

# *Papers on*

- **Innovative approaches to promotion, marketing and outreach in adult learning**
- **New trends in widening participation**

# **DIE**

## **Project „Supporting the development of new learning pathways for adults“**

### **Innovative approaches to promotion, marketing and outreach in adult learning – New trends in widening participation**

### **Learner guidance in continuing vocational education (CVE) for target groups who do not normally participate in continuing enabling as a method of a “pedagogy of enabling”**

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This paper gives an overview of the current theoretical debate in Germany on the implementation of models for self-directed learning in CVE for target groups who do not normally participate in organized learning.

In particular it describes

- the conceptual elements of learner guidance,
- their impact on the self-image of teachers and trainers and
- their impact on the organizational structures in continuing education institutions.

The thematic overview is supplemented by four case studies. This paper is intended to present selected innovative strategies aimed to improve the quality of the educational provision for adults.

#### **Concepts of learner guidance**

Underlying the concept of learner guidance is the idea of enhancing self-responsibility in learners by advising them on learning issues during their learning process. Learner guidance aims to enhance and develop the learners' competence to manage their own learning process. Such a competence is seen as becoming increasingly important in planning and structuring lifelong learning in an individual.

Learner guidance refers, on the one hand, to support, which enables individuals to a more self-determined learning. In this sense self-organized and self-directed learning becomes itself the subject of study. This is a very essential element in all occasions of learner guidance, while the intensity and the focus of the guidance may differ according to individual's or the target group's specific needs. Indeed, there is a danger that an educational practice, which is centered on the “self” and shows an excessive trust in the “self”-competences of the individuals, becomes again a tool of segregation, as it makes excessive demands on those who have not ‘learned how to learn’. And it is estimated that more than half of the adult population do not have an appropriate level of the relevant metacognitive skills. As early as in the 1960s, Hans Dietrich Raapke pointed to a shift of attention away from teaching towards learning and stressed the importance of metacognitive competences as a necessary requirement for successful learning.

According to their biographical experience, individuals are to different degrees able to reflect on their learning experience, to draw appropriately and depending on the situation upon existing knowledge and competences, to make use of information strategies and to become aware of opportunities for transfer and subsumption of knowledge. More often than not learners are not aware of their own learning. This becomes the starting point for learner guid-

guidance, which see it as its task to provide space for a metacommunication on learning in the context of organized learning.

The second point of reference for learner guidance is a certain kind of 'learning culture' in the context of organized learning which offers individuals an environment in which self organization and self direction can freely develop. Making people more aware of opportunities for informal learning, as a supplement to organized learning, is also an essential part of this concept of learner guidance

Learner guidance as a comprehensive service offered by institutions focuses on supporting individuals to harmonize information on formal and informal educational opportunities with their own aims, interests and needs. People are thus enabled to make informed decisions and choices concerning their individual pathways in order to foster and develop both their professional and general competences. Learner guidance can take place before a decision on the study pathway is taken; but it may also accompany the whole learning process as a red thread. The focus is less on providing learners with information but rather on enabling them to search and access the information themselves. Essential in this is the support for the individual in making informed decisions. Here too, learner guidance includes elements of pointing to new ways of informal, non-organized learning.

In this conception, learner guidance is seen as a task for the pedagogical staff and is aimed to support and facilitate individual learning and learning in social contexts. Basic features of this concept are:

- an andragogical concept of continuing education
- an enlarged notion of learning which focuses on self-directed (lifelong) learning by individuals
- an learning/teaching arrangement which requires and supports active learning by individuals who take on responsibility for their own learning
- an andragogical attitude and a changed didactic perspective
- the search for contents, structures and models of a changed learning culture which provides space for an active development by the individual of professionally relevant competences as well as of life perspectives.

***“Learning at an equal pace for everybody is impossible”*** is one of the basic principles in this regard. Heterogeneity is a normal feature of adult education; it also offers manifold opportunities for learning arrangements, in which learners – instead of teachers - take on large parts of the responsibility for their learning. Self-directed/self-organized learning is thus embedded in social contexts and integrated with organized learning.

#### • **Principles of learner guidance**

What we have called an 'andragogical attitude' is key in this conception of learner guidance. This attitude, which is a challenge to learners, teachers and institutions, forms the fundament of a new learning culture. To make this clearer, it is worthwhile to look back at well-known and widely acknowledged principles of andragogy, develop them further and adapt them to the changing requirements and demands made on continuing education practice.

#### ▶ ***From ,orientation towards the participant' to ,participant centeredness”***

Drawing on ideas by Hans Tietgens, learner guidance has at its centre and orientation towards the subject (the individual) and an understanding of adults as mature learners. The guiding principle of ,orientation towards the participant' meant, then as now, the active participation of learners and the addressing of participants as mature learners. Self-directed and self-organized learning means nothing else than to perceive individual learning interests of the learners in a systematic way, to take them seriously and to find and interrelate professional and personal learning objectives. The aim is to enable learners to develop 'visions' of their own professional prospects and to relate them to existing competences. Learning inter-

ests are taken seriously, once they have been discovered and are converted into steering elements of the individual learning process. This means a significant challenge for the organization of learning and teaching. In order to emphasize this shift, we use the notion of 'participant centeredness' to refer to this guiding principle. This is not to say that learning is being totally liberalized or that the burden of the whole responsibility is placed on the shoulders of the learner. Rather, the term of 'participant centeredness' has been introduced to facilitate the shift of perspective away from teaching towards learning, guidance and the readiness to share responsibility in the learning/teaching process – a shift which is a necessary precondition for mature and responsible learning.

