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## Research Memorandum on Adult and Continuing Education

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the Section for Adult Education at the  
German Society for Educational Science  
(Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, DGfE)

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## A. Objectives and intentions

The growing importance of lifelong learning and adult education appears to be a generally accepted fact in the field of scholarly research as well as among the general public. Less well known or even relatively unknown, on the other hand, are the causes, conditions, forms and types of development in all their variety as well as the changing trends and options for solutions to be observed at different levels. This open situation requires broad, intensive and sustained empirical research on adult and continuing education. This Research Memorandum seeks to generate an impetus to this end.

The drafting of this Memorandum was commissioned by the Section for Adult Education at the German Society for Educational Science (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, DgE).<sup>1</sup> Given the state of the art in research which has been attained in the area of adult education, it seeks to identify, structure and label focal areas while broaching the questions which need to be asked in an increasingly pivotal area of educational research. A coordinate and coordination system was then devised for the development of research on adult education which can initially serve the research community by

- structuring the wide range of research activities conducted by individuals and groups in conceptual terms,
- agreeing on the relevance and priority of questions
- initiating cooperation in the area of research and actually collaborating on research projects
- making agencies which promote and fund research more aware of German research in the area.

Mobilization of resources is a precondition as well as a means for tackling current research tasks such as e.g.

- basic contributions to research on lifelong learning,
- sustained communication with relevant groups among the public and
- internationalization of research and teaching

In addition to development-oriented supportive research and problem-oriented research projects, basic research and documentation also need to be strengthened in the future. This type of research is not only of importance to the field of social science itself – for instance through the development of more robust theories. It also creates the preconditions for more effective communication between research and social science on the one hand and the field of practice, the public and political arenas on the other. In spite of a lively exchange in particular areas, basic data and interpretation appear to be lacking just as is a generally understandable portrayal of the state of the art in research to furnish the decision-makers, individuals and institutions involved in the field of education a fundamental orientation all their own.

The internationalization of this sphere which is needed requires first of all that one have an overview of one's own back yard while intensifying work in the area of research,

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<sup>1</sup> The initial draft Memorandum was discussed at the 1999 annual conference of the Section for Adult Education at the DGfE. The authors were requested to modify the Memorandum along the lines of the discussion and to publish it. The authors assume responsibility for the content of Memorandum.

including both with respect to a more targeted exchange on results produced by international research as well as more efforts in the area of comparative research.

Broader, more intensive adult education research requires adequate resources. This means both acquiring additional as well as concentrating existing material and human resources. Especially due to the fact that university adult education research has thus far been predominantly characterized by one researchers working on their own on specific topics, this Memorandum aims to stimulate a more effective, coordinated division of labor in the field of research. At the same time both disciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration is being sought – collaboration at individual universities and, in particular, between researchers at different sites and in international networks. Over the medium term we need to further develop non-university research capacities and collaboration between non-university and university research, as well as group applications for third-party funding. Finally, we need to establish collaborative research centres and priority programs concentrating on certain research topics.

In this Memorandum we have elected to focus on empirical research due to the especially pressing need for such, but also due to the consistency and conformity of such a proposal with the objectives set out here. We understand “empirical” at the same time to mean a type of research practice which makes use of quantitative, qualitative and hermeneutic research methods. The data collected, processed and interpreted using these methods, however, must be fully available for inter-subjective verification. This in turn requires, however, that research projects and the subjects of research also be approached from a historical and comparative angle in a theoretical context. Of course, inclusion of such aspects in empirical research cannot serve as a substitute for real analysis. With regard to historical research on adult education, for instance, it appears to be urgently necessary to ensure a more systematic analysis of contemporary history, collection and preservation of sources, oral history surveys and demarcation lines separating academic disciplines while at the same time pursuing inter-disciplinary collaboration.<sup>2</sup>

## B. Fields of research and research issues

The following portrayal of the need for empirical research focuses on five fields of research: (1) adult learning – (2) knowledge structures and skill needs – (3) professional action – (4) institutionalization – (5) system and policy.

These fields of research are once again broken down into certain focal areas of research or topical areas. Questions are then proposed in order to elucidate the various research options. Without wanting to play down the urgency of these questions, it must be emphasized that these questions are by no means exhaustive. Their purpose, rather, is merely to serve as examples. Overlapping between research fields, topics and issues is not capricious or random – it is, rather, an inherent aspect of all these phenomena.

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<sup>2</sup> A working group set up to categorise the historical need for research and documentation in the area of adult education began its work at the Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung at the end of 1999.

## **1. Adult Learning**

Labels such as *lifelong learning*, *learning organization* or *learning society* serve as short forms for designating social developments in which learning has become an everyday part of our existence, both perceivable and inescapable for each individual in shaping their professional advancement and personal development. Even if the term *learning* is subject to inflationary use with respect to a variety of processes of change, socialization processes, structural developments and intended measures, the term *learning* nevertheless manages to describe the essence of the challenges which modern adult education in all its formal and informal facets has to face. Researching learning is thus at the very heart of research on adult and continuing education.

*Learning* cannot be approached, however, as an isolated subject of research, or even a subject which can be examined in isolation. Learning always takes place inseparably interwoven in a dynamic fashion with other skills and activities. For this reason, a “pure” form of research on learning makes little sense for researchers or the field of actual adult education practice. Researching reasons for and conditions governing adult learning, structures and processes, effects and results of learning in different fields of life and institutional contexts is of fundamental and constitutive significance to theory and practice in the area of adult education.

