

Literacy practitioner competencies

Bernhard Grämiger
Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung SVEB

Marlise Leinauer
EB Zürich

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Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Uncontested literacy practitioner competencies
3. Formal Literacy practitioners qualifications
4. Questions for the workshop

Introduction

SVEB

- Swiss umbrella organisation for Adult Education, **514 members**, including institutions and trainers, **17 employees**, head office in Zurich, branch offices in the French and Italian speaking parts of Switzerland.

EB Zürich

- Largest state-run institution for vocational training, **16'000 participants** per year, **400 trainers** for ICT, languages, management, teacher training, implementing the **training for literacy teachers**.

Introduction

- There's a common agreement on the fact that teaching literacy requires **a special set of competencies**
- The TRAIN consortium has developed a list of competencies - most of these competencies are **uncontested**
- **But:** some crucial aspects of the discussion in the literacy field have an influence on the competencies perceived as essential
 - **The role of the practitioner**
 - **The learning content and the target group**

Literacy practitioner competencies (undisputed)

General Knowledge and understanding

- Knowledge of the causes and effects of poor literacy

Professional competencies include

- Experience in the adult education area
- Ability to teach reading and writing to adults
- Ability to recognise blockages and learning difficulties
- Ability to initiate a common learning process with heterogeneous learner groups

Literacy practitioner competencies (undisputed)

Methodological expertise include

- Knowledge and the ability to make use of different approaches and methods of literacy provision
- Ability to organize a learning environment that is supportive for the learner
- Ability to meet the needs of different learner types

Literacy practitioner competencies (undisputed)

Soft Skills include

- Capability of establishing a climate based on respect, appreciation and partnership to enhance the learners' self esteem
- Capability of understanding the difficulties of the learner and to work with them in a solution-oriented way

Personal Competencies include

- Ability to reflect and change personal concepts as well as attitudes regarding teaching and learning

Formal literacy practitioner qualification

Two different approaches to qualifying literacy practitioners

- Switzerland
- Austria

Switzerland: context / background

- Practitioners today are mostly speech therapists with additional qualifications in Adult Education
- Most of them work on a part-time basis
- In Switzerland exists a basic qualification for Adult Educators (SVEB 1 - certificate)
- No formal literacy teacher course in German speaking part of Switzerland until 2006
- Ministry of Culture initiates professionalisation project as part of a strategy to improve quality of services provided to learners

Switzerland

Modular literacy teacher course “LiteratorIn”

Level	Vocational qualification for literacy teachers
Target group	Adult Educators who wish to work with literacy classes Applicants need SVEB 1 certificate (Basic level)
Duration	3 modules, 4 days per module 12 days in total, over a period 9 months
Goal	The “Literator” <ul style="list-style-type: none">• has a understanding of the causes and effects of literacy problems• is able to teach Reading and Writing classes for adults

Switzerland

Modular structure of the course:

Module 1

Literacy in the (inter-)cultural context

Module 2a

Methods for native speakers

Module 2b

Methods for migrants

Module 3

Planning and steering learning processes

Austria: context / background

- Until 2003 new teachers were trained “on the job” by those more experienced
- Practitioners were mostly primary and secondary school teachers with no special qualification in Adult Education
- Most practitioners work part-time on a freelance basis
- Situation changed when the literacy teacher diploma course was developed in 2003 with the goals to improve quality in literacy provision

Austria

Diploma course “Alphabetisierung und Basisbildung mit Erwachsenen deutscher Muttersprache”

Level	University level, leading to a formal diploma
Target group	Pedagogues and Adult Educators, social workers and advisors
Duration	12 modules plus peer groups; approx. 44 days in total The course takes 2 years
Goal	Deepen know-how in the literacy field and to build up competences to efficiently work with illiterate learners
Content	Introduction to Adult Education, literacy in the social context, methodology and didactics, using ICT, conflict management, project management, evaluation methods

Questions for the workshop

Three aspects that influence the competencies a Literacy practitioner needs:

- **Aspect 1:** Roles in literacy teaching
- **Aspect 2:** Learning content
- **Aspect 3:** Target group

Aspect 1: Roles in literacy teaching

- Teacher: Working with medium sized groups according to a course syllabus.
 - Tutor: Working with small groups of individuals according to their agenda.
 - Counsellor: Giving advice and support on an individual basis.
- ⇒ Which role is most appropriate and effective?
- ⇒ Which competencies are needed for this role?

Aspect 2: Learning content

- Should a literacy teacher only teach reading and writing or should literacy, numeracy and ICT be an integrated content?

Aspect 3: Target groups

- Should native speakers and migrants be taught in the same group or not?

Contact

SVE ■
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Bernhard Grämiger
Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung SVEB
Oerlikonerstrasse 38
8057 Zürich

T: +41 44 311 64 55
bernhard.graemiger@alice.ch

www.alice.ch

Contact

SVE ■
FSEA ▲

Marlise Leinauer
EB Zürich
Bildungszentrum für Erwachsene
Riesbachstrasse 11
8090 Zürich

T: +41 44 385 83 45
marlise.leinauer@eb-zuerich.ch

www.eb-zuerich.ch