

Michael Schemmann (Hg.)

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Yearbook of  
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Adult Basic Education Research



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International Yearbook of Adult Education**

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Michael Schemmann (Hg.)

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# Adult Basic Education Research. An Introduction to the Topic

MICHAEL SCHEMMANN

Volume 42 of the *International Yearbook of Adult Education* is dedicated to Adult Basic Education Research. It is the second time that the International Yearbook focuses on this topic, since volume 20/21 in 1991/1992 addressed the topic “Literacy and Adult Basic Education in European Industrial Countries” (Knoll 1992). However, this time, the aim is to display on-going research on adult basic education. As such this volume presents current research questions, theoretical and methodological approaches as well as most recent empirical findings.

This introductory article will start off by giving an overview of the development and the discussion of the topic, focusing the political debate as well as research. Following, the outline of the concept of this year’s volume and the articles will be highlighted. The article will conclude with some remarks on our own account.

## **1 Brief history of the development of the programmatic debate and research on Adult Basic Education**

When focusing on the institutionalization of literacy and adult basic education, the political debate and research as well as the national and international level have to be taken into account. In the following, a brief history of the institutionalization will be presented, but particularly focusing on the role of international agencies.

One of the key actors in this process is the “United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)” which started engaging in literacy work with its foundation in 1945. Literacy was considered a basis for participation in modern life. However, illiteracy was generally seen as a problem of so-called developing countries. It was at the beginning of the year 1979 in a meeting of representatives of the member states of the European Union that the Portuguese representative asked if there was a literacy problem in the EU (Schöfthaler 1992, p. 2). Most of the representatives and especially the German one denied this, not considering, that during the 1970s numerous local initiatives were founded in industrialized countries by teachers, social workers and psychologists to start literacy work (Steuken 2016, p. 18). As a consequence, loud protest was formulated and addressed to the government representatives. Both UNESCO and the German UNESCO Commission started working on the topic and helped to establish the topic of functional illiteracy in industrialized countries on the political agenda. What is more, as Schöfthaler points



out, it was made clear during this phase that the idea, that illiteracy was a problem of developing countries to which the industrialized countries had the solution, had come to an end (Schöffthaler 1992, p. 4).

1990 can be seen as the pivotal year for international efforts to strengthen programs for adult basic education. UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the Worldbank initiated the “World Conference on Education for All. Meeting Basic Learning Needs”. More than 1500 delegates from 155 countries adopted two documents: The “World Declaration on Education for All” as well as the “Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs” (UNESCO 1990). The Framework defines targets and goals as follows:

“Countries may wish to set their own targets for the 1990s in terms of the following proposed dimensions:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities, including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children;
2. Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as “basic”) by the year 2000;
3. Improvement in learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (e.g. 80 % of 14-year-olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement;
4. Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to, say, one-half its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female literacy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates;
5. Expansion of provisions of basic education and training in other essential skills required by youth and adults, with program effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural changes and impacts on health, employment and productivity;
6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development, made available through all education channels including the mass media, other forms of modern and traditional communication, and social action, with effectiveness assessed in terms of behavioural change” (UNESCO 1990, p. 3).

Politically, UNESCO also tried to point the way by proclaiming 1990 as International Literacy Year which re-emphasized the targets of the framework. But as a series of international comparative studies on literacy indicates, the ambitious goal of the reduction of the adult illiteracy rate was not achieved by 2000 and still has not been achieved (UNESCO 2015, p.135).

As regards research, a milestone was set in the 1990s by the “Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)” and its study “International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)”. The study examined prose literacy, document literacy and quantitative literacy in more than 20 countries and also set a certain standard: “Level 3 is regarded by many experts as the minimum level of competence needed to cope

adequately with the complex demands of everyday life and work” (OECD/Statistics Canada 1997, S. 3). As was shown elsewhere, the effects of the partly dramatic and alarming findings for industrial countries on adult education policies were contingent (Schemmann 2007). The IALS methodologically paved the path for the PISA-studies (“Programme for International Student Assessment”), which were also carried out under the auspices of OECD and intended to measure 15-year-old students’ performance in mathematics, science, and reading. What is more, the PIAAC-study needs to be mentioned here: Published in 2013, the “Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies” assesses and analyzes adult skills. As such the domains of literacy, numeracy and problem solving are in focus. The survey is conducted in over 40 countries worldwide and is concerned with the 16 to 65-year-old adults (Rammstedt et al. 2013).

Coming back to the political agenda, it was again UNESCO launching the “United Nations Literacy Decade” in 2003 (United Nations 2003). What is more, the World Education Forum in Dakar integrated the efforts around literacy and adult basic education into the “Education for All”-initiative (UNESCO 2000). One of the central goals was again to reduce the illiteracy rate by half and to establish basic adult education for all as a right (Lenhart 2018, p. 14). This initiative also had some resonance on the German national level. The German education policy established a funding scheme for literacy and adult basic education projects in 2006. All in all, more than 100 projects in research and development were to be funded, amongst them an empirical study called “leo. – Level-One Study”, analyzing literacy rates among the German-speaking population in Germany. As opposed to PIAAC or IALS, LEO focuses on the lowest competence level, the so-called level one (Grotlüschen & Riekmann 2012). From 2012 to 2016 Germany ran a National Strategy for Literacy and adult basic education and in 2016 the so-called “AlphaDekade 2016–2026” (BMBF & KMK 2016) was launched with the overall goal of reducing functional literacy in Germany and enhancing the levels of adult basic education.

All in all, it can be stated that there has been an interplay between policy and research on adult basic education, which made sure that it remained both on international as well as national political agendas.

## 2 On the concept and the individual contributions

When putting the articles for volume 42 of the International Yearbook of Adult Education together, the main intention was to analyze the topic of “Adult Basic Education” based on the understanding of adult education as a multilevel system. Thus, this volume displays articles on the macro, meso and micro level. At the same time, multiple facets of the topic were included in order to develop a complex picture of the research carried out on adult basic education. As such the aspects of policy, diagnosis, teaching and learning as well as teaching competencies were considered.

The article *Practices and Competencies – Evidence from an Adult Literacy Survey in Germany* by Anke Grotlüschen, Klaus Buddeberg, Gregor Dutz, Lisanne Heilmann and Christopher Stammer is based on data of the LEO-study 2018. Thus, the article reports data on the proportion of low literate adults among the population between 18 and 64. What is more, the article widens the perspective towards an understanding of literacy represented by practices. As such, the relationship between levels of literacy and the usage of certain specific practices is focused on as well. As a theoretical point of reference, the article draws on work from the New Literacy Studies.

Uwe Gartenschläger and Ounpheng Khammang focus on the political dimension of adult basic education. They put the process of developing and adopting a policy of Lifelong Learning in Lao PDR to the centre of their analysis. *The Process of Adopting a Lifelong Learning Decree in Laos* starts by outlining the general social and economic situation as a framework for educational policy. What is more, the special role of the “Deutscher Volkshochschulverband (DVV International)” as a development aid organization and its activities in Lao is discussed. At the heart of the analysis, it focuses on the motivation and potential benefits as well as the process of drafting a Lifelong Learning Decree. Thus, the article contributes to a further understanding of the policy development for Lifelong Learning and adult basic education on a national level.

The article *Effects of Work-Oriented Adult Basic Education Trainings: Addressing Employee’s Competencies across Sectors* by Dennis Klinkhammer and Michael Schemmann focuses on effects of work-oriented adult basic education trainings in different industrial sectors. It is based on the research project “ABAG<sup>2</sup>” funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). The study draws on a longitudinal self-assessment of the participants and differentiates various dimensions of competence. Furthermore, the study referred to individual preferences, satisfaction with the work situation and with work-related trainings.

The article *Professionalization of Teachers in Work-Oriented Literacy and Adult Basic Education. Process Orientation as a Special Competence Requirement of Teachers* by Julia Koller and Carolin Radtke takes its starting point in the assumption that the field of work-oriented adult basic education constitutes a specific framework, which also has an impact on the competencies required by the teaching staff in this field. Thus, the article aims at identifying these special competence requirements by carrying out an exploratory study which was also part of the research project “ABAG<sup>2</sup>”. The study employs a multi-perspective analytical concept including the perspective of the teaching staff, stakeholders in companies as well as participants. The article highlights that process orientation and the focus on addressees are distinct competencies for the field of adult basic education but as well for adult education in general.

Finally, Irit Bar-Kochva, Réka Vágvölgyi and Alexander Bulajic focus on low literacy skills in adulthood, which have been associated mainly with a difficulty in reading comprehension. In the article *The Abilities and Deficits in Reading and Writing of Low Literate Adults* they pose the question whether the difficulty of low literate adults is restricted to reading comprehension or whether deficits can be traced back to the more basic reading and writing skills. The article analyzes previously published em-

pirical studies and highlights deficits not only in reading comprehension, but also in the very basic components of reading and writing such as decoding, orthographic knowledge, word recognition and spelling, in addition to deficits in reading fluency. What is more, the article also indicates to a large variance within adults participating in basic education and literacy classes, as a considerable proportion of those adults do not exhibit extreme deficits across the different reading and writing components.

Next to the thematic articles this year's volume of the *International Yearbook of Adult Education* also comprises one article in the section Miscellaneous. In 2019 many of the German "Volkshochschulen (VHS)" celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their foundation in 1919 since it was in article 148 of the constitution of Weimar that adult education was acknowledged as a public responsibility. *Annabel Jenner* takes this anniversary in her article with the title *Potenziale und methodische Herausforderungen längsschnittlicher Programmanalysen. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag anlässlich des 100-jährigen Jubiläums der Volkshochschulen (Potentials and Methodological Challenges within Longitudinal Program Analysis. A Discussion in the Light of the Centenary of "Volkshochschulen")* as a starting point and introduces a combined teaching and research project which was conducted by a group of university students, carrying out an empirical analysis of programs of a "Volkshochschule" from 1919 until 2017. The article discusses the specific methodological potentials and challenges the method of program analysis brings along when applying it in a historical longitudinal study over a period of a century. Furthermore, genuine potentials for research drawing on the method of program analysis are highlighted.

### 3 On our own Account

Finally, a heartfelt thanks goes to all actors who contributed to this year's volume of the *International Yearbook of Adult Education*. As such, a thank you goes to all authors of contributions, who prepared their manuscripts within the deadlines. It guaranteed that the Yearbook could be published in time. What is more, a thank you is to be said to the reviewers of the articles and to the authors of the review section.

Once again, my personal thanks go to *Lisa Breyer* who runs the editorial department of the *International Yearbook of Adult Education*. Her engagement and her constant effort to improve the quality of processes guarantee the standard of the *International Yearbook of Adult Education*. Unfortunately, *Lisa Breyer* will leave the editorial department in 2019. I would like to express my gratitude for her engagement in the last six years and wish her all the best for her professional and personal future.

Volume 43 of the *International Yearbook of Adult Education* will focus on the topic "Researching and Analyzing Adult Education Policies". We welcome contributions to this volume as well as contributions to the sections Miscellaneous and Reviews.

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## **I Thematischer Schwerpunkt/Key Subject**





# Practices and Competencies – Evidence from an Adult Literacy Survey in Germany

ANKE GROTLÜSCHEN, KLAUS BUDDEBERG, GREGOR DUTZ, LISANNE HEILMANN,  
CHRISTOPHER STAMMER

## Abstract

Basic competencies like reading and writing skills are seen as the necessary fundament for independent and far-reaching social participation. The proportions of adults who only have low reading and writing skills differ from country to country. However, even in highly developed countries there are larger proportions of adults who perform low in literacy assessments. The second German literacy survey “LEO 2018” confirms this observation. About 12.1% of the German speaking adult population (aged 18–64) has remarkable difficulties in reading and writing. In comparison to the first round of the survey which was carried out in 2010 the proportion of low literate adults in Germany is declining. This contribution refers to results of the current survey, offers possible explanations for the trend between 2010 and 2018, describes the composition of the low-literate subpopulation and discusses the main predictors for low literacy. Unlike most former surveys, the LEO survey 2018 also gathered information about literacy related practices in different fields of life (finance, digital, health, and politics). Adults who have difficulties with reading and writing on average perform most literacy related practices less often.

Keywords: Adult Literacy, Large Scale Assessment, Literacy Practices, Adult Basic Education

## 1 Introduction

Reading and writing are basic competencies which are seen as the fundament for independent and far-reaching social participation. Since the 1990s it is well-known that even in highly developed countries there are large proportions of adults who have serious difficulties in reading and writing. Educational policy reacted differently to these results. For instance, as a reaction to the results of the “International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)” (OECD & Statistics Canada 2000), England launched the “Skills for Life strategy” (BIS 2004), which was announced in 2001 by former Prime Minister Tony Blair. In 2013 the fight against illiteracy was proclaimed a “grande cause nationale” (national priority) in France (Jeantheau 2015, p. 177). In 2016 the “National Decade for Alphabetization and Basic Education” (Nationale Dekade für Alphabeti-

sierung und Grundbildung) was launched in Germany by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) and the federal states (BMBF & KMK 2016). A major research project in the National Decade is the second Level One Survey “LEO 2018 – Living with low literacy”. It is a follow up survey on the “leo. – Level-One Study” from 2010 (Grotlüschen & Riekmann 2011), but extends its scope beyond measuring reading and writing skills to include a broader understanding of literacy. Both surveys are cross-sectional studies. The literacy proficiency scores in 2010 and 2018 are linked and therefore comparable.

LEO 2018 combines an assessment module with an extensive questionnaire regarding literacy-related *practices* and domain-specific *basic competencies*. The objective is not only to examine the literacy skills of adults in Germany, but also to look into the connection between (low) literacy skills and the frequency of performing certain literacy-related practices (e.g. writing in social networks or reading health-related documents) as well as self-reported basic competencies in four domains. LEO 2018 aims to widen the focus from an assessment of reading and writing skills to a broader understanding of literacy as (social) practices; following the works of Street (e.g. 1995) and Gee (e.g. 1991)

In this article, by presenting central results of the survey, we want to answer two questions:

1. What has changed since 2010 when looking at the total numbers and the composition of the group of low-literate adults as well as the predictors for low literacy skills?
2. Are low-literate adults less likely to perform literacy related practices?

## 2 Literacy in and outside of large-scale assessments

At the turn of the millennium, the “Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)” raised the awareness of reading and writing skills. The survey had an enormous influence on educational policy in the years following the survey (Sjøberg 2018). However, literacy assessment on a large scale did not start with PISA. It was in 1994 when the “International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)” compared the reading skills of adults in eight countries in the first round (OECD & Statistics Canada 2000). The effects of IALS on the educational policy in the participating countries differed. Reports on IALS and its consequences were published for England and Wales (Brooks 2011), Scotland (St. Clair 2011), the USA (Pugsley 2011), Canada (Rubenson 2011), Australia (Mendelovits 2011) and Norway (Gabrielsen 2011). The history of the “rise of international large-scale assessments” (Addey, Sellar, Steiner-Khamsi, Lingard, & Verger 2017) continued with the “Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey” (ALL) (OECD & Statistics Canada, 2005) and more recently with the “Programme for the Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)” (OECD 2013). Grek (2010) elaborates the role of international organizations in this development – especially the role of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OCED). Trends between

these surveys have been reported by Desjardins (2017). Comparing IALS and PIAAC, he states that literacy proficiency at the population level has stagnated or declined slightly in most countries.

Addey et al. (2017) interpret the development of large-scale assessments as a broader shift in assessment culture since the 1990s. They point to the importance of data for educational policy to compare performance and conclude:

“International large-scale assessments have become an important element of global governance in education by joining up the measurement of educational performance and reinforcing the view that comparison of this performance is important for economic and education policy making.” (Addey et al. 2017, p. 435)

Hamilton, Maddox and Addey (2015) view the growing dominance of large-scale assessments (LSA) or international large-scale assessments (ILSA) critically. They question the translation of the complexities of reading and writing into quantitative descriptions. Additional concern about PIAAC regards the very strong focus on economic aspects and employability (Evans 2015; Rubenson 2019, p. 304).

Meanwhile, in three rounds of assessments, PIAAC has reached 39 countries. The Sustainable Development Goals defined by UNESCO create the need for monitoring of learning progress all over the world. The possibilities for monitoring are discussed in the context of the “Global Alliance for Monitoring Learning (GAML)” (Hanemann 2019, p. 255, footnote). A further global expansion of ILSAs is therefore on the agenda. An expansion is also discussed in the context of PISA, called PISA for Development (OECD 2016).

PIAAC reported that in the 24 countries that were analyzed in the first round of the survey an average of 15.5% of the adults had low literacy skills; indicated by PIAAC levels 1 or below. For Germany, PIAAC reported a proportion of 17.5%, significantly higher than the OECD average (OECD, 2013, p. 63). Besides the international surveys, a number of national surveys produced results on adult basic competencies – for example the “English Skills for Life survey” (BIS 2011; Williams 2003) and the French IVQ (ANLCI 2005, 2012; Jeantheau 2007, 2012). First results on low-literate adults in Germany were published in 2011 (Grotlüschen & Riekmann 2011). A second round of the LEO survey was conducted in 2018. First results were published in May 2019 (Grotlüschen, Buddeberg, Dutz, Heilmann & Stammer 2019). The results of this survey – LEO 2018 – are in the center of this paper.

While there are only few longitudinal surveys on adult skills (e.g. Germany: “National Educational Panel Survey (NEPS)”, Blossfeld, Roßbach, & Maurice 2011 or USA: “Longitudinal Study of Adult Learning (LSAL)”, Reder 2012) it is possible to report the reading and writing skills of adults over time by comparing the results of cross-sectional surveys over time (for France cf. Jeantheau 2015). As the German dataset of IALS had technical weaknesses and Germany did not participate in ALL, until now, there was no trend to be reported regarding low literacy over time.

The current dominance of large-scale assessment surveys might obscure the fact that literacy research is not just assessment. In fact, literacy research is diverse

and contested. A wide field of research follows mainly qualitative approaches. A lot of this work can be associated with the New Literacy Studies (NLS). Authors from the NLS argue that literacy is not a unique set of cognitive skills, which can be defined universally or measured in decontextualized tests. They define literacy as diverse social practices. Brian Street formulated the opposition between an autonomous model (measurable skill) and an ideological model (social practice) of literacy (e.g. 1995, 2003). The social practices approach implies that literacy differs between different social contexts, between regions, and between individuals. Practices can be observed in qualitative research approaches.

By comparison, in quantitative research there is usually only little concern about practices. PIAAC implemented questions about reading and writing practices (also mathematical and computer related practices). In PIAAC these practices are called “skills use” (Reder 2017). Based on PIAAC data a correlation between skills and practices has been reported (OECD 2013, p. 214). The LSAL (Reder 2012) also reports this correlation. It seems that higher skill proficiencies go hand in hand with higher frequencies of skill use.

### 3 Conceptual basis and survey design

Large-scale surveys carry a strong impact on definitions and understandings about literacy. In the context of the LEO surveys a system of so-called Alpha Levels is used to indicate the proficiency levels of reading and writing skills. Thus, low literacy means that a person masters literacy to the degree of single letters (Alpha Level 1), individual words (Alpha Level 2) or short sentences (Alpha Level 3) but fails when attempting to read or write continuing text – even short texts (Grotlüschen, Riekmann, & Buddeberg 2014, pp. 57–58). LEO 2018 uses the term “low literacy” or “low-literate adults” – always with regard to the dominant way of reading and writing – dominant literacy – in Germany. In LEO 2010, the term “functional illiteracy” had been used. This term was the central term in the discussion in Germany since the 1970s. It has been criticized for being stigmatizing and unsuitable for working in adult education (Steuten 2014) and is therefore no longer used by LEO 2018.

Taking into account practices, the survey widened the focus from a narrow understanding of literacy (as reading and writing skills) to a wider approach regarding literacy as social practice in certain domains. LEO 2018 chose several areas of life regarded crucial for social participation (Grotlüschen et al. 2019). These areas (digital, political, health-related, financial) are also at the focus of the current German campaign on literacy and basic skills (National Decade for Alphabetization and Basic Education). For these fields a number of newly developed questions on practices was implemented into the questionnaire. This adaption of practices into a large-scale quantitative survey follows the objective to learn more about vulnerability and social exclusion that may accompany low literacy. Low reading and writing skills in general go along with less frequent use of these skills (without claiming for unidirectional

causality). But is this general observation true for specific practices in different areas of daily life? As published before, existing deficit-oriented stereotypes about low skilled adults can be put into question using large scale data (Grotlüschen, Riekmann, & Buddeberg 2015).

The data base for LEO 2018 is a representative sample of 7,192 German speaking adults aged between 18 and 64 years. The sample includes persons living in private households and speaking German well enough to follow the approximately 60-minute interview (including the assessment). The base sample includes 6,681 persons and is supplemented by an additional sample of 511 persons with low levels of formal education.

The sample is weighted using iterative proportional fitting, taking into account demographic and socio-economic indicators (e.g. federal state, gender, age, employment status, formal education) to correct biases in the sample. This allows us to make statements about the population defined above. Data collection, data preparation and weighting were implemented by Kantar Public in Munich.

The interviews were carried out as a household survey in the form of a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI). The first module of the survey consists of an extensive questionnaire about various aspects of the respondent's life situation. All questions of the questionnaire are read out loud to the interviewees, all answers are written down by the interviewers.

The second module is a paper-based assessment with items to test for reading and writing skills. These items are to be solved and written down by the respondents without any assistance by the interviewers. The items are calibrated using Item Response Theory (IRT) and linked between LEO 2010 and 2018. A latent regression model was used for population modelling and nearly all variables measured by the questionnaire served as covariates. Ten plausible values were drawn to obtain proficiency scores.

## 4 Findings

This section first presents general findings about the number of low-literate adults and about the development since 2010. The subsequent section presents results regarding the composition of the low-literate subpopulation followed by multivariate results regarding the predictors for low literacy. Finally, results regarding literacy related practices are presented.

### 4.1 Literacy skills results in Germany 2018 and 2010

About 12.1% of German-speaking adults aged between 18 and 64 years have low reading and writing skills (indicated by Alpha Levels 1, 2 and 3). This relates to a number of 6.2 million adults (see table 1). The majority of these 6.2 million adults achieves Alpha Level 3.

**Table 1:** German-speaking adult population (aged 18–64) classified by Alpha Level (2018) (Source: Hamburg University, LEO 2018 – living with low literacy. Base: German-speaking adults (aged 18–64), n = 7,192, weighted, any deviations from 100 % or from total figures are due to rounding)

Literacy level	Alpha Level	Percentage of adult population	Number (extrapolated)
Low literacy	Alpha 1	0.6 %	0.3 million
	Alpha 2	3.4 %	1.7 million
	Alpha 3	8.1 %	4.2 million
	Alpha 1–3	12.1 %	6.2 million
Frequent spelling errors	Alpha 4	20.5 %	10.6 million
	Above Alpha 4	67.5 %	34.8 million

Compared to 2010 the proportion of low-literacy adults declined from 7.5 million in 2010 to 6.2 million. This represents a decrease of 2.4 percentage points from 14.5 % in 2010 to 12.1 % in 2018 (see table 2). This change is statistically significant (t-test,  $p < 0.01$ ). No significant changes occur among alpha-levels 1 and 2, which represent a small number of cases. Among the higher alpha-levels the changes are statistically significant: A significant decline occurred regarding alpha-levels 3 and 4 while a significant increase occurred regarding skills above alpha-level 4. A similar development was reported for the two Skills for Life surveys in England (BIS 2011, p. 2).

**Table 2:** German-speaking adult population (aged 18–64) classified by Alpha Level, comparing 2010 and 2018 (Source: Hamburg University, LEO 2018 – living with low literacy; leo. – Level One Study 2010. Base: German-speaking adults (aged 18–64), n = 7,192 (2018), n = 8,436 (2010), weighted. Deviations from 100 % are due to rounding)

Alpha Level	2010 percentage	2018 percentage	Significance of change
Alpha 1	0.6 %	0.6 %	Not significant
Alpha 2	3.9 %	3.4 %	Not significant
Alpha 3	10.0 %	8.1 %	Significant ( $p < 0.01$ )
Alpha 1–3	14.5 %	12.1 %	Significant ( $p < 0.01$ )
Alpha 4	25.9 %	20.5 %	Significant ( $p < 0.01$ )
Above Alpha 4	59.7 %	67.5 %	Significant ( $p < 0.01$ )
Total	100 %	100 %	

This decline cannot be traced back to effects of educational policy regarding adult education, or more precisely the effects of adult education policy are very limited. It appears as an effect of a changing social composition. An increased number of adults is employed compared to 2010. The average years of schooling among adults aged between 18 and 64 have constantly risen in the last decades. With the eldest age

group having left the sample (who is now between 65 and 73 years) this becomes visible in the sample (reported similar for France cf. Jeantheau 2015, p. 181). A larger share of adults reached higher formal school qualifications.

An entropy balancing procedure (Hainmueller 2011, p. 30) was carried out in order to compare the two samples from 2010 and 2018. This statistical method is used to weight the sample of one survey against a second survey. It can then be shown which change would have occurred if the sample composition of 2018 would have applied to 2010 as well. Specifically, the population composition regarding employment, educational attainment, first language, and age cohort were included in the modelling. The entropy balancing shows that there would not have been a remarkable decline between LEO 2010 and 2018 if these compositional changes had not occurred.

## 4.2 Composition of the low-literate subpopulation

The composition of the subpopulation of 6.2 million adults with low literacy skills did not change fundamentally compared with 2010. The following section displays this composition regarding gender, age group, first language, formal education, and employment status. The tables therefore do not refer to the entire sample ( $n = 7,192$ ) but to the low-literate subsample ( $n = 867$  in the weighted dataset).

*Gender:* Among the 6.2 million low-literate adults are more men than women. About 58.4% are men while 41.7% of the low-literate population are women. The proportions differ only slightly (and not significantly) from the values in 2010.

*Age groups:* About 19.5% of the low-literate adults are between 18 and 29 years old. The middle birth cohorts (aged 30–39) include 23.7% of the low-literate adults while adults older than 50 years make up a proportion of 56.9% of low-literate adults. These results correspond to results from PIAAC (OECD, 2013).

*First language<sup>1</sup>:* Only persons participated in the interviews who have mastered the German language well enough that they could follow a survey in the German language. Therefore, immigrants without sufficient command of German have not been interviewed. All results relate to reading and writing skills in German. About 52.6% (3.3 million) of the low-literate adults grew up in German speaking family environments. Around 47.4% (2.9 million) initially learned another language. The change compared to 2010 is not statistically significant. Research results indicate that literacy skills in one language can serve as an important facilitator for learning to read and write other languages (Dünkel, Heimler, Brandt, & Gogolin 2018). Participants in LEO 2018 were asked to assess their (written) language skills in languages they understand or speak. About 77.8% of those with another language of origin who struggle with reading and writing in German state that they read and write even complex texts in this language.

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1 First language or the language of origin refers to languages acquired by people during their childhood. This refers to languages that are used daily in the family and in the environment of a child and which he or she acquires through this language contact. It may be one language, but it may also be two or more languages. The concept of origin does not refer to a geographical origin, but to a family origin.



*Educational qualifications:* About three quarters of the low-literate adults have reached some form of school-leaving qualification. Most of these (40.6 %) reached school-leaving certificates on the level of lower secondary school. However, nearly one quarter of low-literate adults (22.3 %) do not have any form of school-leaving qualification.

The survey captured additional information about participation in adult education. International surveys like the Adult Education Survey (AES) show that the lower the formal qualification, the less likely is participation in adult education (Bilger & Strauß, 2017, p. 46). In line with this state of research the LEO survey shows that adults with low literacy skills participate less than the national average. 28.1 % of adults with low literacy skills took part in any type of continuing education activity in the last twelve months before the survey. Participation rates have stagnated since 2010. The participation rate of the adult population as a whole is about 46.9 % in 2018. German adult education centers (Volkshochschulen) report a rising but still very low participation in classes regarding reading and writing and other basic skills (Reichart, Huntemann & Lux 2019, p. 47). According to the LEO survey participation in adult education classes which explicitly focus on adult *basic education* and *literacy* is very low. Only 0.7 % of low-literate adults participate in this type of classes.

*Employment status:* Unemployment is higher among low-literate adults than in the overall population. 12.9 % of low-literate adults are unemployed, a decrease compared with 2010 (16.7 %). The majority of low-literate adults (62.3 %) is employed. The share increased from 56.9 % in 2010.