Even if this type of research on learning has to make use of scholarly approaches and techniques from different disciplines and fields of research, researchers will have to formulate questions to guide their research in those places where adults are endeavoring to shape their lives with learning resources. Independent research work on learning in the area of adult education is a function of the lively, everyday form of learning which adults engage in. Opening up such fields of formal and informal research is a difficult and creative process which goes beyond mere reception and application of a type of learning research based on children and adolescents.

It is hoped that the following categorizing considerations and questions will help provide orientation on the path to the development of research on learning in adult education.

### **1.1 Learning in individual development and career strategies**

Learning as a lifelong process is not only an effort an individual makes at a particular point in time to analyze situational problems. It is always at the same time a biographical project. While it is true that learning challenges which people face in different phases of life and different life situations are becoming more imposing, options for meeting these challenges are also growing at least in part. These options are not made use of in a fluid, continuous manner, however, which means that it is only in the course of a lifetime that patterns and structures come together to create an individual matrix which all types of learning processes feed into. Making individual learning possible with didactic supervision takes place in a creative field of tension between those strategies acquired and inculcated over an individual’s lifetime, including those strategies which border on learning.

Research on individual biographies and research on learning is complementary.

*Retrospective and longitudinal: How is learning experienced and made use of in the overall context of the individuals' development throughout their entire lifespan? What learning and transfer strategies are devised in the course of an individual's life, and to what extent do these prove to be effective?*

*In what phases of life and life situations and at what nexus do individuals perceive an increased need to engage in learning, at what point does this need appear compelling, and what reaction does this provoke among individuals? What new biographical options and possibilities are opened up through learning?*

*How do learning behavior and personality change in the face of requirements and pressures to become more flexible?*

## **1.2 Learning in different interactive and transformation situations**

Learning is also an interactive process for an individual seeking to acquire skills. Learning in an institutional context or informal, everyday learning often take place in direct social interaction. "Other people" or the community as a whole are present in tangible or intangible form in all individual learning, influencing cognitive, affective and motor processes.

At present, demands are being voiced at the same time for completely different development prospects: Self-organized learning – whether it be at the job site or in everyday life – needs to be reinforced and become more effective. But also formal learning opportunities, including media-supported ones, need to be better taken advantage of.

Basic competencies and key qualifications are considered to be trend-setting notions, but abilities that can be directly applied in practice and application-oriented skills should also be practiced and demonstrated. Such changes lead to a host of relevant subjects for learning research. There is a dialectical relationship between research on interaction and research on learning.

*How do informal learning situations and learning processes differ from formal ones, self-organized ones from (media-)supported ones, "monological" learning situations and learning processes from communicative ones? Or how do learning situations and processes which are inherent elements of work and actions differ from learning situations aimed at easing the burden of various activities in terms of their forms, opportunities and effects? To what extent does their use appear to be dependent on subjects and persons or a need to adapt? (see 3.1)*

*What inter- and intra-personal learning conditions and interaction are situated in such "settings"? How does the relationship between cognitive, affective and motor activity levels change as individuals proceed through different phases of life and engage in occupational specialization or lifelong practice? What meta-communicative and meta-cognitive skills are required by teachers and learners?*

## **1.3 Learning in the contexts of social milieu and problematic societal situations**

A comprehensive understanding of lifelong learning by adults means knowing about individual habits and situational interaction, but also supra-individual patterns and resources which an epoch or a culture makes available to its members in the form of the

“learning *milieu*”. For instance, studies on mentalities and value systems, time budgets and economic resources broken down according to phases in life, gender and social structures. These are constitutive for learning research specific to adults.

On the other hand, one question which is as urgent as it is difficult concerns whether and how the learning of individuals can help solve key societal problems, what network connections are necessary for groups or organizations, and how these relate to the public discussion, to the policy-making arena and legislative sphere.

Studies on societal change, research on socialization and learning research depend on each other.

*In what learning cultures does individual learning develop, and how is it dependent on supra-individual patterns, mentalities and milieus? What implicit learning potentials and learning processes can be seen in social milieus and groups (e.g. within families and between generations)?*

*Are there distinctive barriers to learning, learning strategies, learning paths and learning effects for certain groups of people (e.g. for women or immigrants), and how can these be supported professionally? (see 4.1, 5.5)*

*What methodological and social learning strategies are required for a lifetime and learning when moving between mentalities, milieus and cultures – above and beyond the learning of material with a defined content?*

*What factors justify speaking in terms of organizational, collective or societal learning, and how do these relate to individual learning? What interdependencies can be shown to exist, for instance, between supra-individual and political problems and solutions on the one hand and the learning of individuals in groups, organizations and institutions on the other?*

#### **1.4 Learning in virtual environments and presence learning**

Support for and “virtualization” of learning through electronic and interactive media are assigned a special importance among the plethora of conditions and factors affecting modern learning. A growing body of information and knowledge on offer which can be called up directly, technically supported learning programs which are apparently independent of the location, time or presence and elaborated possibilities for simulation and virtualization create new conditions and problems for learning, in particular with respect to coherency or the possible fragmentation of knowledge. Growth in the amount of learning available goes hand in hand with growing awareness of one’s own knowledge deficiencies. Learning about the knowledge one is lacking is becoming just as important as the knowledge one acquires.