The core elements, the methods and tools of learner guidance evolve from this fundamental attitude. It is worthwhile taking a closer look at this attitude, in particular in regard to the potential consequences for staff development and organizational development. To this end we will first have to consider the sub-principles which are included in the overall guiding principles of 'participant centeredness' and which form reference points for adult educators in the development of their own professional strategies.

#### ▶ ***Connection with biography***

Each learning process has its life history and learning history; it refers to a vivid experience of one's own biography. Whoever wants to actively shape their own learning or participate in the shaping of it necessarily has to examine their own past learning experiences and the way these have contributed to the individual concept of learning. 'Biography orientation' means to sharpen one's awareness of holding the key to one's life in one's own hands, of being a subject and not an object of one's biography. It means also to become aware of biographical processes and structures, of the influences that have shaped the own personal life history in a complex interplay. These include amongst others: family cycles, gender, in the eastern states of Germany the experience of the 'turning point 1989', of the reunification and much more. 'Biography orientation' means also – and this is becoming ever more essential – to discover hidden resources and to make decisions concerning the question which competences to develop further and which 'potentials of un-lived life'<sup>1</sup> to exploit.

#### ▶ ***Competence orientation***

Learning in this conception of learner guidance takes its point of departure from the existing skills and competences of the learners and not from their problems and deficits. Learning problems and difficulties are also dealt with, but they do not form the starting point for the learning. The learners' awareness of their skills, qualifications and competences is a necessary requirement for their assuming responsibility of their own learning process.

#### ▶ ***Ensuring biographical continuity in life and learning***

This principle is closely connected to the principle of competence orientation. If something new is to be learned, a necessary precondition is the embedding of the learning in the continuity of the past life and the work experience of the learner. Older knowledge is connected with new knowledge. Only if the individual is able to experience him/herself in this continuity, it becomes possible to place the readiness to learn and the learning interests in the wider context of future professional competence and to identify and formulate concrete learning objectives. This experience of continuity is all the more essential as professional knowledge and skills are ever more swiftly becoming obsolete and pressure through change increases. Experiencing a sense of continuity is a necessary precondition for being able to tackle new challenges in a proactive way.

#### ▶ ***Reflexive orientation***

According to our conception of learner guidance, the reflection upon learning experience forms an integral part of the learning itself. Reflexion means to stop working for a moment in order to (re)orientate oneself or to pose oneself questions concerning the 'meaning' of new information and the acquisition of knowledge. In other words: to ask oneself 'why' and 'for what' are we learning. When reflecting we are able to interrelate the past, the present and

the future and to examine their reciprocal impact. Concerning the learning process, it means to relate the learning objectives to the present learning situation and to relate the present learning situation with the individual subjective learning objectives and life perspectives. Reflection in the context of learner guidance means a) individual reflection and b) collective reflection in a social learning context. By interrelating individual reflection and joint reflection in the group, learning is getting its dynamic as an interactive process.

#### ► **Orientation towards learning interests**

As mentioned above, the learning interests of the learner form the basis for didactical and methodological choices. They form the point of departure and orientation of the learning, for the identification of learning objectives and the structuring of learning pathways. Orientation towards the learning interests starts with the learners identifying and specifying their learning interest. This provides the potential for self-organization and active shaping of learning processes.

#### **Transparency and participation**

Transparency of the learning/teaching process, in terms of organization, contents, methods and use of learning media are necessary requirements for the active participation of the learners in the learning process. Transparency is also needed in terms of the planned course provision and the educational offers for the single learning steps. Transparency as a didactic principle will always be dependent on opportunities of self-organized and self-directed learning in the context of relevant offers of organized learning.

### **Conditions supporting the implementation of learner guidance**

#### **Core criterion: learner guidance in the run-up to the learning process**

**On the one hand, groups of learners are becoming more diversified. On the other hand, concepts of learning are becoming ever more individualized and flexible. This makes it necessary to offer learners advice before the learning itself starts. The aims of such guidance are:**

- ⇒ Providing the potential learner with information on the learning requirements, the contents and – in particular – the forms of learning. Before the start of the course or the training programme, the learners must be aware, that they must assume responsibility for their life. At the same time, they must be reassured that they will be supported in this responsibility.
- ⇒ Assessing existing interests, qualifications and competences of the potential learner in order to plan an individual learning route for them and agree on that in a contract which is binding for both parts.
- ⇒ Obtaining an overview of the different experiences, interests and competences of the group of potential learners in order to be able to plan the initial phase of the course in more detail.

