PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ADULT EDUCATORS FOR A DIGITAL WORLD: AN EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Digital media play an increasingly important role in all areas of society. As a result, media literacy is one of the key qualifications for our information society. It enables social participation and opens up opportunities for professional development. Media literacy is not a static construct though – due to technological progress it must be continually developed. For this reason, adult education has a central function in promoting media literacy. At the same time, for education too new opportunities for promoting learning are constantly opening up via digital media. The media education competencies of adult educators are therefore of central significance for assessing and utilising the opportunities and risks of current developments. In light of this, this article discusses the current situation with regards to standards and pathways of professionalization of adult educators in terms of media pedagogic competences in Europe.

Keywords: adult education; media competencies; professionalization; adult educators; learning professionals, digital media

Introduction

Digital media play an increasingly important role in all areas of society. As a result, media literacy is one of the key qualifications for our information society. It enables social participation and opens up opportunities for professional development. Media literacy is not a static construct though – due to technological progress it must be continually developed. For this reason, adult education has a central function in

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promoting media literacy. At the same time, for education too new opportunities for promoting learning are constantly opening up via digital media. The media education competencies of adult educators are therefore of central significance for assessing and utilising the opportunities and risks of current developments. In light of this, this article discusses the current situation with regards to standards and pathways of professionalization of adult educators in terms of media pedagogic competences in Europe.

1. Necessity of digital media in adult education

Information and communication technologies have gained a major influence on our life. They have led to significant changes in both the private and the professional sphere. These changes involve an on-going analysis of the opportunities and risks that digital media bring to our lives. The challenges for learning are not only on a functional level of dealing with and/or using digital technologies, such as online banking and online communication. Digital media have a significant influence on fundamental social relationships with equally significant consequences for the life of each individual; however, these consequences are for the most part unapparent and unforeseeable. These consequences of digitalisation are described in a gloomy and cautionary manner by philosophers, information technologists and internet experts (Floridi, 2014; Lanier, 2014; Morozov, 2012), and in a '*digital manifesto'*, European Researcher warn of the erosion of democracy (Helbing et al., 2016).

Livingstone, Van Couvering, and Thumim (2005) identifies three broad purposes to which media literacy makes a contribution:

- **Democracy, participation and active citizenship**. In a democratic society, a media-literate individual is more able to gain an informed opinion on matters of the day, and to be able to express their opinion individually and collectively in public, civic and political domains. A media-literate society would thus support a sophisticated, critical and inclusive public sphere.
- **Knowledge economy, competitiveness and choice**. In a market economy increasingly based on information, often in a complex and mediated form, a media-literate individual is likely to have more to offer and so achieve at a higher level in the workplace, and a media-literate society would be innovative and competitive, sustaining a rich array of choices for the consumer.
- **Lifelong learning, cultural expression and personal fulfilment**. Since our heavily mediated symbolic environment informs and frames the choices, values and knowledge that give significance to everyday life, media literacy contributes

to the critical and expressive skills that support a full and meaningful life, and to an informed, creative and ethical society. (ibid., p. 7f)

This purposes are on a line with general objectives of the *Europe 2020* flagship initiatives for individual development, growth and competitiveness (Eurpean Commission, 2010) and basis for *"a renewed European agenda for adult learning"* (The Council of the European Union, 2011).

Adult education is of central importance because the opportunities and risks of digital technology are constantly expanding and changing. As a result, media education measures cannot be seen as a preparatory activity that takes place during childhood and youth, but must become an element of lifelong learning (cf. Rohs & Ganz, 2016). This means imparting skills, knowledge and abilities to make new worlds accessible and expand the scope for action and decision making. There is already a serious "digital" gap between the media knowledge of an elite group and that of the general population, one which will continue to expand and lead to severe social imbalances in power if the appropriate measures are not taken (van Dijk & van Deursen, 2014).

