order to avoid wrong choices and thereby prevent drop-outs. **One counsellor says:**

“If my lower secondary school had been equipped with such a tool, the youth had been spared much suffering. The main reason why they drop out is that they make the wrong choice. It is hard to get your bearings as a 15-year-old. They are likely to choose the same as their mates, and that is like a shot in the dark. And then they discover that it is awful and drop out. Then we do a mapping and most of the time we hit it spot on – if only it had been done earlier, in primary school.”

One lower-secondary-school counsellor who has already started using Jobpics says:

“I use it in different ways according to need. For instance, I have used it simply to make it clear what different programmes exist in upper secondary school. It is evident that you have for instance a programme called “Services and transport” and a programme called “Health and social services”. The pupils see that quite clearly when they see the cards arranged by programme.”

“It is important that it is linked to education codes. If I had only used JP and nothing else, I would have thought it was very good to have the RIASEC codes and the education codes, and the careers on the back, because they provide a reality check.”

Another counsellor has experienced the following:

“Some very weak pupils for some reason often want to work in health and social services, for instance become a child and youth care worker. Then we look more closely at what tasks this implies, and I ask some challenging questions. One pupil

had chosen kindergarten only because he had once been a babysitter, and that was the only thing he could think of. During the conversation about the pictures he could see other alternatives and concluded on his own that working with children would become too difficult.”

DISCOVERING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Sometimes the counsellors assist career seekers who have already chosen a career or an education, and some may have worked for years, but then it turns out that it will be difficult or impossible to go into or continue in this career or education. In these cases Jobpics can help discover new opportunities, perhaps careers which the counsellor himself has not thought of. **Here are some examples:**

“A young boy, around 20 years of age, living at home, had the theoretical part of a craft training, but got a chronic disease which made him physically unable to complete his apprenticeship. He had no vocational knowledge. The only thing he wanted was an education, but he didn’t know which. He had worked with Jobpics for a long time and chosen few cards. The careers he had chosen had to do with kindness and care, but not as a health worker, and he scored slightly high on I, i.e. the theoretical, and on E, which indicated that he was quite mature. The question was if he could manage to complete an education. The helper role emerged strongly and he discovered that he wanted to be a teacher. He got work placement in an SFO [after-school programme for children], where his interests in crafts were made use of: he was good at woodwork. It was important for him to start somewhere and then figure things out later. Arrangements, transport etc. were agreed on with the headmaster. It turned out very well for him. He is going on to further training as a child and youth care worker.”

“An adult man in his 50s who had had the same vocation all his life, had become very ill and couldn’t continue in the old job. I have had several conversations with him and several guidance sessions without us being able to figure out what he could do. But when he started with Jobpics, he studied the pictures and didn’t say much while he looked. Put them in piles. Then he took one of the cards and said: ‘It’s strange. Here is the job I have been thinking of all the time: sexton. That is what I want after all.’ I told him to look into the work market and explore the opportunities thoroughly.”

“A young woman had begun as an apprentice in a beauty salon, but she discovered that the work involved getting too close and intimate with other people for her liking. She was so full of anxiety and tension that she was ‘completely transparent’. When we took Jobpics, she suddenly made a very specific choice on something she very much wanted to do. Already the next month she got a work placement position and training in this vocation and became much more secure in her everyday life. She eventually got a permanent position. I would never have thought of this career

myself if I had just sat with the girl and talked to her, and she would never have thought of it herself. It was the picture of the career that was decisive.”

A SUPPLEMENT TO OTHER TOOLS

Jobpics is also considered to be a good supplement to other career guidance tools: interest exploration tools.

“The theory behind Jobpics has huge transfer value. It is easy for a career counsellor to start with this tool. Then you get the theory and the connections which can be transferred to other tools.”

“It can be an important supplement to the other tests in situations where you need a confirmation of the choices you have made, but also when you want to move to new opportunities, precisely because it gives room to emotions, too.”

One counsellor provides the following example:

“A man, aged around 60, had held one line of work for a long time, but had then been ill for several years and struggled to get back to work. He feels ready, but has some limitations in terms of the mental strain he can take. His experience is that he doesn’t get any response on his applications because of his age. He is competent in several areas, but doesn’t manage to widen his search well enough to get any response. We then decided that he should try the online interest test, but also Jobpics as a different way of exploring interests. The aim was to find new places to apply for work, different jobs he might fit in and which perhaps did not pose such great demands. It was important to have a tool which could give him some new ideas, look at the pictures, and the backside of the pictures. The pictures gave him associations, and then many things emerged which he hadn’t thought about before. He worked a little with the pictures on his own, and then we talked about the careers that he had defined as most relevant. It turned out that he could well imagine doing the same type of job as before, but a few other things, too, were triggered by the pictures, things he had not thought about before. That made us expand the search for other positions, and in the end we had a much wider search. He got a work experience placement where he also had tasks in line with his competence. He will probably get a job.”

Different descriptions of the ways in which Jobpics is used show that there are big variations in the use and several people emphasise precisely the flexibility as one of the most positive aspects of Jobpics.

“The advantage with Jobpics is that it is so flexible when it comes to the scale on which you want to use it: just to get a quick indication, or you can delve into the soul and find what kind of personality type it is.”

“Jobpics can be used in many contexts; you don’t have to follow a manual from A to Z. You can use it for precisely what each individual needs.”

Some point out the advantage of having a tool which is easy to use and which does not require expert knowledge:

“It’s a visual tool, which is easy to manage, it is easy to transport, practical in every way, not that much text, very relevant for most people, it contains the most important careers.”

“It is not something that is hard to use. It is not so advanced that one has to be a psychologist to use it. It is fine for a counsellor to use.”