### **Core criteria concerning the degree of self-determination in the learning process**

#### **Criteria: learning objectives and contents**

Notably in the case of formal educational offers leading to a diploma or qualification recognized by the state, the general opinion is that there is no possibility of learners determining their learning objectives. However this means to equate course objectives and learning objectives. The individual determination of learning objectives takes place on two levels. It is necessary to establish a) to what extent the interests of the learner are taken into account and b) what knowledge, competences and skills are already existing in the learner, in other

words: which learning objectives has he/she already achieved and which ones remain there still to reach.

The first aspect, the taking into account the interests of the learners, is indeed hardly possible to realize in formal education. The 'free space' which is required for that is never sufficiently available within the strict regulations in this sector.

But the same cannot be said for the second point. Especially in retraining programmes we very often find learners who bring along existing knowledge and work experience concerning parts of the course content. In these cases a 'reacquisition' of this knowledge and these skills would make relatively little sense. Learners should therefore have the possibility and responsibility to establish for themselves which knowledge they already possess. Every learner should be allowed to set themselves individual learning objectives and pursue them during the phases when the rest of group is concerned with the topics that are already familiar to them. "In doing so the learner ... at the same time takes on the role of a teacher of himself" (Weinert 1982, p. 102). Self-instruction means to plan one's own learning process, to obtain the necessary information, to choose appropriate methods, to monitor and evaluate progress, etc.

Touchstones in this regard include:

- the degree of modularization of the course content;
- tools for assessment and self-assessment of existing knowledge and skills;
- possibilities for learners to study selected contents autonomously; this involves appropriate places, equipment and guidance provision;
- use made of competences of the learners in order to let him or her assume the role of a teacher: either in supporting other individual learners (principle of 'godparenthood') or as a teacher of a group (however, practical experiences in this regard have been so contradictory that it is not possible to draw general conclusions regarding the practicability of this approach).

### **Criterion learning method**

The paradigm shift from a pedagogy of 'instruction' to a pedagogy of 'enabling' finds its counterpart in the shift from teaching methods to learning methods. Here it becomes more apparent than in any other area. However, also a danger of overestimating learning methods and undervaluing teaching methods lurks here, if the interrelationship between learning and teaching methods disappear from sight. For learners with scarce learning experience, in particular, appropriate teaching methods may provide a bridge to the discovery of their own learning methods. Educational offers for groups who focus exclusively on learning methods fail to take into account that learners need a basis from where to develop their learning methods further.

Another touchstone is therefore a description of the progress: What steps are taken in what period of time to introduce and systematize reflexive learning methods? How are they justified? From the description it should become clear how the social forms of learning have changed, what importance is being attached to a project or task related to learning and, in particular, how the ability to learn how to learn is supported.

### **Criteria organization of learning, time and place**

Implementing self-determined learning processes require an abandonment from traditional classroom teaching in several regards, not only concerning teaching methodologies. It also means a challenge for the organization of learning and has an impact, which goes far beyond the interaction between teacher and learner.

The less flexible the organization, the less participation of learners in the organization of the learning, in terms of time and place, will be possible and the less learners will be able to develop a will to participate in the shaping of their learning. This, in turn, will have an impact on

the remaining parameters of self-determined learning. One paradox that can often be noticed in the educational practice is that in the relationship between learners and teachers, ways are being searched for and found to introduce a higher level of self-determination (by the learner) in the learning process; but self-determination by the learner ends where the realm of the janitor begins. The most important touchstone in this regard is therefore the issue of whether the overall organization of the provision has been affected by the new conception. Has the concept of self-organized learning led to some kind of organizational development, which involves also the non-pedagogical staff of the institution? Is the time schedule flexible enough to allow the learners to participate in the decision about periods for individual learning or for learning in the group? How variable are the different places for learning? Is it possible to alternate between classroom, workshop, computer room, self-learning centre etc.?

### **Criterion learning success**

„The assessment of the learning success is a task that involves reflexion. The success of self-directed learning can be assessed in terms of professional as well as social and reflexive competences. It is hardly possible to simply measure it, as one would do with knowledge or skills. It is therefore necessary to include in the process of learning the task to reflect upon the learning success in order to become aware of it and make it sustainable. Self-organized learning is therefore necessarily reflexive in character. Only by talking about learning it is possible to become conscious of the successes obtained and to overcome traditional learning experiences.“ (Faulstich 2001, p. 46f)

### **Criterion participation**

The issue of learner participation is closely connected with the issue of self-organization. Such participation can take place on the following levels:

- description of learning objectives;
- methodological decisions and choices;
- selection of course contents;
- organizational aspects and scheduling of the educational offers;
- use of funds;
- feedback on the pedagogical staff (teachers/trainers);
- decision on places and periods for the study;
- assessment of the learning success.

