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The Promotion of Competences Among Teachers in Further Education within the Framework of Addressee-Related Quality

1. Introduction and Outline

The realization of lifelong learning presupposes competences pertinent to adult education among teachers in further education. In-service training for those working in further education can be considered as part of a strategy for the promotion of competences among teachers in further education, and therefore part of the process of lifelong learning among adults (cf. Commission of the European Communities 2007, p. 9).

Following qualification offensives for teachers in further education in the new German Laender during the 1980s and 1990s (cf. Emminger/Giesecke/Nuissl 2001, p. 192), the focus in further education has been on quality maintenance, development and quality management (cf. Meisel 2002). Professionalization, too, is mostly discussed within the context of quality development. Many of the concepts debated aim toward the quality conceptions of staff. Only recently has there been a shift towards quality concepts regarding the participants in further education as well as course instructors (cf. Loibl 2003). Aside from its rather objective aspects, quality also has subjective aspects; in this case, one could speak of “appropriate quality”, the appropriateness of which is determined by the learner (cf. Ehses/Zech 2002, p. 118), which refers to addressee- and participant-orientation. The pedagogical staff (not only the full-time regular members of staff, but also and above all the many freelance extra personnel [course instructors and coaches]) in the institutions of further education plays a crucial role in the construction of quality – also with regard to profile formation and successful participant linking – as they constitute a direct interface with addressees and participants (cf. Tippelt et al. 2008).

A high quality of the educational programs and courses offered in further education is needed to reduce social inequality and promote excellence (cf. Tippelt et al. 2006). Likewise, in order to strengthen “equity and good learning outcomes” (EU Memorandum 2006), the promotion of lifelong learning among all groups of individuals is not only a moral question related to equal and just opportunities, but also an economic question.

A central implication of the results concerning participation in further education in Germany (cf. BMBF 2006, p. 13) – which, on an international scale, finds itself merely in mid-field (cf. OECD 2002) – ought to be a significantly stronger orientation towards addressees and target groups. Further education can only create a compensating and equalizing effect if instructors work addressee- and participant-oriented by taking into account pluralistic desiderata and expectations of different social groups (e.g. age groups, educational groups, migrant groups, social groups, different living situations and life phases) in planning and designing different pedagogical fields of action (cf. Tippelt/von Hippel 2007). A more pluralistic group of addressees and participants (cf. Barz/Tippelt 2004; Tippelt/von Hippel 2005) as well as target groups altered by demographic change can only be reached through an improved demand-oriented planning of further education. Therefore, on the institutional level of further education, addressee-oriented quality is the central starting point for a possible increase in enrolment. In the last few years, in-service training for planners and lecturers in adult education has been neglected (cf. Gieseke 2005; Kraft 2006).

The contribution analyses the need for in-service training from the perspective of both course instructors and fulltime pedagogical staff as well as experts of the associations for further education. The aim is to identify important topics in regard to the promotion of competences among teachers in further education from the perspective of different agents. Furthermore, the question is raised in regard to how strongly teachers working in this sector believe that addressee-oriented quality and the promotion of competences among teachers in further education might contribute to an increase in enrolment in further education.

2. Central Question and Problem Definition

The research project “Increase in Enrolment in Further Education and Improvement of Equal and Just Opportunities Through the Promotion of Competences Among Teachers in Further Education” (www.komweit.de) (duration: May 2007 – April 2009), sponsored by the BMBF, analyzes the issue of the promotion of competences among teachers in further education from the point of view of the pedagogical staff and of lecturers in adult education as well as the need for action as seen by the institutions and those in charge. Thus, the project contains a comparison on three levels: the micro-level (course instructors), the meso-level (pedagogical staff; organizational-pedagogical staff (administrative personnel)) and the macro-level (institutions and organizations in charge). Due to the integration of these different levels, a systematic comparison of the diverse perspectives is made possible. The identification of relevant topical perspectives from the point of view of micro-, meso-, and macro-