Low-literate adults state that they are less satisfied with their overall situation at work. On a scale reaching from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied), low-literate adults rate at 6.7 while the entire employed population would rate at 7.6 (statistically significant difference,  $p < 0.01$ ). Low-literate adults as well report concerns about job security. 23.0 % of adults with low reading and writing skills report that they are worried about possibly losing their jobs. This proportion is twice as high as among the total working population (11.8 %).

### 4.3 Predictors for low literacy

Based on the dataset of the first survey, a multivariate regression analysis showed that low formal education (or school dropout), a first language different from German, being unemployed and the educational background in the family show strong effects on the level of literacy. These effects however do not necessarily imply causalities. Compared to these factors, gender and age are of minor relevance (Grotlüschen, Riekmann & Buddeberg 2012, pp. 40–42). The selection of the independent variables relates to prior research which especially indicates the role of formal education and employment (Bynner & Parsons 1997, pp. 36–40), parent's education (Bynner & Parsons 1998, p. 8) and first language (OECD 2013, p. 125). Results from the new survey confirm these prior findings (see table 3).

**Table 3:** Regression results with literacy level as dependent variable, 2010 and 2018 (Source: University of Hamburg, LEO 2018 – living with low literacy; leo. – Level One Study 2010 (Grotlüschen, Riekman & Buddeberg, 2012). Base: German-speaking adults (aged 18–64), n = 7,192 (2018), n = 8,436 (2010), weighted. Reference: male, 40–49 years, middle level of school degree, at least on parent with middle school degree, first language German, employed)

	2010	2018
<b>Intercept (scale from 0 to 100)</b>	52.2	54.1
<b>formal education (reference: middle)</b>		
no certification	–9.5***	–7.2***
low degree	–3.8***	–4.3***
<b>parent's education (reference: middle)</b>		
no certification	–4.0***	–6.3***
low degree	–1.5***	–1.6***
<b>first language (reference: German)</b>		
other first language	–8.4***	–11.3***
<b>employment status (reference: employed)</b>		
unemployed	–2.9***	–3.2***
<b>gender (reference male)</b>		
female	+2.6***	+2.6***
<b>age (reference: 40–49)</b>		
50–64	–0.8**	–0.9*
30–39	n.s.	–1.0**
18–29	n.s.	–1.2**

Significance: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Not having learned German as the first language in one's childhood (thus having to learn German as a second or foreign language later in life) shows the strongest correlation with the literacy level when controlled for the other independent variables. Having left school early without reaching a certification or with a low certification also shows strong effects on the literacy level, as well as being unemployed. As PIAAC (OECD, 2013, p.113) had shown, the correlation between the literacy level and the educational level of the parents is among the strongest predictors in the participating countries. The LEO results confirm these findings.

#### 4.4 Literacy related practices in different fields of daily life

Literacy practices are diverse and dependent on their contexts (Barton & Hamilton 2000, p. 8). One objective of LEO 2018 is to look at practices of low-literate adults related to reading and writing. Do adults with low literacy perform certain literacy prac-

tices, how often do they perform these practices, and do they compensate their low literacy by performing more non-written practices? Practices can be related to different fields of everyday life. This section presents results from a selection of practices from four domains of everyday life: digital, financial, health-related and political.

Participants have been asked how often they exercise certain practices. The offered response scales are comparable to PIAAC (Reder 2017). Table 4 displays the proportion of adults who perform certain practices regularly. This means that they perform the respective practice either at least once a week or (regarding other question types) answered “often” or “quite often”.

**Table 4:** Proportion of adults performing domain specific practices at least once a week, low-literate adults compared with the total population (Source: University of Hamburg, LEO 2018 – living with low literacy. Base: German-speaking adults (aged 18–64), n = 7,192, weighted)

	Low-literate adults	Total population
<b>Digital practices</b>		
Regularly write emails	35.9%	63.7%
Regularly send voice messages	39.1%	37.4%
Regularly write in social networks	23.5%	19.4%
Regularly read in social networks	41.8%	41.4%
<b>Financial Practices</b>		
Frequent use of online banking <sup>2</sup>	40.6%	65.3%
Frequent use of bank transfer forms	42.3%	25.1%
<b>Health related practices</b>		
Frequently check dosage instructions in pharmaceutical packaging	55.8%	68.7%
Frequently check with your doctor or pharmacist for signs of illness	60.5%	62.0%
<b>Political practices</b>		
Regularly read a newspaper (print or online)	44.5%	63.2%
Regularly watch the news (on TV or online)	82.6%	84.4%

*Digital practices:* Digitalization is a process which fundamentally changed the lives of most people all over the world. This process was widely discussed with the perspective of a digital divide. This discussion moved forward from the perspective of having access to digital technology to a perspective of the competent use of digital technology (Millard, 2015).

2 This question was only given to people who had previously stated that they had access to the internet (n = 6,645).

Low-literate adults engage in most written digital practices less frequently than the entire adult population. 35.9% of low-literate adults write emails regularly (population average: 63.7%). The difference is smaller regarding the use of short messages (SMS, WhatsApp etc.) instead of email. Looking at the frequency of sending voice messages (a mostly oral practice) we do not find this difference. Low-literate adults send voice messages more often than the total population. The difference is small but it points to a common trend. Differences between low-literate adults and the adult population in the application of practices become smaller or disappear if the practice is mostly (conceptually) oral. These practices therefore can be seen as strategies of compensating difficulties with reading and writing. Reading or writing in social networks are exceptions to this general trend: low-literate adults read and write in social networks at least as often as the entire population.

*Financial practices:* Dealing in a competent way with financial questions is a fundamental skill required in modern societies. The responsibility for doing so has largely been transferred from the state to the individual (Davies, 2015). Developments in the banking sector with an increasing role of online-banking show that aspects of digitalization also have a strong influence on other aspects of daily life. About two thirds of the entire adult population use online-banking regularly, whereas low-literate adults use online banking less frequently (40.6%). Low-literate adults fill out bank transfer forms more frequently than the general population (42.3% compared to 25.1%). We conclude that practices that require the use of technical devices (apps or websites) appear more difficult for low-literate adults. Moreover low-literate adults are more likely to look for support when confronted with forms or documents, e.g. filling out bank transfer forms at home together with the partner or asking for assistance from a bank clerk.

*Health related practices:* These practices point at another aspect regarding literacy practices. When confronted with an unfamiliar pharmaceutical, less adults with low literacy look up the dosage instructions in pharmaceutical packaging than in the general population (55.8% compared to 68.7%). When speaking with a doctor or pharmacist about symptoms of diseases and discussing how to treat these signs (a non-text-based but face to face practice) nearly no difference can be found. Differences occur when reading and writing is required. They diminish where alternative practices can be applied. Low-literate adults report on lower average health status than the general population.

*Political practices:* Keeping oneself informed about politics can be seen as an important foundation for political participation. A relatively high percentage of adults read a newspaper (print or online) at least once a week (63.2%). Among low-literate adults this share is significantly lower (44.4%). Differences disappear when asking for a practice which is not based on reading and writing: 82.6% of low-literate adults and 84.4% of the population watch news on TV or online at least once a week. Low-literate adults are therefore not uninformed in general, but prefer non-written media.

## 5 Discussion

The number of adults with low literacy has declined between 2010 and 2018. The figures refer to adults between 18 and 64 years and reading and writing in German. The number of participants in reading and writing classes is still very low (although increasing over the years). Even if participation in second chance schooling or in German classes for immigrants is taken into account, the extent of participation is still relatively small. The lower number of adults with low literacy cannot simply be attributed to these classes. The decline should be seen as a result of a cohort effect and a composition effect. Older adults with averaged less years of schooling left the sample and the rate of unemployment is lower in 2018 compared to 2010, offering more reading and writing opportunities to newly employed adults. Migration to Germany did seemingly not counteract this positive development. Summing up, the decline is not primarily a result of adult education policy but can be seen as the results of labor market policy, educational policy regarding schools and immigration policy (by systematically offering learning possibilities for migrants).

The composition of the group of low-literate adults did not change fundamentally compared to 2010. Among the 6.2 million adults with low literacy, we find more men than women, more older adults than younger adults and more adults who learned German as their first language. The majority of low-literate adults who learned another language than German as their first language has high competencies in reading and writing in their first languages. The results therefore support prior findings regarding stereotypes about low-literate adults (Grotlüschen, Riekmann, & Buddeberg 2015). One of the common stereotypes about low-literate adults is that most of them dropped out of school early. As about 75 % of low-literate adults graduated school the survey results show the opposite. Another common stereotype about low-literate adults is that they are mostly unemployed and dependent on social benefits. Again, the survey results show a different picture: Employment rate among low-literate adults has increased to 62.3 % from 2010 to 2018.

Nevertheless, results on literacy related practices give hints towards lower use of these practices and therefore can be interpreted as indicators for partial exclusion. Multivariate analysis regarding specific practices will still have to be performed and published. The objective was to widen the focus from what people can (assessment) to what people do in their daily lives (practices). Referring to most practices there is a correlation between reading and writing skills and reading and writing practices. This is in line with results from PIAAC (OECD 2013) and with practice engagement theory (Reder 1994). Practices which require reading and writing can either be substituted by oral practices or they can be managed with assistance (e.g. of family members, colleagues or bank personnel, cf. Buddeberg 2019). Although reading and writing in social networks is based on reading and writing skills this type of communication does not systematically exclude low-literate adults.

## 6 Conclusion

The German National Decade for Alphabetization and Basic Education has a strong focus on reading and writing. Reading and writing surely is an important field of work in Adult Basic Education but the findings reported in this paper support an additional way of looking at literacy. By widening the focus from a narrow understanding to a broader approach on literacy as social practices, the results of LEO 2018 show the importance of domain specific literacies and practices (e.g. health or financial literacy). Literacy – in the sense of reading and writing skills – is embedded into these practices (Reder 2017). While the Literacy as Social Practice approach might quickly become common sense in international discussions, it is a relatively new aspect in the German discourse on literacy – especially in quantitative research.

Considering the extensive questionnaire, the data and findings presented in this paper show only a glimpse of LEO 2018. Further research is required and multivariate analyses must be carried out to elaborate on the connection between literacy skills and practices. We also would like to invite quantitative and qualitative researchers to take a look at the questionnaire<sup>3</sup> and make use of it for their own research.

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3 An English version of the questionnaire is available at: <https://blogs.epb.uni-hamburg.de/leo/files/2019/05/LEO-questionnaire.pdf>

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# The Process of Adopting a Lifelong Learning Decree in Laos

UWE GARTENSCHLAEGER, OUNPHENG KHAMMANG

## Abstract

In 2015, the international community adopted Lifelong Learning in the “Education 2030 Agenda” as the key concept for shaping the education sector in the 21st century. While the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education refers to Lifelong Learning, the concept remains widely unknown in many parts of the world – Key stakeholders in governments are lacking understanding of its implications and of procedures to implement the concept. This article outlines how a Lifelong Learning policy was implemented in Lao PDR, one of the poorest and remotest countries in Asia by posing the following question: What was the motivation for the government to adopt this policy, which factors and actors support the growing understanding and valuing of the concept? Additionally, the article describes how policy developments can be driven in a setting of long-term mutual partnership between local stakeholders and a development partner.

Keywords: Lifelong Learning, Education Policy, Education 2030, Laos, Southeast Asia

## 1 Introduction

Since the United Nations approved Lifelong Learning (LLL) as the guiding framework for shaping the education system in 2015 (DVV International 2018, p.1), numerous attempts can be recognized to transfer this concept into policy and practice globally. These processes are challenging and time consuming, as LLL represents a complex concept affecting all sectors of the formal education system and beyond. It breaks with many aspects of the classical thinking on education and also tends to be often implemented in environments in which neither the concept of LLL is fully understood nor the actors are prepared to allow changes to the status quo, since they often have a limited understanding of what education should include (Gartenschläger 2019, p.6). This article explores how these challenges arising from developing a modern LLL policy can be tackled in a small underdeveloped Asian country. The driving forces at national, regional and global level and the motivation behind the adoption of a new approach with a specific focus on the role of development cooperation on the policy level are outlined. After providing a short introduction of Laos and the Laotian education system, the work of the “Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband In-

ternational (DVV International)” will be introduced as the Ministry of Education and Sports’ main development partner to support it in the process of implementing LLL. This will be followed by an analysis of the motivation of the Laotian government to introduce LLL as the main framework for education, a description of the adoption process of a Lifelong Learning decree and the main content of this decree. Lastly, the process and challenges, its actors and the interconnectedness of the global, regional and national levels in shaping LLL policies will be analysed in the conclusion.

## 2 Laos and the Laotian Education system

To understand the process of adopting a Lifelong Learning Decree in Laos, some information on the country and its framework conditions will be given. Laos, or Lao People’s Democratic Republic, is a small landlocked country in Southeast Asia. Since 1975, it has been ruled by the Communist Pathet Lao party. The country is a member of several regional bodies, including the “Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)” since 1997 (Gartenschläger 2016, p. 39).

Its more than 7 million inhabitants are mainly Buddhist in religion and more than 40% of people belong to ethnic minority groups, 49 of which are recognised by the government of Laos. The population is predominantly young, with more than 50% under 25 years of age. Nearly two thirds of the population live in rural areas which is one of the highest ratios in the region. Laos remains a Least Developed Country. The Human Development Index rates the country 139<sup>th</sup> among 189 countries (United Nations Development Programme 2018). Electricity is available to 83% of the population. Agriculture, dominated by rice cultivation in lowland areas, accounts for about 20% of GDP and 73% of total employment. Despite these clear indicators of underdevelopment, the figures for the growing digitalization of the Lao society are astonishing: In 2018, more than 90% used mobile connections with more than one third being engaged in social media (Digital 2018 Laos).

While the government officially announced the eradication of illiteracy in 2016, independent sources estimate that some 20% of the population cannot read and write (Central Intelligence Agency 2019). Drop-out rates also remain high, especially concerning the transition between primary and lower secondary education and within the first years of lower secondary education. This affects especially rural areas where distances to secondary schools are far away and children are required to work from an early age. In many cases, parents do not recognize the long-term value of formal education to improve the livelihoods of their families. One main challenge to be solved are poor learning outcomes of students at all levels including primary education. Many children leave school without being able to read and write properly. The linguistic diversity of Laos has been identified as one of the root causes for this problem. Further, severe challenges lie in reaching gender parity in secondary and vocational education. The education sector does not receive appropriate funds: In 2018, around 15% of the government budget was spent on education, while the Education

Sector Development Plan defines a margin of 17%. Within this education budget, more than 80 % of expenditures are earmarked for salaries and subsidies, leaving very little room for improving infrastructure, trainings and other purposes (European Joint Programming for Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic 2018).

According to the Department of Non-Formal Education, less than 1% of the education budget is spent on Non-Formal Education (NFE), leaving the sub-sector dramatically underfunded and neglected. Currently, the activities in non-formal education focus mainly on equivalency programs<sup>1</sup> and skills trainings, delivered by a network of Provincial and District NFE Centres. While these centres exist countrywide at provincial level, they have been established in less than half of all districts. At village level, Community Learning Centres (CLCs) are supposed to offer non-formal education. However, currently, only a few of these centres are operational.

### 3 DVV International: The Approach and Motivation of the Development Partner

The main development partner in the Lao non-formal education sector is DVV International, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association. Since 2009, DVV International has been active in Laos<sup>2</sup>. As a part of the "Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband" (DVV), DVV International supports the establishment and improvement of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) structures, especially for the marginalized, in more than 30 countries worldwide (DVV International 2019). The Institute celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2019.

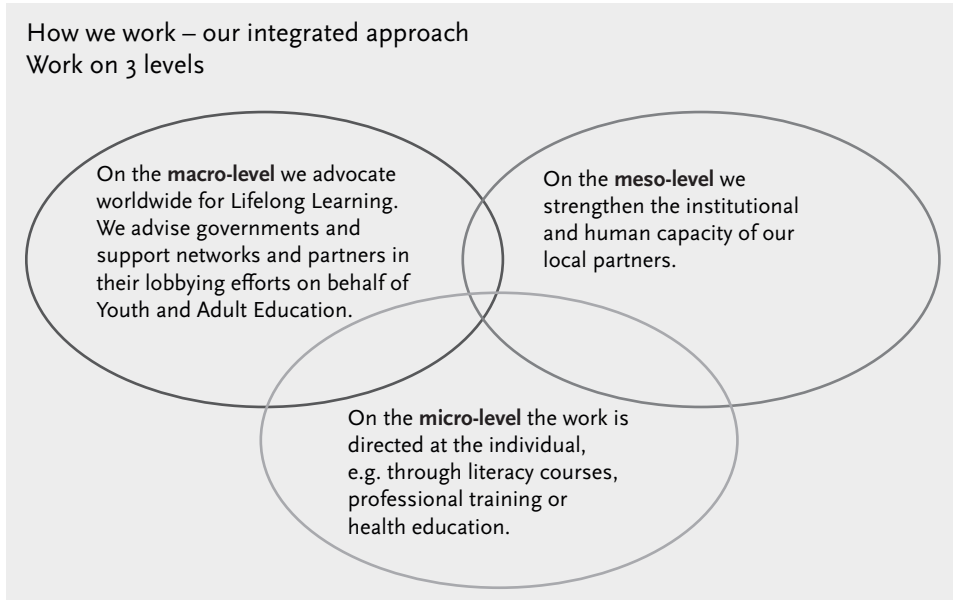
The Regional Office in Vientiane implements projects in Laos and Cambodia and cooperates with regional partners like the "Asian South-Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE)"<sup>3</sup>. The interventions target three levels and are closely interlinked, as shown in figure 1. While the micro-level aims at implementing training courses for youth and adults directly, the meso-level focuses on capacity building for trainers, managers and decision makers in ALE. The macro-level represents the most important objective, to support the establishment of a sustainable and adequate ALE system through improving the legal, financial and administrative framework of a country.

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1 In the case of Lao PDR, equivalency programs offer opportunities for school drop outs to receive primary and secondary education degrees.

2 For more information: [www.dvv-international.de](http://www.dvv-international.de) or [www.dvv-international.la](http://www.dvv-international.la)

3 For more information: [www.aspbae.org](http://www.aspbae.org)



**Figure 1:** Integrated approach of DVV International

In the case of Laos, this approach transfers into a set of interlinked activities:

- The establishment of CLCs in 24 villages of Nong and Sepon districts, two of the most marginalized regions in the country located near the Vietnamese border and inhabited by the Brue ethnic minority, should demonstrate the value of these community based NFE institutions.
- Mobile Skills Trainings which bring teachers from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) schools for one or two weeks to remote villages to offer demand-oriented skills trainings. The objective is to offer tailored services to target groups which are unable to attend TVET schools directly due to financial and geographical constraints.
- Additionally, the DVV office engages in capacity building events, e.g. training cycles for facilitators and managers of NFE centres as well as the improvement of the NFE Development centre<sup>4</sup> as a Resource-Centre for the sub-sector.
- A very promising cooperation exists with the Faculty of Education of the National University of Laos (NUOL) to integrate modules on LLL into teacher education at university and college level. This activity is further supported through the framework of a partnership with the University of Cologne, Faculty of Education.

<sup>4</sup> In the Lao system, NFE Centres represent the institutions responsible for offering NFE on the provincial and district level, while CLCs fulfil this function on the village level.

## 4 The global debate on LLL

Based on the experiences from these activities and the participation in global and regional conferences and workshops, the Department for Non-Formal Education (DNFE) requested DVV International to support the process of creating a Prime Minister Decree for a Lifelong Learning. The DNFE is the most important partner for DVV International in cooperating with the government (Hinzen 2015). The ambitious undertaking of developing a decree is based on the current global debate identifying LLL as the core concept for the education sector in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The development of the concept goes back to the legendary Faure-Report “Learning to be” (Faure et al. 1972) as well as the equally famous Delors-Report “Learning – The Treasure within” (Delors et al. 1996). Both argued that education and learning could not be limited to formal pathways only, but that learning should be understood as a lifelong and lifewide endeavour. At the time, the potential of non-formal and informal learning had been fully discovered and a debate around the need and passion to learn “from the cradle to the grave” was initiated, very much supported by civil society actors. CONFINTEA V – the global conference on adult education organised by UNESCO – which took place in Hamburg 1997 was a pinnacle in the endeavour to foster a holistic understanding of education and learning.

However, the new millennium initially saw a decline in recognition of these concepts. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focused on primary education (United Nations 2015), and the Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO 2000) of the Education for All process was very weak regarding education outside the traditional formal system. It took another fifteen years of strong advocacy work to change things to the better: The Education 2030 Agenda and the education goal of the Sustainable Development Goals, both adopted in 2015, defined Lifelong Learning as the key concept for the education sector (UNESCO 2016). This breakthrough has had impacts on regional and national policies. For Southeast Asia, ASEAN, SEAMEO<sup>5</sup> and the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok are key stakeholders in education, and all of them adopted LLL in their work. The UNESCO Regional Office invites governments annually to the Asia-Pacific Meeting on Education 2030 (APMED) to promote the implementation of the SDG 4 goal “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UNESCO 2016, p.7). APMED strongly encourages policy makers to include Lifelong Learning into the national policies.

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5 Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation, established in 1965. SEAMEO has eleven member states (the ten ASEAN members plus Timor Leste) and promotes regional cooperation in education, science and culture. In this capacity, SEAMEO is able to shape the education agenda on the national level. In 2013, a Center for Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELLL) was established in Ho Chi Minh City to support the development of the new framework (SEAMEO Regional Centre for Lifelong Learning 2019).



## 5 Developing a Lifelong Learning Decree in Laos

After outlining global developments concerning the concept of Lifelong Learning, the next section will be referring to the process of implementing a Lifelong Learning Decree in Laos by pointing out the motivation of the government, the benefits that result in such a decree as well as the process of drafting the decree. Afterwards, the main content and further developments are discussed.

### 5.1 Motivation of the government

As Lao PDR is a member of the United Nations and UNESCO, the government tries to streamline its education policies to suit international developments in the sector. At the moment, Lifelong Learning dominates the discourse. The substantial influence of global debates on Lao PDR's education priorities is linked on the one hand to activities UNESCO, UNICEF, SEAMEO and ASEAN are implementing. On the other hand, the dependence of foreign aid leads to an openness for external concepts.

In Lao PDR, Lifelong Learning has existed for a long time, mainly in form of intergenerational learning in families, villages and temples. However, for many years, there has not been a national legal framework to regulate and support it. In 2007, the first Education Law was adopted, including Non-formal Education and Informal Learning as part of the education system. The Law was updated in 2015. Article 26 states: "Lifelong learning is the integration of formal and non-formal education to support all, including girls and boys, to receive lifelong learning to develop an intellectual society to meet the demands of development".

Today, the country faces internal as well as external challenges. These challenges include economic, cultural and social as well as political, technological and environmental aspects. In this situation, a growing number of decision makers are attracted to the concept of Lifelong Learning to achieve human resources development and to be able to cope with new circumstances regarding economy, society, and the environment. This goes hand in hand with the government's objective to graduate from the Least Developed Country status in the very near future. This ambition demands to invest in knowledge development and to enable the population to link to act regionally and be competitive on the emerging ASEAN labour market.

Following these ideas, the 8<sup>th</sup> Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016–2020 highlights the need to realize education reforms focusing on the expansion of educational opportunities, in particular of marginalized people and rural inhabitants. The National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy presents a framework of developing and implementing initiatives to reduce the poverty rate and to promote sustainable economic growth through a variety of educational programmes, mainly related to vocational training. Such policies as the Technical and Vocational Training Law and the Decree on Higher Education also constitute a legal foundation for developing a policy on Lifelong Learning.

The Lifelong Learning policy is also relevant for the further development of the National Qualification Education Framework and Education Quality Assurance in

the country. It will foster the integration and adaptation of regional standards, necessary especially for ensuring the competitiveness of the Lao workforce, which is a critical issue at the moment. The Lifelong Learning Decree is considered an important cornerstone for the Human Resource Development Strategy; one reason for why the LLL-policy aims to transfer the responsibility for implementing Lifelong Learning concepts to the Human Resource Committees at all levels from the centre down to the village.

In the process of Lifelong Learning policy development, the government supports the Ministry of Education and Sports as the key ministry to collaborate with various stakeholders, including other ministries and government agencies as well as international and regional agencies, to share technical information and financial support. Particularly the Ministry affected by the Decree, UNESCO, DVV International and SEAMEO CELL are involved in this process.

## 5.2 Prospective Benefits

Before describing the process of adopting the LLL decree, the paper aims at reflecting on the impact it can have on the development of the education sector in Laos. The Lifelong Learning Decree will lead to a change in human resource development in Lao PDR. In general, the decree will promote a broader view on education than the traditional narrow belief, i. e. learning merely takes place through formal and non-formal education channels. For educators and policymakers, this is a historical national legal framework to open up learning opportunities to everyone, and to recognize the value of all forms of learning – formal, non-formal and informal. In this sense, the Lifelong Learning Decree would be a guideline to rethink and innovate policies and programs to promote learning opportunities for all people and to recognize the importance of informal knowledge and skills acquired from informal learning – learning through everyday life activities. At the local level, the Lifelong Learning Decree is a legal document to support Article 24 & 26 of the Education Law,<sup>6</sup> which translate guidelines on informal learning and Lifelong Learning into practice, particularly at the provincial and district level, by providing new learning opportunities to people. The Lifelong Learning Decree shall open learning opportunities for different social groups of people and uphold the value of informal learning to be equally important as formal and non-formal learning. Thus, the decree would be useful and beneficial for all people in Lao PDR, particularly for the people of working age who do not have the opportunity to access non-formal education. It will create alternative choices for learning as well as jobs. For employers, the decree will support them to conduct a clear analysis of the knowledge, skills and competencies of their employees as the latter's knowledge and skills acquired from work experience and everyday life were officially recognized. In addition, the Lifelong Learning Decree would be a policy guideline for private and public educational institutes both within the country and in international cooperation to gain the following benefits:

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6 registered number 62/NA, issued on 16th July 2015.

- The Lifelong Learning Decree will be used as a legal framework to promote education in the form of Lifelong Learning and ensure the quality and effectiveness of learning. In this sense, innovative learning approaches together with effective coordination among different sectors and stakeholders would be developed;
- The Lifelong Learning Decree will be a guideline for all sectors, particularly organizations which have educational institutes to develop Lifelong Learning programs and appropriate learning approaches to allow all people to assess to learning at all times and anywhere. In addition, students' registration processes, regulations, and curricula can be comparable and respond flexibly to the needs of individuals and organizations of all sectors. New services can be developed in order to provide educational opportunities for all people;
- One outcome of improved cooperation between the various constituencies will also be a supporting mechanism to call for more investment for education. Additionally, existing infrastructure could be used for multiple purposes more effectively in order to promote education for all people. In the Lao context, where the education system itself is structured in isolated silos, this kind of networking could lead to an immense increase in effectiveness by using scared resources;
- Educational institutes will be provided with guidelines to develop learning assessment systems, recognition and validation of learning outcomes which will be equal to and transferable between formal, non-formal and informal learning;
- The Lifelong Learning Decree would also be used as a national structure to link learning programs and learning outputs acquired from all forms of learning with regional and international frameworks in education development;

In summary, the Lifelong Learning Decree would bring a change for the education system and enable it to meet the needs of people, economy and society in the face of ongoing and rapid changes of social, economic and technological factors. Beneficiaries would include people, individuals and social groups, as well as private and public sector actors contributing to the ultimate goal of Lao PDR in promoting people to acquire knowledge and skills required for social and economic development necessary to reach the government's objective for leaving Least Developed Country status.