As repeatedly stressed, learner participation constitutes a crucial element because in it, the existing degree of participation the institution's readiness or non-readiness to become a 'learning organization' becomes manifest. As repeatedly stressed, learner participation constitutes a crucial element because in it becomes manifest the existing degree of the institution's readiness or non-readiness to become a 'learning organization'. Participation of the learners is not restricted to the interaction between teachers and learners. It affects the whole organization of the institution as well because it questions structures and procedures, even at a high hierarchy level, which in the course of time have come to be seen as naturally grown. The decision on time and place for the learning, the option of making use of offers by competing institutions and the requirement of transparency regarding the availability of funding - these are all issues on which learners have no influence in traditional institutions and neither should they have any according to more conservative views. (The last and most tricky issue, concerning funding, was excluded even in the examples of good practice, which are documented below).

### **Criterion self-organisation**

According to their self-image, educational institutions are organizations that provide and manage all the things that are necessary and important for learning. This self-image matches with the picture that learners usually have of such institutions, since learners expect exactly this from an institution. Managing an institution requires a high degree of planning activity, a detailed overview on estimated costs, a tough planning of staff assignment, in brief, the ideal

basis for the functioning of the organism 'educational institution' are: solid, closed curricula with clear timetables, calculable needs for staff and a fixed framework for costs. But if self-organized learning shall mean more than individual learners fixing the contents, objectives, ways, methods and media for their learning and if participation is considered as an indispensable condition for self-organization (see above: core criterion participation) then the institution faces new challenges. Self-organization and participation require a high degree of flexibility and variability in terms of organization of time and space, learning arrangement ('learning architecture'), staff assignment and planning of costs. Self-organization as a guiding principle requests from the management staff to share their power, to delegate responsibility, to place trust in both the pedagogical staff and the learners (Himmel 2001, p. 101f). It is therefore clear that the actual implementation of the two principles self-organization and participation is only possible in the context of 'learning organizations'. Fuchs-Brünnighoff (2001, p. 34f) quotes Simon, who distinguishes two attitudes prevailing in institutions with regard to change: an attitude of a 'barricade of wagons' and an attitude of an amoeba. The latter one is characterized by a culture of openness. In reality, the predominant attitude at management level in educational institutions is the one of the barricade of wagons. But, as history has shown, this attitude usually triggers lengthy sieges which end up in the destruction of the wagons.

### **Core criterion: supporting structures for learners**

Structures, which support the learners in their learning efforts, are usually associated with the provision of relevant materials in 'resource pools' or with computer access and the provision of learning software. We adopt an extended notion of support here, which does not only relate to the closer learning environment of the learner but also to the overall conditions under which they live. Support can thus include the provision of rooms for free communication without learning purposes within the educational institution or provision of childcare in courses for women. What seems essential to us are supporting structures that take the form of a network and provide access to advice and guidance for most various situations. Particularly in the case of the so called 'problem groups', who see the course also as an opportunity for re-orientation of their whole life, such networks are extremely important. Such networks may for example include advice services on problems with drugs or debts, provide access to self-help groups or enhance professional prospects by integrating job centers and industrial and business companies. An institution claiming to be able to cater for all the needs and vicissitudes of the learners takes on more than it can handle. In the case of complex needs for advice this often leads to a somewhat amateurish provision – a danger, which may be avoided by joining an existing network.

### **Core criterion: supporting structures for teachers**

All teachers and their superiors who were interviewed on the occasion of a study have emphasized very drastically the changing role of the teacher, who is increasingly becoming a 'learning advisor' or 'learning facilitator' and the changing demands resulting from this shift. It is quite obvious that these new demands placed upon teachers make it necessary to train teachers accordingly. Such training should take place both before and during the implementation of a programme and offer the teachers room for tackling their role and reflect on their own fears and anxieties associated with this. It is true that self-organized learning is considered to be the most up to date and innovative form of learning today and those intending to implement this form of learning and fill it with life are particularly estimated. However, this must not lead us to believe that these changing demands for teachers do not cause concerns in them. Teachers experience many feelings of uncertainty when abandoning the way of behaving which they are used to and which makes them feel familiar in favour of a new, not yet quite clearly defined role as a learning advisor or moderator. Often they need help in order to overcome these feelings of uncertainty. Therefore, another criterion for good quality is the availability of professional help and advice for teachers during the whole period of a training programme. This help may take the form of coaching, supervision or practical advice from colleagues.

The concept of self-organized learning is not a concept that suits those fighting single-handedly. Self-organized learning requires teamwork and appropriate structures, which means that time schedules, availability of rooms and resources must be carefully planned. The implementation of self-organized learning is more time consuming and requires more efforts than the organization of standardized programmes. Not only does it require appropriate work places for the staff, equipped with internet or intranet access but there is also a need to review regulations of employment contracts. The flexibility and variability which is required to cater for the needs of the learners for guidance and advice, the changing levels of stress that teachers are faced with during the various phases of a course or programme, all this requires a kind of employment contract which is more flexible than is normally the case, especially as far as working hours are concerned. Fixed working hours which remain the same for every week do no longer in any way reflect the real situation of teaching. It is true, that the examples of good practice have not found a satisfactory answer to that problem so far. It looks as if the superiors trust in the readiness of their pedagogical staff to exploit themselves and as if this trust is justified.