levels yields clues regarding a possible increase in enrolment in further education as well as the improvement of equal opportunities through the promotion of competences among teachers in further education. The research project focuses on the most recent challenges in the field of professionalization, quality development, and competence promotion for teachers in adult education. A differentiated view of diverse agents in the promotion of competences among teachers in adult education could also be of interest within the European dialogue and comparison. Germany, for instance, is debating an overall framework of qualifications and competences applying to all organizations in charge, basing its considerations on a comparison with Austria and Switzerland, countries in which this system has already been employed in further education. The importance of a promotion of quality in further education by focussing on the quality of the staff is also underlined by the "Action Plan Adult Education" published by the EU Committee (cf. Committee of the European Communities 2007, p. 9).

3. Methodology/Research Instruments

The theoretical and empirical foundation of the study consists of professionalization theories, competency debates as well as addressee-oriented research. By means of methodological triangulation the central questions of this project allow for a multi-level inter-related research method (cf. Flick 2004). This enables a detailed analysis of the research subject. On the macro-level 30 expert interviews as well as an multi-level expert delphi were conducted (cf. Häder 2002). On the micro- and meso-level, 15 group discussions (cf. Loos/schäffer 2001) and 30 problem-centered individual interviews (cf. Witzel 2000) are being conducted. The methods of data collection and analysis are based on Grounded Theory (theoretical sampling) (cf. Strauss/Corbin 1996) and the qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (1995). Because of the qualitative nature of this study, contextually representative results regarding theoretically relevant characteristics shall be strived for rather than statistical data (cf. Merrens 1997).

All group discussions and qualitative interviews are transcribed verbatim and then encoded and evaluated using the program MAXqda (a program for computer-supported analysis of qualitative data). The analysis contains individual case analyses, case study comparisons, as well as the development of typical patterns and comprehensive results. The category system consists of a total of 225 codes, including 14 major categories (see below). The inter-code reliability was tested with an inter-code reliability coefficient from Holsti (cf. Mayring 1995). In doing so, five interviews and a group discussion were coded separately by two coders. This

selection comprises approximately 8% of the total data and was also selected by theoretical sampling (Interviews/Group Discussions; Course Instructor/Pedagogical Staff/Organizational-Pedagogical Staff (administrative personnel); different Interviewers). The coders were both extensively introduced to the topic and also created the coding system. Through the independent coding the code system was improved and the discriminatory power of the single codes was raised. An inter-code reliability coefficient was calculated for each code and sub-code. For the means and main codes, the following structure developed:

Table 1 Inter-Code Reliability Coefficients

Main Code	Inter-Code Reliability Coefficient (Mean of all Sub-Codes)
A_General Institution_	.83
Important Topics, Current	.67
Important Topics, Future	.48
B_Image of Further education, Instructor in Further education_	.60
C_Occupational History, Qualifications	.50
D_Actual_Position_and_Job	.66
FB_Advanced Training of Further education Instructors_Demand and Behavior	.54
E_Offer Analysis of Advanced Training for Further education Instructors_	.35
G_Addressees, Participants, Target Groups_	.38
Areas of Conflict in Program Planning	.61
H_Increasing Participation in Further education, Willingness, Equal Opportunity	.46
I_Contribution of Science, Research and Counselling	.37
Counselling	.70
PGM_Program Planning	.43

The inter-subjective comprehensibility is therefore increased and the analysis can be documented, thus better meeting the quality criteria of qualitative research, such as procedure documentation and regulated evaluation in particular (cf. Mayring 2002).