### **5.3 The process of drafting the decree**

Following the analysis of the motivation of the government and the impact the decree can have, the paper aims to describe the process of designing and adopting the concept. In order to operationalize Lifelong Learning in the country, the Department of Non-Formal Education arranged a first meeting on the concept of Lifelong Learning for ministry staff and external stakeholders in March 2012. The purpose of the meeting was to raise awareness and understanding of the essential features of Lifelong Learning among Lao policy-makers and other relevant actors. A second meeting took place in December 2013 with the objective of engaging representatives of the ministry and provincial education sectors in an open-format discussion on how to

structure the national LLL policy. Based on the suggestions provided by the participants of the second meeting, the Department of Non-Formal Education drafted a Lifelong Learning policy for Lao PDR and involved stakeholders in its revision. For this purpose, the Department of Non-Formal Education initiated a project, supported by DVV International and UNESCO, on establishing the policy. An external consultant was invited to develop the policy in two stages: The first stage included a desk study on the situation of Lifelong Learning in Lao PDR as well as the developments on Lifelong Learning in neighbouring countries, followed by a three months consultancy for the Department of Non-Formal Education. The preparatory activities included an extensive analysis of literature materials and policy documents related to LLL policies in regional and international contexts including Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Documents on education for sustainable development, global citizenship education, the ASEAN economic community and other matters helped to build a detailed understanding of the LLL concept's development from a global perspective. The second stage was a series of interviews and discussions with Lao policy-makers in non-formal education and other international stakeholders, especially from the German development sector. The potential of the education sector in Lao PDR as well as demographic data were considered and used in the preparation of the policy. In accordance with the findings, a first draft was presented in early 2016 at a workshop at which representatives of the Ministry of Education and Sports had a chance to give their input to the content of the draft policy. Subsequently, a technical validation workshop was conducted to collect feedback from experts in policy design on the draft's outline, format and other technical features. The Department of Non-Formal Education revised the draft and shared it during a series of meetings and workshops with representatives of provincial offices of the Ministry of Education and Sports, other Ministries and stakeholders. This process took place from mid 2016 to mid 2019.

The development of the LLL Decree has initiated multiple discussions during several internal and higher-level workshops and meetings. The final draft of the decree was accompanied by an impact assessment, a format which was recently introduced as a national tool and mechanism for the development of any law and decree by the Ministry of Justice. At the most recent workshop in early 2019, the Lifelong Learning Decree was finalized and subsequently submitted to the Ministries concerned as well as to the Cabinet of the Prime Minister. It will be introduced and approved in the Government's monthly meeting, expected in June 2019.

The development of the Lifelong Learning policy has been supported technically and financially by the DVV International Regional Office which is working closely with the Non-Formal Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Sports. DVV has co-organized several activities such as study visits, capacity building trainings, workshops and meetings within Lao PDR as well as internationally and regionally. Additional support was provided by UNESCO Regional Office Bangkok by co-funding the consultant for developing the Decree and the UNESCO Institute for

Lifelong learning who hosted two Lao officials for research projects related to Lifelong Learning for one month in Hamburg.

Parallel to the development of the Lifelong Learning Decree, the Faculty of Education of the National University of Laos developed and piloted a module on Lifelong Learning in teacher education in cooperation with DVV International. The module was launched in the academic year 2017–2018. It is being expanded during 2018 to 2019 to Savannakhet University, located in the central region, and Souphanouvong University in the north of the country. The Faculty of Education has organized a workshop to exchange and share experiences of the pilot programmes in three Universities. This cooperation provides unique chances to promote LLL, as nearly all of the teachers and trainers in non-formal education are professional teachers. Additionally, the holistic concept of LLL demands to be implemented from the earliest education level to create a positive image of learning and to enable the next generation to learn autonomously. The LLL Decree will open opportunities to extend these efforts to Teacher Training Colleges as well where most of the primary school teachers are trained. Currently, the TTCs belong to a different department in the Ministry which aggravates cooperation.

In the following, the different steps in developing the LLL Decree are summarized. In *Step 1* an external consultant conducted a baseline survey and developed a first draft of the Decree in March to April 2016:

- The external consultant from the Philippines conducted the survey and developed the first draft of the LLL policy. She was embedded in the Department of Non-Formal education and worked closely with one Deputy Director general as her counterpart.
- The draft of the LLL policy was commented on by the participants in several workshops and meetings.
- Afterwards, the first draft of a Lifelong Learning Decree was translated into English and submitted to a high-level meeting in the Ministry of Education and Sports. Based on the feedback, it was revised, particularly to involve and clarify the responsibilities of all stakeholders, not only the education sector. The structure of the Lifelong Learning Committee was improved and it became an integral part of the Human Resource Committee to avoid overlaps and creation of additional structures.

*Step 2* includes shaping of LLL policy, finalizing and submission to the Government for approval:

- With the support of UNESCO and DVV International, the Department of Non-Formal Education cooperated with stakeholders concerned and other education partners to finalise the Lifelong Learning Decree. Ten different workshops and meetings, at technical and high level, were organised. The workshops and meet-

ings involved the key partners who are directly responsible for the development of legal frameworks and laws in the country, e.g. the Ministry of Justice.

- Finally, in the beginning of May 2019, the report on the development of the Lifelong Learning Decree was submitted to the Minister of Education and Sports by the Director-General of Non-Formal Education. The Minister of Education and Sports further sent an official letter to the Prime Minister' Office and the Ministry of Justice for further procedures.
- The adoption of the Decree is on the agenda of the Cabinet of Ministers in June/ July.

#### **5.4 The main content of the decree**

Finally, the content of the decree as a result of the outlined process will be highlighted. In the view of the Lao government, it should translate main parts of the Education Law into practice. The most recent draft of the Lifelong Learning is comprised of 11 parts and 54 articles.

The objectives of the decree are to set the principles and regulations regarding the definition, implementation, management, monitoring, supervision and promotion of LLL in Lao PDR to ensure that teaching and learning, evaluation, recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning and research of the learning outcomes in the formal, non-formal and informal learning follow the same framework. The Decree should improve the quality of the teaching/learning process and ensure that Lao citizens have the opportunity to upgrade their education, knowledge, skills and competencies in order to contribute to the development of the country, including its integration into the regional and international context.

The Government supports LLL as an important policy for human resource development by promoting learning to all Lao citizen – independently of their age, sex or ethnicity- including Lao citizens who live abroad. They should be provided with opportunities to education and skills development in all forms of learning, including flexible learning pathways adopted to their real situation. The Government promotes LLL by providing teaching and managing staff, budget, and infrastructure as well as training and counselling support for staff who are working in the field of LLL. The Government motivates and promotes individual persons and institutions concerned in the country as well as international partners to contribute to the development of knowledge, personal intellectual capacities, technical skills, scientific knowledge and the budget for Lifelong Learning Programmes.

The LLL support structure will be established at three levels: central, province and district. A national Lifelong Learning Committee will be established at the central level, chaired by the Minister of Education and Sports as the president. Similar structures will be established at the province and district levels. To avoid overlaps, these committees will be merged with the already existing Committees for Human Resource Development. Additionally, joint committees will be established in central agencies who are responsible for promoting LLL in their own organization. The national Lifelong Learning Committee will be located in the Ministry of Education and

Sports. Besides the Minister of Education and Sports as the chair, a Vice Minister of the Ministry of Planning and Investment will be one Vice chair as well as the Vice Minister of Ministry of Education and Sports. Other vice ministers will be members of the committee to represent the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Culture, Information and Tourism, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, National Assembly, National University, Lao Women Union, Lao Youth Association. The national Lifelong Learning Committee will play a key role in developing the Lifelong Learning Strategic Plan, including a budget allocation for the activities.

The secretariat of the national Lifelong Learning Committee will include the Director-General of the Department of Non-Formal Education as the chair, a Deputy Director-General of the Department of Planning as a vice chair (the is as well the Secretary of the Human Resource Development Committee), a Deputy Director-General of the Department Non-Formal Education as a vice chair. Other members include key personnel from the Department of Non-Formal Education, the Department of Planning (from the secretariat of human resource development committee) and other relevant departments at the Ministry of Education and Sports. The Lifelong Learning policy will support the implementation of the national education system including formal, non-formal and informal education to ensure the quality of the formal and non-formal curriculum. The learning process can be organized within education institutions, outside, and mobile. Formal, non-formal and informal learning and studies can be conducted in the government, private and social institutions as well as in the community.

The trainers and teachers of LLL are mainly recruited from the educational personnel, particularly teachers of the formal and non-formal sector. They receive support from the government in the form of pre- and in-service training, salary and additional necessary revenue, particularly for research. The government will constantly support institutions in charge of creating new innovative learning activities etc. The certification of learning outcomes and the monitoring and evaluation system will follow and apply the national certification mechanism. It is recommended to extent it to include informal learning. The certification of learning outcomes under the concept of Lifelong Learning will be introduced into the national qualification framework and quality assurance mechanisms.

The government encourages investments by and cooperation with development partners and internal and external stakeholders in both technical and financial aspects of the implementation of a consistent Lifelong Learning policy and practice. The main financial resources for the implementation of a Lifelong Learning policy will be provided by the government with the support from other sources in and outside the country, including the private sector.

## 5.5 Further developments

The adoption of the decree can be only the first step to shape the education system in an LLL framework. Major challenges still lie ahead to make sure change will happen not only on paper. The following describes briefly the next steps:

- The Ministry of Education and Sports has finalized the draft of the decree and submitted it to the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Justice and to other key Ministries who are members of the Government Conference.
- The Decree will be adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in July 2019.
- The Ministry of Education and Sports, particularly the Lifelong Learning Committee managed by the Department of Non-Formal Education with the stakeholders concerned, will develop the guidelines, strategy and implementation plans of the Lifelong Learning Decree, including budget needs.
- The Ministry of Education and Sports, particularly the Department of Non-Formal Education as the key secretary for implementing the Lifelong Learning Decree, will invite relevant stakeholders to organize a workshop on launching and disseminating of the official Lifelong Learning Decree. It will be conducted at different levels (central, provincial and district). It will also involve civil society and international agencies in the country.

## 6 Summary: Drafting an LLL Decree as an intervention on the Macro level

DVV International as the main development partner has supported the whole process of developing and adopting the LLL Decree since 2012. At the same time, the policy gains at the global level, especially around SDG 4, were instrumental for fostering the process. As a conclusion, we would like to share some lessons learnt from this project:

- Developments at the global level do trickle down to national policies: Lifelong Learning was developed as a concept at the global level. It became prominent as the key framework for shaping the education sector in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals when it was explicitly mentioned in SDG 4 on education. During the years, UNESCO Regional Office Bangkok, ASEAN and SEA-MEO invested a lot of efforts to introduce the concept and to raise the understanding for it in the region. These efforts have paid off: LLL has become a striking example for the potential of a global debate in changing the reality on the ground. It could be interesting to conduct more research (comparative and case studies) on how global debates are reflected in national policies, who are the driving forces and enabling factors.
- At the same time, the adaptation of global concepts to local circumstances is extremely challenging. Still, we live in a world with very diverse realities, including the education sector. Much of the efforts in drafting the LLL Decree were dedicated to foster the understanding of the concept and its translation to the



Lao local context. This tension between the global discourse and regional/national traditions and cultures cannot be overestimated and are worth to become subject of case studies.

- This tension includes not only the concept of LLL. “Translation” can also be understood literally: Much of the terminology used globally does not make sense in Lao language – or simple does not exist. At one of the workshops, the consultant was asked for the meaning of the term “stakeholder”. It took around 45 minutes to clarify the idea for a Lao audience without being able to find a Lao term. Another layer of the language challenge is the need for constant translation of Lao to English and English to Lao, in case non-Lao speaking experts are meant to be involved. Based on our experience, the role of language and the impact of the dominance of English at the global level on national developments should be analysed.
- The work of the consultant represents another interesting lesson learnt. Although the person engaged had multiple experiences working in international teams and other settings, it was still a challenge to create a productive work environment for her, e.g. different understandings of punctuality, respecting deadlines and other aspects of work ethics. It continued with the need to know and respect certain Lao procedures and standards and included as well some aspects of intercultural learning, e.g. communicating and facilitating conflicts. As modern development cooperation relies heavily on short-term consultancy, it would be advisable to investigate on the challenges inherent of this approach and its (widely unintended) impacts.
- It should be accepted that changes at the Macro-level need time, especially in contexts like Laos where procedures are often unclear and seem unstructured, and the capacity of key partners have to be built during the process. This process offers valuable learning opportunities, e.g. having to clarify the idea of informal learning. Unfortunately, the dominating outcome orientation in development cooperation with strict timelines and indicators limits the spaces for harnessing these productive added values.
- Changes especially at the Macro-Level need a strong partnership as a fundament, built on trust and at least a certain openness. The development partner has to invest time and efforts in building informal networks and maintaining good relationships to the counterpart.

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# Effects of Work-Oriented Adult Basic Education Trainings: Addressing Employee's Competencies across Sectors

DENNIS KLINKHAMMER, MICHAEL SCHEMMANN

## Abstract

The paper focuses effects of work-oriented adult basic education trainings across different sectors. As such manufacturing sector, care sector, transportation sector, personnel services as well as logistics sector are under scrutiny. It is based on a broader research project (ABAG<sup>2</sup>) funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and examines the acquisition of competencies through workplace-related trainings. All in all, 50 trainings and 304 participants are considered within the study. The survey draws on a longitudinal self-assessment of the participants at the end of the respective trainings and differentiates professional competence, methodological competence, social competence and self-competence. These competencies are not only considered crucial by the European Union (2018) for the personal fulfilment, participation in the labour market and social participation, but are also based upon a continuing scientific discourse (Roth 1971; Maurer 2006; Trautwein 2011) with references to Klippert's (1994) extended learning concept. What is more, individual preferences, satisfaction with the work situation and satisfaction with the trainings are also referred to within the survey. Next to common descriptive and bivariate analysis, the research on the effects of competencies is based on methods which are assigned to the area of robust statistics (Huber 1981). The methods of robust statistics consider the non-normally distributed response behavior which is to be anticipated in surveys on heterogeneous target groups. As a consequence, the data can be compared across sectors and highlight differences between participants. What is more, the findings of the study allow for conclusions regarding the anticipated effects of training for employees in different sectors and thus are of high relevance for employers.

Keywords: work-oriented basic adult education, competencies, evaluation, robust statistics

## 1 Introduction

For a long time, literacy and adult basic education were considered a topic for developing countries only. It took until the 1970s that literacy and adult basic education were discussed as a problem of industrialized countries.

Tröster and Schrader (2016) trace this back to the economic, technological and social change which took place in industrialized countries at that time and which led to higher unemployment rates among the low-qualified workers. Particularly workers with adult basic education deficits were both concerned of unemployment and due to their deficits had a harder time finding a new job in an economy which asked for higher and higher skill profiles. Since then, literacy and adult basic education are on the political agendas of developing and industrialized countries, but also of international organizations like UNESCO, OECD or the Worldbank.

Regarding the empirical side of the phenomenon, international organizations play an important role since they launched several studies and surveys which analyze the literacy and adult basic education levels in different countries. For example, in the mid 1990s OCED carried out the "International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)". This survey focused on three domains: prose literacy, document literacy and quantitative literacy.

In total, more than 20 countries participated in all three surveys of IALS during the sample period from 1994 to 1998 (Maehler 2018, p. 4). IALS defined literacy "... as an advancing set of skills, knowledge, and strategies that individuals build on throughout their lives in various contexts and through interaction with their peers and with the larger communities in which they participate" (Kirsch 2001, S. 4) The results of the IALS "... demonstrated a strong plausible link between literacy and a country's economic potential" (Statistics Canada 2008)

As a following survey OECD presented the "Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)" in 2013. All in all, 25 countries participated in the first round of PIAAC in 2012 (Maehler 2018, p. 4). PIAAC analyzed the following domains: reading literacy, expertise in everyday mathematics, technology-based problem solving with 16 to 65-year-olds (Rammstedt, et al. 2013, p. 7). The findings underlined the importance of competencies for the participation in the job-market and in social life. What is more, a correlation between high basic skills and income was found.

Also, Worldbank engaged in empirically analyzing literacy and adult basic education. So far a measurement has been implemented in 13 countries (STEPSkills, 2014, p. 5). The domains or types of skills measured are cognitive skills, i.e. reading proficiency, reading, writing, numeracy; socio-emotional skills, i.e. personality traits, behavior, risk and time preferences; and job-relevant skills, i.e. qualifications required for job, assessment of skills used at work (STEPSkills, 2014, p. 4). The findings of the study show that solid foundational cognitive and socio-emotional skills are the basis for the development of job-relevant skills and also lead to higher wages.

As regards the German context, literacy and adult basic education attracted a lot of attention and have been on the political agenda for quite a while. Empirically, the so-called “leo. – Level-One Study” (Grotlüschen et al. 2012) found quite a remarkable resonance and has been a central point of reference within the discussion since then. As opposed to PIAAC or IALS, leo. – Level-One Study focuses on the lowest competence level, the so-called level one. The study analyzed the dimension of low reading and writing competencies amongst German-speaking adults between 18 and 64 in Germany. It showed that the reading and writing skills of 14,5 % of the adult population or 7,5 Million were on the Alpha levels 1–3. Alpha level 3 is defined as being able to read and write single sentences but failing to read even short paragraphs (Grotlüschen et al. 2019, p. 4). A follow up study published in 2019 showed that the number went down to 6,2 Million or 12,1 % (Grotlüschen et al. 2019, p. 5). The study also makes clear that 62,3 % of adults with low literacy are in occupation (Grotlüschen et al. 2019, p. 12). Consequently, work-oriented trainings are one of the areas to look at in order to increase literacy levels and adult basic education.

As of 2006 the Federal Ministry for Education and Research established several funding schemes for literacy and adult basic education projects, in 2016 it launched the “AlphaDekade”. This article is based on a project called “ABAG<sup>2</sup>” which is embedded in the currently running funding scheme. The project focuses on effects of work-oriented adult basic education trainings across sectors. Work-oriented adult basic education takes the working environment in general as a reference point and uses concrete challenges of the workplace to enhance the skills of the working staff. The developed skills, however, can be used beyond the actual workplace. Work-oriented adult basic education does not comprise a set curriculum but follows an open curriculum which is oriented towards the learners’ needs. Key qualifications also play an important role in defining the content of the trainings. As such literacy, numeracy, foreign language skills, digital literacy or financial literacy can be named as examples.

The research question of this paper is formulated as follows: What kind of effects of work-oriented basic adult education trainings can be found and do they vary across sectors?

As regards the structure of the article, the following part of the article will focus on the theoretical and contextual background. After that the methodological approach and the empirical design will be outlined. In a next step the findings of the study will be presented and discussed. A final part will highlight the contribution of this article to the scientific debate and show further research perspectives.

## 2 Theoretical and Contextual Background

The project ABAG<sup>2</sup> is a cooperative project between the “Lernende Region – Netzwerk Köln e. V.”, a network organization for adult learning, and the University of Cologne. It was funded from 2016 to 2019 by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and was extended till 2020. The aim is to analyze the individual, structural

and professional modes of action of work-oriented basic adult education trainings. Thus, the research design comprises three pillars. Pillar one focuses on central actors within companies, pillar two on trainers of work-oriented basic adult education trainings and pillar three on participants of these trainings.

The first pillar focuses on the institutionalization of work-oriented basic adult education trainings in companies and on central actors in companies who are able to make pertinent decisions. As such human resource managers, executives or staff councilors come to the fore and are interviewed with respect to their motives and interests regarding work-oriented adult basic education. Subsequently, the second pillar concentrates on the trainers. They are also central actors within the mode of action of work-oriented adult basic education. The underlying research question refers to the competencies needed as a trainer as well as indicators of excellent trainings. Accordingly, the third pillar takes the participants to the centre stage and focuses on the effects of work-oriented adult basic education trainings as well as on the development of competence structures on side of the participants. This third part of the project is emphasized in the following. However, there are particular challenges when it comes to work-oriented basic adult education trainings and these challenges turned out to be threefold: the heterogeneity of companies, the heterogeneity of the trainings as regards their content and goals as well as the heterogeneity of the participants.

We met these challenges by building on an instrument which we developed in a different project and which refers to the notion of key competencies (Klinkhammer & Schemmann 2018). The discussion on key competencies is currently quite dynamic. The European Commission (2018) considers specific knowledge, skills and attitudes as key competencies for personal fulfilment, participation on the labour market and social participation. What is more, the European Commission is quite concrete in describing some of these key competencies in detail, e.g. communication in one's mother language and foreign languages as well, whereas the scientific community takes a more general approach.

Our approach refers to four acknowledged key competencies: Roth (1971), one of the central actors in the field of key competencies, stated that professional competence, social competence and self-competence are the basic competencies that would have to be learned for educational and work-related success. This approach refers mainly to White's (1959) psychological concept of competencies that seem to be necessary to interact effectively with the environment. Since then, all three key competencies have served as reference for further adaptations of the original concept. Nowadays experts differ in four dimensions of key competencies and their subdivision by professional, methodological, social and self-competence, as summarized, for example, by Maurer (2006):

- The professional competence addresses a broad range of knowledge, theories, attitudes and skills required in order to work in a specialized area or profession (Klippert 1994; Maurer 2006).
- Within the scientific discourse methods and methodological competence are referred to as tools for almost every educational and work-related success (Klippert 1994; Trautwein 2011). A correct and situation-specific application of these methods can be critical in most processes.
- The concept of social competence refers to the ability to act appropriately within social interactions and to get along with others (Roth 1971; Maurer 2006). Thus, social competence is related to interpersonal communication, the perception of others and the self-perception in respect to others.
- Self-competence can be described as someone's attitudes and abilities to reflect upon himself and his own strengths and weaknesses. It is sometimes referred to be the basis for developing other competencies (Maurer 2006).

One advantage of measuring key competencies is the clear intention of taking into account that each participant is unique and might have different evaluation outcomes. Furthermore, trainings can differ in respect of their content and consequently the effects on the key competencies of the participants within the trainings should differ. Therefore, the focussed trainings are rarely comparable figure by figure, but could be categorized according to their content and in respect to the key competencies achieved by participants. This, however, leads to the more detailed outline of the methodological approach and the empirical design.

### **3 Methodological approach, measuring points and participants**

In the next section the methodological approach and the different methodical steps that were applied to analyze competencies of participants in work-oriented adult basic education trainings will be outlined.

#### **Methodological approach**

With regard to the heterogeneity of the target group, the evaluation tool bases upon the four previously mentioned competence dimensions of professional, methodological, social and self-competence (Roth 1971; Klippert 1994; Maurer 2006) that can be measured using a 5-point scale with a total of 16 easily understandable and target group-specific questions. Each competence dimension consists of up to six associated questions and has been confirmed via factor- as well as reliability-analysis (Klinkhammer & Schemmann 2018). Further insights into the questionnaire have been made available to the public by the authors (Schemmann & Klinkhammer 2017). This evaluation tool is mainly designed to provide insights into the underlying competence patterns of the participants – unlike common performance tests or scoring



instruments – and can be analyzed with respect to the industry sectors the work-oriented adult basic education trainings were offered to or with a specific focus on the trainings themselves. Evaluations on basis of a performance test or scoring instrument usually follow a classic pre-post-design and rely on significant differences in the arithmetic mean within the evaluation. Prerequisites for this are comparable participant numbers and structures, which are difficult to implement when it comes to work-oriented adult basic education trainings. Therefore, this evaluation tool determines target group-specific competence patterns – in respect to their often low number of participants – by applying robust statistical methods and using associated competence reference values for each industry sector and work-oriented adult basic education trainings. This approach is supposed to eliminate statistical outliers without interfering with the actual answering behavior (Yuen 1974).

Furthermore, this approach has proven to be beneficial, when the responses differ from a normal distribution (Keselmann et al. 2002; Kowalchuck 2006), whereby a longitudinal comparison of the arithmetic means can lead to a false-positive or false-negative significance. The responses of the participants in the project ABAG<sup>2</sup> are subject to these particularities. Keselmann and Kowalchuck therefore both argue for the use of trimmed values in order to compensate these particularities. In case of a skewed and above-average response behavior this automatically leads to a lower trimmed mean than the common arithmetic mean, which still acts as a reference value for the entire sector the work-oriented adult basic education trainings have been offered to. As a result, that is what pertinent simulations indicate, it is impossible for the trimmed means to exceed the reference values, without significant underlying effects on side of the work-oriented basic adult education trainings. By taking simulation- and randomization-based inferences into account, the findings presented below can be considered as robust.

### Measuring points

Each work-oriented adult basic education training has been accompanied by a total of three measuring points. Measuring point T0 marks the beginning of a training, T1 its end and T2 the point in time three months after completion of the training. At measuring point T0, a total of 380 participants were enrolled in 54 different work-oriented adult basic education trainings. Subsequently, 304 participants from 50 different trainings gave feedback voluntarily and immediately after participation. In order to be able to measure the influence of work-oriented adult basic education trainings measuring point T1 is of specific relevance. Unfortunately, it was not possible to reach all participants at measuring point T2, since the employers seemed to have difficulties to establish a final measuring point outside the work-oriented adult basic education training. As a result, at T2 only 88 participants in 28 trainings gave feedback.

### Participants

Regarding the participants it can be stated that more men (70 %) than women (30 %) attended the work-oriented basic adult education trainings. The average age of all participants is 36 years, while men with an average age of 34 years are younger than women with an average age of 42 years. Up to 60 % of all participants learned German as their main language during childhood and youth and 73 % of all participants have a general education qualification in the form of middle maturity or higher forms. Thus, the general education qualification of most participants would have been suitable for accessing the vocational training system. In addition, participants were asked about their satisfaction with working conditions: While men state satisfaction levels beyond the average values of all participants and in all aspects, the women are particularly concerned with the aspects of safety at the workplace, to have a say at the workplace, their workload as well as the pressure to perform and their payment. When asked about individual preferences, participants respond primarily to health, secondarily to job security, and tertiary to opportunities for education and further training.

## 4 Industry-specific evaluation and competence acquisition

### Participating industry sectors

Considering responses from participants at various measuring points a total of 95 different work-oriented adult basic education trainings, which are distributed among 12 different companies within five different industry sectors, can be taken into account. The trainings within the evaluated companies are distributed across the following industry sectors: Many of the trainings have been offered for participants from the manufacturing sector (26 %), followed by the care sector (20 %) as well as the transportation sector (10 %). The personnel service is represented at 8 %. To a lesser extent, work-oriented basic adult education trainings have been offered for participants from the logistics sector (2 %).

### Competence acquisition across different industry sectors

As stated before, the industry-specific evaluation of the competence acquisition through work-oriented adult basic education training participants is based on the so-called robust statistical methods, in which the competence reference value as an average value within an industry sector must be exceeded by the trimmed mean values of the underlying competence dimensions in order to achieve a demonstrable competence effect on side of the participants. Therefore, the effect sizes presented in this paper indicate a moderate positive effect when the trimmed mean values exceed the average values by  $\leq 0.10$  and a strong positive effect when the trimmed mean values exceed the average values by  $\geq 0.11$ . In a sector-specific evaluation that focuses the different industry sectors, it must be taken into account that sometimes different work-oriented adult basic education trainings have been realized within one company and that several companies can be assigned to one industry sector, so that the

effects related to competence acquisition are likely to be less clear in direct comparison with a program-specific evaluation. Gradually, the effect sizes in the five designated industry sectors are presented.

### Manufacturing sector

Work-oriented adult basic education trainings offered within the manufacturing sector (see table 1) seem to affect the competencies of the participants at measuring point T1 when it comes to the social (trimmed mean of 4.39) and self-competence (trimmed mean of 4.40), which were above the competence reference value within this industry sector (mean of 4.23 at measuring points T1 and T2). However, three months after completion of the trainings and at measuring point T2, these effects shift to professional (trimmed mean of 4.36) and methodological competence (trimmed mean of 4.33). This could be attributed to the fact that participants during work-oriented basic adult education trainings in particular experience the course atmosphere as positively and get in touch with other people, so that they rated accordingly. However, back in working context, the topics and contents of the trainings as well as their clear professional and methodological connection to the work context of the participants could provoke that shift when it comes to competence acquisition.

**Table 1:** Competence effects within manufacturing sector

Competence effects straight after trainings	Competence effects 3 months after trainings
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Methodological	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Methodological
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	<input type="checkbox"/> Social
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self	<input type="checkbox"/> Self

### Care sector

For the care sector (see table 2), a competence reference value of 4.09 is available for measuring point T1, which increases to 4.19 at measuring point T2. Immediately after the completion of the work-oriented basic adult education trainings these reference values are exceeded and positive effects in the methodological (trimmed mean of 4.10), the social (trimmed mean of 4.16) and self-competence (trimmed mean of 4.20) can be recorded. Back in the working context of the participants, the social (trimmed average of 4.28) and the self-competence (trimmed mean of 4.49) of the participants seem to manifest themselves on a long-lasting level.

**Table 2:** Competence effects within the care sector

Competence effects straight after trainings	Competence effects 3 months after trainings
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Methodological	<input type="checkbox"/> Methodological
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self

### Transportation sector

In the transportation sector (see table 3), employers in particular expressed the need for communication skills when it comes to work-oriented contents and topics. Accordingly, several work-oriented adult basic education trainings were realized, which had a competence reference value of 4.05 when it comes to measuring point T1 and 4.19 when it comes to measuring point T2. Since the trainings aimed specifically at communication, positive effects can be observed at both measuring points, especially in the case of social (trimmed mean values of 4.13 and 4.30 respectively) and self-competence (trimmed mean values of 4.16 and 4.39 respectively). Thus, these effects seem to manifest themselves on a long-lasting level like in the other industry sectors presented above.

