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Autoren:

Vanessa Alberti, Sophie Hillerich & Anne Strauch

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# DIE RESULTATE

aus Forschung und  
Entwicklung



## The GRETA competence model 2.0

Professional competences of teachers in adult  
education

VANESSA ALBERTI, SOPHIE HILLERICH &  
ANNE STRAUCH

## Introduction

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The GRETA competence model is a structural model that maps competences that are relevant for professional teaching in adult and continuing education. A first version<sup>1</sup> was developed in 2016 in the project GRETA by the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE) in cooperation with eight nationwide professional associations of adult and continuing education in Germany<sup>2</sup>. In 2020/21, the model was completely revised with the aim of incorporating digital competence requirements to a greater extent. This guide introduces the model through a graphical representation and offers detailed descriptions and definitions of all competence areas and facets listed in the model.

## What is the GRETA competence model?

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In Germany, about 530,000 people work as teachers, trainers, educators, instructors, lecturers and learning facilitators in adult and continuing education. There are many different names for the group of teaching professionals, and even more diverse is the spectrum of activities covered by this group of professionals. No matter whether it is a course on agile working, a creative movement and performance course, a Spanish language course or health education – it is the teachers and trainers who enable and support adult learning through creating and offering educational opportunities. So far, there has been a lack of systematised knowledge about the competences required for teaching in this field. Although there are special training and qualification programmes for teachers and trainers in adult education, it can be assumed that many of them acquire the necessary pedagogical competences infor-

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- Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten e.V. (AdB) [*Association of German Educational Organisations*]
- Bundesarbeitskreis Arbeit und Leben (AuL) [*Federal Working Group Work and Life*]
- Bundesverband der Träger beruflicher Bildung e.V. (BBB) [*Federal Association of Vocational Training Providers*]
- Deutsche Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Erwachsenenbildung (DEAE) (*until Nov. 2017*) [*German Protestant Working Group for Adult Education*]
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung und Fernstudium e.V. (DGWF) [*German Association for University Continuing and Distance Education*]
- Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV) [*Adult Education Centre Association*]
- Dachverband der Weiterbildungsorganisationen e.V. (DVWO) [*Umbrella Association of Continuing Education Organisations*]
- Verband Deutscher Privatschulverbände e.V. (VDP) [*Federation of German Private School Associations*]

mally in their daily work. However, most teachers are not even aware of the competences they have acquired in this way. This means that they are not able to demonstrate their competences to third parties and present them objectively. The GRETA project responded to this need and provided definitions of relevant knowledge and skills in a competence model. Based on this, guidelines and tools were developed that make it possible to validate and recognise the competences of teachers and trainers in adult education.

## In what context did the GRETA competence model emerge?

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In the project GRETA I, a research and development project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research from 2014 to 2018, an inter-agency procedure for the recognition and assessment of the competences of teachers and trainers in adult and continuing education was developed. The aim was to help increase professionalisation and contribute to strengthening the field of adult education as a whole. In close consultation with umbrella organisations from relevant areas of adult and continuing education, structures were prepared to promote the development of professionalism in two ways: on the one hand, teachers and trainers should be given the opportunity to have their informally or non-formally acquired competences recognised. On the other hand, participation in further training and qualification programmes should be strengthened as a way for teachers and trainers to further develop their professionalism. The conceptual basis is provided by the GRETA competence model, which maps all relevant competences required for teaching – regardless of subject, client, or employment situation. As a result, the project offers orientation on the competence requirements for teachers and trainers in adult education.

In the second project phase from 2018 to 2022, the GRETA tools and concepts developed in the first project phase were piloted. Moreover, they were further developed especially with regard to the increasing digitalisation of teaching and learning settings.

## How was the competence model developed?

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Against the background of the heterogeneity of adult education in Germany, the challenge in the development of the model was to describe which competences of teachers and trainers should be considered relevant across fields and institutions, and to make the model both practical and in line with scientific knowledge and research. In developing the model, emphasis was placed on analysing theoretical foundations, integrating existing competence models, and gathering the opinions of practitioners and experts. This should ensure a constant feedback process between academia and the field. For this purpose, a methodological approach was chosen with various research steps building on each other, in which different perspectives were systematically integrated. These included, for example, the perspectives of management and planning staff in adult education institutions, teachers, and trainers from all fields of adult and continuing education as well as the perspectives of the project partners.

*Starting from typical situations at work*

The development of the model was based on the assumption that the professional work of teachers and trainers always involves a certain sequence of actions, i.e. regardless of the subject, the institution and the target group: The course or the educational offer must first be agreed with the cooperating institution, it must be designed, planned and prepared; this is followed by the actual didactic-methodical implementation of the course and the communication with the participants, before a phase in which evaluation and reflection take place which, in turn, can lead to a revision of the teaching, if necessary.