4. Selected Results

4.1 Current Challenges and Important Issues

Experts as well as those at the meso and micro level view the following aspects as current challenges and important issues in further education: financing (especially the

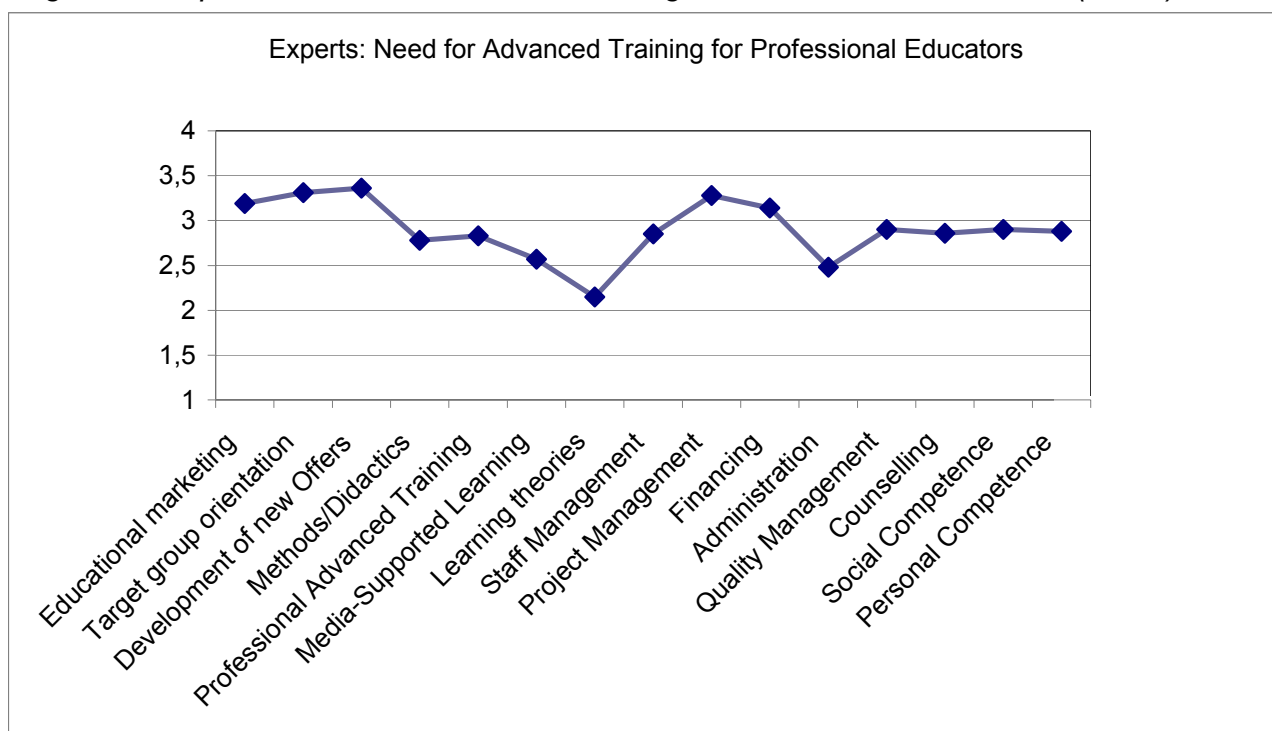
increasing economizing of further education fields as well as the necessary handling of finance structures and means), migration (intercultural aspects, integration classes, language development and special offers in continuing education for immigrants) as well as demographic development (not just the participants, but also those employed in fields of further education. This becomes noticeable in the topic areas of the different target groups, whereas the micro and macro level of the development of participation in further education in general focus on reaching the disadvantaged, educationally underprivileged participants as well as a target group-specific marketing strategy. In the comments of the instructing staff of further education employees, the micro-perspective including the concrete situation and those who do not participate and their demographic development becomes clear.

4.2 Need and Interest for Advanced Training from Different Perspectives

Within the context of the written Delphi-Data Collection, experts were asked which topic areas they view as being in need of advanced training for the planners (see Diagram 1) and the instructors in continuing education (see Diagram 2).

Within the qualitative studies, data regarding the meso (see Diagram 2) and micro level (see Diagram 4) regarding personal interest in advanced training could additionally be won, which will be shown separately here.