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### **Consequences for the self-image of the pedagogical staff**

When we talk of pedagogical staff in vocational continuing education we tend to take it for granted that this staff is well qualified in pedagogical or rather andragogical issues. As a rule, we also believe that it is possible to examine didactical issues such as a ‘pedagogy of enabling’ on the basis of a solid professional knowledge. Reality in Germany and in the eastern Laender, in particular, shows that this is largely not true. The qualification profiles of pedagogical staff vary widely and we mention here only a few: there is for example the manager and organizer of employment and qualification programmes. His job is subsidized by the state as part of a work placement scheme and in this respect his status differs hardly from those of the trainees in the programme. The same goes for his professional skills and qualification which are hardly different from those of the trainees. Then there is the teacher working part time on a honorarium basis. This group usually has professional skills, not necessarily pedagogical competences. Then we have also the full-time teacher who has not trained as a teacher in continuing education but as an engineer, architect, school teacher or something else, who had then not found an appropriate employment and had therefore slipped into continuing education. A similarly broad spectrum can be found on the side of the participants in continuing vocational education: it may range from disadvantaged young adults with no formal school-leaving certificate to highly qualified academics with a degree in humanities and no employment prospects in their profession or to older longterm unemployed people who have only minimal chances of reintegration into the labour market. The andragogical literature still suggests that the classical participant in continuing vocational education has voluntarily chosen his training courses and has clear ideas about his personal goals and career prospects. In reality, we only rarely find this type of participant.

‚Trained‘ adult educators who have acquired a pedagogical self-image through andragogical university studies and work experience are still the exception to the rule.

Any training seeking to familiarize pedagogical staff with the principles of a ‘pedagogy of enabling’ and its methodological conclusions, must take into account this heterogeneity on different levels:

- A ‚pedagogy of enabling‘ cannot be taught. It can only be enabled by appropriate learning/teaching arrangements. Enabling means here to propose offers but let the pedagogical staff decide on whether to use this offer or not. Responsibility lies with the learner, the trainer’s responsibility is restricted to the task of enabling. This may sound trivial, all the more because this is already, with little further reflexion, widely being recommended to

teachers concerning their interaction with the learners. But in fact such ideas are rather difficult to put into practice, especially for those teacher trainers who have been in the business for a long time and who have learned to hold themselves responsible for the whole process of learning/teaching. These trainers tend to feel offended when the offers they make are not accepted by the teachers. If the teachers take the liberty to stick to “the worse option” after having been offered “the better” one, teacher trainers tend to consider this either their own professional failure or the result of “resistance to training” on the part of their students. (Of course, this pattern between trainer and trainees is noticeable not only in teacher training but in any other training course as well).

- Becoming involved with a ‘pedagogy of enabling’ requires from teachers a certain degree of professional competence and awareness of the own andragogical skills during the course of the teaching/learning process. Astonishingly, our experience suggests that these factors are quite independent from the initial training of the teacher, whether she/he was professionally trained in pedagogy or anything else. Rather, it seems to depend on other conditions and circumstances:
  1. One of the key factors is the attitude towards the learners: If the teachers adopt a traditional view of the learner as a being with deficits, whose deficits must be overcome by training and education, then the teachers will hardly credit the learners with the ability to learn in a self-organized and responsible way. Such teachers will tend to consider a ‘pedagogy of enabling’ as a way of eluding study and learning.
  2. Another key element is the previous experience teachers have had in their courses and whether it has been positive or not. The way the teacher defines the success of this own efforts is also crucial. If she/he relies exclusively on external factors such as examination results or the rate of reintegration into the labour market, she/he will prefer programmes with closed curricula and clearly prescribed objectives and methods.
  3. Also of essential importance is the way in which new pedagogical concepts have been handled within the institution in the past. In vocational continuing education, in particular, there has been a tendency to jump at new approaches and methods (e.g. project work) and to believe that their use would have to imply a complete abandonment of earlier approaches. What could be noticed in the educational practice was then a kind of ‘structural schizophrenia’: Whenever superiors or other visitors announced their coming, the currently most fashionable approach was suddenly used in the classroom. In the everyday routine, however, traditional methods and concepts were dominantly applied. This suggests that a ‘pedagogy of enabling’ cannot be imposed. Rather, it can only be practised by those who have reflected upon it and, as a result, have identified their own standpoint and found opportunities for action within this conceptual framework.
  4. It is necessary that the institution provides a reassuring framework which allows teachers to experiment with the new without having to fear any punishment in the case of failure. Only a structure which forgives failures will enable the pedagogical staff to build up familiar and reassuring (but not necessarily successful) orientations and to try out new concepts and methods which had no chance yet to prove their pedagogical worth.

### **Conclusions concerning the organization and structure of continuing education institutions**

**Leadership may enable a ‘pedagogy of enabling’ or make it impossible.** Our studies have shown how strongly the attitude of the leaders affects the chances that concepts relating to a ‘pedagogy of enabling’ (e.g. learner guidance) are implemented in the institution. One of the most common obstacles that can be observed in almost all institutions is the ‘tendency to a planned economy’. Real or seeming economic constraints force the institutions to introduce a cost/performance calculation and to define educational services as products.