Virtual learning opportunities not subject to the constraints of time and space constitute a challenge to the inescapable physical constraints inherent in all types of learning. The more anonymous and apparently non-personal forms of storing and representing information are forcing us to develop new faculties and skills with which to assess and evaluate the usage and selection of knowledge. Research on technology and learning research both depend on a dialogue.

*What aspects of teaching-learning processes and situations are being performed by what types of media and how successfully, and what new forms of these are arising? How are individual learning strategies changing as a result of new media, in particular through virtualization processes? (see 3.2)*

*What “interfaces” or supplementary forms of learning are developing between virtual forms of learning (where there is a trend towards types of learning not subject to the constraints of time, space and physical presence) and in those forms of learning which have thus far been intimately related to physical rhythms and direct communication? What routes do individuals find in their quest to create an individually viable, successful and realistic coherence in their knowledge and skills. How are standards of assessment created and learned in using globally available knowledge?*

## **1.5 Learning in organized and institutionalized contexts**

Learning research for adult education is not only targeted at a general acquisition of knowledge on types of learning among adults. Rather, it also seeks to understand learning under current conditions governing its institutionalization and with respect to required professional skills. To this end the structure and organization of educational institutions themselves have to become the subject of research on learning.

It is in this manner that research on institutions and learning complement each other.

*Under what conditions and with respect to which problems is there a demand for professional, and in particular personal, support of learning?*

*Under what conditions are people successful in profiting from the learning programs available? What skills are necessary to be successful in obtaining instruction?*

*Can professional and institutional forms of support be identified which are perceived as particularly helpful for specific learning problems and target groups, and what borderlines of such support for individual learning are evident? (see 3.1, 4.1 and 4.3)*

On the whole, research on learning, if it is to be useful to the field of practice in adult learning and to learning communities as well, will not only have to direct attention in all of these thematic fields to the possible improvement of learning processes. It will also need to identify their borderlines as well as possible opposition to the wide variety of learning prevailing among individuals and organizations.

(That which is supposed to be taken for granted in all areas of research – the analysis of international literature and research on learning – applies all the more so with respect to research on learning, and especially to informal and self-guided or self-organized learning.)

## **2. Knowledge structures and skill needs**

To promote the long-term development of continuing education it is necessary to understand the social reference and target factors which continuing education relates to in terms of its functions and services. The importance of knowledge to development prospects in different areas and society as a whole as well as possibilities for distributing and acquiring this knowledge need to be understood. This requires studies on requirements and trends in needs as well as their implementation in learning subjects and programs.

The prerequisite for this is a tighter definition of concepts such as information and knowledge, qualification and competence as well as the development of empirical analytical tools. Topics and programs in adult education result not only from external needs and skills requirements, but also programs themselves aimed at developing skills

and identifying needs. Continuing training is thus itself caught up in dialectical knowledge structures forming in society while at the same time creating a further impetus. This all is subsumed under the rubric of “knowledge science”.

## **2.1 Knowledge structures and distribution of knowledge**

Research on adult education directs its special interest in requirements governing the acquisition of a stock of knowledge, which is aggrandizing with the accelerating accumulation and rapid change in knowledge structures and stocks of knowledge. Examined more closely, one begins to understand “knowledge” to mean the coherent interpretation of traditional forms of knowledge offered in society and currently available information for improving action. Such knowledge as a potential for action must be acquired at the individual level.

Although the possibilities for acquiring knowledge and education in principle offer potential for development and equal opportunity, there is an inescapable danger that the increasing dependence on knowledge in all societal activities will bring about new inequalities which can only be alleviated in part through continuing education, but which are nonetheless exacerbated in structural terms.

*What possibilities for describing and measuring the content and forms of knowledge stand up to empirical examination and can be used in corresponding studies?*

*In what areas of society, at what levels and for what groups of persons is the need for knowledge becoming increasingly important? What forms of knowledge are particularly affected, what value is assigned, for example, to scientific and experiential knowledge?*

*How are cognitive, affective and motor aspects of competence linked to knowledge? What role do learning environments and forms of brokerage play in the acquisition of knowledge?*

*What political strategies and what continuing education measures appear to be suited to smoothing out inequalities in opportunities to acquire knowledge?*

## **2.2 Development of skills**

The double-meaning of the term knowledge – on the one hand designating cumulative social wisdom acquired over the age, on the other that which is achieved at the personal level – makes additional theoretical and empirical inquiry necessary. While the term education has at times appeared to be in the process of being displaced by the term qualification, nowadays reference is more often made to “skills” in the occupational context. “Skills” is meant to emphasize the personal value of individual skills and responsibility, thus taking into account a possible development where certain types of activities and abilities are not simply supposed to conform to external requirements, but rather also offer quite the opposite: solutions to problems and a potential for planning one’s own path (for example, the way in which technology is applied). The term skills contains elements of the term education and elements of the term occupation.

These terms or notions are rarely cleanly separated, even when they designate different domains, depending upon the method used to specify them (e.g. specifying school or vocational degrees, occupational, activity and job-related analyses, personality analyses, etc.). Scholars must thus first of all face the task of imparting these terms with meanings

from the perspective of theory at the level of the individual and to comprehend them more clearly as viable notions useful in scholarly inquiry and analysis. Researchers then have the task of finding out in empirical terms what skills or groups of skills appear to be important in different areas and what changes need to be focused on in these skills.