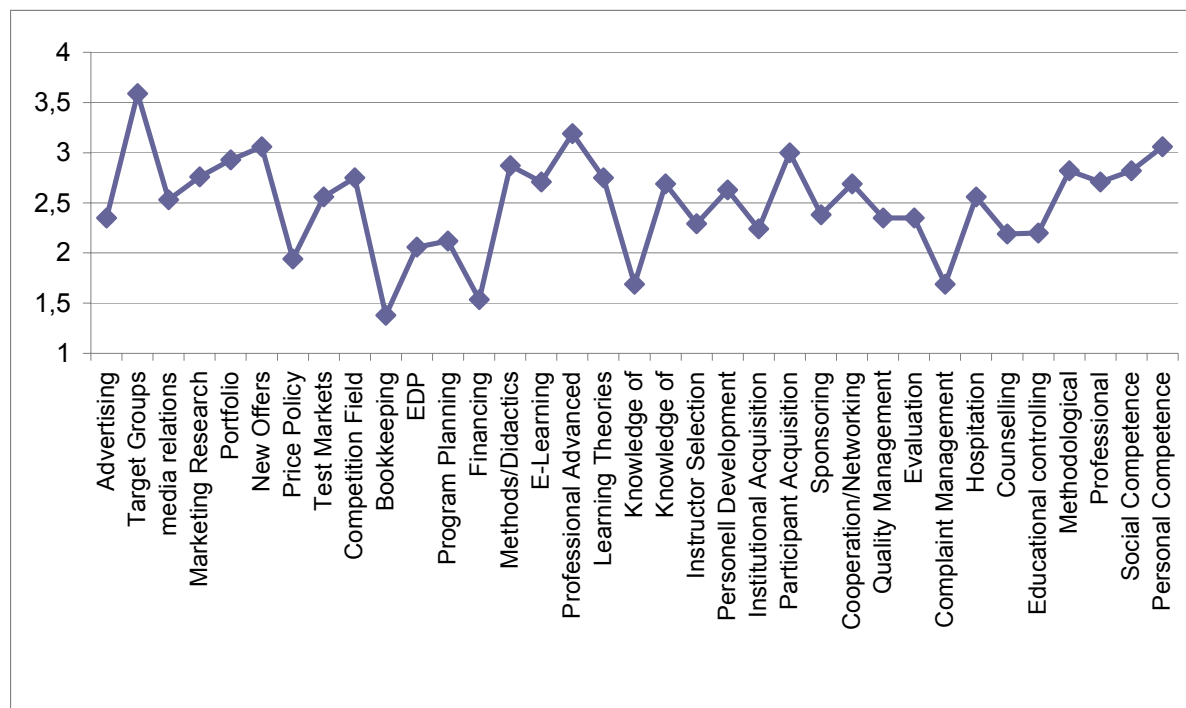
Diagram 1: Experts: Need for Advanced Training for Professional Educators (mean)



(1=no need, 4=need)

n=56

Diagram 2: Interest for Advanced Training of Professional Educators (mean)