There are numerous attempts to tackle the ever more complex reality of continuing vocational education by means of stronger standardization and schematization. In such a perspective, new pedagogical approaches are easily seen as cost factors for which additional resources, time and staff is needed and whose potential material benefit for the institution cannot be clearly demonstrated. The benefit that teachers and learners can take out of such new orientations cannot be described in business management terms. At best, they can be registered as assets under quality development schemes. (The hope initially nurtured by some to save costs by increasing the level of self-organization and self-direction in learning is unlikely to come true in the middle-term perspective. Experience has shown that so far the number of pedagogical staff necessary to support learners has not diminished with the introduction of elements of self-organized learning).

This is not to plead in general against the use of categories pertaining to business management in the educational business. Attention must be drawn to the fact that such an orientation poses obstacles to the implementation of innovative approaches.

If, on the basis of practice examples, we analyze the relationship between leadership attitudes and implementation of new pedagogical approaches, we can distinguish four categories of managing staff whose attitudes make a 'pedagogy of enabling' either possible or impossible. The first category includes the 'rejectors' whose refusal may have utterly different reasons. There are, first, managers who feel insecure in their position and who perceive everything new predominantly as a potential threat. They often display an authoritarian behaviour and shy away from delegating tasks and responsibility. As soon as they realize that a 'pedagogy of enabling' means not only that teachers have to place more trust in learners but also that leaders have to place more trust in their staff (and funders in the institutions), in other words: that the whole discourse is about abandoning a share of power, they block all attempts in this direction. In this first category, we also find those who reject the new orientation because they fear they could not justify it externally, especially towards the employment authorities. Pointing to the supposedly conservative public authorities, they stick to old orientations, often against their own conviction

The second category are those who 'hesitate and wait-and-see': they do not feel like opposing the pressure exerted by the innovative vanguard in their institution and therefore allow for the introduction of smaller 'playgrounds'. But in deep down in their hearts they already anticipate the failure of the new orientation and thus contribute to make this failure really occur. In two of the institutions under study, the attempt, started in one unit, to implement self-organized learning, prompted other units to adopt this new orientation as well. Or learners who, in the course of a training programme, had to pass through various units in an institution asked explicitly for opportunities for self-organized and self-directed learning if they had already had some positive experience in other units. At this point in time it is normally decided if the manager with a hesitating attitude will finally become a motor of change or if she/he will stop the whole experiment.

The third category is made up by 'promoters without reflecting': They include those who take it for granted that labels such as 'learner guidance', 'self-organized and self-directed learning'- 'pedagogy of enabling' etc. are a visible sign for their readiness and ability to implement innovation and may serve as a marketing tool on a highly competitive market. This type of manager is not fully aware that the new orientation also implies changes in content, structures and methodologies, which result in a restructuring of the whole organization and in a new understanding of leadership itself. It often happens that in the end the institution will be aware of and make use of all the labels, which are appropriate for their marketing, but, fundamentally, its orientation will nevertheless remain unchanged.

In the fourth category we find the 'engaged supporters', those who are deeply convinced that the new orientation is useful and that the old routes will in the long run lead to a dead end. As a rule, these managers feel highly confident which makes it easier for them to adopt the

principles of 'participation' and 'transparency' in their institutions. In the good practice examples under studies these managers were in the majority. But this attitude, too, is not without risks. In larger organizations, in particular, open-minded managers run the danger of destabilizing the balance between continuity and innovation, which is so crucial for an organizational culture. They tend to overestimate the new, innovative aspects and at the same time dismiss – often unintentionally – the existing practice. This may provoke resistance in the staff who do not feel up to the continuous pressure for innovation and who feel the need to draw on their experiential professional knowledge to feel confident. What has been said above concerning the interaction between teachers and learners applies here, too: a 'pedagogy of enabling' constitutes only an offer, it can not be imposed. What is essentially needed for its implementation is to convince all the staff involved and at the same time to respect their experiential knowledge.

## Case studies

All case studies are structured in the same way:

- a) Target groups
- b) Concept, goals and principles
- c) Methods, media, social environment
- d) Architecture of learning
- e) Staff
- f) Further comments

1.) „Lernwerkstatt“ (learning laboratory) of the vocational training institute of the Red Cross in Berlin

### a) Target groups

Target groups are young adults with learning disabilities, behavioural disorder and/or psychological problems.

### b) Concept, goals and principles

The „Lernwerkstatt“ (learning laboratory) works with a rather open concept. The only given element is the time amount (90 minutes per week for each learner). The concept is individually oriented. The learning support system is a reference frame for the individual learner and for groups of learners, in which they can experiment with learning.