**Table 3:** Competence effects within transportation sector

Competence effects straight after trainings	Competence effects 3 months after trainings
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Methodological	<input type="checkbox"/> Methodological
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self

### Personnel service

Participants who attended a work-oriented adult basic education training via a personnel service provider (see table 4) seem to have significantly shorter competence reference values three months after completion of the work-oriented basic adult education training compared to their time of ending, so that 3.71 was measured at measuring point T2 compared to 4.05 at measuring point T1. This could be attributed to the fact that not all participants have arrived in a work context at survey time T2 and that those participants who have already arrived in the work context seem to be set more negative about their job satisfaction compared to the participants in other sectors. Immediately after completion of the trainings, there seem to be competence acquisitions in the professional (trimmed mean of 4.06), social (trimmed mean of 4.11) and self-competence (trimmed mean of 4.20). Compared to other sectors, the lowest trimmed mean values on social competence can thus be found in the personnel services. At baseline T2, these effects shift towards methodological (trimmed mean of 3.75) and self-competence (trimmed mean of 3.81), both measured at an intersectional low rate.

**Table 4:** Competence effects within personnel services

Competence effects straight after trainings	Competence effects 3 months after trainings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional
<input type="checkbox"/> Methodological	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Methodological
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	<input type="checkbox"/> Social
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self

**Logistics sector**

Since the answers of more than three participants can only be used for the logistics sector (see table 5) at measuring point T1, there are no results presented for measuring point T2 due to data protection reasons. After completion of the work-oriented basic adult education trainings, a competence reference value of 4.59 could be determined, which is exceeded only in the field of self-competence (trimmed average of 4.83). This effect is in line with expectations, as the logistics sector has expressed the need for self-competence and the work-oriented adult basic education trainings were specifically designed to meet these needs.

**Table 5:** Competence effects within logistics sector

Competence effects straight after trainings	Competence effects 3 month after trainings
[ ] Professional	[-/-] Professional
[ ] Methodological	[-/-] Methodological
[ ] Social	[-/-] Social
[x] Self	[-/-] Self

**5 Further insights and implications for employers**

As previously mentioned, satisfaction with the work situation and satisfaction with trainings were also referred to within the survey and they have proven to be worth mentioning: For instance, participants with an increase in methodological competence seem to be more satisfied with the working atmosphere after completing the work-oriented basic adult education trainings. A positive correlative connection as well as a t-test confirm that connection, both significant at  $p=.000$ . Furthermore, participants with an increase in professional, methodological as well as self-competence seem to be more satisfied when it comes to the experienced workload, all effects have proven to be significant at the  $p=.000$  level as well. This corresponds with the effect, that an increase in methodological, social and self-competence seems to have a significant impact on the pressure to perform. Participants seem to perceive the pressure to perform in their company as more pleasant, if they experience positive effects by the work-oriented basic adult education trainings, despite the fact, that the experienced workload as well as the pressure to perform did not change during the evaluation period. Overall, there are positive effects when it comes to the satisfaction of participants with their work situation. These effects seem to be especially strong, when the topics and contents of the work-oriented adult basic education trainings have been in accordance with the work of the participants.

The accordance of the topics and contents with the actual work situation of the participants led to better satisfaction levels when it comes to the trainings and trainers. In particular, a seamless integration into the work routine, as well as the proximity of the discussed contents to the workplace resulted in a good evaluation of the

work-oriented adult basic education trainings. Therefore, only satisfaction with the discussed contents seems to favor professional competence, methodological competence, social competence and self-competence alike. Contents considered to be off-topic by the participants led to lesser or no effects at all. Satisfaction with the trainers is also beneficial when it comes to methodological, social and self-competence. All correlative connections are .300 or above and have proven to be significant at the  $p=.000$  level. The duration of the work-oriented adult basic education trainings did not have any significant effects at all, since different topics and contents seem to require different duration periods. They have been arranged by the trainers in agreement with the employers. These results seem to indicate, that a close consultation between these two stakeholders seems to improve the effects of work-oriented adult basic education trainings. Only then employers and employees both seem to benefit from the offered trainings.

## 6 Conclusion

This study as well as the presented research method provided first insights into the competence patterns of participants of work-oriented adult basic education trainings by focusing longitudinal effects. It contributes to the scientific debate, by being one of the few, if not the only longitudinal study, which allows for analysis of inter-personal differentiable competence patterns and their development over time. In order to do so, the underlying questionnaire and research method are capable of differentiating between the level of participants, the level of work-oriented adult basic education trainings as well as the level of sectors. Results on the level of sectors were presented within this paper. It is due to the correlative connection of the four key competencies, that the acquisition of competencies can be traced in detail.

As a first result, it can be very clearly stated that social as well as self-competence seem to profit from work-oriented adult basic education trainings in almost every case. This effect seems to expand to the professional as well as methodological competence, when the participants are back in their working routine. Subsequently, and as a second result, it has to be mentioned that some of these effects seem to depend strongly on whether the participants can apply the key competencies in their working context or not. This suggests a certain degree of specificity as prerequisite, when it comes to work-oriented adult basic education trainings. Furthermore, and this is a third result, it can be stated for the sector-specific evaluation that the work-oriented adult basic education trainings favor the competence acquisition of the participants across all sectors. Finally, this is a fourth result, the general increase of the reference values of the key competencies seems to come along with stronger correlations between almost all underlying items of the four key competencies over time. Participants who stated to feel more secure in communicating with others because of a communication related work-oriented adult basic education training also stated that they feel more secure in dealing with superiors. However, this correlation was

less established right after the work-oriented basic adult education training than three months afterwards, so the same for most of the other underlying items.

All in all, these results are covered by an increase of the competence reference values between measuring points T1 and T2 in almost every industry sector – despite the manufacturing sector and within personnel services. This can be attributed to the sensitivity of the questionnaire and research method, which both indicate a general increase in key competencies through work-oriented basic adult education trainings. This stands in line with the perspective, that each participant is unique and might have different evaluation outcomes in respect to the context the work-oriented adult basic education trainings were offered.

Since the questionnaire has proven to be functioning within different training contexts and its results are supported by the interviews with the trainers as well as the relevant actors within enterprises, it seems to be adaptable to more contexts as well. especially when it comes to work-oriented basic adult trainings with all the heterogeneity involved. Therefore, a Scientific Use File, the questionnaire and methodological framework of reference values as well as the application of robust statistics within the programming language R can be provided on request.

As regards further research perspectives, two aspects are to be highlighted. On the one hand further research is to be carried out in order to scrutinize the patterns that were presented in this paper as regards the different sectors. On the other hand, international-comparative research needs to be carried out in order to validate the findings presented in this article.

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# Professionalisation of Teachers in Work-Oriented Basic Education: Process Orientation as a Special Competence Requirement of Teachers

JULIA KOLLER, CAROLIN RADTKE

## Abstract

The pedagogical concept of work-oriented basic education is the result of an increasing differentiation concerning the concept of basic education and adult education as a whole. This article addresses the question of context specificity in the field of work-oriented basic education. This will be discussed within the context-specifics of knowledge and skills of teachers in the field. Certain competencies, such as process orientation and the development of diverse addressee relationships, are particularly relevant in the field of work-oriented basic education, although they are closely linked to general adult education skills.

Keywords: Professionalisation, professional pedagogical competence, teachers, work-oriented basic education, adult education

## 1 Introduction – professionalisation and competence requirements

In recent years, adult literacy and basic education have become a distinct topic and research field within adult education research. This field is increasingly differentiated (cf. Tröster & Schrader 2016), which raises the question of the characteristics and peculiarities of the respective contexts. A specific, currently strongly promoted and discussed field of research and practice is work-oriented basic education. This concept uses the workplace as an opportunity structure to promote employability as well as to enable autonomy and the ability to reflect in an educational-theoretical tradition (cf. Klein & Reutter, 2014 p. 3). In addition to the participants, work-oriented basic education also focuses on the goals and expectations of the company as a business and learning location. Work-oriented basic education is characterised by a special field reference between vocational and general education and by the interaction of diverse actors (cf. Klein, Folger & Behlke 2015). Consequently, special contextual and structural framework conditions can be assumed for work-oriented basic educa-

tion as a field of action. Starting from this assumption, it is expected that this is also reflected in the professionalisation of teachers, especially in specific requirements for the competencies of teachers in work-oriented basic education. This article examines the assumption through an explorative-empirical approach and poses the question if special competence requirements can be identified for professional teachers in work-oriented basic education.

The multi-perspective research project “Arbeitsplatzbezogene Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener (ABAG<sup>2</sup>)”<sup>1</sup>, on which this article is based, takes a close look at these conditions by the three aspects of participants, teachers and enterprises in the field of work-oriented basic education. A subproject dedicated to the teachers in work-oriented basic education focuses on professionalisation and the professional pedagogical action of teachers. Based on the notion that there are special structural and contextual framework conditions in work-oriented basic education, this article discusses which specific competence requirements for teachers can be identified for the field. This research question is related to a fundamental debate on the professionalisation and competencies of teachers in adult education and in work-oriented basic education. For this purpose, the current state of research on professionalisation and professionalism as well as on the competencies of teachers in adult education and the field of work-oriented basic education will be discussed. The theoretical perspective of this empirical work is the model of professional pedagogical competence according to Baumert and Kunter (2006). We will then focus on the discussion of selected empirical findings: In a multi-perspective study with teachers in work-oriented basic education, company stakeholders, education management and participants, requirements and competence facets are analysed. In addition to a brief overview of all empirically identified competence requirements for teachers, *process orientation in the addressee relation* is presented and discussed as an outstanding competence requirement for teachers in the field of work-oriented basic education. The empirically identified requirements of special competence are also discussed with regard to assumptions about general adult educational competence requirements. The article concludes by offering perspectives on further findings as well as connections to current research. This research contributes to the debate on the competencies of teachers, in particular those related to practical feasibility. The results can stimulate the development of models for the accreditation of competencies as well as the concepts of qualification.

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<sup>1</sup> The joint project on Workplace Literacy and Basic Education with the Learning Region-Network Cologne e. V. is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research from May 2016 to July 2020. The research project contains 3 subprojects, which deal with the institutionalisation, professionalisation and competencies of the participants.

## **2 Professionalisation and competencies of teachers in adult education and work-oriented basic education**

In the following, we give an overview of the current state of research and outline the debate on professionalisation in adult education as well as the specific field of work-oriented basic education. In particular, we highlight the close connection with a strongly competence-oriented debate on questions of professional pedagogical competencies of teachers in the school sector. We then present current findings and models that systematically outline competence requirements for teachers in adult education.

### **2.1 Professionalisation and professional pedagogical competence of teachers in adult education**

The debate and development towards professionalisation in adult education began as early as the 1960s; numerous recent publications and research activities point to an intensification of the debate, especially in recent years (cf. Gieseke 2015; Scheidig 2016; Schrader 2010a). While initially the development of a profession and an adult education profile was emphasised, the focus shifted towards the professionalisation of the individual and his or her actions (cf. Gieseke 2015, p. 2; Kraft, Seitter & Kollewe 2009, p. 13 f.; Scheidig 2016, p. 74). However, in recent decades, the focus has been primarily on planning personnel, whereas insufficient attention has been paid to the professionalisation of teachers (cf. Bosche et al. 2015 p. 54; Gieseke 2015; Schrader 2010a, p. 31). This is particularly remarkable against the background of the progressive institutionalisation of adult education and the associated demands on teachers to meet minimum requirements (cf. Schrader 2010a). Furthermore, the outstanding importance of professional teaching and the relevance of qualified and professional teaching staff are emphasised (Bosche et al. 2015, p. cf.; Kraft et al. 2009; Martin et al., 2016; Scheidig 2016). However, not least because of a practical necessity, recently a focus on professionalisation and professionalism of teachers has become apparent (cf. Schrader 2010a, p. 31). For example, the “wb-personalmonitor” examines the staff in continuing education, and thus also the teachers, and their qualifications (cf. Martin et al. 2016). The studies on media-supported case studies by Schrader et al. (2010) also refer to interests in the professionalism of teaching and develop a training concept for the competence development of teachers in adult education (cf. Schrader, Hohmann, & Hartz, 2010). In addition, specific further training courses for teaching activities in adult education can be identified, for example, the “Adult Education Qualification” of the German Adult Education Association or certificates such as “Train the Trainer” of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. However, these certificates are not yet recognised across institutions and industries.

The question regarding formalisation and certificates generates a current debate on recognition and certification opportunities for professional adult education competence (cf. Bosche et al. 2015; Gruber 2018). This is stimulated, among other things, by educational policy requirements on the international and national level concern-

ing a transparent and consistent recognition system, which results in the development of concepts (cf. Bosche et al., 2015; Gieseke, 2015; Gruber, 2018, p. 1090; Kraft et al., 2009). In this context, the study “Adult Learning Professions in Europe (ALPINE)”, published in 2008 and commissioned by the European Commission, should be mentioned. The study focuses on professionalisation in adult education and recommends a common “European Qualifications Framework (EQF)”. Subsequently, a follow-up study on “Key competencies for adult learning professionals” was developed in 2010. The study is regarded as an important step towards a consistent reference and qualification framework (cf. Research voor Beleid 2010). However, the adoption of such a framework at the international level has not yet taken place, just as the proposed key competencies have not yet been applied within the national context. In this context and at the national level, the “GRETA” competence model must be mentioned, as it responds to this need for consistent competence standards and related recognition procedures and systems. GRETA compiles the foundations for the development of a cross-institution recognition procedure for the competencies of teachers in adult and continuing education (cf. Lencer & Strauch 2016). The GRETA-model identifies all competencies that teachers should have and it should be applicable as a generic cross-field and cross-carrier model for different areas (cf. Lencer & Strauch 2016, p. 3).

Even though recognition systems of competencies such as the GRETA model are considered to be of central importance for the professionalisation of teachers (cf. Gruber 2018, p. 17), at the same time adequacy and applicability of such models are questioned concerning the heterogeneity and specification of adult education (cf. Schrader 2010a, p. 34; Schwendemann 2018). In addition, it becomes clear that despite the above-mentioned efforts to research professional adult education competencies, the lack of consensual approaches and consistent standards persists. Consequently, these considerations reinforce the interest in identifying which special demands can be made in regard to the competencies of teachers in the specific field of work-oriented basic education.

The debate on professionalism of teachers in adult education is closely related to the discussion of professional pedagogical competencies of teachers in the school sector (cf. Dewe, 1990, 2017; Goeze & Hartz, 2008). However, taking this into account and referring to current research findings, there are hardly any competence models that attempt to capture and depict the professional (pedagogical) competence of adult education teachers in a comprehensive, theoretically founded and empirically tested way (cf. Schrader 2010b). Of course, the GRETA model previously cited should be mentioned here (cf. Lencer & Strauch 2016).

Nonetheless it is therefore profitable to join the discourse on professionalisation and competencies in school and teacher education research. These are already intensively devoted to the question of professional competence, especially since the modernisation and reform of teacher training and the development of quality standards. The compatibility of school-related models for the field of adult education seems to be ensured despite structural differences. Thus, no significant differences between the requirements of teachers in school and in adult education can be identified (cf.

Schrader 2010b, p.77). The school-related debate produces a series of competence models that range from strongly substance- and content-oriented standards to educational-psychological ones (cf. Baumert & Kunter, 2006 p.469). Drawing on these models from international and national teacher education and school research, and in consideration of standards formulated in education policy, Baumert and Kunter (2006) developed a heuristic model of professional action competence based on the model of professional teacher personality. The authors understand professional action competence as being composed of various components and differentiate between self-regulatory abilities, motivational orientations, convictions and values as well as (professional) knowledge. Accordingly, professional action competence develops from the interaction of

- specific, experience-saturated declarative and procedural knowledge (competence in the narrower sense: knowledge and ability);
- professional values, beliefs, subjective theories, normative preferences and goals;
- motivational orientations as well as
- metacognitive and professional self-regulation skills (cf. Baumert & Kunter 2006, p.482).

Following this understanding as well as the aforementioned study by Schrader et al. (2010), these considerations serve as a theoretical framework for our understanding of knowledge and skills, understood in a broader sense as professional pedagogical competence. The methodological approach therefore follows the interest in knowledge and ability, the declarative and procedural knowledge as well as the practical ability to act and the professional values, convictions and self-control of teachers in work-oriented basic education.

## **2.2 Professionalisation of teachers in (work-oriented) literacy and basic education**

Professionalism is also debated in the field of work-oriented basic education, where it is particularly justified by the high practical need for concrete training and continuing education opportunities for teachers (cf. Nuissl & Przybylska 2016, p.93). The research focus on professionalisation is inspired by internationally comparative research activities and findings, which emphasise the lack as well as the need for professional competence training and consistent standards (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung 2013). However, the development and implementation of a professionalisation system for teachers in literacy and basic education has progressed differently among the European member states. Nonetheless, professionalisation has led to a focus on the development of continuing education concepts and trainings (cf. Nuissl & Przybylska, 2016 p.93).

In the national context, the practical and scientific necessity of dealing with the subject has been increasingly responded to in recent years. The practical and research field of (work-oriented) literacy and basic education are promoted in particu-

lar by educational policy developments and programmes such as the “National Decade for Literacy and Basic Education”<sup>2</sup>, which came into force in 2016. Within this framework, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research carries out specific funding priorities, including work-oriented basic education, and funds corresponding research and development projects. The project “CurVe II” represents such a project and focuses among other things on the professionalism of teachers and is currently developing and testing a further training course for teachers in the basic education sector (cf. Mania & Tröster 2015). The University of Education Weingarten also reacted in a special way to the practical necessity and social relevance of the subject by establishing a Master’s programme for the training of professional teachers (cf. Pädagogische Hochschule Weingarten 2018). The “Büro für Berufliche Bildungsplanung Dortmund” also reacts to the practical necessity with the “Gruwe” project and offers practical and specific further training for teachers (Büro für Berufliche Bildungsplanung 2018).

Despite the efforts outlined above, there are no consistent and common standards on the competence requirements for teachers in the field of (work oriented) literacy and basic education. Current research activities indicate a high level of activity and promotion of professionalisation, yet the state of research points to the urgent practical need to address the specific pedagogical competence requirements of teachers as well as their professional development. Especially for work-oriented basic education, which is characterised by the peculiar field reference between vocational and general education and by the involvement and interaction of various actors, questions arise regarding competence requirements for teachers. In this sense, Klein, Folger and Behlke emphasise that work-oriented basic education confronts educational institutions and teachers with new challenges. Work-oriented basic education is an “outreach” offer; it is about addressing, informing and sensitising companies; it has to be conceived of customized offers that meet the needs of employees and companies; learning has to take place as close to work as possible; benefit and gain should become as transparent as possible (cf. Klein et al., 2015, p. 5).

We assume that there are certain requirements in the field of work-oriented basic education and that these have a certain relationship to competencies in adult education as a whole. Based on this initial assumption and the scientific desideratum of research, the article discusses the initial question regarding the context-specific competence requirements of teachers in work-oriented basic education.

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2 It is in this context that the ABAG<sup>2</sup> project, on which this contribution is based, should be seen.

### **3 Methodical notes: A multi-perspective analytical concept**

Next, an overview regarding the empirical design of the multi-perspective study is given. A multi-perspective research design was developed for the empirical survey of the pedagogical competence of teachers in work-oriented basic education, which is achieved by the analysis of four different perspectives on the research object as well as by the entanglement and contrast of these perspectives with regard to the research question. The emphasis is on the perspectives of teachers, educational management as planning actors, company stakeholders and participants in work-oriented basic education courses. Accordingly, the methods of the guideline-based expert interviews and questionnaire surveys were applied triangulatively in the procedure. The perspective of the teachers was recorded via a guideline-based group interview and four expert interviews with trainers of work-oriented basic education courses. The focus was the assessment of important competencies and requirements, especially in contrast to teaching activities in other contexts. Regarding education management, three expert interviews were analysed, focusing on selection criteria for teachers. The perspective of the company stakeholders was analysed in 13 expert interviews which particularly focused on expectations and experiences of competencies of trainers. These interviews address the conditions for success and institutionalisation of work-oriented basic education in the company, which is the main topic of another subproject (cf. Koller 2018). The interviews were transcribed and analyzed on the basis of the structuring qualitative content analysis (cf. Mayring 2015). The category system was sharpened in a deductive and inductive coding process based on the 6-eyes principle; the inter-rater reliability is at a satisfactory Cohens-Kappa value of 0.68 (cf. Krippendorff 2004). The fourth perspective relates to participants' feedback on the seminar situation; the collected data comes from a third subproject which uses a quantitative longitudinal section to survey the competencies of participants (cf. Schwarz & Klinkhammer 2017). Within the questionnaire open questions for feedback were given. These short text documents were also used for content analysis. The participants' written statements cannot be directly compared with the data from the expert interviews, as they provide insights into the requirements from the participants' point of view.

### **4 Findings – Process orientation as a special competence requirement for teachers in work-oriented basic education**

By analysing the data, various facets of pedagogical competence can be identified. Thus, in the 23 categories for example specialised didactics, specialised knowledge, didactical knowledge and ability as well as methodical competence, self-organization up to customer acquisition are analysed. Figure 1 shows the variance and wideness of the competence facets which were conducted in the data.





Figure 1: Facets of competencies in the field of work-oriented basic education

The facet of process orientation will be emphasised in the following. In the analysis, the category of process orientation turns out to be differentiated in a remarkable way, since it appears to have a certain contextual specificity. Process orientation refers to the competence to adapt quickly and efficiently to changing situations and to be able to flexibly access various facets of professional action. Learning from participants and in particular to understand work-oriented basic education as a process and to stimulate it through flexible reaction is the characteristic of this competence facet. The thesis can be put forward that process orientation as a competence is relevant for teachers in work-oriented basic education in a twofold manner:

1. *It addresses a variety of competencies and thus formulates the profile of the pedagogical competencies of teachers in work-oriented basic education.*
2. *It structures the variety of addressee orientations in the field of work-oriented basic education.*

In the following, we will empirically illustrate and elaborate how the competence of *process orientation* is reflected in the various perspectives of the actors. In addition, this competence is shown in its intertwining with other competence facets and with a specific addressee relation.

The overlapping of *process orientation* and the categories *participant orientation*, *didactic knowledge and skills* and *self-organisation* is particularly striking. These overlaps show the dimensioning and leading function of *process orientation*. The following quotation<sup>3</sup> from the data material of the teachers illustrates this link:

Much more important, because the just yes, it is (short break) from the format, those are full days, so mostly from nine to three. You're already together a lot more intensively. Didactically, this has to be approached in a different way, it's also a big material abundance, whereby I always see, leave a lot of free space for my own impulses and my own experience and so on and that also works quite well. (I\_T1, L. 164–168)

3 The interviews were conducted in German and translated for this essay as close as possible to the original.

It can be seen here that the teacher uses a modified or unusual teaching format as a starting point for didactic decisions. The question of “material abundance”, which addresses competencies from the field of *subject didactics*, is placed in an area of tension with *participant orientation* in the sense of “one’s own impulses” and “one’s own experience”. Flexible action becomes obvious here when speaking of “differently raised” and “free space”. This is underlined by the fact that in preparation and in the concrete teaching situation adaptations must be made which require competencies from the field of *didactic knowledge and skills*, *participant orientation* and *subject didactics*. Obviously, there is a repertoire, which is prepared in a special and modified way due to the format, but then flexibly adapted in favour of orientation to the impulses of the participants. With regard to the entire data material, it can be seen that the processing of questions of e.g. *subject didactics*, which and how much content is to be processed, is often decided or adapted in the situation and then aligned with the process. In the learning situation and ad hoc, *participant orientation* is usually given preference over prepared planning.

The following quotation points out the role of *self-organisation* as a competence connection with *process orientation*:

[...] that the goals, the learning goals are perhaps clear but the way to get there is not the same as in the traditional course. You first have to work your way through it, you have to develop it [...] so in my courses there have been some needs from which new course offers have been developed and implemented. Which I developed together with the participants [...]. (I\_TG, L. 213–218)

First of all, a difference between work-oriented basic education and other formats becomes obvious here. The statement is not trivial, as the interviews show, that the actors allocate the activity in work-oriented basic education context a special position and apparently assess the requirements as specific. It is made clear that the didactic concept of work-oriented basic education is to be developed and carried out in *self-organisation*. The learning objectives, i.e. the required *specialist knowledge*, have been formulated explicitly and in coordination with the respective company and the educational management.<sup>4</sup> The didactic knowledge and skills are adapted in a flexible manner while taking teaching and the learning process into consideration. In this context this aspect is extended by the meaning of the addressee relation: *also the company*. *The company also has an interest, which is now being added as a third partner (GI\_L\_1, L. 58)*. The *process-oriented* handling of *didactic knowledge and skills* in coordination with the *participant’s orientation* is additionally brought into harmony with the “third partner” company. This entanglement of *addressee relation* with the competence of *process orientation* is a particular challenge. As already discussed, the context of work-oriented basic education shows a special relation between in-company and

4 It should also be mentioned here that in the case of the ABAG<sup>2</sup> project, educational management is an external actor financed by project funds, which initiates work-oriented basic education in the companies and determines the topic and content with the company’s internal actors. The trainers are recruited and financed by the educational management.

general education in the interaction of various actors. This requirement is also met with flexibility by renegotiating, coordinating and adapting *didactics* and the content of the course.

If the perspective of this “third partner” company is integrated, it can be seen that the flexibility in dealing with *didactic* questions is seen as a unique selling point of teachers in the field of work-oriented basic education and the specific offer:

In particular that we even switched over the course content at short notice and it was then adapted so quickly and I don't think every provider is necessarily in a position to do this. (I\_B\_RVG, Z. 134–136)

The given example illustrates the importance of cooperation and the customisation of offers within the respective business contexts. In cooperation, pedagogical competencies that affect the *ability to cooperate* become relevant. This shows that process-oriented action is not only relevant within the context of teaching and learning. As well as addressing competencies in the area of *didactic knowledge and skills* and *participant orientation*, it is also important in cooperation with additional addressees.

In addition to competencies that are central to the teaching situation and focus on the participants, this multiplied addressee relation seems to mark a passage on which routines and familiar concepts are questioned and reoriented. In the data material, not only the companies as partners but also the educational management as addressees become visible. The following excerpt depicts the perspective of the educational management. It portrays the relationship between the teacher and the respective partner in regard to coordination:

[...] that doesn't necessarily have to be what we negotiated, I'm totally willing to say, if someone comes to me, just look, we tried it today, they can, they're much, much better, they're much, much worse or it's about completely different things, they have huge conflicts, they can't concentrate on it at all, I just talked to them about it for four hours. Then I say yes, great. You did exactly right. (I\_BM2, Z. 394–399)

In this quote, educational management and teachers negotiated a concept for a concrete offer, which was rejected after the beginning of the offer in the teaching situation. The need for change is determined by the teacher on the basis of the competence of *participant orientation*. For example, it is determined that *it's about completely different things*. In addition, an assessment of the participants which had been conducted by the education management and the teacher in advance, could not be maintained in the teaching situation – the participants' competencies were underestimated. Another aspect becomes clear: the didactic concept of the subject is abandoned in favour of an empathetic, understanding approach. The emphasis on *socio-emotional sensitivity* as a facet of social competence is recurrent in the data material. The orientation and objectives of the offer, which have already been negotiated and recorded, are again open for discussion and must be adapted by the teachers in relation to the addressee of education management. Cooperation with education management also shows that *process orientation* in alliance with (among other things)

*participant orientation* and *socio-emotional sensitivity* is given priority over coordinated goals and concepts.

By taking a final look at the perspective of the participants, the emphasis on *socio-emotional sensitivity* is reinforced. One can interpret it as a starting point for a flexible course design:

The trainer has patience with us and she explains to us if we have not understood correctly. She is very nice. (TN 22)

It should be remembered that the statements of the participants do not originate from a comparable survey context, but are part of a comprehensive long-term study based on questionnaires (see methodological notes). However, in relation to the question posed by this article, it becomes apparent that the participants value the teachers' change of perspective and their emphatic approach. The teacher obviously uses these social competencies to adapt the course concept to the situation. Having patience with participants also means being able to make new didactic and methodological adjustments over and over. The feedback of a participant emphasizes exactly this characteristic: *trainer X, who has adapted wonderfully to the respective situation* (TN 19).