*What procedures in the analysis of occupations, requirements, skills, qualification, etc., appear to be useful and manageable with respect to the needs of research on continuing education and development? How do skill requirements change over time, and who defines these?*

*How do the weights assigned to the relationship between technical, methodological, social and reflexive skills change over time? What is the empirical significance of a statement to the effect that there is a growing need for key qualifications; what are key qualifications, and how are they determined, learned or taught? How does this requirement conform to the accompanying demand for learning in problem or application-based contexts and the apparent expansion in the importance of expert and knowledge-based professions?*

*What skills do people need, what latitudes do they have as individuals to deal with increasingly pressing flexibilization requirements; and how are these determined? What possibilities for the development of skills are needed by people who are threatened by economic or social exclusion?*

### **2.3 Meeting needs**

One can refer to the development of skills which is deemed to be necessary in a certain situation by individuals, organizations and policy-making institutions as educational needs. The question as to these needs is raised right at the outset in abbreviated form when one proceeds from objectively ordained notions of requirements. Because education is inescapably bound to the individual and constitutes an experiential value, the need for education is on the one hand only met through cooperation between the actors involved (e.g. the management of an enterprise, those persons engaging in education, technology producers and continuing education facilities) while on the other hand it is only met through the process of educational activity. Thus the identification of needs stands at the nexus between societal tendencies, interests of actors and the continuing education opportunities available.

*How can specific “needs for education” in broad problem situations be identified and met in a skill-oriented, cooperative and dynamic fashion? What hypotheses on needs, forms of forecasting and tools for “observing the market” and “determining needs” are used, and what can they achieve? How do the exploration of needs, the development of educational programs and marketing by providers of continuing education relate to one another?*

*What role do different types of expertise – especially that of learners – play in the development of needs? What is the importance of different decision-making levels (from the policy-making and associational level across the business and institutional level all the way to the individual)? What tensions must be endured and negotiated by the various actors and interests?*

## 2.4 Topics and programs in adult education

Economic, political or cultural trends pose requirements for adult education and are approached as tasks and translated into programs differently. On the other hand, evolved programs also serve as matrixes or filters which help identify and channel societal, institutional and individual needs for education. Those issues which are identified as “key problems” and which specific needs for skills are hence satisfied are subject – so it would seem – to an increasing pace of change both in terms of social relevance and individual importance.

*When, why and by whom are topics identified in the area of adult education and how are these then translated into learning programs. How do programs and topics change – through exclusion, modification or innovation – in the historical process? What changes in knowledge structures, mentalities and needs for skills are expressed through this? (see 4.2)*

*What is the relationship between “disciplinary dogma” and learning programs in initial education on the one hand and continuing education on the other, and what needs can be seen for a closer interrelationship between these? (see 5.9)*

## 3. Professional action

It is indicative of the level of development, but also the openness and flexibility which applies to adult education, that there is no uniform, all-encompassing term to describe the activity of actors in this area. The term “professional activity” selected here is open and provisional enough to take into account the breadth of the area as well as changes taking place in employment, functions and the requirements which apply to activities of the actors involved in adult education.

The accustomed division of labor and assignment of status, according to which managerial and planning activities are generally exercised in one’s main profession, while teaching activities are usually practiced as a second job, are undergoing change at present. The noticeable changes institutions and financial resources are undergoing in the area of adult education are bringing about new, and at any rate increased, requirements for planning and management, for business administrative thinking, marketing and public relations work, which can no longer be subsumed under the rubric of “didactic activity”, which used to be the favored term.

But functions and characteristics of activities are also changing and undergoing a shift at present within “classic” fields of activity in the area of adult education, especially with respect to learners assuming a greater responsibility themselves as well as with respect to learning in and with media. Skills such as educational counseling and ascertainment of needs, arranging learning settings with different media, learning counseling and supervision are in ever greater need in addition to direct instruction.

Expansion and shifts within the spectrum of activities like these cry out for review, modification and reinforcement of existing initial and continuing education programs. The review of professional work and the requirements applying to this work in the area of adult education and changes in these need to become a core element of research on adult and continuing education.

### 3.1 Teaching activities

The accelerating accumulation of knowledge, changing skill requirements in occupations and other areas of life and the fundamental openness of this development place greater requirements on self-guidance and learning capabilities of all individuals. At the same time, support offers are apparently becoming more varied, especially digital and interactive media. These trends will probably change teaching in a profound manner. Media could play a greater role in conveying knowledge, allowing teachers to focus more on functions such as orientation, learning counseling and learning enablement. Growing learning requirements, a generally rising level of education and trends towards individualization are increasingly requiring more flexible and varied teaching methods.

