

Teachers and Trainers in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Professional Development in Asia and Europe

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Workshop B: Pathways towards
Professionalization in Lifelong Learning
Qualifications for personnel working in lifelong
learning: What ways can be identified to qualify
teachers and trainers in adult education in
Asian and European countries?**

**Qualifications for teachers who teach basic
skills to adults in Norway**

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Workshop B: Pathways towards Professionalisation in Lifelong Learning Qualifications for personnel working in lifelong learning: What ways can be identified to qualify teachers and trainers in adult education in Asian and European countries?

Qualifications for teachers who teach basic skills to adults in Norway

Margrethe Marstrøm Svensrud

International surveys¹ concerning basic skills in the adult population shows that there are a large number of adults in Norway whose basic skills need to be addressed. Depending on how the statistics are interpreted, at least 400 000 adults are at risk (out of a population of 4 million). In general, the number of people with low basic skills increases with age and every fifth person between 16 and 20 is at risk. In addition, immigrants, especially from non-western countries, show a low score. Among people with low scores, the following factors occur more frequently: low levels of education, unemployment, social benefits as main income.

The education that has been offered for adults with low basic skills so far is a full (condensed) primary school course. For some this will fulfil their needs, but for many this will be neither useful nor necessary. What many adults need, is a possibility to attend flexible education geared specifically towards basic skills. The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research commissioned Vox to develop a Framework for Basic Skills for Adults, i.e. descriptions of levels of competence for literacy, numeracy, ICT skills and oral communication. In addition there were produced a methodological guide and various teaching resources.

For teachers who teach basic skills to adults Vox has developed a training model. The purpose of the training is to improve the quality of the teaching and support the teachers in their new role. The training also aims to improve the teachers competence in the disclosing of a participants need for adapted training. It gives an introduction in how to use the framework for basic skills as a basis for developing courses and planning sessions. The teachers need to learn how they may work together with subject teachers and other professionals as a team, for example at the working place.

The teachers are offered a series of one-day courses free of charge. This arrangement is in its second year now and seems very successful. The teachers find it useful to get input and ideas to use in their own teaching, and share experiences with other teachers working with the same target group.

In addition, there is also a further education programme for teachers who teach basic skills to adults. The curriculum is developed in close co-operation with pedagogical experts from teacher training institutions. The course gives 30 ECTS points. It is a part-time study over one year with a combination of classroom activities, web-based training and teaching practice. The first classes start in September 09 at the University of Stavanger and Vestfold University College. The programme consists of different modules. The student combines a theoretical module of how adults learn and a didactical module where they have to choose between how you teach adults in digital competence, numeracy or reading and writing.

¹ International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) and Adult Literacy and Life Skill Survey (ALL)

Vox has the responsibility for the development and the implementation of the curriculum of the introductory courses for refugees and immigrants. When discussing quality in these courses, the focus is on both the teachers competence and their teaching methods. In 2008, extra funding was provided to improve the teachers competence. There are developed a course plan covering five central topics witch is offered to the teachers. Their competence in evaluating their students is one topic that is being covered in the teacher training. The teachers have to know the competence levels in the curriculum in order to register the participants to the correct tests.

Going forward the different paths of teacher training for teachers who teach basic skills to adults and teachers who are teaching immigrants should be seen in closer relationship to each other. Teacher training for immigrant teachers who are training immigrants in written and oral communication in Norwegian could for instance be a forth choice for didactical studies in the further education programme mentioned above.