However, digital media also have direct effects on the field of adult education. These include a) different usage patterns for participants, b) new teaching/learning opportunities with digital resources and c) new provider structures.

a) Digital media permeate all areas of daily life. Social networks in particular have become an integral part of daily communication for many people. This raises the question of how these informal forms of learning are incorporated and used didactically for adult education (Hague, 2009).

b) Technical developments also lead to constantly new ways of supporting learning. Digital media are discussed repeatedly in particular with regards to dealing with heterogeneous target groups and individualisation of learning (Hillen, Sturm, & Willbergh, 2011). It is even conceivable that trainers could teach in the learner's own home as holograms or may be replaced completely by technology as avatars based on teaching algorithms and artificial intelligence or as robot teachers (Sharkey, 2016).

c) Finally, the opportunities for publishing and exchanging digital learning materials are expanding through simple forms of distribution. As a result, the creation of new ways to access learning opportunities, e.g. through the development and distribution of Open Education Resources (OER) for adult education is being discussed intensively (cf. Bacsich, 2015; Falconer, McGill, Littlejohn, & Boursinou, 2013).

The relevance of digital media for adult education can therefore be accounted for on three levels:

1. on a *content level* in connection with the qualification for social participation, to improve individual employability and for general economic development,

2. on a *programme structure level* (e.g. distance and blended learning and new forms of learning facilitation for informal learning) and

3. on an *organisational level* in connection with the changing of work processes and internal and external forms of communication (e.g. knowledge management, online marketing).

The European Commission has therefore designated engagement with digital media as a strategic aim for adult education (along with basic education and increasing the efficiency, effectiveness and coherence of adult education policy) (European Commission, 2015a). The following recommendations have been given as key areas of development for adult education in relation to digital media:

1. **Digital skills are essential for social inclusion and an effective labour market:** *A digital skills divide is growing in Europe. Too many adults are at risk of exclusion due to a lack of basic digital skills. (...)*

2. **Information and computer technology (ICT) can help raise participation and improve quality:** *ICT can make adult learning more tailored, relevant, attractive and up-to-date but is still not exploited sufficiently in many countries.(...)*

3. **Balanced investments are needed to enhance digital adult learning:** *Weak infrastructure, educators' lack of digital skills and a lack of high quality digital learning resources are preventing Member States from reaping the benefits of ICT in adult learning. Visionary leadership and efficient outreach are also required. (...)*

4. **More research for more knowledge:** *Member States can benefit from each other's experiences. There is a need for more research on how ICT can improve the efficiency of adult learning.* (ibid. 52f)

The need for this (continued) engagement with digital media and its consequence for society as a whole and adult education in particular, which is shared by many but repeatedly disputed in adult education, also forms the basis for a more intensive analysis of the media education qualifications of people working in adult education, particularly trainers. On the one hand they must be placed in a position to evaluate new technologies in terms of their usefulness for supporting teaching/learning processes and to implement them appropriately, and to assess participants' requirements in terms of their media literacy and usage preferences. On the other they must also have the ability to teach media literacy at those points that support the individual in their teaching/learning process. Therefore, the professionalization of adult learning staff has been recognized as a priority at European Educational Policy. In this context, the development of competency profiles and professionalization paths for education staff are of particular importance (The Council of the European Union, 2011).

The following section therefore deals with the relevance of digital media for adult education regarding the need and current status of media education qualifications and professionalization for adult educators.

2. Professionalization of adult educators

To broach the subject of media education skill requirements for trainers in adult education is to get into a discourse about the professionalization of adult education. At the centre of this are the terms profession, professionalism and professionalization. The relationship between these terms could be described as follows: professionalization describes the collective process of the development of a profession on one hand, and the process of developing individual professional competence (professionalism) on the other (cf. Windahl & Rosengren, 1976).

The process of establishing a profession (structural professionalization) is closely linked to the individual process of developing professionalism; however the development of individual professionalism is not bound with the establishment of adult education as a profession.

A few key documents of the European Union were of particular importance here, highlighting the significance of trainers and their qualifications, for example:

"Teachers and trainers are the most essential actors in the overall strategy towards a knowledge society and a knowledge-based economy (…) Europe needs to improve the ways in which teachers and trainers are prepared for, and supported in, their profoundly changing role in the knowledge society. This is also related to a change in the public of the teaching profession and the general expectations of society concerning school, as well as education and training in general".

(European Commission, 2002, p. 14)

In this context adult education is assigned central importance in the development towards a knowledge society. According to the recommendations of a study by the Bertelsmann Foundation and ECORYS, it is necessary to ensure that "all the teachers are fully aware of the most relevant ICT for their target adults, in their teaching and learning developments." (cf. Bertelsmann Stiftung & ECORYS, 2015). In relation to this role key issues that must be tackled in this context are addressed:

- *identifying the skills that teachers and trainers should have, given their changing roles in a knowledge society;*

- *providing the conditions which adequately support teachers and trainers as they respond to the challenges of the knowledge society, including through initial and in-service training in the perspective of lifelong learning;*
- *securing a sufficient level of entry to the teaching profession, across all subjects and levels, as well as providing for the long-term needs of the profession by making teaching and training more attractive;*
- *attracting recruits to teaching and training who have professional experience in other fields.* (ibid.)

