

Norwegian report from the Bonn meeting

Organisation: Vox

Meeting: October 22-23, 2012

Host organisation: DIE

Date: October 22-23, 2012

Location: Bonn (DE)

Reflections

What were the most useful experiences?

Group work

The discussions and the viewpoints that were expressed were interesting and awareness raising. We especially want to refer the statement saying that There is nothing new in the thoughts around teacher training and basic skill approaches today. The same statements and strategies have been repeated over and over again through the last decades. We think that this shows that it is necessary to work for an issue *over time*, in order to obtain results such as political reforms, change of practice and general acceptance among policy makers and in society. Repetitions are necessary to raise awareness among the majority and not only the few who are already dedicated. Lots of political reforms during the last decades justify this way of thinking.

Another interesting discussion was whether changes are made top down or bottom up. Some argued that top down systems make rather rigid systems that are supposed to be valid for many different educational areas. On the other hand, bottom up approaches can be adapted to the actual needs. The advantages of top down are that someone is in charge of the area and actions, and that funding are available. In our opinion there is not necessarily a contradiction here. These two systems can work together.

We also discussed figures, for example that approximately 7 million Germans lack sufficient literacy skills. This number is probably too high. The real number of people who do not function in society (not coping in their daily lives and at work, or unable find work) is probably much lower. We have had the same

discussion in Norway, and the estimated number of adults needing training in basic skills has been considerably downsized. Exaggerated numbers of adults in need of basic skills does not contribute to support the credibility of the field. In other words; this will undermine the credibility.

Furthermore, it is a good point that *the best* teachers should train learners with the most bad experiences schooldays. Adult teachers should be selected carefully. They ought to be motivated and highly competent teachers. We want to stress this point, even if it may not be scientifically proved that well qualified teachers lead to high quality training. There seems to be lack of statistics in this field, although there exist qualitative research in this field (interviews with teachers and learners). We realize that this however is difficult to prove. What makes a good teacher a good teacher is probably a mix of good formal qualifications and personality.

What can be considered as examples of good practices?

A framework for adult literacy professionals

Education Scotland (Lyn and Cath) presented their framework for adult literacy professionals that we find quite interesting. We especially find it interesting that they focus on the different roles. They started out to describe the roles, then in what learning areas these roles appear, and finally which are the typical competences, attributes and tasks of each role. This framework is supposed to be clickable at the internet, and also show pathways into each role. We found this a very systematic way of presenting a complex field.

What did you learn that is similar or different from policy and practice in your own country?

Adult basic skills teacher training in Germany

In Germany they have a Master study for adult teachers, and also a shorter, non-academic study for teachers. The master study does not have many students, as job possibilities are rather poor. The non-academic pathway is shorter and module based, and the teacher trainees need to finish at least two modules. We like this model that also provides the teachers with a certificate. As far as we understood, it is more or less compulsory to do these modules if you are going to teach adults. In Norway we have "one day" courses *and* a CDP of 30 ECTS. One day courses are too short. It is not compulsory with courses of CPD to teach adults In Norway. We would like to introduce a longer non-academic course, for teachers who are practicing. Vox is working towards a more formalised short duration training that provides a certificate – a training that should be compulsory in the sense that most adult teachers would find it necessary for teachers to have accomplished such training in the future.

What conclusions can be drawn from the experiences of the meeting?

Well-structured group work functions well.

What recommendation can be made based on the experiences and discussions of the meeting

At EU level;

Progress in the work on core competences for adult teachers.

At national policy making level;

Progress in the work on core competences for adult teachers.

Shorter courses that is module-based and compulsory, in the sense that it will be difficult for teachers not to do this training because the employees/course providers require it in the future. It may be an obstacle that teachers that are already well qualified and experienced can feel that their competence is not recognised, and in worst case quit. Some places there are already a shortage of qualified teachers.

At institutional level

- Vox are working towards the changes indicated above on national policy level.