*A holistic understanding of competence*

We understand competences to be the cognitive abilities and skills available to individuals and which can be learned by individuals to solve certain problems and the associated motivational, volitional, and social readiness's and abilities to be able to use the problem solutions successfully and responsibly in variable situations (Weinert, 2001, p. 27).

*Parts of this text have already been published in German here: Lencer, S. & Strauch, A. (2016). Das GRETA-Kompetenzmodell für Lehrende in der Erwachsenen- und Weiterbildung [The GRETA Competence Model for Teachers in Adult and Continuing Education].*

[www.die-bonn.de/doks/2016-erwachsenenbildung-02.pdf](http://www.die-bonn.de/doks/2016-erwachsenenbildung-02.pdf)

## Why the GRETA 2.0 model was developed?

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Increasing digitisation has an impact on teaching and learning and thus also on the profession of teachers and trainers. With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic at the latest, the demands on digital competences of teachers and trainers have become higher. In response to the changed requirements, the GRETA model was adapted in 2020/21 and digital competences were more strongly integrated into the model. A multi-method approach was used to extend the GRETA model: In the first step, existing models and documents on digital competences were evaluated. In the second step, scholars, and practitioners with expertise in digitisation, digital competences, and digital media were interviewed. In the third step, a questionnaire was used to assess the perspective of the teachers and trainers. This approach ensured that the revised model meets both scientific standards and practical requirements.

Following the holistic understanding of competences on which the GRETA competence model is based, digital requirements for teachers and trainers were considered and integrated into the existing competence facets of the model. Digital competences are understood in the broadest sense as media pedagogical competences: that is, the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the handling and use of digital media and tools in the context of teaching and training. Digital competence requirements for teachers and trainers are to be seen as strongly interwoven with general (adult) pedagogical competences. Accordingly, digital competence components were integrated into the definitions of the existing competence facets instead of defining a separate facet for digital competence. Thus, digital competence requirements appear in the definitions of all competence facets.

The aim was to expand the structural model to include digital competence requirements in such a way that it continues to be equally viable for teachers and trainers in different employment situations and from different areas or fields of activity, as well as for different teaching and learning formats such as online teaching or face-to-face teaching.

## How is the competence model structured?

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According to a holistic understanding of competence, the GRETA model comprises four so-called competence aspects (outer ring): *professional knowledge and skills*, *subject- and field-specific knowledge*, *professional values and beliefs*, *professional self-management*. These aspects are subdivided into competence areas (inner ring) and these in turn into competence facets (middle ring). Knowledge is understood here as theoretical or formal knowledge (e.g., field-specific knowledge), while more application-related and practical knowledge is referred to as knowledge and skills.

The *subject- and field-specific knowledge* is divided into the competence areas *subject content* and *field expertise*. The area *subject content* refers to subject-specific, theoretical, and formal knowledge and is not further specified in the generic model. Instead, it is to be defined subject-specifically due to the large thematic breadth in the spectrum of professional activities of teachers and trainers in adult education. The competence aspect *professional knowledge and skills* includes pedagogical-psychological knowledge and skills and is divided into the competence areas *pedagogy and teaching methods*, *guidance*, and *counselling as well as communication and interaction*, and *organisation*. The competence aspect *professional values and beliefs* includes the areas professional ethics and professional beliefs. The aspect of *professional self-management* includes the competence areas *motivational orientations*, *self-regulation*, and *professional experience*.

