



Teachers in adult education in the Nordic countries

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The need for competences - and how to fulfill it!

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Mapping competences for adult education teachers in five Nordic countries



Purpose

- › To describe the volume, form and content of competence development for adult education teachers
- › And – on that basis – to estimate the need for future competence development



Method



- › Common framework for the description prepared by a group of researchers
- › Key persons completed the questionnaire
- › A selected group of users described the need for competences



Findings - 1



There are no formal requirements of adult pedagogical skills for adult educators in the Nordic countries.

A professional insight into the teaching content (the subject) is required. As well as a general pedagogical knowledge.

Normally adult teaching staff will obtain teaching skills and pedagogical theoretical insight through continuing education and training alongside their work as adult teachers.

This training can be formal, as part of the public educational system, or it may be non-formal in the form of workplace-related courses.



Findings - 2



There is a variety of training within the adult education field. Extent and nature vary considerably between the Nordic countries. In Denmark the formal adult educational training is available at three levels:

- › Adult Teacher Education Programs which provide basic adult educational skills and knowledge. This training takes place at an Adult Education Centre.
- › Bachelor's in Adult Education. This training is at the undergraduate level and takes place at university colleges. The duration is one year's part time training
- › Master's in Adult Education. This training is at master's level and takes place at a university. The training endures one year and it is normally part time. It includes adult life and learning processes, learning and skills in work and organizations and competence in the knowledge society.



Desired adult educational competences:



- › Knowledge of how to use the students' experiences and prior learning in the teaching programs
- › Differentiated teaching methods in relation to heterogeneous groups of adults
- › Knowledge about motivation and resistance to learning
- › Knowledge of work-based learning and training
- › Knowledge of transfer from the learning situation to practice
- › Knowledge of computer technology in education



Educational policy recommendations



- › To strengthen the theory-practice linkage by placing education and training in authentic settings where particularly inspiring training takes place.
- › To focus on the interplay between theoretical knowledge and reflection and practical training.
- › To focus on the interaction between general and vocational educational programs



A modern teachers training program for adult education teachers



Purpose

- › To train adult educators in cooperative learning
- › To ensure that the teachers use the method in a qualified way



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The content of the training program

- › Theoretical reading
- › Two day course
- › Seven times of coaching



Data Collection Method



- › Focus group interviews
- › Log books written by teachers during the training



Findings



- › Teachers are qualified to apply the method
- › The use of the method was comprehensive and widespread
- › The teachers are very satisfied with the competence development course
- › The competence development proces formed a u-graph
- › The use of the method does not increase with increasing level of competence



Further reading



Wahlgren, B. (2011). *Training of Adult Education Teachers. Experiences from a teacher program in cooperative learning*. Copenhagen: Cursiv no 6.
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