These recommendations are set out in the document '*Adult Education: It is never too late to learn*' (European Commission, 2006). Here too the significance of qualification in the field of digital media is discussed, as follows: '*New forms of illiteracy in the shape of exclusion from access to and use of ICT in professional and daily life exacerbate this exclusion: adults who are not computer literate are deprived of essential information and facilities which are increasingly only available in digital form*' (ibid., p. 4). This concern is also picked up in the action plan for the implementation of the recommendations (European Commission, 2007), in that not only are digital media addressed in connection with a lack of media literacy but also the '*role of the media and their capacity to address hard-to-reach groups should be taken on board*' (ibid. p. 8).

These initiatives have been accompanied by a series of projects to develop corresponding curricula and qualification standards for adult education, as well as the associated opportunities for recognition of informally acquired competencies (cf. Strauch, Radtke, & Lupou, 2010), to which reference will be made again at a later point. Jarvis (2010, p. 276) mentions a total of 18 roles that amalgamate into occupations in adult education. Taking into account such roles as '*author of learning materials*' or '*programme technical staff*' it becomes clear that significant changes to competence requirements are also likely due to the increasing importance of information and communication technologies. In particular the creation of learning content and the design of online learning environments is becoming more significance. Moreover, digitalisation will bring with it changes for the other occupational fields of adult education as well. The extent to which this will involve mere expansion of the traditional repertoire of activity or necessitate completely new competencies is the subject of the current discussion (cf. Freynet, 2008).

In summary mediatization and digitalization will bring new challenges for professionalization of adult education especially for the professionalization of learning professionals. It means, above all, to formulate necessary competences of adult educators rising from the opportunities and risks of mediatization and digitization of learning.

2.1 Professionalization as an individual process

In this context professionalization is understood to mean the learning process in which adult educators acquire their professionalism as adult educators (Maier-Gutheil & Hof, 2011). The definition of individual adult education professionalism varies widely in academic literature and is interpreted at least as differently in professional practice. It is understood to mean competent professional behaviour (Nittel, 2000, p. 15) or '*the requirement to hold a professional qualification alongside continuing to stay up to date with teaching methods and industry practice*' (Institute for Learning, 2012, p. 6).

Professional knowledge is a basis for professionalism. This professional knowledge includes on the one hand academic knowledge, predominantly acquired in university (continuing) education, and on the other professional knowledge, generated from professional practice. Academic knowledge is any knowledge that has been acquired in a demonstrable manner through academic methods and criteria and adjudged valid, whereas professional knowledge must primarily satisfy the criteria of practicability and utility (Peters, 2004, p. 142). Both types of knowledge, i.e. academic and professional knowledge, constitute a complementary base for adult education activity.

Due to this complementary nature, professional knowledge cannot be acquired exclusively at university. Rather it is evident that informal learning has major significance for the acquisition and transfer of theoretical knowledge (Hutchins, Burke, & Berthelsen, 2010) and that there is a biographical interrelationship between formal and informal learning – including for the acquisition of media education competencies (see Chapter 4). Digital forms of learning are playing an increasing role in this. Whilst it is true that according to a study by the German Institute for Adult Education and the Bertelsmann-Stiftung only approx. one third of adults use online specialist portals (Schöb, Salender, Brandt, Fischer, & Wintermann, 2015, p. 8), these forms of learning meet the specific needs of teachers, who often work in insecure employment and have little time and money for continuing education (Dobischat, Fischell, & Rosendahl, 2010; Martin & Langemeyer, 2014).

On the whole there only very little research into professionalization processes for adult educators with digital media (e.g. Forneck, Robak, & Wrana, 2001; Schrader, Hohmann, & Hartz, 2010).

3. Media competences of adult educators

Firstly, the above illustrations demonstrate the need to make digitalisation more a part of adult education and to utilise the opportunities digital media present for supporting teaching/learning processes in adult education. Secondly, digitalisation has direct and

indirect consequences for the professionalization of adult education, since provider structures, occupational roles and skill requirements for adult educators change and digital media are playing an increasingly important role in the process of professionalization.