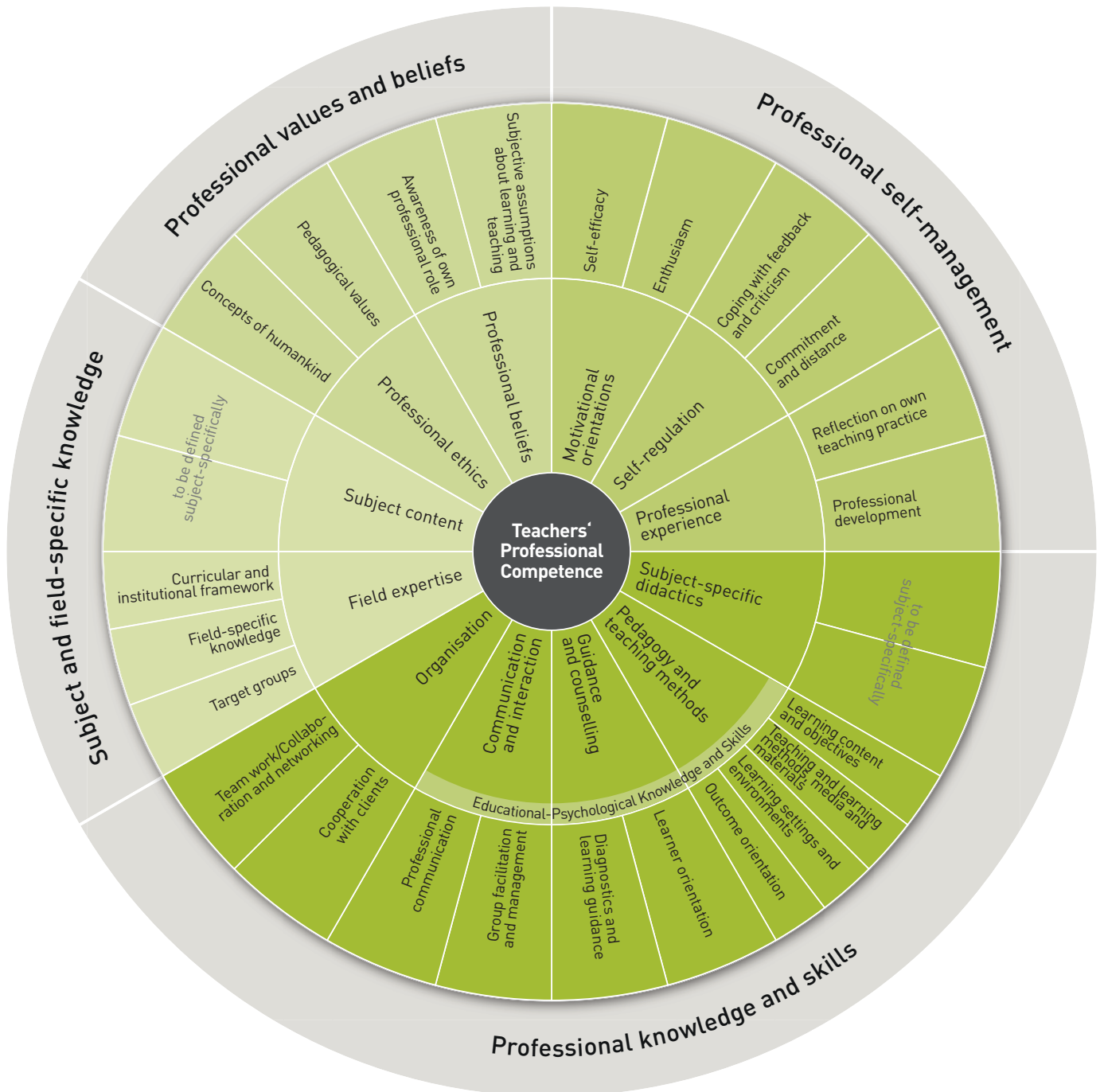
## What can the GRETA competence model be used for?

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Being a structural model, the GRETA competence model describes everything that teachers and trainers should know and be able to do professionally in typical work situations. It refers to all persons who support adult learning by planning, implementing, and evaluating educational offers, no matter what their professional status is. This can be very different. Some work full-time, many work part-time; they may be freelancers, self-employed or volunteers; also, the institutional context in which they work (from public, non-profit, and commercial to in-house training), can be very different.

The competences defined by the GRETA model are not to be understood as mandatory minimum requirements. In other words, even teachers who do not have evidence of every single facet of competence can very well be considered professional teachers. Which competences are relevant and necessary for a particular teacher depends on the context and is determined by the specific requirements of the respective workplace or field of work. The GRETA competence model is intended as a reference model and can be used in different ways depending on the context, as the following examples show:

# The GRETA competence model 2.0



- ▶ The GRETA model can be the basis for an assessment of non-formally and informally acquired competences. For this purpose, a tool was developed, the so-called Portfolio-Plus. It offers teachers and trainers in adult education the opportunity to reflect on their competences, document them in accordance with the GRETA competence model and have them assessed by trained evaluators. The results of the assessment are presented in a so-called competence balance. This includes both a graphical representation of the teacher's individual competence profile and a written description of the knowledge and skills the teacher possesses. Finally, a feedback meeting takes place in which the evaluator discusses the results of the competence assessment with the teacher in detail and, if desired, also gives suggestions for the teacher's professional development.
- ▶ The GRETA model can be used to support providers of train-the-trainer offers in analysing and further developing their provision and curricula. It can also help them to produce competence-oriented descriptions of their offers. The GRETA project has developed a so-called mapping tool which allows training providers to compare the learning outcomes of their train-the-trainer offers with the competences defined in the GRETA model.
- ▶ Similarly, training providers can use the GRETA model to recruit suitable teaching staff or use it as a template for staff interviews or for planning their staff development.
- ▶ In the long term, the establishment of a reference competence model for teachers and trainers, such as GRETA, can contribute to strengthening the social recognition of the profession and to advancing the professionalisation of the field of adult education.