*What didactic requirements, measures and repertoires of methods influence “teaching activity” in different fields and subject areas; can common elements be identified in a specific adult teaching activity?*

*Are additional teaching tasks (e.g. the selection and presentation of knowledge) becoming more evident and skills needed in these more visible in the face of a growing body of knowledge globally available through media?*

*What changes in teaching functions and teaching activity can already be seen now, what changes are expected, and what has induced these? Are today’s teachers moving away from direct instruction and in the direction of teaching diagnosis and counseling, the structuring and application of media and learning environments?*

*What other tasks do “teachers” have in communicative settings which could be overseen by learning didactics based on rational principles (e.g. hosts, representatives of a strange world, identification models, etc.)? What need for continuing education is deriving from these developments?*

*Do certain forms and new types of learning arrangements of self-learning, personal or media-supported learning appear to be demonstrably better suited for certain target groups, stages in learning and the conveyance of certain types of knowledge, or do decisions along these lines remain arbitrary? (see 1.2)*

### 3.2 Dealing with and designing media

The “new”, i.e. especially digital and interactive media, mean an increasing challenge to traditional didactic knowledge-conveyance systems. Even now offline media allow people to learn more independently of time, place or persons. The additional possibility of organizing interactive teaching and learning processes on a purely media basis direct and in real time could trigger a revolution in everyday teaching methodology. Initial experience with online seminars has indicated possibilities, but also constraints on new media. There is a particularly pressing need for research and development with regard to this issue.

*To what extent are media in demand and to what extent are media used at educational institutions, and to what extent is this in the form of learning programs or even as platforms for teaching-learning processes? What technical possibilities do new media offer with which to structure teaching-learning processes, and what didactic functions do they perform and with what impact?*

*How are older and newer forms of media used by learners? What opportunities, difficulties and losses can be seen, especially concerning the appropriateness with respect to the subject, the individual learning prerequisites and learning capabilities, social aspects and the sustainability of learning? (see 1.4)*

*What specific skills do adult learners and teachers need in order to design and use media?*

### **3.3 Educational planning and educational counseling**

The macro-didactic level of adult-teaching activity is not unaffected by the changes discussed in the foregoing. Forms of demand-oriented, cooperative educational planning and counseling will probably continue to multiply. This holds out the promise of a better fit between learning prerequisites, educational measures and application requirements. Such distinctions require more complex methods for ascertaining needs and evaluation. Counseling activities will not be limited to the selection of present courses on offer. Rather, counseling activities will provide aid in individual and institutional educational planning, cooperatively develop alternative settings including media usage and especially include learning diagnosis and learning counseling.

*What objectives and forms of planning of programs and counseling appear to have proven their usefulness in different contexts, and which new ones appear to be developing or appear to need to be developed?*

*Are professional activities such as cooperative and integrative educational planning, more complex ascertainment of needs, supervision, learning counseling and support, evaluation and quality controls growing? For what reasons, in what form and what are the effects of this?*

*What is the relationship between networking, modularization and individualization in continuing education? To what extent is there a need, for example, but also the possibility to “modularize” learning stages in teaching-learning contexts with different levels of flexibility and develop accreditation and certification systems? (see 5.9)*

### **3.4 Education management**

Basic changes have come about and have still not yet been completed in the area of institutional adult education. A greater focus on demand, more difficult funding conditions, increased competition and a change in the value attached to societal institutions in general require a gradual, and in some areas a more rapid, restructuring of organizations which help make further education possible. Adult teachers are increasingly expected to be qualified in the area of planning and management, marketing, public-relations work, organizational and staff development and in particular cost accounting – including in different combinations of relative emphasis. Criteria such as efficiency and ensuring institutional survival appear to more and more often be assigned the same status as teaching effectiveness and innovation.

*What general and what specific management tasks arise in adult educational institutions, and who performs these in what manner?*

*What conditions surrounding management and organizational tasks are undergoing change (e.g. competition, cooperation, the need for more efficiency)? In what manner are*

*the targets for educational and economic fields of activity changing in the area of adult education? What new requirements apply to professional activity, and how are they being tackled?*

*Are business administrative notions of management, marketing and cost accounting being successfully combined with educational objectives and imperatives for action and is a balance being achieved among these tasks?*

*In what manner is teachers' understanding of their role changing?  
(see 4.4, 4.5)*

### **3.5 Further education**

As the discussion above indicates, the spectrum of professional work which is to be performed is expanding on a large scale. Counseling, moderation and supervision, designing media, planning, management, public-relations work, marketing and the ability of institutions to cooperate with one another represent new or at least growing, more complex requirements. Even if one assumes that some of this is performed through a division of labor and specialization, the question remains as to whether and to what extent people working professionally can be trained for these new areas and skills in studies programs and how they are to be further educated for this.

*Who works in what functions, with what profile of activities and qualifications, in which fields of continuing education and what is their employment status and social situation? What core tasks do professionals face in various functions, and what new skills are required?*

*What fundamental skills are being sought in different forms of university education, and what possibilities are there for modification and expansion? What further education programs are put on by continuing education institutions, associations, service institutes and universities? To what extent can strategies and concepts, degrees and interests be coordinated?*

*To what extent are research and research results on the professional activity of adult teachers made a subject of further education and what impetus does experience in further education create for research?*

## **4. Institutionalization**

Attention is focusing much more at present on the organizational and institutional reality with respect to continuing education than was the case in the past: educational institutions are increasingly examining their own activities; the very existence of some types of institutions is in question due to declining funding; there is an almost infinite variety of providers "in the market"; increased attention is being devoted to learning sites outside genuine educational facilities such as enterprises or the Internet. Empirical research needs to explore developments like these, but inquiry can also build on individual work performed thus far on special types of institutions or on regional distributions of programs.