Taking into consideration the technological developments described, in the first instance it can be established that teachers are particularly required to follow and assess these developments and to make them the subject of adult education programmes. This requires, to a much greater extent than the teachers, ongoing engagement with technological progress in general and accordingly strong media competence and information literacy. According to Baacke (Baacke, 1980, 1996), '*media competence*' includes the following dimensions: knowledge about media (Medienkunde), use of media (Mediennutzung), productive/creative use of media (Mediengestaltung) and critical reflection of media (Medienkritik) (Baacke, 1996). Media competence here is not the same as media literacy, but comes from the concept of competence (Livingstone, Wijnen, Papaioannou, Costa, & del Mar Grandío, 2013, p. 214). Moreover, information literacy is of fundamental importance for the assessment of sources, in particular for the individual continuing education of teachers.

These competencies form the prerequisite for assessing the effects of digitalisation on the subject matter (content) of one's programme. Furthermore, these competencies are particularly important for special programmes for imparting media competence for digital participation. Here teachers must have special expertise in order to communicate the use of new technologies and critically reflect their opportunities and risks.

A second aspect concerns the teaching/learning level and media didactics issues. The aim of media didactics is to assist learners with their individual, social and developmental situations in terms of the contents and objectives of the learning process set or specified by the everyday world. In this sense media are a means to achieve more effective and efficient learning processes. The assistance of learners can also extend beyond the original form of the traditional teaching/learning setting and incorporate functions such as consultation and competence diagnostics and recording, which support stronger self-guidance of the learning process and a link with informal learning contexts. These areas are also increasingly affected by digital media.

Complementary to the above mentioned competencies media educational competencies, knowledge about the role of media in socialisation and school development competencies with regards to media as key competencies for teachers (Blömeke, 2000; Gybers, 2008; Tulodziecki & Grafe, 2012). These competences can only be applied to adult education to a limited extent. Media education in the meaning of *Medienerziehung* as a process of intentionally manipulation of values and behaviors is

more connected with the life phases of childhood and youth and does not fit to adult education. Here the concept of media education in the meaning of *Medienbildung* is more appropriate, which aims at personal development by actively dealing with the realities of the world.

Furthermore it is important to note that teachers in adult education work part-time or are self-employed in most cases and are therefore less involved in organisation development processes than employed teachers. In contrast to this, the work of adult educators in different contexts shows the necessity of context-specific knowledge about the medial framework conditions in the organisations in which they work and knowledge about the media literacy of participants.

Finally it also requires teachers to have reflexive abilities to engage with their own values and convictions regarding the use of digital media as well as with the media-related values and convictions of the organisation in which they work.

Thus a series of competencies have been described that are significant in adult education (particularly for teachers) for using digital media for teaching and to facilitate learning, and also to impart media literacy – whether alone or in connection with the use of digital teaching/learning media (Rohs, Rott, Schmidt-Hertha, & Bolten, 2017).

Despite the developments outlined and the competencies they necessitate, the significance of media education competencies for teachers in adult education is the subject of controversial discussion. Whereas a series of adult education representatives see them as an independent field of competence (e.g. Stang, 2003), others believed that media didactic competencies are covered by the existing adult education competencies (e.g. Schmidt-Lauff, 2002). This controversy can also be seen in the role of digital media in competence profiles and core curricula of adult education:

4. Digital media in competence profiles of adult education

An analysis of current competence profiles for adult educators in Europe (Sgier & Lattke, 2012; Strauch et al., 2010) shows that media education competencies play in most cases a somewhat subordinate role (Rohs, Bolten, Steil, & Kohl, 2017). An example of this is the description of teaching competencies by the QF2TEACH project (Bernhardsson & Lattke, 2011). The QF2TEACH project covered a consortium of eight European countries and conducted a Delphi study to identify the core competencies needed by Learning Facilitators today and in future. Regarding the role digital media was stated:

> *"Media use as a modern part of didactical conceptualisation is still developing at a fast pace. In particular this involves the production and use of learning software for adults, cooperation with IT experts, the development of teaching and learning opportunities with*

interactive media and on the Internet. It has changed (with blended and e-learning) the whole procedure of developing didactical concepts."

