
synergies

Linking the Competences and Validation Related Needs of Disadvantaged Learners in Adult Education with the European and National Qualifications Frameworks

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TOOLS AND METHODS FOR THE PROCESS OF VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL ACQUIRED COMPETENCES

EDITED BY LUDWIG ZEIER WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ALL THE PARTNERS OF
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Cooperation Partners:



PART 1

WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE SPEAK ABOUT “COMPETENCES, VALIDATION, NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL”?

1. INTRODUCTION

The collected methods and tools of validation in this publication are an outcome of the Erasmus+ project “Synergies”. The methods and approaches of this toolkit are quite diverse and they are partly the result of a research looking for good practice examples of organisations of adult education all over Europe and partly methods developed by the partners in the project. The partners have chosen methods and tools which they find fruitful in their daily work with migrants and refugees. A part of them the partners tested in their work and disseminated them in train the trainer workshops and discussed them with stakeholders and experts. As an outcome of the testing period the partners improved the methods and tools due to the feedbacks and testing experiences.

The partners of the project come from Austria (uniT Graz), Germany (LAG Brandenburg), Italy (Alpha) and Spain (baobab).¹ The given toolkit provides quite a variety of approaches for different situations and the contributions are in the partner languages German, Italian Spanish and in English, too.

2. DEFINITION OF COMPETENCES

Before presenting different methods it is helpful to clarify what we mean when we speak about competences. The graphic² below can help to understand what most of the experts mean under the term “competence”.



¹ Further information on synergies.online. There you can find other outcomes of the project. Visit also our community of practice on Epale: <https://ec.europa.eu/epale/de/private/synergies-validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

² See Erpenbeck und Rosenstiel 2007; XII

We want to point out that the term “competences” includes the terms “knowledge, skills, qualifications” but the term “competence” is broader than the sum of these. To be able to act in complex, open and insecure situations values, norms and rules are very important, too and have to be considered as a part of being competent.

Specific terminology of both, adult education and human resource management often refers to the definition coined by philosopher of science John Erpenbeck and the psychologist Lutz von Rosenstiehl who understand competences as “generalised self-organised dispositions - as an outcome of development processes - of complex and adaptive systems, particularly of human individuals, to reflecting creative problem solving actions with respect to general classes of complex and selective meaningful situations”³

This definition clearly shows that it is very difficult to measure competences and as a consequence it is quite a challenge to validate competences. That may be one of the reason why the validation of non-formal and informal competences is not that advancing in the last decade despite all the supporting documents of the European Commission and the qualification frameworks on the European and national levels. It is much easier to rely on formal competences because there is a certain prove – a certificate – showing the qualification of people. But that does not automatically mean – as written above – that it really proves the competences.

But what do we mean by speaking of formally, non-formal and informally acquired competences?

- **Formally Acquired Competences**

Formal learning means pursuing institutionalised and structured ways of learning that are finalised by a certification procedure. In German-speaking countries, this expression is limited to educational paths offered within the state-regulated education and qualification system (school, university, dual vocational education system), which lead to further educational or professional authorisations.⁴

- **Non-Formally Acquired Competences**

Non-formal learning denotes an educational path that is targeted and runs according to a certain plan, but which ends without a certification procedure-This form of learning often occurs as an educational activity in companies and in institutions offering further education. Certification evolving from these courses is often only valid outside the formal education system.⁵

- **Informally Acquired Competences**

Informal learning denotes the competences acquired in everyday life, within the family, during leisure time or at work. It does not involve a curriculum or certificate. Here, the private context is decisive.⁶