Research on teaching organizations carried out in the field of Pedagogical Science directs the questions it poses

- first of all at the specific aspects of educational facilities, for instance how learning opportunities come about and the design and use of education services,
- while secondly, however, keeping its field of inquiry broad enough so that relationships between institutions/organizations and social change and individual learning processes can be examined.

This thus involves the “institutionalization” of lifelong learning and its different forms of organization. Individual forms and their change can be interpreted as a historical expression of how well social and individual learning expectations conform to one another and long-term support for them. At the same time, educational institutions along the lines of enterprises are at the center of the following discussion. Questions exploring the institutionalization of learning behavior in more detail are also addressed in other places (see in particular chapter 1). On top of this, one must not ignore educational institutions’ own importance and their special functions: for instance, representation, objectifying and handing down social knowledge, cultural and communicative practice. Research of institutionalization and organization are assigned special importance with regard to the exchange between science and practice, but also in policy counseling.

#### **4.1 Institutionalization as an exchange process**

Institutionalization and the form and degree of their level of organization result from exchange processes taking place between real-life learning needs and long-lasting systemic rendering of services. Historical and comparative studies are also necessary here. Empirical research on systems and organizations need to be combined with issues relating to participation and research on biographies, however, the reason being that a key question, also involving the topic of institutionalization, is the extent to which lifelong learning and adult learning appear to be institutionalized in present-day biographies, which is to say going beyond occasional activities to actually become a means for shaping one’s life. Organized support services are made structurally possible through the differentiation and assumption of teaching functions from real-life learning process.

*Can certain phases, constellations and conditions be identified in different biographies which have proven to be particularly effective in learning, which deliberately trigger intended learning processes or generally lead to a demand for supporting services? What other demand is there for such services (institutional, collective and public) and what are the reasons behind this? What complementary and compensatory tasks arise for educational services at the same time? (compare 1.2, 1.5)*

*Another question which remains important in spite of previous research work and increased participation is: Who takes part in different support programs? What difficulties relating to access and what positive possibilities come about, in particular for particular groups such as women, the well-educated, educationally disadvantaged, immigrants, etc.? (see 1.3, 5.5)*

*To what extent do the objectives and structures of organizations have an exclusionary effect? What basic breaks in structure can be seen between institutionalized learning on the one hand and informal learning or application contexts on the other?*

*What forces and resources and what alternative institutionalization models can be identified in historical and comparative research for tasks relating to educational and learning support?*

## 4.2 Programs on offer and providers

The exploration and mapping of the field of explicitly organized continuing education require considerable research efforts nowadays, as differentiation is proceeding apace. A distinction needs to be made not only between educational institutions of different origins and with different objectives. Rather, a distinction must also be made between programs offered through and in media as well as educational efforts at particular locations and in organizations which are primarily aimed at performing other functions (*inter alia* enterprises, social insurance schemes for occupational accidents, associations and citizens' initiatives).

One important means of exploration is the structure of programs offered by permanent institutions and providers. The program represents a matrix for inquiry. Its development shows what sets of expectations providers and clients/customers can agree on and which ones have been lost. Documentation of the entire range of programs on offer in addition provides important indicators of changes in the continuing education system, especially when types of programs are examined in relational terms with types of providers and funding agencies, price and funding policy.

*What programs and supporting services are offered and carried out by which providers and what is their degree of acceptance? What types of programs, forms of organizations and learning sites can be typologized, and how should they be characterized and categorized?*

*How has the program matrix developed, what has been lost and what innovation does it offer? What forms of documentation and statistics are available, how can they be made more comparable to one other and combined? (see 2.4)*

## 4.3 Performance and service

The key issue in research on institutions and organizations is what they perform specifically and the borderlines of this service, the way they perform the service and the momentum this develops. Here "performance" is first of all meant in a non-specific way to designate services for users as well as all the work which is necessary to provide these services in the first place, but also the performance of more wide-ranging functions, i.e. in comparison with other systems.

We need studies on interaction and exchange processes taking place within organizations as well as their different *milieus*, but also research on conditions which can hardly be changed from the individual staff working at organizations (policy-making, economics/resources, system structures).

*What special services which can be distinguished from other social institutions and forms of intervention do continuing training institutions render, and what spectrum of services can be identified? Under what conditions, with what resources and with which actors do these services come about in the first place, and with the aid of which internal and external exchange processes? What role do learners play – as possible co-producers – in setting out objectives, and planning and rendering such services? What opportunities and barriers contain different*

- *constellations of services (e.g. with different clients or user groups),*

- *organizational forms (e.g. individual acquisition of media learning programs) and*
- *learning sites (e.g. on-the-job learning)*

*with respect to how closely attuned these are to needs and applications, but also with respect to latitudes for action and a comprehensive development of skills among learners? (see 1.5)*

*What new forms of service requirements are appearing and to what extent are they perceived? (see inter alia 3.3, 5.7).*

#### **4.4 Organization and management**

The classic business administrative question as to structural and process organization, management functions, use of resources and marketing needs to be looked at in a more discriminating manner from the educational science perspectives of specific performance of educational tasks and the possible value of educational objectives.