(Bernhardsson & Lattke, 2011, p. 20)

Here the competencies for dealing with digital media are described as sub-competencies in the field of '*contents and didactics*' media:

A. Knowledge

- '*Adult learning facilitators (...) have comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge (...) concerning the use of learning media*' (ibid, p. 56)

B. Skills

- '*Adult learning facilitators (...) have extensive experience and skills in the proficient use of different learning materials / media in their usual teaching / learning context.*' (ibid.)

C. Responsibility and Autonomy

- '*Adult learning facilitators (...) are able to use a variety of learning materials and media in many different teaching and learning contexts.*' (ibid.)

Similarly, in most competency standards for Adult Educators, such as the Competency Framework of the European Projects „Flexi-Path" (Flexi-Path, 2010), or national standards like „Standards for teaching and supporting learning in further education in England and Wales" (FENTO - Further Education National Training Organisation, 1999), the „Professional Standards for Teachers, Tutors and Trainers in the Lifelong Learning Sector" (UK) (Lifelong Learning UK, 2006), the „GRETA"-Competence Model for Adult Educators (D) (Lencer & Strauch, 2016) or in the International Core Curriculum for Adult Educators „globALE" (DVV International, 2015), the requirements for dealing with digital media are described only superficially and rudimentarily (Rohs, Bolten, et al., 2017).

In contrast to this, the competence model by Research voor Beleid (Buiskool & Broek, 2011; Buiskool, Broek, van Lakerveld, Zarifis, & Osborne, 2010) presents ICT competence as a particular sub-competence, affording the field a special significance. This competence model describes 7 key competences and 12 specific competences (see fig. 1)

Figure 1: Graphic representation of the set of key competences of adult learning professionals (Buiskool et al., 2010, p. 33)
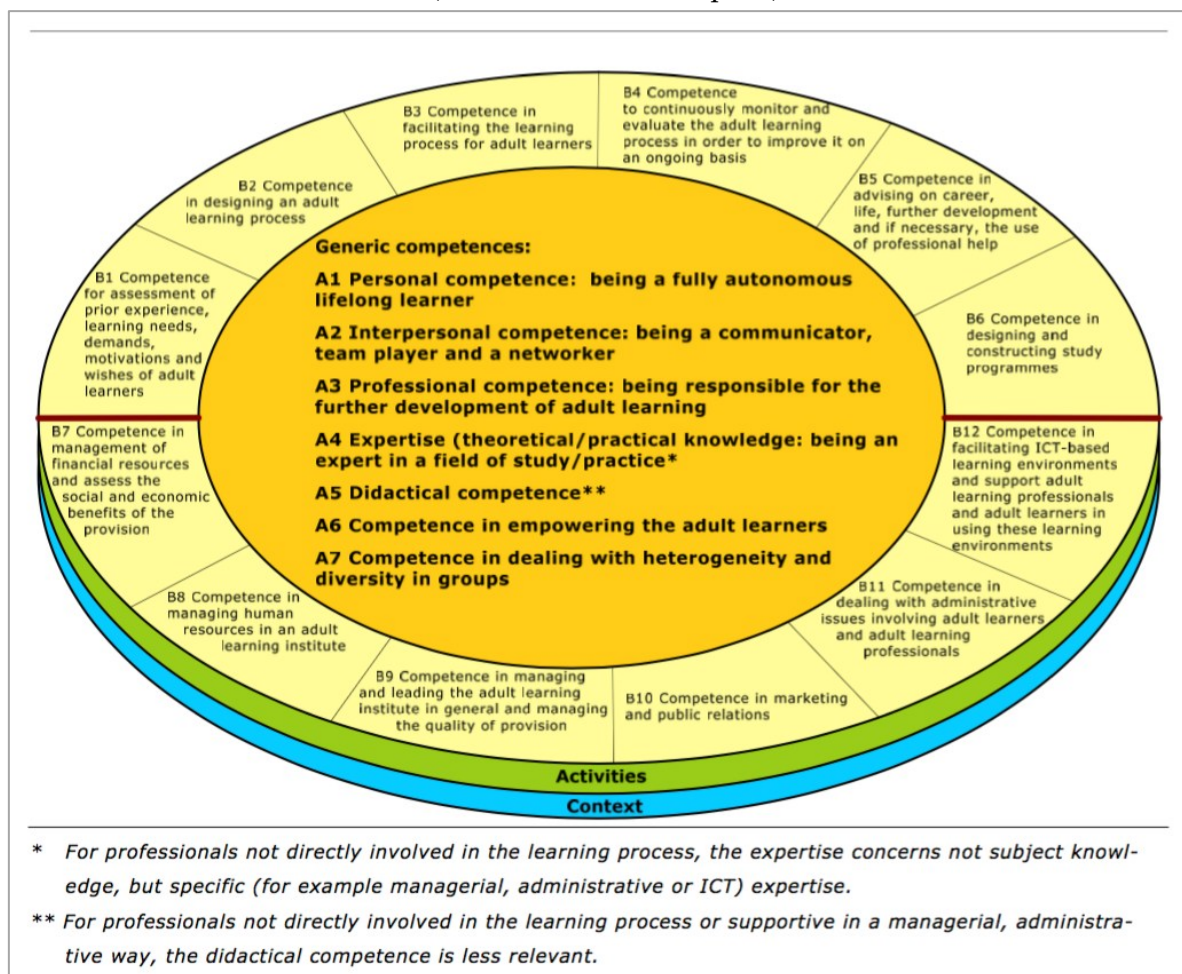
One of these special competencies is ICT support activities. Buiskool et al. (2010) consider that ICT is becoming more and more important and that areas of responsibility in adult education are changing as a result of the use, but above all the development and maintenance, of online learning environments. They list the following areas of responsibility for ICT support:

- Contribute to the design of ICT-based and mixed mode programmes of study, using multiple forms of media (the worldwide web, integrating text, audio and video).
- Delivery of the ICT-based programmes.
- Collaboration in design teams, involving teachers, learners, administrators and instructional designers.
- Conduct and facilitate assessment within on-line environments.
- Use of electronic discussion forums and other media including PC-based audio and video-conferencing for academic and guidance support.

- Contribute to the design of web pages for marketing; maintain personal   web pages. (ibid., p. 39)

The lack of media pedagogical competences in most competency models of adult education can be attributed to the fact that empirical analyzes have not shown the need (e.g. Flexi-Path, 2010) or that the descriptions are too general, so that the specifics of learning with digital media are implied but not formulated.

The low consideration of media pedagogic competences has the consequence that there is at most little orientation in the design of educational offerings or the description of job requirements for adult educators, especially in the field of digital media. As a result, there is a risk that media competencies will be less relevant for curricula and staffing at all.

5. Professsionalization of teachers in the field of digital media

5.1 Formal, non-formal and informal learning

Since European education policy is often reflected in the national guidelines on education policy requirements, it is not surprising that the promotion of media pedagogical competencies of teachers can also be also found in national strategy papers, curricula, educational standards and programs (European Commission, 2015b). Although media education is largely addressed in all areas of teachers' training, it is usually teacher training in schools, which is particularly important, whereupon the field of continuing education is less strongly taken into account.

One reasons for this is the fact that the teacher education for schools is in public responsibility, while professional standards for teachers in adult education are in responsibility of professional associations. Therefore, the professional standards for teachers in adult education are as heterogeneous as the field of adult education itself.

Looking at the individual professionalization of adult educators in dealing with digital media it is possible to distinguish between formal and non-formal continuing education and informal learning. The sections below focus on German education and continuing education.

a) Formal education and continuing education

Numerous academics and professional associations have gone along with this requirement. For adult education there is no systematic overview of the extent to which the requirement has been implemented. However, a rough review shows that digital media is currently addressed in many adult education study courses. Some even place a particular emphasis on digital media, such as the '*Lifelong learning and media education*' course (MA, University of Mainz) and '*Education, specifically intercultural, media and adult*

education' (BA, Bundeswehr University Munich). However, on closer inspection it is apparent that there is a lot of variation in the breadth and depth of incorporating media education topics in study courses. In some there is a focus on aspects of media didactics, some include a comprehensive review of all areas of media education. There are also differences in whether they are oriented more towards theory or implementation and whether they focus on digital media or the broad discussion of analogue and digital media (Rohs, Bolten, et al., 2017).

The different anchoring of media-related topics can amongst other traced back to the fact that digital media are not consider in the recommendations of the German Society for Education (section for adult education) for the design of adult education study courses (DGFE - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, 2006).

b) Non-formal continuing education

Whilst in the field of formal education there are already a large number of study programmes for adult educators which address media education topics, a complete overview of the field of non-formal education is not possible. A great number of institutions with different sponsors offer corresponding programmes. Von Hippel (2007) mentions, amongst others, adult education centres, churches, federal state media authorities, trade unions, political foundations, private providers and associations. The topics and target groups also vary widely.