## 5 Conclusion: Facets of competence and requirements in the field of work-oriented basic education

A synopsis of the various perspectives showed that *process orientation* seems to be a key competence demanded of teachers in the field of work-oriented basic education. It was shown that the competence facet of *process orientation* is reflected in many other facets, e.g. the importance of *socio-emotional sensitivity*, *didactics* and *didactic knowledge and skills* was highlighted. *Process orientation* can thus be understood as an overarching and dimensioning competence towards which other competencies are aligned. It was also explained that the special addressee relation between participants, the company and the educational management, requires the ability to cooperate in a particularly process-oriented manner. It is noticeable that this ability is not only relevant in teaching-learning interactions – as demonstrated here by the competence of participant orientation – but also in cooperation with the other addressees. This threefold addressee relation represents a criterion against which routine *didactic knowledge and skills*, *methodology* etc. are measured and made more flexible accordingly. A model of pedagogical competence of work-oriented basic education teachers, would not only have to integrate the much-discussed participant orientation (cf. Lencer & Strauch 2016), but also the orientation towards other addressees, such as companies and education management.

The question posed in this article puts into focus the specifics of the requirements of work-oriented basic education field for discussion. The statement that

teachers have a special relationship to process orientation does not yet say anything about the special nature of work-oriented basic education. It can therefore be assumed that flexibility and situativity are essential to the pedagogical competence of teachers in general and of teachers in adult education in particular (cf. Baumert & Kunter 2006, p. 488). A multiple reference to addressees is also inherent in various – but not all – fields of action in adult education. For example, Seitter, Schemmann and Vossebein have shown this for scientific continuing education (cf. Seitter, et.al. 2015).

The characteristics and requirements of work-oriented basic education, which is related to multiple addressees, obviously require a certain ability to deal with flexibility. Although this can also be seen in other fields. Based on our analysis we conclude that the special connection of *process orientation* and *addressee relation* is particularly distinct in the field of work-oriented basic education. It becomes apparent through the demarcation that the interviewees draw from other contexts of teaching. This certainly does not mean that a specific competence model can be assumed. It can be stated that certain competence facets become relevant in a special way and in a combination with other facets. For the determination of a competence profile of work-oriented basic education, a generic structural model of professional adult educational competence with a certain orientation for the field of work-oriented basic education could be useful.

This also points out a politically relevant issue of the possibilities of professionalising adult education as a whole and work-oriented basic education in particular. In a specific field characterised by a great heterogeneity of access to professions, low regulations and standards and a great variety of topics, questions arise concerning the limits of certifications and consensual approaches. Nevertheless, these results can stimulate the development and extension of concepts of teacher training in the field of work-oriented basic education. In this way, the empirical findings address the practical need to offer training opportunities for actors.

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# The Abilities and Deficits in Reading and Writing of Low Literate Adults

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## Abstract

Low literacy skills in adulthood have been associated mainly with a difficulty in reading comprehension. The question arises whether the difficulty of low literate adults is restricted to the complex task of reading comprehension or whether deficits can be traced back to the more basic reading and writing skills. This question will be examined in the present article based on previously published empirical studies of that population. The available data indicate deficits of these adults not only in reading comprehension, but also in the very basic components of reading and writing such as decoding, orthographic knowledge, word recognition and spelling, in addition to deficits in reading fluency. Alongside these broad deficits, the results also indicate large variance within adults participating in basic education and literacy classes, as a considerable proportion of those adults do not exhibit extreme deficits across the different reading and writing components.

Keywords: Reading, writing, functional illiteracy, adult education

## 1 Introduction

Despite having spent at least some years in the compulsory educational system, the occurrence of low literacy skills among adults is a frequent phenomenon worldwide. In the recent survey of adult skills “Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)”, an average of 18.5% of the population between the ages of 16 to 65 in the countries participating in the survey were found to have poor reading skills, which were defined as at or below level 1 in literacy proficiency (OECD 2016a). Participants at level 1 could complete only very basic reading comprehension tasks i.e. locating a single piece of information in a very short text. The information was identical/synonymous with the information given in the question, while little competing information was inserted (OECD 2016a). Notably, a high prevalence of poor literacy skills was even found in the European welfare states, e.g. 10.6% in Finland, 11.7% in the Netherlands, and 18% in Germany. A recent large-scale study carried out in Germany further indicated that 20.5% of the adults in this country present deficient spelling skills, even in the writing of simple and frequent words (Grotlüschen et al. 2019).

While the PIAAC survey covers a wide range of ages, the distance from formal education may play a role in the difficulty to retain functional reading and writing skills. Nonetheless, the recent “Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)” survey indicates high proportions of low literacy skills in 15-year-old adolescents as well (OECD 2016b) i.e. adolescents who have almost completed compulsory education. Notably, about 20 % of the students in this survey (averaged for the participating countries) did not attain the baseline level of proficiency in reading, which should enable them to participate effectively and productively in life. As was the case in the PIAAC survey of adults (OECD 2016a), a high prevalence of 15 years old adolescents with low literacy skills was also found in the western welfare countries, e.g. 16.2 % in Germany, 15 % in Denmark, and 21.5 % in France.

Low literacy skills naturally limit one’s ability to use printed information in daily life in various contexts – at home, at work and in the society. Consequently, low literate adults are often referred to as functional illiterates (e.g. Egloff et al. 2011). Considering the necessity of reading and writing skills in literate societies for almost every aspect of life, it may come as no surprise that functional illiteracy has been associated with different negative conditions. For instance, the “Canadian Youth in Transition Survey” from 2009, which followed students who were assessed by PISA for several years, showed that students scoring below the basic level in reading were at a higher risk of not attending post-secondary education and experiencing poorer employment outcomes (OECD 2010). Low self-esteem, frustration, sadness and social avoidance have also been considered as conditions related to low literacy in adulthood (Gottesman et al.1996; Eme 2011).

The quest to improve literacy skills in adults is, however, a road lined with hurdles. Some of the major challenges include: limited participation of low literate adults in adult education programs (Grotlüschen, Reder & Sabatini 2016); high attrition rates from literacy classes (Greenberg et al. 2013); limited knowledge of evidenced-based practices in adult literacy courses and on specific abilities and difficulties of low literate adults. In trying to address the final challenge, the question at the center of the present article is what are the skills and deficits of low literate adults in the different components of reading and writing.

The need to examine this question results from the fact that the suggested definition of functional illiteracy puts an emphasis on deficient reading comprehension (Egloff et al. 2011; Vágvölgyi et al. 2016). Accordingly, the level of literacy skills is often defined in large-scale studies based on performance in reading comprehension tasks (e.g. OECD 2016a, 2016b). While this focus on reading comprehension is justified, as it is the essence of reading, it is important to recognise that reading comprehension is a highly complex procedure (Perfetti, Landi & Oakhill 2005), and difficulties in this skill may stem from various sources. However, the analysis of more basic reading and writing skills in large-scale studies are rare (Baer, Kutner & Sabatini 2009). Such basic skills include fluency in reading, word reading and spelling, as well as the ability to decode single graphemes and to rely on orthographic knowledge for word recognition and spelling. As the mastery of these foundations of literacy is expected to

free up cognitive resources for the complex task of reading comprehension (as well as text composition), the understanding of low literate adults' performance in these skills should contribute to the design of appropriate instructional programs (National Research Council 2012). Therefore, in this article, we review the reported performance of low literate adults in tasks addressing the basic components of reading and writing from previously published studies.

We first refer to the results of the PIAAC survey (OECD 2016a), as it is a recent large-scale study, in which an effort was made to disentangle to some extent the complex task of reading comprehension, while comprehension at different text levels was considered – of passages, sentences and isolated words. We further review studies published in international peer-reviewed scientific journals, in which groups of low literate adults were examined. These articles were sourced from the “Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)”. The following search terms were taken into account: 1. Reading OR writing AND 2. Skills OR abilities AND 3. Low literate adults OR functional illiterates OR functional illiteracy OR literacy class OR basic education. The search resulted in 263 articles. Some additional articles, which appeared to be relevant, were obtained from the references of these resulting articles. Manual selection of the articles followed thereafter. Studies were considered once they presented empirical and standardized results on the different reading and writing components. We did not consider articles in which only raw data of performance were presented, as these did not allow for estimating the level of reading and writing skills according to age norms. However, two exceptions to this rule were made; we included studies presenting raw data, if they presented error analysis in reading or spelling, and if standardized measures were reported at least for some of the reading and writing components. Studies also had to relate to adults who have some knowledge of reading and writing, thereby excluding cases of illiteracy. Articles relating only to second language learners were excluded from analysis, and so were articles in which adults enrolled in secondary and in basic education programs analysed as one group. Based on this screening process, we refer to 17 studies.

## **2 Performance of low literate adults in the different components of reading and writing**

The review on the literacy skills of low literate adults is presented from the higher order skill of reading comprehension to the more basic skills of fluency in text reading, word reading and spelling. We also refer to some underlying processes of word reading and spelling i.e. decoding and the application of orthographic knowledge.

### **2.1 Comprehension of sentences and passages**

The recent PIAAC survey differentiated for the first time between levels of reading comprehension, while including the testing of sentence and passage comprehension, in addition to the comprehension of single printed words (OECD 2016a). How-

ever, the latter skill is separately discussed under the Word Reading section under paragraph 2.3. The sentence-reading task in the PIAAC survey required participants to identify whether a sentence made logical sense in the real world. The passage-comprehension task comprised a prose text, while at certain points in the text, participants were given a choice of two words and were required to select the word that made sense in the context of the passage. Although the passage-comprehension task took longer to complete, in the majority of countries participating in the survey, the sentence comprehension task was more difficult for the low literate adults (at or below level 1) than the passage comprehension task. The average accuracy rate on the sentence comprehension task of these adults was approximately between 76% and 93% -depending on the specific participating country, while the accuracy rate of reading of a passage was between ca. 83% and 94% (OECD 2016a). At face value, these may not appear to be low comprehension rates; nevertheless, they were considerably below the achievements of adults at higher reading levels, who reached an average accuracy rate of approximately 94% in sentence reading and 95% in passage reading (when taking into account all countries participating in the survey). The low literate adults required also around 1.75 times longer on average to complete both the sentence and passage comprehension tasks (Grotlüschen et al. 2016). It should be further considered that although participants at both below level 1 and at level 1 in the PIAAC study are considered as candidates for basic literacy programs, considerable differences in accuracy in reading comprehension between participants of the two levels were observed. Grotlüschen et al. (2016) reported a gap of 12% in accuracy rates in the sentence reading task and of 16% in the passage reading task (when the gap was averaged for all countries).

Other studies, applying standardized reading comprehension tests allow for a better evaluation of the results in relation to the level expected by different age groups. Nanda, Greenberg, and Morris (2010) administered in their study, a standardized sentence reading comprehension task ("WJ-III Reading Fluency Subtest", Woodcock et al., 2001) of the same type applied in the PIAAC survey (OECD 2016), i.e. participants had to read as many statements as they could in three minutes and decide whether each statement was true or false. The participants were 371 low literate adults who were native or non-native speakers of English. Results indicated deficient performance in this task in relation to the expected performance level based on age, while some advantage was found for the adults who were native speakers of English over the non-native English speakers. Additional data comes from another study of low literate adults, who are speakers and readers of the German language (Grosche & Grünke 2011). These researchers examined 54 adults involved in literacy classes and who had attended school in Germany. They applied a German version of the same sentence-reading task described above ("Salzburger Lesescreening (SLS)", Mayringer & Wimmer 2005). In order to be included in the sample, participants had to present a reading level in this test, which matches the one expected by 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Finally, Eme, Lambert and Alamargot (2014) tested 52 native speakers of French, who were involved in an adult literacy program. These participants ex-

pressed a reading comprehension level between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, as observed in a standardized reading comprehension test of the cloze type, which required the comprehension of sentences.

The testing of passage comprehension using standardized tasks further confirms the deficient level of reading comprehension of low literate adults. Mellard, Fall and Woods (2010) examined 174 English speaking adults, who participated in adult basic education programs (while excluding participants receiving instruction in English as a second language). These researchers applied a passage comprehension test from the standardized test (“Woodcock Reading Mastery Test (WRMT-R)”, Woodcock 1998), in which participants were required to read short passages of two to three sentences and complete a cloze task. The reading comprehension of these participants was at the level expected by 5<sup>th</sup> graders (also see Fracasso, Bangs & Binder, 2016). Nanda et al. (2010) also reported a deficit of low literate adults in passage comprehension, when tested with another cloze procedure (“WJ-III Passage Comprehension Subtest”, Woodcock et al. 2001). Their study also indicated better performance of native compared to non-native speakers of English. While the testing of reading comprehension using a cloze procedure may also involve writing, Nanda et al. (2010) found significant deficits in an additional reading comprehension task administered in their study, in which participants were required to answer multiple-choice comprehension questions following the reading of passages (“Gray Oral Reading Test (GORT-4)”, Weiderholt & Bryant 2001). The native speakers of English in their study showed a standard score of 3.80 and the non-native speakers of English presented a standard score of 3.10, when compared to norms of young adults (18 years of age). Taken together, these results confirm significant gaps in reading comprehension of low literate adults in relation to the expected level by age – even in the handling of very short texts, and when different comprehension tasks are applied.

## 2.2 Fluency in reading of connected texts

Fluency in reading has been conceptualized as a complex procedure and is defined as the ability to read at “a level of accuracy and rate where decoding is relatively effortless; where oral reading is smooth and accurate with correct prosody; and where attention can be allocated to comprehension” (Wolf & Katzir-Cohen 2001, p. 218). In practice, however, fluency in reading is often tested in oral reading of texts, while measures of reading accuracy and time are taken into account. Fluency in reading has been suggested to be a central component of reading comprehension –amongst others, because slow reading is thought to hamper efficient processing of information in the working memory (Breznitz 2006).

Nanda and her colleagues (2010) applied a reading fluency task, from the GORT-4 (Weiderholt & Bryant, 2001), in which participants (N=371) read stories aloud, while measures of accuracy and reading time were recorded. The low literate adults in their study presented very poor performance when compared to norms of young adults at the age of 18 (with a standard score of 1.28 and 1.09 in native and non-native speakers of English, respectively). Mellard et al. (2010) further revealed

considerable variance in the fluency of text reading within adults having below basic to basic literacy skills. In their study, the Qualitative Reading Inventory task (Leslie & Caldwell 2001) was applied. Participants were asked to read two passages designed for sixth-grade level, while a measure of the number of words read correctly in one minute was calculated. Participants were grouped into six reading-level categories, as defined by the U. S. Department of Education. The average fluency measures suggested considerable variance between the groups such that participants at level 1 read 26 words per minute ( $SD = 34$ ), participants at level 2 read 71 words ( $SD = 34$ ), participants at level 3–94 words ( $SD = 37$ ), level 4–112 words ( $SD = 28$ ), level 5–125 words ( $SD = 34$ ), and participant at level 6 read 160 words ( $SD = 30$ ) per minute in a connected text.

### 2.3 Word reading

The ability to recognize printed words accurately and quickly is considered as the building block of skilled reading (Ehri 2017; Lervåg, Melby-Lervåg & Hulme 2018). In the recent PIAAC survey, participants were also tested for the more basic level of comprehension i.e. comprehension of single printed words (OECD 2016a). The task applied required participants to select the word corresponding to a picture out of four alternative words. Of the participants at or below level 1 in literacy proficiency, accuracy in word reading was rather high, with a mean accuracy rate of above 93% in the countries taking part in this survey. In contrast to the case of comprehension of sentences and texts, the gap between participants below level 1 and participants at level 1 for accuracy in word comprehension was modest (an average of 5% for all countries). These results suggest that adults with low comprehension of sentences and texts are still able to accurately recognize highly familiar words (concrete nouns, e.g. bird, circle, chair, see Grotlüschen et al. 2016). However, it is worth mentioning that in the USA, adults categorised as having below level 1 reading skills presented much lower accuracy rates (77%). The irregularity of the English spelling, which has been shown to impose significant difficulties in the acquisition of reading skills (Share 2008), may not – or at least not exclusively, explain these results, as adults below level 1 in other English speaking countries reached an accuracy rate in word reading of approximately 90% (e.g. 88% in UK and 89% in Australia). This rate was similar to the one found in the same group of adults from countries in which more transparent orthographies are read (e.g. 93% in Germany, 91% in Spain). Nonetheless, the deficit of low literate adults in word reading may become more apparent when a measure of time is taken into account, as adults with below level 1 reading skills took about 1.97 times longer (averaged for all countries) to complete the printed word reading task than adults with level 3 literacy. Similarly, adults at level 1 required 1.45 times longer for completing the word reading task than adults at level 3 (Grotlüschen et al. 2016).

Other studies applying standardized tests, which as previously stated allow a closer examination of performance in relation to the expected level by age, further stress the deficits of low literate adults in the reading of single words. Grosche and

Grünke (2011) applied a standardized word reading test (“Würzburger Leise-Leseprobe (WLLP)”, Küspert & Schneider 1998) in their study of German speaking low literate adults (N=54, all having attended a school in Germany), which was similar to the one applied in the PIAAC survey (OECD 2016a) i.e. a word had to be matched to a picture. The scores represented the words correctly identified in a given time. The low literate adults involved in their study presented a word reading level, which was equivalent to the one expected by 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> graders (also see Bolzmann et al. 2017).

While the matching between a picture and its corresponding word addresses the silent mode of reading, additional studies applied oral word reading tasks. For example, in the study by Mellard et al. (2010) who examined 174 English speaking adults with below basic to basic literacy skills, participants presented a word reading ability equivalent to the level expected by 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Nanda et al. (2010) also reported an average word reading level between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades in low literate adults who were both native and non-native speakers of English. Additional evidence for deficits in reading aloud of words by readers of English can be found in a series of other studies (e.g. Barnes et al. 2017; Gottesman et al. 1996; Greenberg, Ehri & Perin 1997; Mellard & Fall 2012; Miller et al. 2017; Sabatini et al. 2011).

Notably, the difficulty in oral word reading does not appear to be restricted to the reading of the opaque English orthography, which may impose considerable challenges when reading single words without a supporting context. Namely, similar deficits in oral word reading were also reported in low literate adults who read the more transparent German orthography (Vágvölgyi, 2018). It may also be mentioned that in the study by Eme et al. (2014) of French speakers, the oral word reading level of 52 low literate adults participating in a literacy program was equivalent to the level of a matched group of children between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades.

Finally, in line with the differences in silent word recognition time between participants below level 1 and at level 1 in the PIAAC study (OECD 2016a), studies applying oral word reading tasks also indicate a considerable variance within the group of low literate adults. Mellard et al. (2010) reported such differences from adults having below basic to basic literacy skills, whereby participants with very low literacy skills read approximately half the number of words in a given time compared to participants with somewhat higher literacy skills, while the gap in word reading rate further dramatically increased as literacy level increased (also see Mellard, Woods & Fall 2011). Similarly, in the study by Gottesman et al. (2010) of adults involved in a literacy program, participants could be divided into three groups according to their word reading level: 72 participants reached the highest quartile on the Word Identification subtest of the “Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Revised (WJ-R)” (Woodcock & Johnson 1989) with a mean standard score of 100 (SD = 15); 134 participants showed a mean standard score of 69 (SD = 12); and 64 participants performed at the lowest quartile, with a mean standardized score of 36 (SD = 8).



## 2.4 Spelling

Similarly to the relations between efficient printed word recognition and reading comprehension, the ability to produce efficiently words in writing is expected to free up cognitive resources for the complex task of text composition (Kent & Wanzek 2016). Words included in standardized spelling tests usually address the ability to transform each sound into its appropriate grapheme, in addition to the ability to access word-specific orthographic knowledge and acquaintance with the conventions of the orthography written. Gottesman and her colleagues (1996), who analysed performance of 280 English speaking adults enrolled in an adult literacy program, showed extreme deficits of these adults in a standardized spelling test (“Wide Range Achievement Test-Revised (WRAT-R)”, Jastak & Wilkinson 1984), which were over two standard deviations below the norm group mean. In line with these results, Greenberg et al. (1997) reported a disadvantage of the low literate adults in her sample ( $n=72$ ) compared to younger reading-levels controls ( $n=72$ ) in a measure of spelling (including orthographically complex words at different levels of difficulty). However, such a disadvantage in word spelling of low literate adults compared to reading-level matched younger controls was absent in the study by Eme et al. (2014) with French speakers. Nevertheless, performance of the adults in their sample did not exceed the performance of the younger controls (children in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grades).

Results by Gottesman and her colleagues (1996) further demonstrated significant variance in spelling within low literate adults who participate in literacy classes. When the participants in their study were divided according to their relative word reading skills, participants with the most severe word reading deficits and participants with intermediate word reading skills differed significantly in spelling from adults defined with the highest word recognition skills.

## 2.5 Processes of reading and spelling: decoding and orthographic knowledge

Two main pathways for word recognition have been suggested: the one relies on decoding of graphemes into their corresponding sounds and the other relies on the direct identification of larger orthographic units (such as whole words or morphemes, Coltheart 2005; Harm & Seidenberg 2004). The first is expected to be dominant in novice readers or in the reading of unfamiliar words. However, with reading experience and print exposure, readers are expected to acquire orthographic knowledge and sensitivity to the orthographic conventions of their script, and as a result, the direct recognition of orthographic units larger than graphemes takes a larger role in reading (also see Ehri 2017; Share 1995). These two pathways should also be relevant in spelling. Spelling is expected to begin with a process of “spelling by hearing” while children transform each sound into its appropriate grapheme. It is then expected to progress to the application of orthographic knowledge, which is critical for efficient spelling and for the writing of irregular words. Relatively few studies have addressed the availability and application of these pathways in low literate adults. These are discussed below, separately for reading and spelling.

### Decoding and orthographic knowledge in reading

While familiar words can be read either by relying on orthographic knowledge or by decoding each grapheme into its corresponding sound, pseudowords are read mainly using the latter process (except for pseudowords comprising familiar orthographic clusters, such as morphemes). For this reason, decoding skills are typically tested in a pseudoword reading task. Mellard et al. (2010) reported very low decoding skills in their sample (N=174) of English speaking adults that had below basic to basic literacy skills, with them being at the level expected by 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Deficits in decoding by low literate adults participating in adult basic education courses were further confirmed by Fracasso et al. (2016), Mellard & Fall (2012) and Nanda et al. (2010). Notably, Nanda et al. (2010) reported larger deficits of low literate adults who were native speakers of English compared to adults who are not native speakers of English. Greenberg et al. (1997) further found significantly poorer decoding skills of 72 adult literacy students in a standardized test when compared to 72 reading-level, matched typically developing children in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grades (speakers of English). Restricted application of processes of decoding can also be inferred from the analysis by Greenberg et al. (2002) of reading errors of these adults, as their reading mistakes were more often real words whereas children's reading errors were decoding mistakes.

While decoding difficulties may be affected in particular by orthographic transparency, there are very few reports on decoding deficits from low literate adult readers of orthographies with more transparent spelling-sound relations than the English one. However, significant decoding deficits have been reported in one study on low literate adult readers of the German orthography (Vágvölgyi 2018). Additional data can be found in the study of French speakers by Eme et al. (2014), who reported lower performance of 52 low literate adults (participating in a literacy program) in a pseudoword reading task, compared to reading comprehension-level matched children between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades.

As in the case of word reading, data by Mellard et al. (2010) indicate considerable gaps between adults with below basic to basic literacy skills. Participants at the lowest literacy level in their study read less than half the pseudowords in a given time compared to participants in the next literacy level, and participants in this level read approximately half of the items read by participants in the following level (also see Mellard, Woods & Fall 2011). Considerable gaps were also obtained between these participants and participants at higher literacy levels (also see Binder & Lee 2012).

As far as the application of orthographic knowledge in reading is concerned, Greenberg et al. (1997) provide a somewhat complex picture on the availability of these skills in low literate adults. As previously stated, they observed a disadvantage of the low literate adults in their sample over reading-level matched children in reading of pseudowords but an advantage of the adults in reading of real words. Although these results may suggest some advantage of the adults in applying orthographic knowledge in reading, other tasks applied in their study do not support this possibility. Namely, the adults presented lower performance compared to the younger controls

in reading rhyme words, which were spelled differently (e.g. fuel/mule). Decoding alone of these pairs would not suffice in order to succeed in this task, and hence the application of orthographic knowledge was required. The adults and younger controls further showed similar performance in two other tasks addressing orthographic skills. The first was a word likeness task, in which sensitivity to frequent and infrequent orthographic sequences in words was tested by presenting participants with pairs of invented words, and asking them to circle the item which looks more like a real word (e.g. vism/visn). The second was a letter position task, in which participants were required to determine which is the most frequent position of a letter in a word (e.g. whether c appears most often in the beginning, middle or end of a word). These results suggest then some advantage in the application of orthographic knowledge compared to decoding in reading by low literate adults, though both processes are below the level that would be expected in adulthood.

### **Decoding and orthographic knowledge in spelling**

One way of gaining a closer look on processes and knowledge available to participants in spelling is through the analysis of spelling mistakes. Greenberg et al. (2002) analysed the spelling mistakes of 72 low literate adults (speakers of English), and found more phonological mistakes in spelling than in a group of reading-level matched children. Results by Eme et al. (2014) of French speaking low literate adults also suggest poor application of decoding in spelling. In this study, the adults showed lower performance in spelling of pseudowords compared to reading-level matched younger children (between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades). This was in contrast to the results of a real word dictation task, in which the adults showed equivalent performance to the level of the children (as already reported here under the spelling section). The error analysis of the word spelling task further indicated fewer phonologically acceptable errors, which resulted in a transcription that did not phonologically correspond to the target word (or in a nonresponse). The two groups did not differ, however, in the extent of spelling errors categorized as lexical or grammatical ones. These results may then suggest some advantage of applying orthographic knowledge in spelling over decoding processes.

A more detailed characterisation of the spelling errors, which sheds some light on the availability of phonological and orthographic processes in spelling, can be found in the study by Worthy and Viise (1996), who compared the spelling of 41 adults enrolled in a workplace literacy program with 92 achievement-level-matched children. The test applied was an informal spelling test corresponding to levels expected by first to fourth graders (Schlagal 1982). The words in the lists accounted for the most frequent errors made by typically developing children on these four levels. A qualitative analysis of spelling errors indicated that the two groups made no (adults) or almost no (children, with 1%) errors in the category of letter reversals (such as b for d), and very few mistakes in the category of letter sequences (e.g. vocie for voice, with 2% and 1% mistakes in adults and children, respectively). Participants did not differ in categories of spelling of short vowels (e.g. chein instead of chin, with 9%

and 6 % mistakes in adults and children, respectively), and in the category of consonant units (e.g. bave instead of brave, with 13 % and 10 % mistakes in adults and children, respectively). However, significant differences were found in categories of long vowels (e.g. plane instead of plain) and double consonants (bated instead of batted), with an advantage to the adults compared to the children (adults made 13 % of errors, while children made 22 % of errors in the category of long vowels; adults made 26 % of errors, while children made 36 % of errors in the category of double consonants). This pattern reversed however, in two other categories relating to the word's ending: adults made more errors (10 %) in the spelling of inflectional or derivational morphemes (e.g. omissions, e.g. bat for batted; substitutions, e.g. batting for batted; and erroneous additions, e.g. wrinkly for wrinkle) compared to children (1%), as well as in phonological misrepresentations (these included different, recognizable words, e.g. success for such, and nonwords, e.g. brode for brave, with 8 % of errors in adults and 1 % in children). These results suggest the mastery of very basic and limited features of the English spelling. Nevertheless, the adults appeared to have shown some relatively more advanced use of orthographic knowledge. However, the adults made more spelling errors that were rarely made by the children, including omissions, substitutions, and additions of derivational and inflectional morphemes, and omission of word endings in general.

### 3 Discussion

While the difficulty in understanding printed texts is often used as the main criterion to define poor literacy skills in adulthood, the purpose of this review was to examine whether low literate adults show deficits also in the more basic reading and writing skills, which may explain –at least to some extent, their deficit in reading comprehension. In the following discussion, we first refer to the main conclusions derived from the present review. Afterwards, practical aspects of the results and further research directions are considered.