*Under what conditions, with what resources, in what organizational forms, and with what assigned tasks and understanding of these tasks do continuing education institutions attempt to achieve their specific objectives? How are possible conflicts over objectives, key situations and internal and external interfaces dealt with?*

*In what manner and with what degree of success are general business administrative strategies of management, marketing and cost accounting adapted or applied? How is the tension resolved between the need to ensure institutional viability (or maximize profit), desirable educational autonomy, openness to the outside world and an orientation towards participants and implemented in coherent activity? (see 3.4)*

*Can educational institutions – except with regard to their profile of various tasks – also be typologized and classified according to their (successful) organizational rules and modes of interaction?*

#### **4.5 Learning organizations**

In a certain respect, action by educational institutions guided by rules reoccurring in a cyclical manner have always constituted a fundamental aspect of learning. New programs, for example, are generally modified as a result of the evaluation of older programs which have been carried out. The changes which institutions are subjected to at present – in view of the increased economic pressure, social change and changing learning needs and options – could go beyond these institutions' own understanding of their purpose as well as present learning capacities. On top of this, the "organization" is frequently viewed by adult educators, but also scholarly studies, to constitute the reason for or impediment to educational activity, but not as an immanent structure for activity and structural task.

What pressure are educational institutions under to change? What reactions and solutions can be seen, what impact does change have (e.g. partial reorganization, completely new areas of focus for the institution, etc.)? How are latitudes of action, stability and innovation placed on a secure footing at the same time?

*What quality assurance, organization and human resource development strategies and measures are used and how well do they work?*

*What theoretical and empirical conditions justify educational institutions being referred to as “learning organizations”? What framework conditions and structure promote their (further) development?*

#### **4.6 The dynamics of networking, competition and guidance**

The extent to which one can refer to a “real” market with respect to the field of continuing education is a matter of controversy. Programs which resemble each other may be designed for different levels, different target groups and different segments of the market. At the same time there is competition for resources and users.

Increasing trends towards cooperation and networking are more evident. Cooperation tends to be sought with institutions and persons who are working in the same field but do not necessarily have the same skills. The aim is frequently to safeguard resources, to become more closely attuned to the needs of target groups and actual situations. At the same time, efforts by actors to create regional continuing education alliances which use the same resources with the aim of coordinating the supply of continuing education are receiving support. (see 5.6)

Observations regarding competition, networking and their dynamics are not only needed to open up the field to more scholarly inquiry – they also provide a “map” offering orientation for practical activity and, what is more, a basis for monitoring systems and counseling policy-makers.

What typical forms of competition and cooperation can be observed, especially in the regional context? What role do competitors play in economic conduct, forms of service (e.g. public-relations work) and promoting awareness of continuing education institutions? What forms of networking are appearing, what are they based on, and what do they have to offer to educational institutions and the actors involved?

*How is transparency guaranteed – for example with respect to the programs on offer and the quality of these – for individual and institutional users? What approaches are there towards information and consultation for a wide variety of interests which could be reinforced?*

*Where do guidance dynamics emanate from in this field? What role do the market and the state, different sources of funding and flows of funding play in development? (see chapter 5)*

### **5. System and policy-making**

The formation of an adult education system drawing on traditional functional contexts is in line with the historical process of functional differentiation but also exhibits countervailing tendencies. This can be referred to as an “intermediate systematization” and involves structural questions surrounding changing functional requirements, forms of regulating the system, continuing education policy, financing, institutional types, their coordination and networking. It also involves the structural enablement of access and participation, information and transparency and, ultimately, integration and flexible mobility in moving from one learning program to another in a system of life-long learning.

## **5.1 The relationship between adult education and society**

Functional requirements have undergone change over the long course of development in the area of adult education. An impetus towards informing and educating people, the political arena's efforts to harness this sector and economic use of continuing education mean there are different constellations of interest which manifest themselves in historical processes.

*What factors push development of adult education? How is adult education taken into account in the socio-economic context?*

*What societal functions are performed by adult education, and how are these changing? What systemic segments are forming out of these functions?*

## **5.2 Market and public responsibility**

From an economic standpoint, continuing education is a private as well as a public good. To the extent that continuing education is also a subject of public interest, regulatory mechanisms apply which depend not only on private motivation and the market, but are also subject to public responsibility and democratic postulates. Various "mixtures" of regulations open up different opportunities for learning and participation.

*What economic and political conditions have an impact on the development of adult education? How do intermediate historical categories evolve in the area lying between economic regulation and state dirigisme, and what is the effect of this?*

*What programs are effectively distributed and created with the aid of the market? Where and in what manner does the market "fail"? What programs and types of participation are not possible without public responsibility, funding and promotion?*

## **5.3 Policy forms and policy consulting**

Government policy and the pursuit of societal interests in the area of continuing education fluctuate between large-scale intervention and almost complete uninvolvement. Justification legitimizing government intervention to promote adult education is being increasingly demanded and made contingent on consensus-based strategies, which for their part need to be based on people's ideas of what society and individuals are all about. Here scholarly inquiry could play an important role when it is used as a tool for solving problems or when it is included in policy-making processes to lend these more legitimacy.

*What are the reasons offered to legitimize dirigistic government activity and intervention in the area of adult education and what impact does this have? What legal preconditions are created and what impact do they have? What support structures are made available?*

*What interest groups seek to influence policy-making in the area of adult education?*

*How are organizations which fund and sponsor adult education included in the policy-making process in the area of adult education?*

*What role does scholarly research play in the process of policy consulting, and how can these kinds of services be improved?*

## **5.4 Securing financing**

Continuing education is financed from different sources. Even in the area of state recognition and promotion there is a sort of mixed funding with resources being contributed by the public sector, promotional funds and, increasingly, private financing by the participants themselves. Because continuing education is also a public good, ways need to be found in the area of tension between the market and the state to avoid saddling individuals with the entire costs of continuing education.