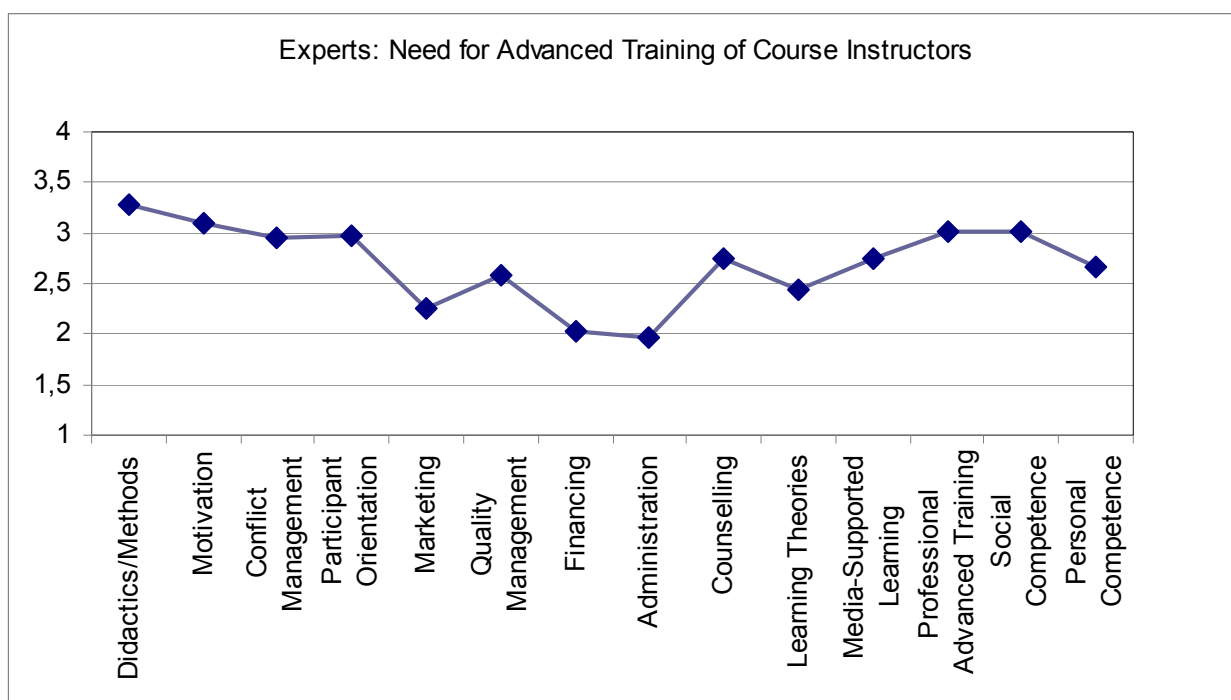


(1=no interest, 4=interest)

n=17

By comparing the levels to one another, a similar weighting of topics can be discovered. For example, the development of new offers is not only seen by experts as an important area for advanced training, but also by the planning personell. Equally important is the tendency in the topic area Target Groups, which is strengthened in expert fields by the interesting topic of recruiting participants. While professional advanced training has a comparatively high value amongst planning personell, this area of focus is not noticeable at first sight amongst experts. The need for advanced training from the perspective of experts in the area of project management is not noticeable at the level of professional educators, although it can be easily concluded by the current topic (see above) Project Work as a result of the financial structures in the area of further education. Applied to the instructing personell at the mico level, the following areas of further education can be seen from different perspectives.

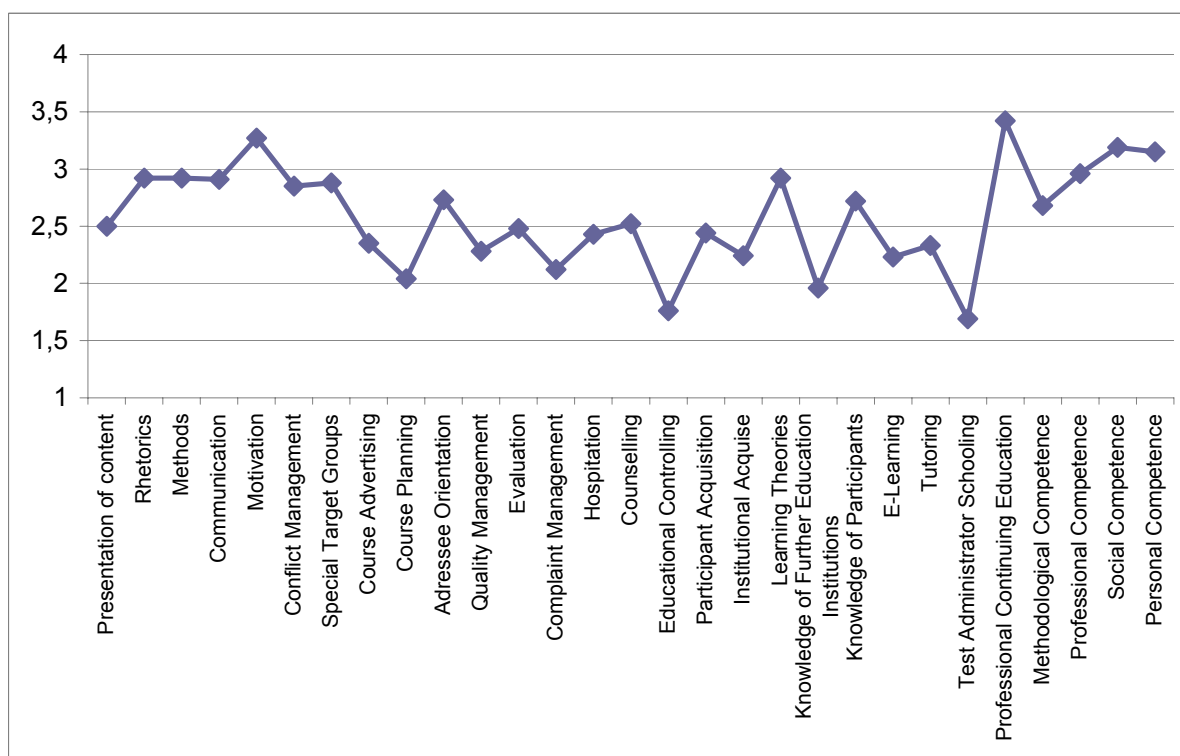
Diagram 3: Experts: Need for Advanced Training of Course Instructors (mean)