Although there are statistics and programme analyses available for adult education programmes, there are no specific analysis for '*train the trainer*' programmes in the field of media education competencies for Germany. An analysis of professionalization programmes is very difficult purely due to the fact that these programmes are often geared only towards in-house trainers and so are not publicised. Course databases for course leaders, such as QUALIDAT[i] in Germany make it possible to get an overview of public courses. During the last year the scale of programmes is linked with '*media*' content is about 3-4 percent. The majority of these are communication and presentation courses.

Overall, it can be stated that there is no statistics on the amount of media pedagogical trainings for adult educators. An exploratory analysis shows, however, that the courses are often functionally oriented and hardly include any elements of reflection. This is also confirmed by a German regional study by von Hippel (2007). Irrespective of this, due to the precarious employment of adult educators, it can be assumed that participation in training is very low.

c) Informal learning

According to different studies informal learning play a major role for professionalization of adult educators (e.g. Guimaraes & Sanchos, 2009; Hutchins et al., 2010). Of particular importance is the learning in the process of work, the exchange with colleagues or Internet search, as Hutchins, Burke und Berthelsen (2010) illustrate:

> "…*trainers currently use informal more than formal methods to learn about transfer, such as seeking information from other internal trainers, learning through work experiences, reading books (not periodicals), or searching the Web. Trainers also reported learning about transfer through formal methods, such as attending practitioner conferences, but to a lesser extent.*"

> (ibid., S. 599).

It is believed, that informal learning on the job is also importance for media pedagogical competences (e.g. Treumann, Baacke, Haacke, Hugger, & Vollbrecht, 2002, p. 344). But there is also a need for empirical studies.

5.2 Biographical process of professionalization

On the whole the acquisition of media education knowledge in different forms of learning takes place in different ways during the course of a career, i.e. formal and non-formal learning is important alongside informal forms of learning. The results of a recent study on the biographical acquisition of media pedagogic competences of adult educators showed that all interviewees were so-called "early adopters" and were already working with digital media early on in their lives (Rohs & Bolten, 2017). The results suggest that a biographically acquired media habitus had a positive effect on the use of digital media in teaching / learning processes.

As a hypothesis, it may be argued that the use of digital media requires a positive basic attitude as well as knowledge about the use of digital media that are not mainly acquired in pedagogical education, but in other biographical contexts: in a private environment, such as a family or a circle of friends, as well as in the educational or professional context, such as a computer science study.

Due to the partial or missing media education of adult educators, the acquisition of media pedagogical competencies is bound in specific work requirements and individual interests, as shown by the findings of Maier-Gutheil and Hof (2011):

> "*In this process, two forms of professional learning can be differentiated through these examples: first, the development of professionalism as the continuous adjustment to professional requirements by acquiring knowledge and ability and second, the*

development of professionalism as a realisation of individual interests and competence because of available possibilities."

(ibid. p. 85)

6. Conclusion

Corresponding to the strategic cornerstones of European education policy, the competent handling of digital media is a central prerequisite for economic competitiveness, individual development, social participation and the avoidance of inequality. Media pedagogical competences of adult educators are a central prerequisite for this.

The analysis of the current situation shows that digital media plays an underpart roles in the competence models or the formal training of adult educators. It is chiefly seen as an appendix to basic competencies. The radical changes that digitalisation will mean in future, including for adult education, are not yet being reflected. As a result the competence profiles give no clear description of exactly what abilities adult educators must have with regards to using digital media. In fact engagement with media education requirements is left to informal and self-guided acquisition.

At the same time there is a lack of both research findings on competence requirements for the use of digital media in adult education and knowledge about the current media pedagogical competences of teachers in adult education. At the same time there is a lack of information on how adult educators acquire media education competencies and how this process can be supported through appropriate measures.

In order to achieve the described objectives of the European education policy in the field of media education, it is necessary not only to describe the objectives, but also to create the prerequisites that these goals can be achieved. This includes a stronger emphasis on media pedagogical competences in the training of adult educators , as well as the need to include media pedagogical competences in (all) competency models and core curricula for adult educators. Although it is possible to make use of the experiences and research results of teacher training in the school sector.

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