“It is easy to use. Not something you need to prepare a lot for, one can take it out spontaneously. Good for pupils who only need basic competence; there are plenty of suggestions for careers where perhaps you don’t need upper secondary school.”

It is true that Jobpics does not require expert knowledge or professional training, but some still warn against using it too lightly and without the necessary competence:

“Jobpics has no value unless it is linked to guidance and an explorative approach. It can be abused. For instance if a counsellor in lower secondary school categorises a pupil: ‘you are like this, and these are the careers you can choose from’. Jobpics is just a part of the guidance process. It doesn’t give any clear answer, it is too superficial for that. It also depends on what kind of background and attitude you have as a counsellor. It mustn’t replace the counsellor role, mustn’t be used instead of something else, but as a supplement.”

CRITICAL REMARKS

When asked what Jobpics is less suited for and what is perceived as disadvantages, several counsellors reply that it is not suited for career seekers who want careers with higher education:

“There is a little too much focus on the manual, practical careers.”

“Why are there not more jobs that require higher education on Bachelor or Master levels? There are some codes, but that’s not a good enough starting point.”

Some complain that there are some repetitions or some pictures that are not so good at showing job situations:

“Some pictures of careers are a little uninformative, particularly when it comes to office-based jobs, but that is a challenge. It is important, then, to fill in with follow-up questions, and perhaps we find some more pictures online and can look closer at what the job entails.”

“Several careers reappear on different cards, on the front and on the back of other cards, and they can then reinforce each other. For instance, SFO [after-school-programmes], kindergarten worker etc.”

“There are quite a lot of shop careers. There isn’t that much difference if you are a salesman in a shoe store, a record store or a toy store, is there? Is it necessary to have one card for each?”

Another counsellor, however, tells a story of a case when precisely these variations were decisive for making the correct choice and have a specified career wish:

“A woman, around 40 years of age, foreign-language speaker, wanted to find a position for language practice, which could later count towards a certificate of apprenticeship. It was all about finding a position where she could work with the things she was interested in. First we had a get-to-know-each-other conversation and then she took Jobpics. In this case there were not that many different codes. They mainly centred on shop careers. But there were many different shop careers, and she did not know that much about what you do in the different lines of business. I spent some time on information about the different careers. She had chosen a lot of shop careers, so we had to fine-tune the question of sales careers and put away some of the cards which had products that she was less interested in.”

Others emphasise that some of the popular careers are missing, are misleading or outdated:

“Some careers are missing. For instance milieu therapist, which is a career that many want to choose, but that isn’t there. And why aren’t there more about media and communication? ‘Child and youth care worker’ is very misleading. In the picture there is a youth club, but most of them work in kindergartens.”

“The working life changes continuously, and it must be updated all the time.”

“Some careers are outdated. Digital tools can be updated continuously. That isn’t possible with these pictures. New careers emerge. We notice that quite quickly. For instance there isn’t anything called a children’s nurse anymore. But I try to turn it around, make it into a subject: careers come and go and you must be prepared for that in society. That is no disadvantage, but you have to be aware of it, because then you can do something about it.”

Some think that the format itself, the fact that it consists only of printed cards, can constitute some limitations on the use:

“The disadvantage is that there is no digital source belonging to it so that I can choose a picture and show it on my smart board so that everyone can see it. Or that

you could have links which the pupils could work on on their own. I cannot lend the cards to them. They are too expensive. So it is a bit too exclusive.”

Several found it problematic that the pictures show such a traditional gender pattern, and some criticise the fact that there is no variation in terms of ethnicity. All the people who are portrayed are white, while the target group for Jobpics might well be immigrants/refugees with a different ethnic background. “This is something you must be aware of. You have to say something about it, and you could well make it into a topic for discussion”, one counsellor emphasised.

Some think that time constraints can limit what Jobpics can be used for, even if there are certain possibilities for modifying its use:

“You must have time for it. The local NAV offices have bought it, but they have little time. It is good to have that competence, but they do not have time to use it for all their clients, they have perhaps 300. Then it’s difficult to use it on everyone. In the rehabilitation sector they have more time.”

“If you are to use RIASEC more and use it fully as we have learnt in the courses we have been to, it would take very long time. But it has worked well when I have used it in different ways, too, when I don’t use everything.”



CONCLUSION

The counsellors who were interviewed had in common that they use Jobpics to assist people who want to find out what career or education fits their desires and abilities. Beyond this, the more specific goals for the use of Jobpics and the way the possibilities in this material are exploited, are very different. In some connections Jobpics is used not just for interest mapping, but also for teaching concepts and disseminating knowledge about working life. Sometimes it is a question of widening the horizon and making the opportunities visible. At other times the goal is to get an overview in an ocean of ideas and put away what is unrealistic or impossible. The big variations in the way the material is used and the adaptations that can be made for different purposes and target groups make it very useful in a range of different areas.

The advantage of its visual, picture-based nature is that it gives room for associations without limiting linguistic frames. The pictures are well suited to get a conversation started on opportunities, limitations and emotions associated with specific work tasks and situations in working life. Pictures inspire associations about conceptions and experiences, which might be important to bring out in order to make the right choices.

As opposed to standardised test batteries which require specialist knowledge to apply and interpret, Jobpics is a very free and flexible tool. It is an advantage that no certification and expert knowledge are required and that there is no set recipe for its use, but one should notice that all counsellors who have been quoted in this report have participated in the introductory course, and that they also have competence in counselling and explorative guidance and know in what way and when Jobpics can be useful and appropriate.

jobpics

WWW.ATTFORINGSBEDRIFTENE.NO/INFORMATION-IN-ENGLISH/JOBPICS-EUROPE.ASPX



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