#### 3.1 Broad deficits alongside broad variance

Two main conclusions are apparent from the current review. The first conclusion is that low literate adults present, on average, deficits not only in the higher order skill of reading comprehension, but also in the more basic skills of fluency in reading, word reading, spelling and in the ability to apply decoding and orthographic processes. Despite having spent at least some years in the compulsory educational system, these adults lack on average the mastery of the foundations of literacy, while performing in basic reading and writing tasks at a level equivalent to the level of elementary school children. Even though not many studies explored these deficits, the results appear to be rather strong, as these were replicated in different samples, while different diagnostic test were used.

The clear deficits in decoding, which is the key skill enabling the deciphering of the orthographic code should in particular draw our attention. It is a skill systematically taught during the course of the first grade, and is expected to be mastered early on in the first years of schooling, and as early as the end of first grade in readers of transparent orthographies (see Seymour, Aro & Erskine 2003). Insufficient decoding ability was suggested to elicit a chain of negative effects on the course of the development of literacy skills (Stanovich 1986). Namely, imprecise decoding has been found to hamper the acquisition of orthographic skills (Share & Shalev 2004). Consequently, the development of the ability to recognize words accurately and fast “by sight”, or to spell words correctly is also impaired (Ehri 2017; Share 1995). The process of reading then remains inefficient, and minimal cognitive resources are left over for comprehension. Furthermore, the gap in reading experience between good and poor decoders is already large by the first grade of school, and this gap constantly increases, with its further negative impact on the development of cognitive reading-related skills (Stanovich 1986). It bears mentioning, however, that dyslexic readers have also been shown to have a core and persistent deficit in decoding ability, while concurrently being able to reach higher education (Bar-Kochva & Amiel 2016; Bruck 1990). Obviously, inefficient decoding should not necessarily lead to functional illiteracy in adulthood, while models relating to interactions with other factors – environmental and emotional ones as causes of functional illiteracy have been suggested (review in Eme 2011).

The second conclusion of this review is that low literate adults, who attend literacy classes or basic adult education programs, present a large variance in reading and writing skills (see Binder & Lee, 2012 for a similar conclusion). This was found in reading comprehension, fluency in reading, word reading, decoding and spelling. The results of Gottesman et al. (1996) in particular demonstrate this variance, as of the adults involved in a literacy program in their study (N=270), 72 adults actually presented efficient word-reading skills. Studies of low literate adults often involve the entire group of adults participating in a literacy class (with very few exceptions of studies applying clear exclusion criteria, see Grosche & Grünke, 2011). Consequently, samples of low literate adults include participants varying in factors such as first language, age and educational experience. The findings by Nanda et al., (2010) further suggest differences of performance in various reading tasks by low literate adults who are native and non-native speakers of English (advantage of the native speakers in most tasks, but a disadvantage in decoding). However, the question to which extent other possible factors mediate literacy skills and progress in these classes requires further examination.

### **3.2 Practical considerations**

The addressing of the broad range of reading and writing deficits of low literate adults and their variance in literacy programs faces considerable challenges. There is a wide spectrum of forms and means of provision of literacy interventions for adults, usually referred to as “Adult Basic Education (ABE)” or “Adult Literacy (AL)”, while

diversity is evident within, as well as, between countries (Hamilton & Merrifield 1999; European Commission 2015). Adult basic education is a broad umbrella term that covers both formal and non-formal education forms designed to improve adults' necessary basic competencies such as language literacy (reading and writing skills), mathematical and ICT (technological) literacy (European Parliament and the Council of Europe, 2006). It also covers both general and vocational education in different contexts (McCaffery, Mace & O'Hagan 2009). These frameworks often set different goals; so while some aim at a school-leaving certificate, other courses aim for the more general goal of improving literacy skills. Workplace literacy approaches further combine literacy training with specific work-related contents (e.g. work-related terminology and ICT skills, see Schroeder, 2016). Family literacy programs may also be considered as a means of improving literacy skills not only of children but also of the adult caretakers (Nickel, 2014, 2016). Other alternative approaches such as web-based platforms, educational software or self-organized learning circles exist worldwide. While some efforts have been made to phrase curriculums for literacy instruction for adults (the German project "Framework curriculum and course concept for graduate-oriented basic education", Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband 2014a, 2014b 2017) and to offer training for course instructors (e.g. by the German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschulverband e. V., see <https://www.grundbildung.de/qualifizieren>) the diversity of offers still suffers from lack of clear standards regarding contents and teaching quality and methods (Löffler & Weis 2016). Accordingly, and to the best of our knowledge, systematic diagnosis of reading and writing skills which addresses the different components of reading and writing is not carried out in these contexts. It may be reasonable to assume that the understanding of the abilities and difficulties of each participant should contribute to the appropriate design of the relevant instructional program. Two findings coming from studies on literacy instruction for adults are the restricted progress found following literacy courses (e.g. von Rosenbladt & Lehmann 2013) and the high attrition rates (Greenberg et al. 2013). While there may be various sources for these difficulties, the relevance of instruction to the reading and writing proficiency of each individual should be considered in trying to improve instructional results. Nevertheless, the scientific background justifying the implementation of such a systematic diagnosis in literacy classes appears to be lacking, as research exploring the actual potential of such diagnoses on the adjustment of instruction in adult literacy programs and on progress in reading and writing skills is still required. If found effective, additional directions for examination should relate to the implementation of diagnostic procedures in literacy classes (e.g. who should carry out the diagnosis, how results should be communicated and how interventions should be accordingly designed).

An additional challenge in providing appropriate interventions for adults with low literacy skills is that the effects of the programs offered on progress in the different components of reading and writing is seldom evaluated (or is evaluated but with questionable methodologies, see reviews in Greenberg et al. 2011; Nickel 2014). This is in sharp contrast to the study of intervention methods in children who struggle

with reading and writing acquisition. Efforts to provide general recommendations for interventions in adults have been made, however, based largely on research of children (e.g. Kruidenier, MacArthur & Wrigley 2010). While this line of research should give a good direction, it may not cover the specific needs of low literate adults. As suggested by Greenberg et al. (2011), adults may have difficulties that are entrenched and harder to remediate compared to children. It may then be suggested that factors such as training time and the direct training of automaticity in decoding and in word processing may play a larger role in adults than in children. However, these suggestions require experimental confirmation. The very few studies examining the effects of interventions addressing the basic, as well as higher order components of reading in literacy classes for adults, support the need to further explore the special requirements of this population. Greenberg et al. (2011) for example, compared the effectiveness of five instructional approaches in English speaking low literate adults. The approaches covered low (e.g. letter identification, word reading) and higher order literacy skills (e.g. comprehension of passages) next to a control/comparison approach, which was based on a local community-based literacy program. Four approaches, which trained decoding, reading comprehension, fluent reading, and extensive reading components (including reading and discussing literature of own choice) alone or in combination with each other were included. Although three approaches (decoding & fluency, decoding & comprehension & fluency, and decoding & comprehension & extensive reading & fluency) particularly aimed at skills in which low literate adults show difficulties, the significant improvements were rather small (effect sizes: .03 to .18), and smaller than previously reported in the case of children. The ability of adults to generally improve basic reading and writing skills was confirmed in a training study by Rüsseler et al. (2012). However, in their study, the basic reading and writing skills were addressed in training as part of a comprehensive intervention, which involved many other factors (also including perceptual training and social activities). Therefore, the role of the training of the basic reading and writing skills could not be disentangled. Further research is clearly needed in order to evaluate the effectiveness of diagnostic procedures and of intervention programs addressing the different components of reading and writing in adult literacy programs. An additional question for future examination is to which extent the training of the basic components of reading and writing actually leads to better reading comprehension, text composition, and to improved reading habits in everyday settings.

## 4 Summary and conclusions

In summary, the studies reviewed in this article indicate that the deficits of low literate adults on average extend well beyond the complex task of reading comprehension, and comprise the more basic reading and writing components. This may suggest that these basic skills need to be addressed in literacy classes. However, the

different factors affecting the efficiency of such instruction still require further research. Moreover, the results do not point to the need to automatically address all components of reading in adult literacy classes, as low literate adults may not present difficulties in the entire spectrum of reading and writing components. The variance in the literacy skills of adults participating in basic education and literacy courses suggests that diagnosis should precede intervention in class in order to plan the most relevant instruction program for each individual. Nonetheless, the advantage of such a systematic diagnosis on actual reading and writing outcomes still has to be scientifically proven.

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## **II Vermischtes/Miscellaneous**



# Potenziale und methodische Herausforderungen längsschnittlicher Programmanalysen. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag anlässlich des 100-jährigen Jubiläums der Volkshochschulen

ANNABEL JENNER

## Abstract

Mit dem Jahr 2019 begeht eine Vielzahl deutscher Volkshochschulen ihr 100-jähriges Jubiläum und erinnert damit an die Institutionalisierung der Erwachsenenbildung als öffentliche Aufgabe. Trotz der großen Relevanz der Jubiläen für die Disziplin und ihrer Resonanz in der erwachsenenbildungswissenschaftlichen Diskussion erweisen sich empirische Studien zu der Entwicklung von 100 Jahren Volkshochschule als Leerstelle. Hier knüpft der Beitrag an, indem er eine längsschnittliche programmanalytische Untersuchung vorstellt, die im Rahmen eines Lehr-Forschungsprojekts durchgeführt wurde und Programme einer exemplarischen Volkshochschule von 1919 bis 2017 analysierte. Die Untersuchung wird als Beispiel herangezogen, um spezifische Potenziale und forschungsmethodische Herausforderungen der Programmanalyse im historischen Längsschnitt für ein Jahrhundert zu diskutieren. Der Fokus liegt folglich nicht auf den empirischen Befunden, sondern auf der Diskussion der methodischen Entscheidungen der Untersuchung. Sichtbar werden dadurch genuine Anschlusspotenziale für programmanalytische Forschung.

Keywords: Programmanalyse, Längsschnittstudie, Volkshochschule, 100 Jahre VHS, Jubiläum der Volkshochschulen, Geschichte der Erwachsenenbildung

## Potentials and Methodological Challenges within Longitudinal Program Analysis. A Discussion in the Light of the Centenary of “Volkshochschulen”

In 2019, many German “Volkshochschulen”, i.e. public adult education centres, face the jubilee of their foundation in 1919 and remind of the institutionalization of adult education as a public responsibility. Despite the jubilees’ disciplinary importance and resonance within the debate of adult education research, empirical studies remain a desideratum. The article introduces a longitudinal program analysis by drawing on a combined teaching and research project that was conducted by the author and a group of university students considering programs of a “Volkshochschule” from 1919 until 2017. The project serves as an example for discussing the specific potentials and



methodological challenges the method of program analysis brings along when applying it in a historical longitudinal study over a period of a century. Subsequently, the article addresses methodological decisions rather than empirical results. This approach allows highlighting genuine potentials for research applying the method of program analysis.

English Keywords: program analysis, longitudinal study, adult education, 100 years of folk highschool, history of adult education

## 1 Einleitung

Das Jahr 2019 markiert ein besonderes Datum für die öffentlich verantwortete Erwachsenenbildung in Deutschland, gilt es doch als das Jahr, in dem eine Vielzahl der Volkshochschulen auf ihre 100-jährige Geschichte zurückblickt. 1919 lässt sich als das gründungsstärkste Jahr in der Entstehung der deutschen Volkshochschulen konstatieren (vgl. Archivbericht Febr. 1929, zit. nach Olbrich 2001, S. 151). Vor diesem Hintergrund finden gegenwärtig in der Praxis verschiedenste Formen der Auseinandersetzung mit der eigenen Einrichtungsgeschichte statt, um das Jubiläum gebührend zu gestalten (vgl. Heuer und Hinzen 2018). Der durch das Jubiläum angeregte Blick zurück in das Jahr 1919 erinnert an die Institutionalisierung der Erwachsenenbildung als öffentliche Aufgabe und kennzeichnet einen Meilenstein in der historischen Genese der Erwachsenenbildung: Mit dem Beginn der Weimarer Zeit rückte die Erwachsenenbildung aufgrund ihrer „gesellschaftsintegrierenden Funktion“ (Olbrich 2001, S. 140) als Möglichkeit zur Beförderung einer demokratischen Gesellschaft in den Fokus der bildungspolitischen Aufmerksamkeit der Nachkriegszeit (vgl. auch Tietgens 2018, S. 33). Damit einhergehend erfuhr die Erwachsenenbildung in Artikel 148 (4) der Weimarer Reichsverfassung erstmalig Verfassungsrang, indem die Förderung des „Volksbildungswesen[s], einschließlich der Volkshochschulen“ zur öffentlichen Aufgabe ernannt wurde, die „von Reich, Ländern und Gemeinden gefördert werden“ (Deutsches Reich 1919, Art. 148 (4)) sollte und sich mit ihren bis heute geltenden Grundprinzipien der Pluralität und Subsidiarität manifestierte (vgl. Olbrich 2001, S. 140). Neben der Etablierung der Volkshochschule als „institutionelle[r] Kern der Erwachsenenbildung“ (ebd., S. 150) setzte auch die zunehmende Ausdifferenzierung der Erwachsenenbildungseinrichtungen ein (vgl. Kade et al. 2007, S. 45). Letztere ist auf die Grundannahme zurückzuführen, „dass in einer offenen und demokratischen Gesellschaft die großen Gruppen eine besondere Gestaltungsverpflichtung für den quartären Bildungsbereich zu übernehmen hätten“ (Olbrich 2001, S. 144), so dass neben den Volkshochschulen beispielsweise auch Gewerkschaften, Kirchen, Parteien (vgl. ebd., S. 144) und soziale Bewegungen (vgl. Kade et al. 2007, S. 43) ihre erwachsenenbildungsbezogenen Aktivitäten ausbauten und damit maßgeblich zur pluralen Struktur des Feldes beitrugen.

Mit der Institutionalisierung der Erwachsenenbildung als öffentliche Aufgabe ist eine große Relevanz der Jubiläen für die Disziplin impliziert, so dass sich die innerhalb des Praxisfeldes erfolgende Auseinandersetzung mit 100 Jahren Volkshochschule auch in der erwachsenbildungswissenschaftlichen Diskussion spiegelt. So ist das Heft 2/2018 der Zeitschrift *Bildung und Erziehung* dem Thema „100 Jahre Volkshochschule“ gewidmet (Hinzen und Meilhammer 2018). Auch Heft 4/2018 der *Hessischen Blätter für Volksbildung* (Ehse und Kufner 2018) fokussiert dieses Thema und zeigt in seinen Beiträgen ein Spektrum unterschiedlicher Perspektiven auf die Entwicklung der Volkshochschulen. Darüber hinaus lassen sich praxisorientierte Publikationen an der Schnittstelle von Erwachsenenbildungswissenschaft und -praxis benennen: Die Gestaltung der Jubiläen ist Gegenstand eines Bandes, der den Einrichtungen mögliche Formate und Praxisbeispiele zur Geschichtsaufarbeitung und Vorbereitung ihrer Jubiläumsfeierlichkeiten präsentiert (Heuer und Hinzen 2018). Zudem ist in diesem Jahr ein Bildband mit ausgewählten Geschichten und Bildern aus 100 Jahren Volkshochschule (Schraeder und Rossmann 2019) erschienen. Empirische Studien zu der Erforschung von 100 Jahren Volkshochschule bleiben bisher indes eine Ausnahme.<sup>1</sup> Eine solche liegt im Rahmen des o. g. Themenhefts *Bildung und Erziehung* mit der Untersuchung von Reichart (2018) vor, bei der empirische Entwicklungen der Programmstruktur von Volkshochschulen im Zeitraum von 1962 bis 2016 anhand der Volkshochschul-Statistik analysiert und im Hinblick auf die 100-jährige Geschichte eingeordnet werden. Empirische Forschungszugänge, die sich überdies explizit des Themas 100 Jahre Volkshochschule annehmen und in der Gründungszeit ansetzen, bilden jedoch ein Forschungsdesiderat.

Die Feststellung dieser Forschungslücke erscheint einerseits wenig verwunderlich, da sich historische Entwicklungen lediglich in der Retrospektive erforschen lassen und damit Zugänglichkeitsproblemen unterliegen. Andererseits verfügt die erwachsenbildungswissenschaftliche Forschung jedoch mit der Programmanalyse als „ihre[r] einzige[n] wirklich weiterbildungsspezifische[n] Forschungsmethode“ (Nuisl 2010, S. 173) über eine Methode, die sich u. a. für historische Aufarbeitungen in besonderer Weise eignet. Diese Überlegung steht im Fokus des vorliegenden Beitrags. Er stellt auf der Basis einer eigenen empirischen Untersuchung den Vorschlag zur Diskussion, die Methode der Programmanalyse in einem längsschnittlichen Forschungsdesign zur empirischen Aufarbeitung von 100 Jahren Volkshochschule heranzuziehen. Dabei wird die These zugrunde gelegt, dass die Nutzung dieser Methode für den Zeitraum rund eines Jahrhunderts mit spezifischen Problemstellungen einhergeht, die im Spiegel der einschlägigen Literatur genuine Herausforderungen für historische, längsschnittlich angelegte programmanalytische Forschung sichtbar werden lassen und deshalb Anregungspotenzial zu ihrer Weiterentwicklung offenlegen. Diese These begründet sich dadurch, dass es an verschiedenen Stellen des Forschungsprozesses notwendig ist, die sichtbar werdenden Befunde vor dem

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1 Dies soll nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, dass auch literaturbasierten historischen Aufarbeitungen Empirie insofern eingeschrieben ist, als sie empirische Sachverhalte systematisch aufarbeiten. Zu diesem Verhältnis von Theorie und Empirie vgl. Hirschauer 2008.

Hintergrund des retrospektiv *Nicht-Sichtbaren* historischer Entwicklungen einzuordnen. Von diesen Überlegungen ausgehend widmet sich dieser Beitrag der Frage, *welche Potenziale und forschungsmethodischen Herausforderungen die Anwendung der Programmanalyse im Längsschnitt auf die 100-jährige Geschichte der Volkshochschulen kennzeichnen und welche genuinen Einsichten damit für programmanalytische Forschung in Längsschnittdesigns verbunden sind.*

Zur Bearbeitung dieser Frage wird ein kürzlich abgeschlossenes universitäres Lehr-Forschungsprojekt vorgestellt, in dessen Mittelpunkt die empirische Analyse der Programme von 1919 bis 2017 einer als Einzelfall untersuchten Volkshochschule stand. Dieses Projekt wird als Beispiel für eine programmanalytische Längsschnittuntersuchung herangezogen, an der sich Potenziale und methodische Herausforderungen in der Anwendung von Programmanalysen in einem knapp 100 Jahre umfassenden Zeitraum diskutieren lassen. Der Forschungsfrage folgend liegt der Fokus in diesem Beitrag nicht auf den empirischen Befunden, sondern auf den methodischen Entscheidungen innerhalb des Forschungsprozesses. Zur Bearbeitung der Forschungsfrage wird die Methode der Programmanalyse für längsschnittlich konzipierte Forschungsdesigns beschrieben (2.). Es folgt die Vorstellung des o. g. Projekts (3.), um dessen zentrale forschungsmethodische Herausforderungen literaturbasiert aufzuarbeiten und mit Blick auf ihr Generalisierungspotenzial zur Diskussion zu stellen (4.). Ausblickend werden Implikationen für anschließende programmanalytische Forschung in Längsschnittdesigns abgeleitet (5.).

## 2 Die Methode der Programmanalyse in längsschnittlichen Forschungsdesigns

Programme von Organisationen der Erwachsenen- und Weiterbildung bezeichnen „die veröffentlichten Ankündigungen von Lehr-/Lernangeboten und anderen Leistungen (z. B. Mitarbeiterfortbildung oder Beratung)“ (Nolda 2009, S. 293). Sie dienen damit vorrangig der Information über aktuelle Angebote und insofern der Werbung gegenüber potenziellen Adressatinnen und Adressaten, aber auch der Selbstdarstellung und Legitimation der jeweiligen Anbieter (vgl. ebd., S. 293). Programmen wird zugesprochen, zwischen der gesellschaftlichen Öffentlichkeit, der Erwachsenen- bzw. Weiterbildungsorganisation und ihren Adressatinnen und Adressaten zu vermitteln (vgl. Gieseke 2014, S. 167). Für die erwachsenenbildungswissenschaftliche Forschung gelten Programme als eine mögliche Quelle, um Aufschluss über Programmentwicklungen und das Profil einer Organisation zu erlangen. In dieser Perspektive sind Programme

„als analysierbare Dokumente Belege für in der nahen oder fernen Vergangenheit Geplantes und dann auch (in den meisten Fällen) Stattgefundenenes. Sie sind aber auch Zeugnisse, die auf das Bild schließen lassen, das Anbieter von sich haben bzw. vermitteln wollen, und die über Vorstellungen Auskunft geben, die Anbieter von den Bildungsbedürfnissen und der Ansprechbarkeit ihrer Klientel haben“ (Nolda 2009, S. 293).

Spezifisch für die Erwachsenenbildung ist die Methode insofern, als Programme ihr im Gegensatz zu anderen, stärker curricular orientierten Bildungsbereichen eigen sind (vgl. Käßlinger 2016) und als Ausdruck der für das Feld charakteristischen Pluralität und geringen Regulierung (vgl. Heuer und Robak 2000, S. 115) gedeutet werden können.<sup>2</sup> Die Methode der Programmanalyse

„wertet Programme aus der Distanz von Beobachtern aus, die sich nachträglich der in diesen enthaltenen Texte bzw. Informationen bedienen, um Erkenntnisse zu gewinnen über das Erwachsenenbildungsangebot einzelner oder mehrerer Träger bzw. einzelner oder mehrerer Einrichtungen; häufig bezogen auf bestimmte Themen bzw. Ziele, Zielgruppen, Organisationsbedingungen und didaktische Arrangements. Die Texte haben den Vorteil non-reaktiver, natürlicher Daten, d. h. sie sind nicht eigens durch Forscher erhoben oder durch deren Intervention verzerrt“ (Nolda 2009, S. 294).

Indem sich Programmanalysen retrospektiv auf Programme beziehen, eignen sie sich besonders für historische Forschungsarbeiten. Während unterschiedliche Designs für historische Programmanalysen denkbar sind (siehe im Überblick Nolda 2009; Käßlinger 2008), liegt der Fokus der folgenden Ausführungen aufgrund des Interesses an der Erforschung von 100 Jahren Volkshochschule explizit auf längsschnittlich angelegten Programmanalysen. Die Anwendung von Programmanalysen für Längsschnittuntersuchungen ist gut dokumentiert (vgl. insbesondere: Tietgens 1998; Gieseke und Opelt 2003; Schrader 2011) und findet bis in die Gegenwart Anwendung (z. B. Käßlinger 2017). Allerdings stellt ihr Einsatz für einen vergleichbar langen Zeitraum, wie es die Beschäftigung mit 100 Jahren Volkshochschule erfordert, Neuland dar und ist – so die zu diskutierende These – durch verschiedene forschungsmethodische Herausforderungen und Problemlagen gekennzeichnet. Um auf ebensolche einzugehen und darauf basierend Anschlussperspektiven zur weiteren Entwicklung der programmanalytischen Forschung zu diskutieren, wird die durchgeführte Studie als exemplarischer Referenzpunkt vorgestellt.

### **3 Das Lehr-Forschungsprojekt „100 Jahre Volkshochschule im Spiegel ihrer Programme“: eine Programmanalyse von 1919 bis 2017**

Besonderheit der Studie ist in *formaler Hinsicht* ihre Konzeption als Lehr-Forschungsprojekt in einer forschungsorientierten universitären Lehrveranstaltung, welche die Autorin mit zwanzig Studierenden des Masterfachs Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung im Wintersemester 2017/18 an der Universität zu Köln geleitet hat. Hierbei wurden insgesamt zehn Teilanalysen als eigenständige Forschungsarbeiten durch jeweils zwei Studierende durchgeführt, bei denen unterschiedliche the-

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<sup>2</sup> Eine Ausweitung des Einsatzes von Programmanalysen erfolgt auch für Kontexte beigeordneter Formen der Erwachsenenbildung, siehe z. B. für Museen Specht und Fleige 2016.

matische Entwicklungen im Angebot der Volkshochschule Köln in ihrem zeitlichen Verlauf untersucht wurden. Die Forschungsarbeiten der Studierenden wurden im Rahmen der Lehrveranstaltung sowie ergänzender Einzelberatungen inhaltlich und forschungsmethodisch von der Autorin in ihrer Rolle als Seminarleitung begleitet. Das Projekt erfolgte in Kooperation mit der Volkshochschule Köln und schloss mit einer Abschlussveranstaltung zur Kontextualisierung der Befunde gemeinsam mit verschiedenen Leitungskräften der Volkshochschule sowie Gästen aus Wissenschaft und Praxis ab.

In *inhaltlicher Hinsicht* wurden einerseits programmübergreifende Themen und andererseits Entwicklungen einzelner Programmbereiche analysiert. Zu den programmübergreifenden – d. h. sich potenziell über alle Programmbereiche erstreckenden – Themen zählten die veränderte Konstellation von Programmbereichen im zeitlichen Verlauf, die Veränderung didaktischer Formate, die Entwicklung von Bildungsreisen, die Genese migrationsbezogener Angebote sowie die geschlechtsspezifische Ansprache von Adressatinnen und Adressaten. Zu der Analyse einzelner Programmbereiche zählten die Entwicklung des Sprachenportfolios, Angebote in den Bereichen Deutsch als Fremdsprache und Deutsch als Zweitsprache, Entwicklungen im Programmbereich Politik sowie im Programmbereich Nähen und textiles Gestalten, außerdem das Aufkommen von Angeboten für erwachsenenpädagogisches Personal.

In *forschungsmethodischer Hinsicht* war die Programmanalyse leitend (vgl. Nolda 2009). Ausgehend vom Gründungsjahr 1919 wurden Programme aller auf die Jahreszahl neun endender Jahre, d. h. im Abstand von zehn Jahren, untersucht. Im Vorgriff auf 2019 wurde auf das zum Untersuchungszeitpunkt aktuellste Heft von 2017 zugegriffen.<sup>3</sup> Die Auswertung stützte sich auf die inhaltlich strukturierende qualitative Inhaltsanalyse nach Kuckartz (2012), wobei die Kategorien sowohl deduktiv als auch induktiv gebildet wurden (siehe Kap. 4.4). Neben der qualitativen Inhaltsanalyse wurden anhand der nach Kuckartz erarbeiteten Kategorien zudem deskriptive quantitative Häufigkeitsanalysen vorgenommen. Insgesamt zeichnet sich das methodische Vorgehen durch einen stark explorativen Charakter aus, der in der spezifischen Konzeption der Studie als Lehr-Forschungsprojekt begründet liegt. Zudem bewegte sich das Vorhaben in dem Spannungsverhältnis, einerseits forschungsmethodischen Ansprüchen gerecht zu werden und Studierende mit ebendiesen vertraut zu machen. Andererseits war es vor dem Hintergrund begrenzter Ressourcen und zugunsten der Förderung eigenständiger Forschungsentscheidungen der Studierenden erforderlich, forschungspraktische Kriterien in Rechnung zu stellen. Gerade die Notwendigkeit dieser Abwägungen ließ methodische Spannungsfelder deutlich hervortreten.

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3 Zur Begründung und den Konsequenzen dieser Auswahl vgl. Kapitel 4.

## 4 Forschungsmethodische Spannungsfelder

Die Diskussion von Potenzialen und forschungsmethodischen Herausforderungen in der Umsetzung der Analyse von Volkshochschulprogrammen seit 1919 erfolgt, indem Anforderungen des Quellenzugangs (4.1), der Samplebildung (4.2), der Datenaufbereitung (4.3) und -auswertung (4.4) sowie der Ergebnisdarstellung (4.5) diskutiert werden. Die deutlich werdenden Herausforderungen werden abschließend zu genuinen Anhaltspunkten für die Durchführung programmanalytisch konzipierter historischer Längsschnittuntersuchungen gebündelt (4.6).