#### The goals are:

- promotion of self-directed learning
- promotion of the individual responsibility in the learning-process
- promotion of the ability to shape the own life and to develop the own personality
- guidance and counselling of the learning trajectories
- support of the development of cultural techniques and basic skills
- support in mastering learning obstacles and resistances in order to develop vocational knowledge
- promotion of the individual motivation and creativity
- passing the exams

#### The principles are:

- the learners are responsible for their learning
- the teachers have counselling and moderating functions
- reflective abilities of the learners should be enhanced

### c) Methods, media, social environment

The concept is put into practice by a variety of methods (games, drawing, painting, visualising, music, recreation techniques, creative writing, debating, mediation and reflection). These methods try to combine „Kopf und Herz“ (mind and heart) in respect to the individual resources of the learners. This makes the concept very special, because it works not only with cognitive and communicative methods.

Media are white boards, mind maps and computers.

The methods are used individually, in social groups and in interaction processes between the learners and the teachers.

### d) Architecture of learning

The concept puts „Lernberatung“ (counselling of learning) in the centre of attention. Thus the ability to organize everyday learning should be enhanced. There should be room as well to deal with fear, conflicts and differences as to manage vocational needs or time pressures. The learners should be prepared to pass the exams and to specialize themselves vocationally.

A special feature of the learning laboratory is the learning in a laboratory, which means that nothing is fixed. The learner can experiment and can make mistakes.

**e) Staff**

In order to realize such an open concept the tasks of the learning counsellors have to be changed and enhanced. The professional tasks are:

- to promote vocational learning
- to moderate learning processes
- to accompany learning processes
- to focus on the individual
- to promote the combination of three competencies: 1.) competence to adapt 2.) competence to have an own opinion c) competence to build relationships

These new tasks require a pool of professional competencies on side of the counsellors. The required professional skills are:

- ability to support dialogues
- ability to give impulses by open questions (e.g. "How do you learn?")
- ability to establish learning contacts
- ability to recognise the hidden individual resources

**f) Further comments**

A main element of the concept is its open structure. The fixed time structure is necessary because of the needs of the target groups. The fixed time structures gives young adults with learning disabilities, behavioural disorder and/or psychological problems an orientation.

The concept combines a personal and vocational orientation. The learners are stimulated to be in charge of their own learning. Support of the counsellors is offered on that basis. The counsellors support and moderate the process of learning and try to motivate the learners. Therefore they focus on dialogue and giving impulses by open questions. The learning laboratory is an open reference frame, which promotes making experiments. Creativity and initiative on side of the learners shall thus be promoted.

The target groups, which consist out of persons with learning problems, is a room offered to develop individually and unconventionally ways to learn.

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2.) Concept „open learning” of the Foundation for Vocational Training in Hamburg

**a) Target groups**

The concept is oriented towards people, which are considered as groups at risk. Their learning achievements are low and their socio-biographical environments are not stimulating. They have negative learning experiences, they have worked in non-skilled sectors of the labour market and they have experienced times of unemployment. The concept has been awarded with the innovation price of the German Institute for Adult Education in 1999.

**b) Concept, goals and principles**

The concept can be described as rather open. It is focused on learning contracts between learner and the pedagogical staff. The acquiring of knowledge is transferred from teacher-centred situations to self-directed learning processes. The outcome of the learning is controlled.

**The goals are:**

- successful integration of socially excluded into the labour market
- acquiring knowledge and vocational qualifications
- transparent learning goals by learning contracts

- promotion of personal competences
- promotion of the ability to learn learning
- mastering of complex vocational tasks
- balanced promotion of knowledge, abilities, skills, behaviour, strategies and communication
- offering companies qualified people

**The principles are:**

- moving self-responsibility in the centre
- decentralizing responsibility from the top of the organisation to all organisational levels
- forming independent teams
- establishing a system of learning contracts
- market research and customer research are resulting in an adaptation of concepts and structures

**c) Methods, media, social environment**

The concept consists out of four methodical levels: Planning, carrying out, securing and evaluating.

- The planning consists of: learning contract, self-evaluation and an individual time table .
- The carrying out consists out of: individual learning trajectories, using multi media, learning support, combination of theory and practice.
- The securing consists of: realisation of the transfer, prolongation of the individual learning trajectory.
- The evaluation consists of: test, self-evaluation, assessment, feedback.

The foundation uses only very well developed learning media. The media have to meet didactical and methodical requests and not the other way around. The foundations uses for example CBT and simulations, but even more mundane tools like cassettes, videos, books, scripts or games are used when needed.

The social environment of learning is differently shaped:

- simulation of an order by a customer
- simulation of production and services
- project-based working
- team work and individual work
- making a video
- making a learning diary

**d) Architecture of learning**

The starting point is the self-evaluation and the assessment of the competences of the learners. The next step is the making of a learning contract between learner and the foundation. The core of the contract is the commitment of both sides to fulfil their responsibilities.

It is necessary that:

- the goal of the learning is clear
- the learners are aware of their learning in every phase of the learning process in order to self-direct their learning
- there are joint rules when problems arise
- it is clear that goals can be only jointly changed

Theory and practice are modularised. Every module consists of complex tasks, which have to be independently solved by the learners. The modules are not knowledge-based structured but learning-based structured (e.g. theory is introduced when it becomes relevant in solving a task). Thus the acquiring of knowledge should become transparent and meaningful. The modules are constantly revised accordingly the changes in the daily work. Different learning-sites are combined: Counselling room, workplace, team room, class room and media room. The rooms are adaptable accordingly to theory and practice.