³ Erpenbeck und Rosenstiel 2007, XXIII

⁴ Cf Gnahs 2003

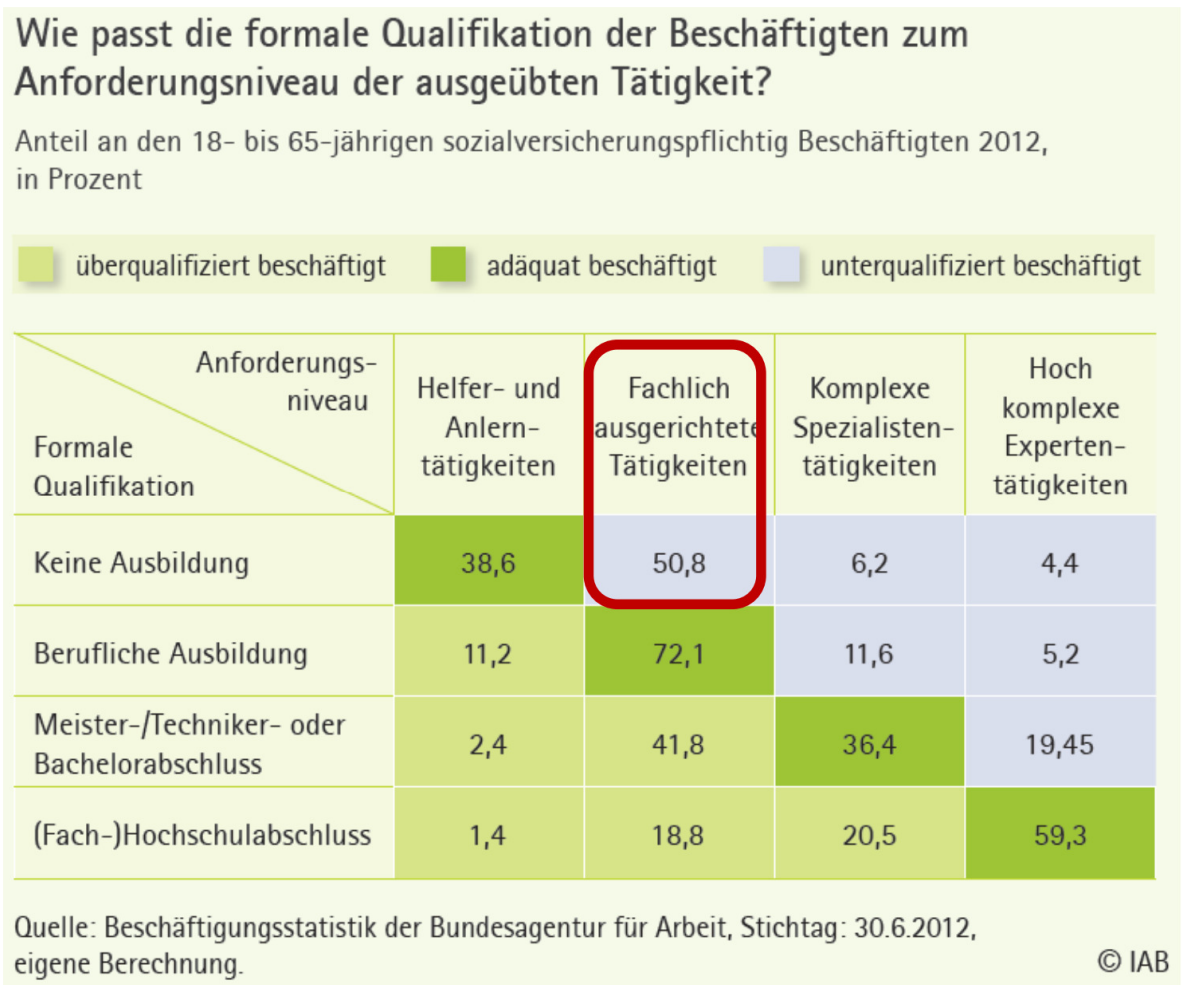
⁵ Cf ibid.

⁶ Cf ibid.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF VALIDATION

There are several reasons why European countries shall foster the validation of prior learning. One type of arguments are moral-based arguments such as the fairness of payment and the value of being appreciated as a human being with all the competencies one has.

Talking about the fairness of payment we should mention that in European countries a lot of migrants working on a higher level than their qualification level is. That means that they are paid less than the employer normally pays for this work. 3 millions of “low skilled” employees do already skilled work in Germany. The statistic below shows that in more detail⁷



Especially looking at one of the main target group of the project – refugees and asylum-seekers, it must be mentioned that 81% of the asylum seekers in Germany do not have any vocational or academic degree, 23% of them went to school less than 5 years. But 61% have gathered substantial work experience. It is obvious that they must have gathered informal competencies which might be quite useful for the labour market.