### 4.1 Anforderungen an den Quellenzugang

Der Quellenzugang erwies sich insofern als herausforderndes Element des Forschungsprozesses, als sich für die untersuchte Einrichtung kein systematischer Bestand aller Programme für den Untersuchungszeitraum voraussetzen ließ. Es bedurfte daher der Prüfung, welche Programme verfügbar sind, um Möglichkeiten einer systematischen Zusammenstellung der Quellen abzuwägen. Wenngleich Programmanalysen mit verhältnismäßig geringem methodischen Aufwand und einer leichten Zugänglichkeit des Materials in Verbindung gebracht werden (vgl. Schrader und Ioannidou 2011, S. 259 f.), gilt der Zugang zu älteren Programmen als Schwierigkeit (vgl. Nolda 2003, S. 213).<sup>4</sup> Durch Vorgespräche innerhalb der untersuchten Volkshochschule und das Sichten ihres internen Programmbestandes ließen sich Volkshochschulprogramme für die geplanten Auswahljahre ab 1949 zusammentragen. Im Vorgriff auf das zum Untersuchungszeitpunkt noch nicht erschienene Programm für 2019 war als aktuellstes Heft das Frühjahrsprogramm 2017 verfügbar. Für die Auswahljahre vor 1949 konnten ebenfalls Materialien zusammengetragen werden. Zwar lagen Programme für die ersten Auswahljahre 1919 und 1929 nicht vor, gleichwohl konnten im Archiv des Deutschen Instituts für Erwachsenenbildung für diese Jahre Quellenrekonstruktionen im Anhang einer historisch ausgerichteten Diplomarbeit (Steinborn 1978) ausfindig gemacht werden.<sup>5</sup> Diese Rekonstruktionen stellen Versuche des Autors Steinborn dar, die jeweiligen historischen Programme basierend auf Plakaten, einem Arbeitsplan, der Teilauflistung eines Arbeitsplans sowie Zeitungen aus dem lokalen Stadtarchiv aufzuarbeiten. Während diese Rekonstruktionen die Programminhalte nicht vollständig abbilden und deshalb Genauigkeitsverluste mit sich bringen, erlauben sie, diese frühen Jahre überhaupt in die Analyse einzubeziehen. Für das Jahr 1939 lag im internen Programmbestand der Volkshochschule das von der „Deutschen Arbeitsfront, NS-Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude“ getragene Programm der „Volksbildungsstätte“ von 1938/39 im Original vor. Dieses Programm konfrontiert das Forschungsvorhaben mit der Zäsur in der Geschichte der Volkshochschule, d. h. ihrer Schließung bzw. Instrumentalisie-

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4 Siehe für einen Überblick über Programmarchive im deutschsprachigen Raum Gieseke et al. 2018.

5 Dank gebührt Anja Ising, die im Rahmen ihres Studiums der Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung ein Forschungspraktikum am Deutschen Institut für Erwachsenenbildung absolviert und ihre Rechercheergebnisse und -materialien für diese Studie zur Verfügung gestellt hat.

rung durch das nationalsozialistische Regime. Unweigerlich wirft das Interesse an 100 Jahren Volkshochschule die Frage auf, wie mit dieser Zeit forschungsstrategisch und -ethisch umzugehen ist. Entsprechende Überlegungen werden insbesondere in Kapitel 4.2 und 4.4 vorgestellt. Die nachstehende Tabelle 1 bildet die beschriebene Programmauswahl ab.

**Tabelle 1:** Übersicht über die Auswahl der untersuchten Programmhefte

Jahr	Quelle	Zeitraum
1919	Originalprogramm liegt nicht vor, jedoch eine Quellenrekonstruktion	Mai-Juli 1919; Oktober-Dezember 1919
1929	Originalprogramm liegt nicht vor, jedoch eine Quellenrekonstruktion	März „bis Pfingsten“ 1929; Juni-Juli 1929; November-Dezember 1929
1938/9	Originalprogramm der „Volksbildungsstätte“, getragen von der „Deutschen Arbeitsfront, NS-Gemeinschaft Kraft durch Freude“	September 1938-April 1939
1949	Originalprogramm der VHS	Januar-März 1949
1959	Originalprogramm der VHS	Januar-März 1959
1969	Originalprogramm der VHS	Januar-März 1969
1979	Originalprogramm der VHS	Januar-Mai 1979
1989	Originalprogramm der VHS	Januar-Juni 1989
1999	Originalprogramm der VHS	Januar-August 1999
2009	Originalprogramm der VHS	Januar-August 2009
2017	Originalprogramm der VHS	Januar-Juli 2017

Insgesamt wird deutlich, dass die Zugänglichkeit zu Programmheften aus den frühen Jahren der Volkshochschule Begrenzungen unterliegt und intensive Sondierungen erfordert (vgl. auch Gieseke und Opelt 2003). Dies unterstreicht die Relevanz von Archivierungs- und Digitalisierungsbemühungen für historische Programmforschung (vgl. Gieseke et al. 2018). Einen vielversprechenden Schritt in diese Richtung leistet die digitale Aufbereitung von Programmen ausgewählter Volkshochschulen ab 1957 für die historische Forschung in dem von der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) geförderten Projekt „RetroPro“ sowie dem Folgeprojekt RetroPro2 am Deutschen Institut für Erwachsenenbildung.<sup>6</sup>

6 Vgl. Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung: <https://www.die-bonn.de/weiterbildung/archive/programmplanarchive/retropro.aspx> (Zugriff am: 06.11.2018). Die untersuchte Volkshochschule war nicht im Sample von RetroPro enthalten.

## 4.2 Anforderungen an die Samplebildung und Konsequenzen

Die Samplebildung hängt nicht allein von der Zugänglichkeit der Quellen ab, sondern betrifft insbesondere die inhaltliche Plausibilisierung der Auswahlabstände von zehn Jahren (a), die zur Materialreduktion erforderliche Auswahl von Semester- bzw. Trimesterprogrammen innerhalb der Untersuchungsjahre (b), Auswahlentscheidungen im Hinblick auf zusätzlich zu den regulären Hauptprogrammen vorliegende separate Teilprogramme (c) sowie Abwägungen darüber, welche Konsequenzen die Aufnahme des Programms aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus in das Sample für die spätere Auswertung und Ergebnisdarstellung birgt (d).

a) Die *Begrenzung der Analyse auf die Abstände von zehn Jahren* erfolgte in erster Linie aus forschungspraktischen Gründen und um möglichst einheitliche Zeitabstände zu gewährleisten. Die Konzentration auf die mit der Ziffer neun endenden Jahrgänge bedingte sich vor allem durch das Gründungsjahr 1919. Mit Abständen von zehn Jahren handelt es sich um eine grobmaschig angelegte Analyse, die einerseits Veränderungen besonders kontrastreich aufzeigen kann. Andererseits lässt sie Schwankungen innerhalb der Dekaden unentdeckt. Ob z. B. eine Entwicklung erst- oder letztmalig in einem bestimmten Jahr auftritt, lässt sich bei der Beschränkung auf ausgewählte Erhebungszeitpunkte nicht bestimmen. Dies lässt es erforderlich werden, Befunde entsprechender Forschungsdesigns – auch bei kleineren Zeitabständen zwischen den Auswahljahren – zu kontextualisieren, indem ihre Aussagekraft und Relativität expliziert wird. Zudem zeichnet sich das Erfordernis ab, innerhalb der grobmaschigen Analyse aufkommende Fragen erst durch ergänzende Vertiefungen mittels weiterer Programmanalysen innerhalb der Dekaden erhellen zu können. Folglich muss die Konzeption eines entsprechenden Längsschnittdesigns diese Begrenzung bzw. Vertiefungsnotwendigkeit berücksichtigen. Fleige und Reichart (2014) verweisen darauf, dass die Abwägung, ob in längsschnittlich angelegten Programmanalysen „jeder Jahrgang erfasst wird oder Messzeitpunkte im Abstand von 3 bis 5 Jahren gesetzt werden, [...] von der Fragestellung“ (S. 83) abhängt. Deutlich wird überdies, dass auch die benannten Begrenzungen und Kontextualisierungserfordernisse bereits in der Zusammensetzung des Samples antizipiert werden müssen, sofern es zeitliche Abstände umfasst.

b) Im Hinblick auf die *Materialreduktion innerhalb der Untersuchungsjahre* ist festzustellen, dass innerhalb der ersten Untersuchungsjahre aufgrund des ohnehin geringen Datenumfanges keine Reduktionen erforderlich und sinnvoll waren, so dass für 1919, 1929 und 1938/39 das gesamte verfügbare Material verwendet wurde (siehe Tab. 1). Demgegenüber machte die jüngere Vergangenheit mit umfassenden Programmen forschungspraktische Reduktionen notwendig. Aufgrund des zunehmenden Umfangs der Programme im Zeitverlauf wurde ab 1949 eine Eingrenzung auf die Frühjahrsprogramme vorgenommen. Diese Fokussierung beruht auf einer Sondierung, die gemeinsam mit Mitgliedern der Volkshochschule als Expertinnen bzw. Experten für das Feld erfolgte und sich im Rahmen erster Gespräche über das Forschungsvorhaben ergab. Sie äußerten, dass sich Frühjahrsprogramme gegenüber Herbstprogrammen möglicherweise stärker durch Neuausrichtungen kennzeichnen



würden, weil Entwicklungen tendenziell eher zu Jahresbeginn auf den Weg gebracht würden. Diese These verweist auf die empirisch zu klärende Frage nach unterschiedlichen Gewichtungungen der Jahresteilprogramme hinsichtlich des Aufkommens neuer Entwicklungen. Die Eingrenzung des Samples auf die Frühjahrsprogramme ist mit einer weiteren Herausforderung konfrontiert: Innerhalb der Untersuchungsjahre liegen zum Teil Semester-, zum Teil aber auch Trimesterprogramme vor, so dass unterschiedlich lange Zeitspannen impliziert sind. Die beschriebenen Auswahlentscheidungen haben deshalb wiederum Folgen für die Vergleichbarkeit. Während ihr in quantitativer Hinsicht durch die Bildung von relativen Häufigkeiten Rechnung getragen werden kann, bleibt in qualitativer Hinsicht – bzw. auch bei der interpretativen *Einordnung* quantitativer Ergebnisse – das Problem bestehen, dass Ergebnisse verschiedener Jahre nur erschwert vergleichbar sind. So könnte es z. B. bei Vergleichen von Bildungsreisen im Zeitverlauf aufgrund jahreszeitlich bedingter Präferenzen von Planenden sowie Adressatinnen und Adressaten einen Unterschied machen, ob angebotene Reisen in bestimmte Zielländer als Programminhalte eines sich von Januar bis März oder von Januar bis August erstreckenden Programmheftes miteinander verglichen werden. Insgesamt wird erkennbar, dass die Eingrenzung des Samples aufgrund der unterschiedlichen Zeitspannen der Programme mit Limitationen in der Einheitlichkeit und inhaltlichen Vergleichbarkeit zwischen den unterschiedlichen Programmen einhergeht.

c) Innerhalb der Auswahljahre zeigt sich eine weitere Herausforderung in Bezug auf den *Umgang mit separaten Teilprogrammen*, die mitunter parallel zum regulären Hauptprogramm existieren und beispielsweise gezielt Angebote in bestimmten Stadtteilen bewerben oder spezifische thematische Angebote zugunsten einer zielgruppenorientierten Ansprache umfassen. Diese separaten Teilprogramme eröffnen die Möglichkeit einer gezielt darauf bezogenen Forschung – so lassen sich z. B. anhand von separaten Teilprogrammen für bestimmte Stadtteile Veränderungen zwischen lokalräumlicher Zentralisierung und Dezentralisierung der Angebote ebenso wie Phasen einer besonderen Forcierung stadtteilbezogener Bildungsarbeit erforschen. Zugleich hat das Vorhandensein der separaten Teilprogramme jedoch Konsequenzen für die Analyse der regulären Hauptprogramme. Werden die separaten Teilprogramme in die Analyse einbezogen, ist eine systematische Prüfung von Doppelungen erforderlich, da zu klären ist, ob Angebote lediglich an dieser Stelle oder auch im regulären Hauptprogramm abgebildet sind. Auch stellt sich die Zugänglichkeit zu den separaten Teilprogrammen als Herausforderung dar, insbesondere, weil die Frage offenbleibt, wie sich ihr vollständiges Vorhandensein für frühere Jahre überhaupt beurteilen lässt. Dies würde eine lückenlose Archivierung oder zumindest Übersicht aller zusätzlichen Teilprogramme erfordern und kann nicht vorausgesetzt werden. Werden sie nicht in die Analyse einbezogen (wie in vorliegender Untersuchung), stellt sich die vermeintliche Grundgesamtheit der Angebote innerhalb eines Semesters (bzw. Trimesters) begrenzt auf die regulären Hauptprogramme dar. Dies birgt die Gefahr von Schiefen, sofern dadurch Teile des insgesamt vorgehaltenen Programms einer Einrichtung unberücksichtigt bleiben. So legen im vorlie-

genden Forschungsbeispiel die regulären Hauptprogramme für die letzten Jahre einen Rückgang des Sprachangebots nahe, der sich im Wissen um ein separates Teilprogramm zum Sprachangebot nicht bestätigt. Im Gegenteil wirft dessen Vorhandensein die Frage nach einer Intensivierung des Sprachangebots auf. Deutlich wird an diesen Ausführungen, dass die Zusammenstellung der Quellen Anforderungen birgt, die weit über eine durch Einheitlichkeit begründete Auswahl der regulären Hauptprogrammhefte hinausgehen. In der Literatur wird in Bezug auf die Erfassbarkeit aller in einem Programmzyklus erfolgenden Angebote vor allem „ein Nebeneinander von Internetpräsenz und Print“ (Käpplinger 2017, S. 100) in den Angeboten von Volkshochschulen konstatiert, wobei manche Angebote nur digital erworben und unter Umständen auch wieder gelöscht würden, so dass sich durch die Digitalisierung von Angeboten eine für Forschungszwecke herausfordernde Fluidität ergebe (vgl. ebd., S. 100; vgl. auch Nolda 2009, S. 303 f.). Im Hinblick auf das Problem der Überblickbarkeit separater Teilprogramme liegt die Frage nahe, ob sich diesem durch methodentriangulierende Verfahren begegnen lässt. Es wäre beispielsweise denkbar, anhand von Experteninterviews mit Organisationsmitgliedern (insbesondere jenen, die eine lange Betriebszugehörigkeit aufweisen) in der Retrospektive in Erfahrung zu bringen, in welchen Phasen der Einrichtungsgeschichte Stadtteilarbeit, spezifische Zielgruppenansprache usw. separate Teilprogramme erwarten lassen – auf dieser Basis ließen sich ggf. gezielte Recherchen durchführen bzw. zumindest reflexiv berücksichtigen, wenn separate Teilprogramme nicht mehr verfügbar sind. Auch werden in der Literatur Möglichkeiten zur Verknüpfung von Programmanalysen und den Nutzungsmöglichkeiten der vom Deutschen Institut für Erwachsenenbildung geführten Volkshochschul-Statistik diskutiert (vgl. Käpplinger und Reuter 2019; Fleige und Reichart 2014). Da die Statistik *durchgeführte* Veranstaltungen erhebt, während Programmanalysen *geplante* Veranstaltungen abbilden (vgl. ebd.), stellt sich die Frage, ob eine Spiegelung von programmanalytisch generierten Befunden an den Daten der Volkshochschul-Statistik hilfreich sein kann, um ein Korrektiv für blinde Flecken innerhalb längsschnittlich durchgeführter Programmanalysen zu gewinnen.

d) Das *Programmheft von 1938/39 in das Sample aufzunehmen* erfordert es, bereits frühzeitig im Forschungsprozess zu klären, wie die darin repräsentierte Zeit des Nationalsozialismus innerhalb der Einrichtungsgeschichte angemessene Berücksichtigung in dem Forschungsvorhaben finden kann. Um diesem Aspekt bereits bei der Samplebildung Rechnung zu tragen, wurde das Programmheft von 1938/39 explizit als Programm der als „Volksbildungsstätte“ bezeichneten instrumentalisierten Einrichtung unter nationalsozialistischem Regime gerahmt. Dadurch sollte die deutliche Distanzierung der heutigen Volkshochschule zu diesem Teil ihrer Geschichte bereits innerhalb der Beschreibung des Samples zum Ausdruck gebracht werden. Außerdem wurde im Hinblick auf die eingangs für Programme reklamierte Funktion, Selbstaussdruck einer Einrichtung zu sein, eine analytische Differenzierung innerhalb des Samples vorgenommen: So galt das Forschungsinteresse zwar einer *Deskription thematischer Entwicklungen* ab 1919 fortlaufend, während die für

1938/39 zu markierende Zäsur in der Geschichte der Volkshochschule sowie die für 1919 und 1929 nicht vollständig verfügbaren Programminhalte begründeten, Forschungsergebnisse *erst ab 1949 als Identitätsausdruck* der heutigen Volkshochschule einzuordnen. Damit liegt dem Sample eine analytische Differenzierung zugrunde, die es ermöglicht, thematische Entwicklungen entsprechend dem Analyseinteresse einer Längsschnittuntersuchung zwar über die Jahre hinweg als Verlauf zu untersuchen, dabei jedoch die unterschiedlichen Kontextbedingungen der jeweiligen Zeit zu kennzeichnen. Mit der Entscheidung, auch Dokumente aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus in das Sample aufzunehmen, sind insbesondere für die Auswertung weitere Konsequenzen verbunden (siehe Kap. 4.4).

Werden die in diesem Teilkapitel aufgeworfenen Perspektiven übergreifend betrachtet, fällt auf, dass die Auswahlentscheidungen zur Bildung des Samples bereits erfordern, die damit verbundenen Konsequenzen für die Auswertung und Ergebnisdarstellung zu antizipieren. Eine rein unter Gesichtspunkten der logischen Stringenz der Quellenzusammenstellung getroffene Auswahl greift zum einen aufgrund der Heterogenität der Programme zu kurz. Zum anderen gilt es, den fragilen Umgang mit den jeweiligen historischen Bedingungen im weiteren Forschungsprozess schon bei der Zusammenstellung des Samples zu berücksichtigen.

### 4.3 Anforderungen an die Datenaufbereitung

Die Aufbereitung der Daten beschränkte sich auf die Digitalisierung der Programmhefte, von denen der Großteil zunächst lediglich als Printausgabe verfügbar war.<sup>7</sup> Gearbeitet wurde folglich an den digitalisierten Programmen. Angesichts der Konzeption der Studie als Lehr-Forschungsprojekt musste aus forschungspraktischen Gründen auf eine extensive Datenaufbereitung verzichtet werden. Eine solche müsste z. B. darin bestehen, eine tabellarische Zusammenstellung aller Angebote innerhalb des Untersuchungszeitraums unter Kenntlichmachung bzw. Extraktion von Dopplungen vorzunehmen (vgl. Schume 2009, S. 69–72). Dies legt sich auch im Hinblick auf den Umgang mit separaten Teilprogrammen nahe (sofern verfügbar), um diese auf Überschneidungen und Ergänzungen zu den regulären Hauptprogrammen hin zu untersuchen.

### 4.4 Anforderungen an die Auswertung

Das forschungsmethodische Vorgehen zur Datenauswertung ist bereits in Kapitel 3 umrissen worden. Die Programmanalyse (vgl. Nolda 2009) wurde unter Rückgriff auf die inhaltlich strukturierende Inhaltsanalyse nach Kuckartz (2012) sowie deskriptive quantitative Häufigkeitsanalysen anhand der nach Kuckartz entwickelten Kategorien durchgeführt. Die Studierenden entwickelten eigenständig Fragestellungen, die ihr jeweiliges Forschungsthema betrafen und bildeten hiervon ausgehend jeweils ein eigenes Kategoriensystem. Dieses setzte sich sowohl aus Vorabüberlegungen und daraus entwickelten deduktiven Kategorien als auch bei ersten Sondierungen der Programme entwickelten induktiven Kategorien zusammen. Die Analyse fokus-

7 Dank gilt dem engagierten Einsatz der wissenschaftlichen Hilfskräfte Jasmina Feistl und Tim Vetter.

sierte einerseits die Entwicklung und den Vergleich von Häufigkeiten bestimmter Angebote, andererseits qualitativ ausgerichtete Systematisierungen der Angebote. Letztere umfassten beispielsweise die Untersuchung der Art und Weise, durch die der Wissenserwerb einer Zielgruppe in bestimmten Angeboten repräsentiert wird, die Analyse variierender inhaltlicher Schwerpunktsetzungen innerhalb bestimmter Themenangebote oder etwa die Differenzierung unterschiedlicher Arten von Bildungsreisen nach Kultur-, Sprach- und Erlebnisorientierung. Herausforderungen bei der Auswertung ergaben sich insbesondere für die Operationalisierung des Erkenntnisinteresses zu konkreten Kategorien (a), für die sich im Zeitverlauf verändernde Struktur der Programme (b) sowie für eine historisch sensible Kontextualisierung der Befunde für das Programmheft von 1938/39 (c).

a) Bei der *Operationalisierung des jeweiligen Erkenntnisinteresses zu konkreten Kategorien* stellen sich Herausforderungen insbesondere dadurch, dass sich die in den Programmen verwendeten Bezeichnungen im Zeitverlauf mitunter verändern. Das Kodieren und die Kategorienbildung müssen daher von den explizit verwendeten Begrifflichkeiten der Programme Abstand nehmen und analytische Bestimmungen erzeugen, die diesen Variationen Rechnung tragen. Methodisch einlösen lässt sich dies, indem die Kategorien im anfänglichen Analyseprozess zunehmend präzisiert werden, bevor sie auf das gesamte untersuchungsrelevante Material (ggf. erneut) angewandt werden. Dies ist für historische Programmforschung besonders hervorzuheben, weil gerade entsprechende Veränderungen als Gegenstand der Analyse relevant sein können. Insofern lässt sich annehmen, dass Kategorienbildungen im Kontext historischer Programmanalysen eine gesteigerte Sensibilität für ebendiese Variationen erfordern.

b) In Bezug auf die *Struktur der Programme* besteht eine Herausforderung darin, dass sich im Zeitverlauf die Gliederung der Programmbereiche verändert (vgl. hierzu auch Schume 2009, S.70). Zudem ist die Struktur der Programme nicht in allen Jahren entlang von Programmbereichen gegliedert, sondern z. B. unter dem Kriterium der Zielgruppenansprache. Die Struktur der Programme bleibt folglich im Zeitverlauf nicht konstant, so dass zum einen das analytische Interesse der bzw. des Forschenden von der durch das Material repräsentierten Struktur differenziert werden muss. Zum anderen können gerade die Veränderungen in der Programmstruktur als Gegenstand der Analyse zentral sein, weil sie Aufschluss über Zusammenlegungen bzw. Ausdifferenzierungen von Programmbereichen oder z. B. die Fokussierung bestimmter Strategien der Zielgruppenansprache geben können. Auffällig ist zudem, dass Angebote trotz thematischer Passung in einen Programmbe-  
reich mitunter an anderen – zunächst unvermuteten – Stellen im Programm platziert sein können, z. B. weil sie für eine spezifische Zielgruppe unter einer anderen Gliederungsüberschrift beworben werden. Nolda (2009) hebt hervor, dass „[a]ufgrund der weithin bekannten Gliederung des Angebots der Volkshochschulen nach Fachbereich [...] fast jede Programmanalyse mit der Frage konfrontiert [ist; Einfüg. AJ], wie mit diesen Einteilungen umzugehen ist“ (S. 300). Dieses Problem teilt die Programmanalyse mit statistischen Erhebungen, die in längsschnittlichen Betrach-

tungen ebenfalls vor dieser Herausforderung stehen (vgl. Fleige und Reichart 2014, S.71f.). Voraussetzung für das Nachzeichnen von Entwicklungen auch mittels statistischer Analysen ist, „dass auch bei Veränderungen der Themenkategorien in der Erhebungssystematik über entsprechende Zuordnungsregeln die Zeitreihenkontinuität gewahrt“ (ebd., S.76) wird.

c) Die *historische Zäsur in der Geschichte der Volkshochschule* durch das Programmheft von 1938/39 in das Sample einzubeziehen geht damit einher, die für andere Jahre plausiblen Kategorienbildungen auf ihre Schlüssigkeit in diesem Kontext prüfen zu müssen. Dies ist erforderlich, um für jenes Programmheft spezifische Merkmale nicht in der Subsumption zu verlieren und dadurch historische Sensibilität einzubüßen. Als prägnantes Beispiel lässt sich die Bezeichnung des didaktischen Angebotsformates der „Arbeitsgemeinschaft“ anführen. Ursprünglich sollte diese

„die gleichberechtigte gemeinschaftliche Kommunikation stimulieren, den gegenseitigen Wechsel der Perspektiven einüben, die Methodenabhängigkeit des Wissens deutlich machen, das Alltagswissen der Teilnehmer aktivieren und den eigenen Standpunkt auch durch biographisches Erzählen verständlich machen“ (Kade et al. 2007, S. 47).

Auch in dem Programmheft von 1938/39 treten unter der Bezeichnung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Angebote auf, die jedoch – beispielsweise mit explizitem Fokus auf die Lektüre nationalsozialistischer Schriften – dem erwachsenenpädagogischen Verständnis der Arbeitsgemeinschaft als ein den demokratischen Austausch förderndes Format zuwiderlaufen. Der Einbezug der geschichtlichen Zäsur in die Untersuchung birgt deshalb eine forschungsmethodische Konsequenz für die Kategorienbildung. So muss das Kategoriensystem trotz des Gebots systematischer Vergleichbarkeit Anpassbarkeit für die Spezifika der jeweiligen Zeit erlauben. Dies erfordert eine kritische Prüfung dahingehend, ob entwickelte Kategorien trotz vermeintlicher methodischer Korrektheit inhaltliche Verzerrungen erzeugen. Die systematische Vergleichbarkeit im historischen Längsschnitt erfordert folglich nicht nur Vereinheitlichungen, sondern auch Sensibilität für Differentes.

Insgesamt lassen sich Operationalisierungsfragen bei der Kategorienbildung wie auch veränderte Themenstrukturen und das kritische Hinterfragen der im Zeitverlauf unterschiedlich ausfallenden inhaltlichen Bedeutung bestimmter Kategorien als reflexiv zu bearbeitende Anforderungen konstatieren. Die Relevanz von Kontextwissen in der Durchführung von Programmanalysen kommt dadurch deutlich zum Ausdruck (vgl. mit Bezug auf das Kodieren hierzu auch Käßlinger 2008, Abs. 26).

#### 4.5 Anforderungen an die Ergebnisdarstellung

Werden die bisher diskutierten Anforderungen hinsichtlich ihrer bereits zum Ausdruck gelangten Implikationen nun noch einmal in Bezug auf die Ergebnisdarstellung gebündelt, stellt sich die Frage, wie mit den deutlich gewordenen Anforderungen an die Kontextualisierung von Befunden umzugehen ist. Diese sind allein durch das methodische Inventar der Programmanalyse nicht systematisch angelegt, sondern werden erst durch die Reflexion der Befunde vor dem Hintergrund genuiner Kriterien wissenschaftlicher Güte erkennbar. Die Bedeutsamkeit der Kontextualisie-

rung von Befunden legt den Vorschlag nahe, die Ergebnisdarstellung als expliziten Schritt im Forschungsprozess längsschnittlicher Programmanalysen anzusehen. Damit wird an allgemein gegenwärtige Forderungen nach einer stärkeren Berücksichtigung der textuellen Performanz, d. h. Kontext erzeugender, erläuternder Darstellung in der Veröffentlichung von Untersuchungsergebnissen als Gütekriterium qualitativer Forschung angeknüpft (vgl. Strübing et al. 2018, S. 93 f.).

#### **4.6 Zusammenschau: Potenziale und forschungsmethodische Herausforderungen**

Das Potenzial der Programmanalyse für Längsschnittdesigns zeigt sich insbesondere in der durch sie möglichen Systematisierung und Verdichtung der historischen Entwicklung von Angeboten im Zeitverlauf. Die Anforderungen an das methodische Vorgehen machen deutlich, dass durch das Längsschnittdesign eine besondere Komplexität entsteht, die sich jedoch durch die Berücksichtigung der genannten Anforderungen bearbeiten lässt. Es wird erkennbar, dass die mit Programmanalysen im Längsschnittdesign angelegte Vergleichbarkeit erfordert, eine Balance zwischen Einheitlichkeit und notwendigen Differenzierungen zu schaffen. Ebenso wird die Notwendigkeit zur Spiegelung des in den Befunden Sichtbaren am retrospektiv *Nicht-Sichtbaren* historischer Entwicklungen durch explizite Kontextualisierungen der Befunde deutlich. Die gezeigten Herausforderungen können als Potenzial eingeordnet werden, um in ihrer reflexiven Bearbeitung den Besonderheiten der historischen Entstehungsbegebenheiten vergangener Programme nachzugehen. So bringen die beschriebenen methodischen Herausforderungen die forschende Auseinandersetzung mit dem Analysegegenstand mitunter regelrecht hervor, indem sie durch die Konfrontation mit Differentem im Zeitverlauf eine Befremdung des Forschenden (vgl. Hirschauer und Amann 1997) von den vermeintlichen Selbstverständlichkeiten der Gegenwart anregen können.