Every professional has access to a pool of media.

**e) Staff**

The concept mirrors the paradigmatic shift from teaching to learning. This means also a shift in the tasks of the staff. Teachers become counsellors, which organise and mediate a variety of individual learning processes. They have to know that different learning trajectories are possible. They have to be as much able to consult individuals as to consult groups. They need three main pillars of competences:

- competences in the subject/field/theme
- competences in the use of media
- competences in counselling

The staff is supported by the intranet, team coaching and further education.

**f) Further comments**

The concept is vividly put into practice. It is a realisation of the principles of self-directed learning. The learning contract is in the centre of the concept. Learning trajectories are shaped by the learners themselves. There is a paradigmatic shift from teaching to learning. Participation, transparency, methodical combination, teamwork and modularisation are "lived" elements. Theory and practice are task-related combined. The inner-logics of learning is paid attention to and not the system of a subject or a theme. Learners and counsellors have to agree on a commitment towards the goals of learning. The shift from teaching and learning means also that the organisation has to change itself constantly according the needs of the learner. The foundation sees itself as a learning organisation.

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### 3.) Concept of counselling learning of the EUROPOOL-Project of the Academy for Youth and Vocation / Volkshochschule Witten-Herdecke

**a) Target groups**

The concept was born in the qualification project "EUROPOOL – individualisation and flexibilisation of learning processes in vocational training" for women. It was implemented, evaluated and documented there.

The participating women had no formal vocational qualification or they were returning from their parental leave. The target group was very heterogeneous concerning their needs and abilities in learning. The private and vocational goals of the women were also very heterogeneous. The vocational training was thematically focused on business and commerce.

**b) Concept, goals and principles**

The concept is characterised by an open approach, which tries to suite the didactical and methodical implementation according to the target groups and the institutional resources. The activation of the learning competencies of the women is the starting point of the concept. They have to formulate interests and goals of their learning. These goals have to be continuously reflected during the learning process. The learners shall have a right to decide about their learning, also they have to share this right with the pedagogical staff. The participants should experience how big this free space is in a dynamic process. The goal is to establish a transparent balance of responsibilities of both sides (learners and staff).

The EUROPOOL concept understands learning counselling as:

- a pedagogical concept in further education
- a term for high quality for teaching which is targeted at self-directed learning
- a learning arrangement which promotes active and independent learning
- a pedagogical position and shifted didactical focus

Didactical principles are:

- biographical approach
- promotion of participation
- orientation on competences and potentials
- securing biographical continuity
- orientation on reflexivity
- orientation on learners' interests
- transparency

### **c) Methods, media, social environment**

The core elements of counselling learning are:

- a learning diary, which offers room for reflection and goal attainment.
- learning conferences, in which learners are discussing their own learning. The learners themselves are in charge of the conferences after the initial introduction of the method by the staff.
- a pool of learning tools, which is permanently accessible by the learners. The pool consists out of books, files, scripts of teachers, tests and a selection of CBTs.
- feedback to the learning process given by the staff.

### **d) Architecture of learning**

The development of self-management skills and vocational skills is promoted by individual and collective learning experiences:

- core modules
- voluntary modules
- selected certification
- visit of external modules by other institutions when wanted by the learner
- project-based learning
- group work and tandem work
- use of CBTs
- periods of individual studying
- counselling sessions between the staff and the learner

### **e) Staff**

Traditional teaching remains an important part in the concept. The professional role of the teachers is enriched by counselling tasks. There is a shift of attention from teaching to learning. The staff understands themselves as learning partners for the target group. It is very important that the staff is able to construct a frame in which the learners can develop and follow their learning trajectories. Staff and participants have to be open for meta-communicative discourses about learning. The goal is that learners experience learning as something enriching.

The staff has to focus on their competences in self-reflection, self-distance, diagnosis, empathy and outcome tolerance. A special challenge is the ability to make a good diagnosis in learning processes and to make use of that diagnosis in counselling sessions.

There are further training offers made to the staff in order to master these challenges. The concept was continuously further developed in discussions between the project leader and the staff. For the staff there were training modules offered in counselling on a collective and an individual basis.

### **f) Further comments**

The concept is characterized by an implementation, which depended on the needs of the target group, the institutional resources and the requirements of the labour office. The project leaders continued to use the concept in other settings accordingly. The concept has a holistic focus. Self-directed learning is defined as the combination of individualised learning processes with organised learning in social environments. Changes on all sides and on all levels have been observed and documented. They deliver material for a further development of that approach in other contexts.

It is very positive that the term counselling learning means much more than having just a discussion about learning. There are many more elements and forms of interaction implemented. It has to be stressed that the concept is no fixed arrangement but it tries to adapt itself according to the needs and the composition of the target groups. It can be summarised that the concept is a best practice of putting self-directed learning into practice.

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