*What sources are used for resources and funding in the area of continuing education and which of these is it possible to activate? What does this secure and safeguard for programs and for participation by wide-ranging parts of society as well as with respect to sufficient continuity? How are costs split up between the public sector, associations, enterprises and participants, and what effects does this have?*

*What different funding models are there, including in international comparison, which ones are used and what is the effect? What incentives can be created to assume the costs of continuing education? Are more far-reaching financing models conceivable comprising initial education and continuing education?*

## **5.5 Access and the right to continuing education**

The more apparent it becomes that continuing education is an essential precondition to participation in the differing areas of life of a society, the more important it is becoming to ensure that access to continuing education is made possible. There is still a sort of “double selectivity” with respect to the availability and use of continuing education and the danger of an expanding knowledge gap.

*What different opportunities can be seen to participate in continuing education and use media to confront problems and what are these opportunities based on?*

*What conditions impede general access? What could be done to not only secure access and participation in formal terms, but also make it possible through content-related, methodological and specific target group-related measures (e.g. entitlement to learning time)? What financing models (e.g. education accounts) could be helpful here (see 1.2, 1.3, 3.1 and 4.1)*

## **5.6 Regional cooperation**

In view of the scarcity of resources, it is apparent that different institutions and fields of learning need to be coordinated in order to make better use of these limited resources by sharing them, at the same time allowing individual institutions to increase public awareness of their existence. These lead to the creation of affiliated groups and networks at the regional level.

*What forms of networks appear to be viable, and for what tasks are they suited? What effects can cooperation be shown to have? To what extent does this eliminate competition?*

*What incentives and opportunities are there for formal affiliated continuing education networks, and what benefits do these offer? How are they organized and supervised or supported? (see 4.6)*

### **5.7 Information and support**

General information above the level of individual funding agencies and institutions could be useful with regard to rational decisions to engage in continuing education. Due to the myriad of continuing education programs, there are increasing possibilities to obtain general information on continuing information and consulting before making a decision to participate in a program, although most of it is not very systematic and it is based on insecure funding sources.

*What possibilities are there to use continuing education information systems and how can these be made and structured more effectively and expanded?*

*What importance does regional counseling above the level of individual funding agencies and institutions have? How can “secondary” institutions be placed on a secure financial footing? (see 3.3, 4.6)*

### **5.8 Segmenting general and vocational training**

With a view to the observable segmentation going on in the area of continuing education, complaints are being heard about an increasing separation of general and vocational education as well as a structural deficit in the area of adult education. At the same time, a distinction must be made between a separation of these spheres along topical and curricular lines, or institutional, legal, financial or political divisions.

*Is increased segmentation taking place between general and vocational continuing education: in what respect, and with what impact on users, funding agencies and planners?*

*What integration services can be witnessed at the curricular level, and which of these services are rendered by the learners? What additional needs for, and approaches to, solutions can be perceived?*

### **5.9 The relationship between initial education and continuing education**

Emphasizing lifelong learning compensates for shorter amounts of time spent in school education. Initial education and continuing education have thus far apparently not been successfully coordinated, however.

*What approaches can be seen to creating links and allowing people to move from one area of education to another? How can initial education become more oriented towards the model of lifelong learning? (see 2.4)*

*What can modularization offer? Has continuing education made progress in this respect, or does this development appear to be losing steam? To what extent can modules follow on initial education or be used at this stage? Where and under what conditions does the continuation of modularization and certification efforts appear to make sense? (see 3.3)*

*What opportunities should be provided for accelerated advancement, dropping out and switching to other types of learning in the area of lifelong learning in terms of educational organization and in a financial and biographical respect?*

### **C. Strategies for further research**

The following strategies appear to make sense and be necessary in the future:

- Development of a “research exchange” (including master’s theses and dissertation projects)
- Structured cooperative promotion of young scholars (graduate colleges and promotional programs)
- Establishment of collaboration networks at the supra-university level to deal with particular questions in the area of research on adult education
- Intensification of a practice and development-oriented supportive research; scholarly communication and evaluation of the relevance and effect of pilot projects and support for these
- Development of fundamental concentration programs and group applications for promotional funding of research; involvement in BLK priority programs
- Involvement in priority programs and initiation of a collaborative research centre on “lifelong learning” at the supra-university level.

It is necessary to stimulate the establishment of affiliated research networks on the basis of a medium-term, viable inclusion and definition of fundamental research topics and prospects and to make it easier to establish these through appropriate promotional criteria. At the same time, it is warranted for individual research chairs and institutes to assume a leading role with regard to specified topical areas of concentration.

The development of concentration programs and special research areas involving networked groups of researchers could no doubt be facilitated by having this Memorandum revised and updated at regular intervals. The Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung (DIE) could perform a service function here in accordance with its mission. It would also be useful and necessary to supplement this Memorandum with expert studies on the state of the art in research and the aforementioned research fields.

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Rolf Arnold, Peter Faulstich, Wilhelm Mader, Ekkehard Nuissl von Rein, Erhard Schlutz (editors)(2000): Research Memorandum for Adult and Continuing Education.

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