## **5 Fazit: Implikationen für programmanalytische Anschlussforschung**

Ausgehend von dem Anlass des 100-jährigen Jubiläums der Volkshochschulen wurde eine Untersuchung der Programmhefte einer ausgewählten Volkshochschule von 1919 bis 2017 in Bezug auf die im Forschungsprozess aufgetretenen Potenziale und methodischen Herausforderungen diskutiert. Die Diskussion am spezifischen Beispiel der Erforschung von rund 100 Jahren Volkshochschulgeschichte hat genuine Anforderungen für über längere Zeiträume angelegte Programmanalysen offenlegt. Werden diese Anforderungen in Rechnung gestellt, birgt die Methode ein großes Potenzial, um die historische Genese von Angeboten in der Retrospektive nachzuzeichnen. Dieses Potenzial lässt sich zu drei Anschlussperspektiven verdichten.

Erstens werden Anschlussmöglichkeiten für die *historische Erwachsenenbildungsforschung* sichtbar. So können durch die Untersuchung von thematischen Verände-

rungen im Zeitverlauf historische Entwicklungen in ihrem Bezug zur Gegenwart nachgezeichnet werden. Damit ist wiederum für die Praxis die Möglichkeit einer historischen Selbstvergewisserung der eigenen Einrichtung verbunden (vgl. Heuer 2018; Jenner 2018), weil es anhand derartiger Befunde greifbar wird, „Genesen zu verstehen und Alternativen zu sondieren. Für Planende, die vom Alltag mit seinen Handlungslogiken beeinflusst sind, bieten die empirischen Befunde eine Chance, reflexiv in Distanz zu Routinen zu treten“ (Käpplinger 2017, S. 108).

Zweitens rückt mit der historischen Selbstvergewisserung der untersuchten Einrichtungen das Potenzial längsschnittlicher Programmanalysen für die *erwachsenenpädagogische Organisationsforschung* in den Fokus. So kann das Rekapitulieren des Profils einer Einrichtung anhand ihrer Programme auch unter der Perspektive analysiert werden, wie im Zeitverlauf auf veränderte gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen immer wieder Bezug genommen wurde (vgl. Gieseke und Opelt 2003). Die längsschnittlich konzipierte Programmanalyse kann insofern Aufschluss über die organisationale Erfolgsgeschichte einer Einrichtung geben, als sie über mehrere Jahrzehnte hinweg Bewältigungsstrategien im Umgang mit Veränderungen auf der Ebene ihrer Programme zeigt. So machen Meisel und Sgodda (2018) darauf aufmerksam, dass die Geschichte der Volkshochschulen ein „kontinuierlicher Kraftakt des Ausbalancierens und des Veränderungsmanagements“ (S. 237) ist. Unter diesem Blickwinkel wird es auch möglich, Programmforschung nicht allein in ihrem Bezug zum Planungshandeln (vgl. Käpplinger et al. 2017) und somit als Gegenstand der Professionalitätsforschung zu fassen, sondern auf der Basis von Programmanalysen auch *organisations- und professionalitätsbezogene Perspektiven* zu verschränken.

Schließlich kann drittens – gewissermaßen quer zu den genannten inhaltlichen Anschlussperspektiven – das Potenzial längsschnittlicher Programmanalysen für *international-vergleichende Arbeiten* hervorgehoben werden. Die Methode der Programmanalyse gilt außerhalb der deutschsprachigen Diskussion bisher als wenig bekannt, gleichwohl wird ihr für international-vergleichende Fragen Potenzial zugesprochen (vgl. Specht und Stodolka 2018, S. 2) und es lassen sich erste diesbezügliche Entwicklungen beobachten (vgl. Käpplinger et al. 2017). Die oben angeführten Überlegungen rücken in den Fokus, dass insbesondere durch die Gegenüberstellung von Einzelfallanalysen ausgewählter Einrichtungen im historischen Längsschnitt nicht nur ihr Angebot, sondern anhand dessen auch der Umgang der Einrichtungen mit ihren jeweils spezifischen Rahmenbedingungen und der Übersetzung dieser in ihr Programm greifbar wird.

Mit den skizzierten Anschlüssen im Hinblick auf historische, organisations- und professionalitätsbezogene Forschungsfragen sowie dem Vorschlag, entsprechende Fragen in international-vergleichender Perspektive zu untersuchen, sind exemplarische Möglichkeiten einer Weiterentwicklung des Einsatzes längsschnittlicher Programmanalysen aufgezeigt. Sie bedürfen der empirischen Plausibilisierung und legen es deshalb nahe, die Diskussion methodischer Herausforderungen und Potenziale auf einer solchen Grundlage weiter voranzutreiben.

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### **III Rezensionen/Reviews**



# Rezension: Weiterbildungsbeteiligung aus sozialraumorientierter Perspektive

JASMINA FEISTL

**Ewelina Mania: Weiterbildungsbeteiligung sogenannter „bildungsferner Gruppen“ in sozialraumorientierter Forschungsperspektive. Theorie und Praxis der Erwachsenenbildung, wbv Media, Bielefeld 2018, 216 S.**

Der interdisziplinäre Diskurs um Sozialräume findet zunehmend Eingang in die Erwachsenenbildung. Insbesondere die Forschung zu Milieus und Lebenswelten von Individuen, die in der Weiterbildungsbeteiligungsforschung angesiedelt ist, soll durch die Perspektive sozialer Räume erweitert werden. Die vorliegende Dissertation leistet mit ihrer Schwerpunktsetzung auf die Weiterbildungsbeteiligung sogenannter „bildungsferner Gruppen“ einen weiteren Beitrag hierzu und ordnet sich in die Reihe Theorie und Praxis der Erwachsenenbildung, herausgegeben vom Deutschen Institut für Erwachsenenbildung – Leibniz Zentrum für lebenslanges Lernen e. V., ein. Es handelt sich bei der Untersuchung um eine Teilstudie des Projekts „Lernen im Quartier – Bedeutung des Sozialraums für die Weiterbildung“, die den Fokus auf die Perspektive der Individuen richtet. Auf der Basis von 38 problemzentrierten Interviews verfolgt *Mania* die Forschungsfrage, wie sich eine sozialraumorientierte Forschungsperspektive auf den bisherigen erwachsenenbildnerischen Forschungsstand zu Regulativen der (Nicht-)Teilnahme an organisierter Weiterbildung sogenannter „bildungsferner Gruppen“ auswirkt. Durch die Entwicklung eines mehrdimensionalen und integrierenden Modells von Regulativen der (Nicht-)Teilnahme an organisierter Weiterbildung, das auf dem SONI-Schema basiert, welches im weiteren Verlauf noch nähergehend beleuchtet wird, gelingt es, die Bedeutung der vier sozialräumlichen Dimensionen „Sozialstruktur“, „Organisation“, „Netzwerk“ und „Individuum“ herauszuarbeiten, in denen wiederum alle Regulative der (Nicht-)Teilnahme verortet werden können. Diese Möglichkeit der Einordnung und der Darstellung einer wechselwirkenden Einflussnahme der Faktoren war bisher nicht gegeben.

Zunächst würdigt *Mania* einleitend in Kapitel 1 bisherige Forschungsarbeiten zur Weiterbildungsbeteiligung und stellt heraus, dass deren Foki vordergründig auf der Beschäftigungsfähigkeit der Bevölkerung auf Basis von Bildung als Ressource und der Adressierung möglichst aller Bürgerinnen und Bürger durch Weiterbildungsangebote liegen, wobei damit einhergehend häufig die Problematik der sozialen Selektivität von Weiterbildung diskutiert wird. Die Autorin führt den Diskurs um Sozialräume an und betrachtet die Sozialraumorientierung als Ansatz, der dazu genutzt werden kann, sowohl Faktoren zu erfassen, die das Nicht-Zustandekommen von Weiterbildungsaktivitäten bedingen als auch Regulative der tatsächlichen Weiter-

bildungsteilnahme in den Blick zu nehmen. Den Nutzen dieser sozialraumorientierten Forschungsperspektive leitet die Autorin insbesondere vor dem Hintergrund des Anspruchs her, einen zielgruppenübergreifenden Ansatz zu realisieren und „bildungsferne Gruppen“ als Forschungsgegenstand zu kennzeichnen. Sie betont die daraus resultierende Möglichkeit, die „doppelte[...] Verankerung von Bildungsdistanz“ (S. 13), die aus der wechselseitigen Distanz zwischen Bildungsorganisationen und deren Adressatinnen und Adressaten hervorgeht, abbilden zu können.

Darauffolgend werden in Kapitel 2 das Feld und der Gegenstand der Untersuchung präzisiert, indem die organisierte Weiterbildung eingangs als eingegrenzter Bereich der Weiterbildungslandschaft für die vorliegende Forschungsarbeit festgelegt und die Relevanz der Aktivität in diesem Feld verdeutlicht wird. In einem nächsten Schritt werden die Regulative der (Nicht-)Teilnahme an Weiterbildung sogenannter „bildungsferner Gruppen“ sowohl begrifflich also auch bezüglich des damit verbundenen Forschungsstandes in der Erwachsenenbildung erörtert. Hierbei dient die kritische Beleuchtung der Begriffe „Regulativ“ und „Bildungsferne“ einer einheitlichen Definitionsbasis, gleichzeitig aber auch einer Loslösung von einer Defizitorientierung. Es wird angenommen, dass eine komplexe Verschränkung von subjektiven und objektiven Faktoren die Weiterbildungsbeteiligung beeinflusst, sodass die Exklusionsmechanismen und deren Wirkung zwar verdeutlicht werden, deren Ursprung aber nicht nur auf der Mikro-, sondern auch auf der Mesoebene verortet wird. Auf Basis einer Bilanz der Weiterbildungsbeteiligungsforschung unterstreicht *Mania* die Notwendigkeit einer ganzheitlichen theoretischen Perspektive, die eine mehrdimensionale Heuristik beinhaltet und die Teilnahme und Nicht-Teilnahme an organisierter Weiterbildung als gleichwertig betrachtet. Die Heterogenität der Weiterbildung soll durch den Verzicht auf eine vorab vorgenommene Trennung von allgemeiner und beruflicher Weiterbildung Berücksichtigung finden.

Im nachfolgenden Kapitel 3 wird die sozialraumorientierte Perspektive als theoretische und methodische Rahmung der Untersuchung skizziert. Hierfür stellt die Autorin verschiedene (Sozial-)Raumvorstellungen, die in der Erwachsenenbildung Anwendung finden, und die damit einhergehenden Implikationen vor. Daraus leitet sie stringent ab, dass die relationale Sozialraumvorstellung für die vorliegende Arbeit geeignet scheint, da diese die Handlungsebene fokussiert und den Raum als Konstrukt betrachtet, der individuell geschaffen wird und unterschiedliche Ressourcenverteilungen, räumliche Strukturen und Machtverhältnisse berücksichtigt (S. 45). Dies mündet schließlich in die Herausstellung der Sozialraumorientierung als integrierender Ansatz, der in Form des SONI-Schemas, welches die Dimensionen Sozialstruktur, Organisation, Netzwerk und Individuum beinhaltet, einen mehrdimensionalen Raum eröffnet. Die vier Dimensionen werden explizit und durch handlungsnahe Beispiele erläutert. Der methodische Rahmen weist eine Darstellung des Projektbezugs, der Zielsetzung, der Datenauswertung mittels der Grounded Theory und der Gütekriterien auf, wobei insbesondere die sozialraumorientierte Datenerhebung begründet aufgeschlüsselt wird. Prägnant erscheint dabei vor allem, dass die problemzentrierten Interviews, die durch Kurzfragebögen ergänzt wurden,

mit 49 Personen durchgeführt wurden, die über Orte oder Einrichtungen des Quartiers erreicht wurden, die für die Ortsansässigen einen hohen Stellenwert aufweisen. Die Kontaktaufnahme und die Durchführung der Interviews konnte auf diese Weise in der Lebenswelt der Befragten stattfinden.

Den umfangreichsten Teil der Arbeit bildet die Systematisierung der einzelnen Regulative der (Nicht-)Teilnahme an organisierter Weiterbildung sogenannter „bildungsferner Gruppen“ als Darstellung der Befunde in Kapitel 4. Entlang der SONI-Systematik werden die Regulative den vier sozialräumlichen Dimensionen zugeordnet und in diesem Rahmen problematisiert und interpretiert. Die jeweiligen Regulative werden bis auf eine praxisnahe Ebene ausdifferenziert, auf Basis von Interviewzitatzen belegt und die Bedeutung des Ausgesagten stichhaltig hergeleitet. Eine Besonderheit besteht darin, dass auf mögliche Verbindungen zu weiteren Regulativen, die einer anderen sozialräumlichen Dimension untergeordnet sind, verwiesen wird. Die Erkenntnis des Zusammenhangs dieser Regulative entspricht somit der sozialraumorientierten Forschungsperspektive, die für einen allumfassenden Blick auf die Regulative der (Nicht-)Teilnahme an organisierter Weiterbildung sorgen soll.

Im Anschluss daran erfolgt in Kapitel 5 eine resümierende Ergebnispräsentation, wobei die Kombination der Regulative der (Nicht-)Teilnahme an organisierter Weiterbildung mittels eines mehrdimensionalen und integrierenden Modells erfolgt. *Mania* schlägt zur Sicherung der Berücksichtigung aller vier sozialräumlichen Dimension und der daraus resultierenden Regulative vor, die Metapher des Geschicklichkeitsspiels Jenga zu nutzen, um die wechselseitig bedingende und kumulative Wirkung der Regulative und Dimensionen visualisieren zu können. Es gelingt der Autorin, ihre Zielsetzungen einzulösen und ein Modell zu entwickeln, das zielgruppenübergreifend und ressourcen- und lebensweltorientiert die Heterogenität der Weiterbildung berücksichtigt und Regulative der (Nicht-)Teilnahme aufführt, gleichzeitig aber auch eine Anpassung und Weiterentwicklung dieser zulässt. Dabei steht die Relation der einzelnen Elemente im Fokus.

Im letzten Kapitel 6 der Dissertation führt *Mania* schließlich die Konsequenzen ihrer Arbeit für die Erwachsenen- und Weiterbildung aus, indem sie sowohl Impulse für die Forschung als auch für die Praxis und Politik folgert und als Ausblick formuliert. Im Zuge dessen räumt sie eigenständig ein, dass ihre Arbeit nicht allumfassend jegliche Regulative der (Nicht-)Teilnahme und deren Bezugnahme aufeinander wiedergeben kann, die Sozialraumperspektive aber einen umfassenden Blick ermöglicht, sodass ergänzende Forschungsarbeiten hieran angegliedert werden können. Dementsprechend leitet sie zu einem thematischen Anknüpfungspunkte entlang der vier sozialräumlichen Dimensionen und zum anderen methodische beziehungsweise theoretische Erweiterungsmöglichkeiten unter Nennung spezifischer Konzepte ab. Ein potenzieller Impuls für weitere Forschungsarbeiten wäre neben der Ausweitung des Diskurses zum Begriff der „Bildungsferne“ zum Beispiel die Verwendung des Modells der Regulative als Orientierungsrahmen, um hieran eine gezielte Untersuchung der Bedeutung ausgewählter Regulative anzuschließen. Die Autorin schlägt



beispielsweise vor, hinsichtlich der Dimension Netzwerk den Einfluss der sozialen Ressourcen auf die Zugänge zu organisierter Weiterbildung zu analysieren. Mögliche Folgerungen ihrer Erkenntnisse für die Praxis oder Politik zeichnet sie vor dem Hintergrund des Mehrebenensystems nach Schrader (2011) nach, wodurch sie Implikationen auf Mikro-, Meso- und Makroebene sichtbar werden lässt und Akteurskonstellationen, verschiedene Handlungsebenen und Interventionsformen in den Fokus der Auseinandersetzung gerückt werden.

Insgesamt liegt ein Band vor, der einen wesentlichen Beitrag zur Weiterbildungsbeteiligungsforschung liefert. Mögliche Regulative der (Nicht-)Teilnahme an organisierter Weiterbildung sogenannter „bildungsferner Gruppen“ werden erarbeitet und in einem mehrdimensionalen Modell, in dem Modifikations- und Entwicklungsprozesse angelegt sind, anschaulich vereint. Auf der Basis einer theoretisch und methodisch ausführlich dargestellten Herleitung werden die Regulative systematisiert und ihre Verbindung zueinander herausgearbeitet. Auf diese Weise unterstreicht die Autorin die Bedeutung der Reflexion des Begriffs der „Bildungsferne“ im erwachsenenbildnerischen Diskurs. Sie schafft eine innovative Grundlage, um die Korrelationen zwischen den Regulativen der Dimensionen Sozialstruktur, Organisation, Netzwerk und Individuum als Einflussfaktoren auf die (Nicht-)Teilnahme an organisierter Weiterbildung darlegen zu können.

## Autorin

Jasmina Feistl, M. A., war bis 2019 als wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft an der Professur für Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung der Universität zu Köln tätig. Derzeit arbeitet sie beim Career Service der Humanwissenschaftlichen Fakultät an der Universität zu Köln.

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# Rezension: Öffentliche Erwachsenenbildung in der Migrationsgesellschaft

TIM VETTER

Alisha M. B. Heinemann, Michaela Stoffels & Steffen Wachter (Hrsg.): *Erwachsenenbildung für die Migrationsgesellschaft. Institutionelle Öffnung als diskriminierungskritische Organisationsentwicklung. Perspektive Praxis*. wbv Media, Bielefeld 2018, 151 S.

In Anbetracht der demografischen Veränderungen in den letzten 10 Jahren wird im öffentlichen Diskurs zumeist auf die Dimension der stetigen Alterung der bundesrepublikanischen Gesellschaft verwiesen. Spätestens seit 2015 rückt jedoch der wachsende Anteil von Personen, denen ein Migrationshintergrund zugeschrieben wird, als weitere demografische Dimension in den Fokus. Im Kontext einer gegenwärtig entstandenen Migrationsgesellschaft kommt der Erwachsenenbildung im Allgemeinen und der öffentlichen Erwachsenenbildung im Speziellen eine zentrale gesellschaftspolitische Aufgabe zu. Mit dem Ziel, Bildung für Menschen aller Hintergründe anbieten zu wollen, setzten sich vor allem die gemeinnützigen Volkshochschulen durch das Veranstellen von Deutsch- und Integrationskursen für Bildung in der Migrationsgesellschaft ein. Der vorliegende Sammelband der Buchreihe *Perspektive Praxis* des Deutschen Instituts für Erwachsenenbildung betrachtet die gesellschaftliche Verantwortung der Volkshochschulen innerhalb der benannten Gesellschaftscharakterisierung über die Grenzen der Durchführung fremdfinanzierter Integrationsangebote hinaus. Unter Berufung auf das Konzept der *Institutionellen Öffnung* wird ein Zugang eingeführt, welcher einen ganzheitlichen organisationalen Wandel öffentlicher erwachsenenpädagogischer Organisationen als Voraussetzung für einen systematischen Öffnungsprozess voraussetzt. Aus einer rassismus- und diskriminierungskritischen Perspektive versuchen die Autor/innen anwendungsorientiert Maßnahmen zu entwickeln, um in den zentralen Organisationsfeldern Öffnungsprozesse zu initiieren und übergreifende Teilhabe aller Mitglieder der Migrationsgesellschaft zu ermöglichen. Als besonderes Merkmal der Autor/innenschaft ist hervorzuheben, dass sich diese überwiegend aus steuernden Akteuren verschiedener Volkshochschulen zusammensetzt.

Das erste der sechs konsekutiven Kapitel des Sammelbands stellt die theoretische Einführung in die rahmengebenden Konzepte dar. Die Autorin *Alisha M. B. Heinemann* orientiert sich zunächst entlang des Begriffs der Migrationsgesellschaft am erwachsenenbilderischen Forschungsdiskurs um das Phänomen der Migration und identifiziert gegenwärtige strukturelle Defizitdiagnosen öffentlicher Weiterbildung unter dem Blickpunkt gesamtgesellschaftlicher Teilhabe. Mit dem Ergebnis,

dass nur institutionelle Öffnungsprozesse auf allen Ebenen von Organisationen die notwendigen Veränderungen befördern können, führt sie mit der (rassismus-)kritischen Migrationsforschung in die zweite zentrale Theorieperspektive des Sammelbands ein. Zunächst erläutert die Autorin das Konzept der sozial konstruierten Unterscheidungspraxen, platziert den Begriff der Heterogenität als konstitutives Merkmal migrationspädagogischer Professionalität (S. 21) und stellt das Verständnis des Rassismus und der Rassismuskritik aus migrationswissenschaftlicher Perspektive als Ankerpunkt (selbst)-reflexiver Analyse an das Ende der theoretischen Erläuterungen.

Das zweite Kapitel des Sammelbands eröffnet den Praxisteil. *Yonas Endrias* und *Michael Weiß* fokussieren das Feld der strategischen Organisationsentwicklung von Volkshochschulen als Institutionen gemeinnütziger Erwachsenenbildung. Dabei greifen Sie den Prozess der Leitbildentwicklung als zentralen Entwicklungsprozess heraus, dem eine diskriminierungskritische Reflexion des real gelebten organisationalen Handelns und Denkens aller Organisationsmitglieder vorausgehen müsse (S. 43). Anschließend schlüsseln die Autoren die strukturellen Verformungen der Volkshochschulen unter dem Einfluss integrationspolitischer Impulse auf. Dabei werden finanzielle Abhängigkeiten (*Fremdfinanzierung von Deutsch- und Integrationskursen*), und strukturelle Verwachsungen (*Versäulung durch strikte Aufteilung in Fach- oder Programmzuständigkeiten*) dechiffriert, die der institutionellen Öffnung der Volkshochschulen im Wege stehen. Abschließend stellen die Autoren im Sinne eines "Best Practice"-Ansatzes die Organisations- und Leitbildentwicklung der Berliner Volkshochschulen vor, die mit dem Ziel der institutionellen Öffnung die Selbststeuerung und Entsäulung der Lernangebote befördern, um die Teilnahme von Menschen mit Migrationsgeschichte an Kursen abseits der „eingetretenen Pfade“ der bereits erwähnten Deutsch- und Integrationskursen zu steigern.

Kapitel drei widmet sich dem Aspekt der Personalgewinnung und -entwicklung als Mittel der institutionellen Öffnung der Volkshochschulen in der Migrationsgesellschaft. Während bisher die Diversität der Teilnehmenden im Fokus stand, richtet *Philipp Salamon-Menger* nun den Blick auf die Beschäftigten der Volkshochschulen. Da besonders unter den festangestellten Mitarbeiter\*innen Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund unterrepräsentiert seien, lautet die zentrale Forderung, deutlich mehr Menschen mit eigener oder familiärer Migrationserfahrung in Volkshochschulen einzustellen (S. 62). Um diese Forderung umzusetzen, bedarf es einer diskriminierungssensiblen Reflexion von Erwartungen gegenüber migrantischen Mitarbeitenden und Eintrittsbarrieren im Recruitingprozess.

Im vierten Kapitel werden Lernräume und -formate von *Michaela Stoffels* unter Berücksichtigung ihrer pädagogischen Wirkpotentiale in den Blick genommen. Raumkonzepte von Volkshochschulen seien häufig beliebig und aufgrund ihrer binären Unterscheidung von Lern- und Nicht-Lernräumen unflexibel (S. 83). Diese Inflexibilität stellt die Autorin auch auf Formatebene fest. In Zusammenführung von raumkonzeptioneller und didaktischer Öffnung sei das informelle Lernen als räumlich ungebundenes und Dialog förderndes Konzept als Ergänzung neben anderen

offenen Lernformen dem durch Homogenität geprägten formalen Lernen in monofunktionalen Lernbereichen zur Seite zu stellen.

Im Zentrum des fünften Kapitels steht die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit von Volkshochschulen für die Migrationsgesellschaft. Die Autorin *Inga Schwarz* setzt sich hier mit der Zweischneidigkeit direkter Zielgruppenansprache auseinander, die einerseits mehr Menschen mit Migrationsgeschichte im Sinne der institutionellen Öffnung in die Volkshochschulen integriere, aber andererseits auch Gefahr liefe, durch Anerkennung der Differenz Migrant versus Nicht-Migrant und eine entsprechende Adressierung diese scheinbare Differenz zu bestätigen und die vermeintlich „Anderen“ damit zu reproduzieren (S. 103). Unter Berufung auf verschiedene Ansätze aus der anti-diskriminatorischen- und der Empowermentarbeit sowie praktischen Beispielen der Volkshochschulen Hamburg und München wird ein Orientierungsrahmen erarbeitet, der es ermöglicht, marginalisierte Gesellschaftsgruppen anzusprechen ohne defizitfokussiert Negativbilder zu reproduzieren.

Institutionelle Öffnung beinhaltet auch das Aufbrechen institutioneller Außengrenzen.

Daher befasst sich die Autorin des letzten Kapitels, *Beate Blüggel*, mit Volkshochschulen als Netzwerkpartner von Akteuren der Migrationsgesellschaft. Dabei stellt sie zunächst die Stärken der Institution Volkshochschule (*Einbindung in kommunale Verwaltungsstruktur und vielfältiges Angebot*) heraus (S. 124) um anschließend auf die bisweilen unzureichende Ausnutzung dieser Vorteile hinzuweisen. Volkshochschulen müssten im Rahmen von Kooperationen nicht nur die gängigen Angebote aus dem Segment der Deutschkurse forcieren, sondern die Öffnung der allgemeinen Angebote anstreben, die bisweilen kaum von migrantischen Interessengruppen wahrgenommen werden. Hierzu definiert die Autorin relevante Voraussetzungen für Kooperationen und gibt den Lesern\*innen eine Reihe fruchtbarer Beispiele aus der Praxis mit an die Hand.

Im Rahmen des vorliegenden Sammelbands gelingt es den Autor\*innen, eine Reihe theoretisch fundierter, gesellschaftlich notwendiger und praktisch umsetzbarer Konzepte und Ansätze vorzustellen, die der Volkshochschule als Institution der gemeinnützigen Erwachsenenbildung zu einer umfassenden institutionellen Öffnung für eine gesamtgesellschaftlich zugewandte Erwachsenenbildung im 21. Jahrhundert verhelfen kann. Dabei werden jedoch nicht populäre Allgemeinplätze migrationsbewusster Programmatiken reproduziert. Vielmehr brechen die durch die konzeptionelle Erweiterung des Konzepts der interkulturellen Öffnung in Verbindung mit einer Durchgängigen diskriminierungs- und rassismuskritischen Perspektive erarbeiteten Impulse mit bisweilen gängigen Praktiken und Perspektiven. Durch die durchweg praxisinvolvierte Autorenschaft sind die Best Practice-Beispiele und Leitfäden authentisch und umsetzbar. Dabei sprechen die Inhalte des Sammelwerks nicht nur steuernde Akteure von Volkshochschulen an. Kapitelübergreifend optisch hervorgehobenen Definitionen, Checklisten und Reflexionsfragen dienen auch handelnden Akteuren anderer erwachsenenpädagogischer Organisationen zur kriti-

schen Reflexion und Entwicklung des eigenen professionellen Handelns. Obgleich die aus dem Strang der Adressatenforschung extrahierte Grundfrage des Sammelbands die Erwachsenenbildung bereits seit den 1970er Jahren beschäftigt, bietet die theoretisch-konzeptionelle Rahmung des Gesamtwerks Innovationskraft in der Schnittstelle zwischen Theorie und Praxis.

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This year's volume of the International Yearbook of Adult Education is dedicated to Adult Basic Education Research. The topic is discussed on the macro-, meso- and micro-level: Practices and competencies of adults in general and of participants in adult education courses in particular are taken into focus. Furthermore, professionalization and competences of teachers in the field of adult education are regarded when discussing if basic adult education requires specific abilities in teaching. Finally, also political processes in implementing lifelong learning in the South East Asian country Laos are emphasized.

Im Internationalen Jahrbuch der Erwachsenenbildung (IJEB/IYAE) werden gegenwärtige und grundsätzliche Fragen der Bildung im Erwachsenenalter in international-vergleichender Perspektive diskutiert. Dabei widmet sich jede Ausgabe einem Schwerpunktthema, das in englischen und deutschen Artikeln verschiedene Aspekte wissenschaftlich betrachtet. Beiträge zu aktuellen Themen und ein Rezensionsteil ergänzen die Ausgaben.

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