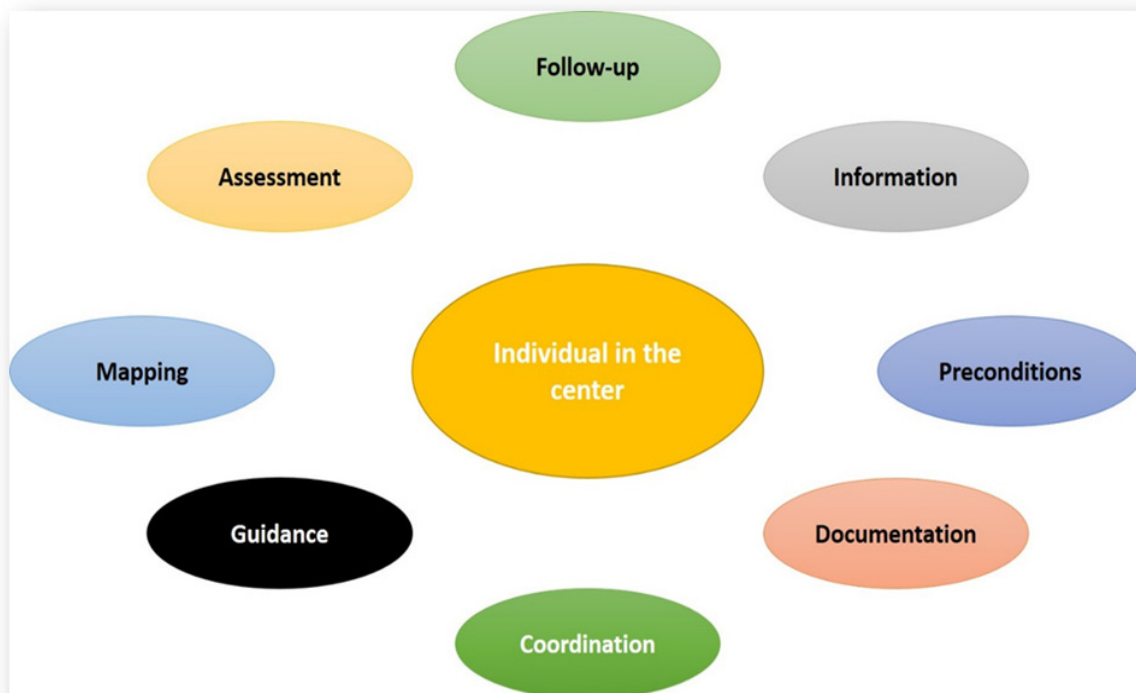
That leads us to a type of economic based arguments for the importance of validation. In some European countries, for example Germany and Finland, there is upcoming lack of qualified workers

⁷ These arguments are based on a lecture of Martin Noack. Cf Noack 2018

on the one hand, on the other hand most of the European countries do not need that much low skilled workers. These group of employees faces higher risks of unemployment. As mentioned above migrants and refugees belong mainly to this group of workers and for them, their integration in the labour market and the society it is very important to validate their hidden competences and to offer tailor-fit further qualification measures for them which would be much cheaper than to ignore all the competences and to start the qualification measures from the scratch. Also in Austria high skilled migrants very often cannot work on their level of competences which means that they loose their competences – a process of dequalification and brain waste.⁸

4. THE PROCESS OF VALIDATION

Validation is a process with different steps. Different methods address different steps of this process mostly not the whole process. Adult education organisations can support parts of a validation process but they often are not able to provide assessment leading to formal certificates. But that does not mean that they cannot support a process of validation meaningfully because assessment is only one part of the process. To get an overview over the whole process the Nordic model of quality management of validation is useful.⁹



⁸ Cf. Tschiggerl 2015

⁹ Cf Karttunen 2018, 2018

Most of the steps are quite logical and self explaining. Just a few comments on them especially concerning adult education organisations and their possibilities to support that step.

Information: Looking at our target group, migrants and refugees often do not realize how important validation in European countries can be. They do not know enough about our system. For them validation and further qualification is a quite long and exhausting procedure. So adult education can help to motivate them to do it and they can provide guidance to do it in the most effective way which is possible. They also can create information material which is accessible, motivating and understandable for the target group.

Preconditions: This step includes the existing laws, the funding, the cooperation structures, the assessment criteria etc. It is important for the organisations themselves to deal with these preconditions, it is the background to their work with the target group. It is very useful to cooperate in validation processes with important stakeholders to improve the methods. In our toolkit Baobab and Alpha will give us examples for possible cooperation models.

Documentation: It is very useful to have a systematic and transparent approach to validation in an organisation that means to have plans, timelines, possible results etc. uniT includes validation steps into their workshops for “Basisbildung” and “Pflichtschulabschluss” in workshops for orientation in the labour market combined with short internships in enterprises. So that is quite a clear context and a focussed validation process which improves the self-esteem and the job-orientation of the participants.

Coordination: Coordination includes the training of trainers (as we did as well in the Synergies-project) the forming of networks and community of practice of VNFIL professionals (as we try on our Epale-platform – everyone who is interested is invited to be part of this community of practice:

<https://ec.europa.eu/epale/de/private/synergies-validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>)

Guidance: As we described above guidance is one crucial task adult education can provide for validation. Guidance can motivate for validation, can show the benefits of validation. It can help to identify hidden competences, can give advice how to use the results of the validation process and can show further learning paths which are available. In the tools of uniT and LAG Brandenburg one can find a lot of methods for identifying competences and for further orientation in personal career planning.