(1=no need, 4=need)

n=56

Diagram 4: Interest for Advanced Training of Course Instructors (mean)



(1=no interest, 4=interest)

n=19

The professional advanced training receives a higher significance amongst instructing personnel. For quality insurance in further education activities, the level of professional qualification and the up-to-datedness of instructors can be view as significant on both levels, whereas the responsibility is to be held by the instructors themselves. Also on the level of further education personnel the experts and the respondents themselves see an important need for advanced training in the areas of motivation of participants and target group orientation, in which the counselling of addressees and participants are to be included. Especially in the context of the qualitative survey, this topic will continue to be included by teaching personnel and proves to be an important activity, whereas advanced training in this area seems to be difficult to imagine and should be primarily performed on the basis of practical experience.

4.3 Behavior in Further education: Barriers, Motivation, Characteristics of Quality

The most important barriers which prevent the participation in further education are named as being lack of time, too much work, lack of support by the institution or employer as well as low expected use of skills learned. The lack of use of the skills learned can be connected to the missing transfer of topics in further education as well as the missing expectations that further education will improve the chances of promotion or improvement of the current employment situation. Especially for course instructors, barriers can be the partial payment of the cost for advanced education as well as the consequence of missing work during the time of the training. Motivation for the participation in further education activities are on the one hand extrinsic, for example through mandatory orders (integration courses) or through self-perceived deficits, which are mostly intrinsic. This includes the wish to be professionally and educationally held up-to-date, to interact with others and interest in new topics. Participation in further education can also be seen as a compensation for low salaries.

For the responding further education instructors, practical relevance or the ability to transfer skills learned in real-life situations, the competences of the contributors as well as the opportunity for personal and professional interaction prove to be important characteristics of quality in further education.

4.4 Competence of Further education Instructors and The Contribution to Increasing Participation in Further education

From the perspective of the responding further education instructors, the promotion of competences amongst is necessary, but not alone capable of increasing the

participation in further education. Only in combination with one another can the three levels lead to an increase in further education (cf. Brüning 2002; Becker/Lauterbach 2004) – for many of the responding experts the question is of social socio-political importance. On the level of the individual, increasing individual responsibility and access to personal resources is being discussed. On the level of the institutions of further education, addresses and participant oriented quality in further education can lead to an increase in participation and quality. This quality and can only be reached by competent further education instructors. Addressee orientation can be reached, for example, by including real-life examples and counselling of potential participants. . Orientation on participants is to be seen as especially important regarding support of the future participation in further education, for example by creating positive experiences with instructors for immigrants. On the level of society, politics and economics, is especially important for instructors to create local structures of education and increase financial support, as well creating a better social atmosphere for further education. The quality of addressee orientation is also a central starting point on the level of education institutions as a step towards a possible increase in participation. The perspective of participants also proves to be a central characteristic of quality for instructors. (vgl. Ergebnisse Projekt ImZiel).

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