Mapping: In the uniT and LAG contributions one can find ways to collect the documentation of the competences, to create portfolios etc.

that is not the main task for adult education. uniT can assess most of the parts of the “Pflichtschulabschluss” which focusses on generic competences and language skills.

Follow-Up: To support people after the process of validation – it does not matter if the results are positive or negative – is very important. Unfortunately it is oft not that well-funded as it should be. It is mostly done by the labour market services.

TOOLS AND METHODS FOR VALIDATION

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Cooperation Partners:



1. INTRODUCTION

Our collection of tools and methods includes methods developed from the partners or inside the community of practice they are part of. A few methods are developed by other organisations and projects but we include them because at least one of the project partners use them in their work. All the methods we describe have been successfully used by the “Synergies” – consortium.

2. COMPETENCE CARDS¹⁰

OBJECTIVES AND AREA OF APPLICATION IN THE PROCESS OF VALIDATION

This method is developed by the Bertelsmann-Stiftung in 2015. For our target group the competence cards are very useful because they are not that much language-based. They mainly deal with **generic competences** and it is a **self evaluation tool**. This tool is very useful in the **guidance** in a validation process.

The main objectives of this tool are to help to identify and to document transversal competences and to raise the self-awareness of the own capacities.

DESCRIPTION

There are 46 competence cards in the three areas of social, personal, technical and methodological competences, 11 interest cards and 3 supplemental cards. Each competence is illustrated by a picture, described by a sentence and translated in the following five languages: German, French, Russian, Arabish and Turkish. Further information and questions about the given competence can be found on the backside of each card.

The front of the card is aimed at the clients, the back more to the coach/trainer.

Social Competences

¹⁰ Cf. Noack 2018 and www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/competence-cards

SOCIAL COMPETENCES

Soziale Kompetenz

Nr. 01_1 Begeisterungsfähigkeit

Nr. 01_2 Einfühlungsvermögen

Nr. 01_3 Führungsfähigkeit

Nr. 01_4 Hilfsbereitschaft

Nr. 01_5 Interkulturelle Kompetenz

Nr. 01_6 Kommunikationsfähigkeit

Nr. 01_7 Konfliktlösefähigkeit

Nr. 01_8 Kontaktfähigkeit

Nr. 01_9 Soziales Engagement

Nr. 01_10 Teamfähigkeit



Teamwork skills

Travail en équipe

Умение работать в команде

مهارات العمل الجماعي


Takım çalışması

PERSONAL COMPETENCES

Personale Kompetenz


Nr. 02_1 Anpassungsfähigkeit	Nr. 02_31 Kritikfähigkeit
Nr. 02_2 Auffassungsfähigkeit/-gabe	Nr. 02_32 Lernbereitschaft
Nr. 02_3 Ausdauerfähigkeit	Nr. 02_33 Motivation/ Leistungsbereitschaft
Nr. 02_4 Begeisterungsfähigkeit	Nr. 02_34 Sorgfalt/Genauigkeit
Nr. 02_5 Belastbarkeit	Nr. 02_35 Umgang mit Geld
Nr. 02_6 Eigeninitiative	Nr. 02_36 Verantwortungsbewusstsein
Nr. 02_7 Entscheidungsfähigkeit	Nr. 02_37 Zielstrebigkeit/ Ergebnisorientierung
Nr. 02_8 Flexibilität	Nr. 02_38 Zuverlässigkeit
Nr. 02_9 Ganzheitliches Denken	
Nr. 02_10 Kreativität	

Nr. 02_10 Kreativität



Creativity
Creativité
Kreativität

Nr. 02_38 Zuverlässigkeit



Reliability
Fiabilité
Надежность
أمانة
Örneklik


Andere können sich auf mich verlassen. Ich kann Ver-
antwortung übernehmen.

PROFESSIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCES

Fach- und Methodenkompetenz


Nr. 03_1 Analyse- und Problemlösefähigkeit	Nr. 03_11 Schreibkompetenz
Nr. 03_2 Arbeiten am PC	Nr. 03_12 Selbstständiges Arbeiten
Nr. 03_3 Arbeitsplanung	Nr. 03_13 Sprachkenntnisse
Nr. 03_4 Improvisationsfähigkeit	Nr. 03_14 Technische und handwerkliche Fertigkeiten
Nr. 03_5 Kinderbetreuung organisieren	Nr. 03_15 Verhandlungsgeschick
Nr. 03_6 Kundenorientierung	Nr. 03_16 wissenschaftliches Arbeiten
Nr. 03_7 Organisationsfähigkeit	Nr. 03_17 Wissensmanagement
Nr. 03_8 Pädagogische Kompetenz	Nr. 03_18 Zeitmanagement
Nr. 03_9 Pflegekompetenz	
Nr. 03_10 Referieren, Vortragstätigkeit	

Nr. 03_10 Referieren, Vortragstätigkeit



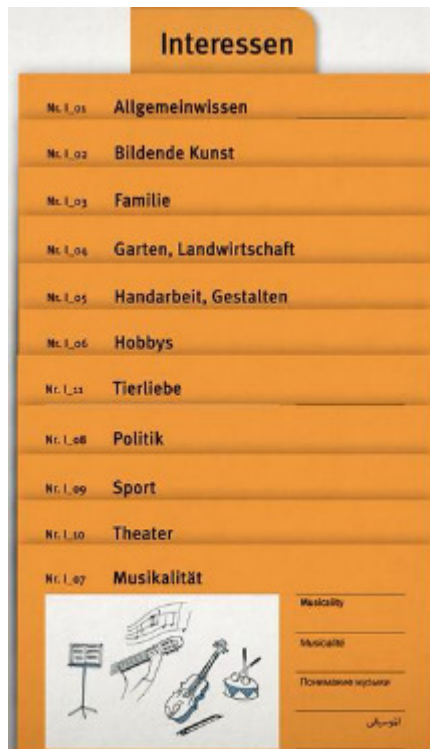
Presenting
أداء
Fluency
présentation
Умение выступать
مهارات العرض

Nr. 03_18 Zeitmanagement



Time management
Gestion du temps
Управление временем
إدارة الوقت

INTERESTS



OUR EXPERIENCES

We use the cards as one of the methods to start the conversation for identifying competences and to raise the self-esteem of the clients because they see that they have capacities. It is part of a portfolio-work to foster job-orientation and to develop the further career path of the clients.

3) TOOLKITS DEVELOPED BY THE PARTNERS OF THE SYNERGY-CONSORTIUM

- 1) **Introduction:** This introductory document contains **a clarification of main terms** linked to validation such as competence, knowledge, skills, formally, non-formally and informally acquired competences. The importance of validation of non-formally and informally acquired is highlighted and the process of validation is described.

In the second part of the introduction we present **one tool of validation**, the competence cards of the Bertelsmann-Stiftung. For our target group the competence cards are very useful because they are not that much language-based. They mainly deal with **generic competences** and it is **a self evaluation tool**. This tool is very useful in the **guidance** in a validation process.

This presentation is followed by brief sketches of the tools of the Synergies-partners which are fully described in special documents.

- 2) **The uniT-Toolkit:** It helps to denominate, describe and visualize the own personal competences in various different fields of action. That is a change to open up perspectives and possibilities that may have an impact on future education and career choices. In this respect, the competence-profile serves as a tangible orientation tool that maps the own position, builds up strength-oriented terminology and develops a dynamic self-image. Moreover, it fosters self-efficacy and lays the foundation for the

competence to shape and design the own individual education and career paths. The methods used are part of uniT's art of learning, so they are based **on creative and artistic approaches**. The toolkit deals with **generic as well as professional competences**. It is a self-evaluation tool which is very useful for **guidance** and **mapping** competences.

- 3) **LAG Brandenburg**: The first document gives an **overview** over the possibilities to assess non-formally and informally acquired competences in Germany. Discussion pros and cons of these methods. (English)
The second document shows one way of assessing professional competences in the "Netzwerk Integration durch Qualifizierung" It is a tool to **document** the process of validation, to **assess** professional competences from an outside perspective, **to map** these competences and to offer **guidance**. (German – long presentation; short version on a folder).
- 4) **BAOBAB**: This document is a strategic paper that develops the perspective of assessing competences in companies during a period of internship. It discusses the main steps of this process which is linked to EFQR and the Spanish QR and the main preparatory steps to enable companies to fulfil this task. The document is mainly dealing with preconditions, documentation, assessment and mapping.
- 5) **Alpha**: This document consists of training material aimed at training professionals in adult education. The training material is organised in a Toolkit, focused on the paths leading to the validation of competencies of disadvantaged learners, and consists of pedagogical material easy to use. The document focusses on **preconditions** of validation such as to create an inclusive culture in the organisations dealing with validation and **in mapping and identifying** competences using the Europass, the Profile Pass and the Youth Pass and how to assess competences especially in the field of caretaking.

All the documents can be found on our website and the Epale Community of Practice.

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