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## Competence aspect

### PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

#### Competence area pedagogy and teaching methods

Pedagogy and teaching methods are the core elements of the teaching and learning process and thus are a key component of teachers' and trainers' professional knowledge and skills. Pedagogical questions essentially refer to the conception and planning of teaching and learning opportunities to enable effective learning, according to the prerequisites and prior knowledge of the participants, and to the designing of learning processes. During this planning and designing process, factors such as target group, learning setting, content, and objectives as well as the conception, implementation and evaluation of the planned offer must be taken into consideration. "Pedagogy" assumes that it is not enough to provide learners with information and expertise, but that learning processes must be designed and oriented towards learning outcomes. "Teaching Methods" refers to procedures and methodologies to achieve learning goals in a planned way. It seeks an answer to the question of how learning can be brought about and builds on pedagogical considerations. Methodological considerations put the focus on appropriate procedures and tools to achieve the defined learning goals and to promote the active participation of the learners.

#### Competence facet Learning content and objectives

The planning and use of learning content and objectives encompasses the knowledge and skills for defining a curriculum as well as learning content and objectives for an educational offer. Learning objectives serve as orientation and quality assurance about the course planning, the reflective selection of learning content, and as a point of reference for evaluations and learning level checks. When planning and selecting learning content, it is important to critically examine and evaluate both the quality of the content and the (digital) information channels and sources used. The planning of the content and objectives of a learning item should primarily be oriented towards the participants: Content and objectives should be meaningful, relevant, life-sustaining, up-to-date and useful, as well as linked to the participants' current knowledge and skills. The learning content and objectives should also be transparent for the participants and – depending on the context – be developed together with the participants in dialogue.

Learning content and objectives
Defining learning content and objectives
Examining and evaluating the quality of the learning content critically
Examining and evaluating the (digital) information channels and sources used critically
Aligning the learning content and objectives with the participants
Developing the learning content and objectives in dialogue together with the participants

## Competence facet **Teaching and learning methods, media, and materials**

The competence facet "Teaching and learning methods, media and materials" comprises the reflected and critical selection, use and design of suitable methods, (digital) media and learning materials to support and evaluate teaching and learning processes. Only if teaching methods, (digital) media and learning materials are aligned with predefined learning objectives and various influencing factors are considered, active learning is optimally promoted or made possible. Apart from being oriented towards the learning objectives, teaching methods, (digital) media and learning materials should be oriented towards the contents to be conveyed as well as the interests, (learning) needs and motivational situations of the participants, and they should consider given framework conditions. When selecting, using and designing suitable teaching methods, (digital) media and learning materials, aspects of media, copyright and data protection law as well as media ethics must be taken into account (e.g., copyright, handling of sensitive data). The teaching methods, (digital) media and learning materials used in the teaching and learning process must be evaluated. For this evaluation, it is necessary for teachers and trainers to obtain feedback from learners to optimise the educational offer based on this feedback.

Teaching and learning methods, media, and materials
Selecting, using and designing suitable teaching methods, (digital) media and learning materials reflected and critically
Aligning teaching methods, (digital) media and materials with learning content and objectives as well as participants and learning settings
Considering aspects of media, copyright, and data protection law as well as media ethics when selecting, using and designing suitable teaching methods, (digital) media and learning material
Evaluating the teaching methods, (digital) media and learning materials used in the teaching and learning process
Using (digital) tools for the evaluation of the educational offer

## Competence facet **Learning settings and environments**

The competence facet “Learning settings and environments” includes spatial, temporal, personnel, media, and organisational framework conditions in which the teaching and learning setting is embedded, and which can be influenced in a planned manner. The framework conditions include, for example, the number of participants, the target group, the topic, the physical or digital location, the duration, the learning material, and the media that are available. Digital learning settings are becoming more and more common and can be understood as planned learning arrangements in which framework conditions are created based on digital media and infrastructures that are intended to enable and promote learning. For learning processes to be successful, learning content and objectives must be compatible with the given learning environment. The task of teachers and trainers is therefore to clarify framework conditions in advance and to adapt and exploit them as best as possible in order to create a constructively supportive (digital) learning environment.

Learning settings and environments
Considering the spatial, temporal, personnel, media, and organisational framework conditions in (digital) learning environments
Adjusting the framework conditions that can be influenced in (digital) learning environments
Creating a constructively supportive (digital) learning environment by exploiting the framework conditions

## Competence facet **Outcome orientation**

The competence facet “Outcome orientation” comprises the orientation of one’s own teaching activities towards learning outcomes to be achieved. This contrasts with orientation towards learning content (“input orientation”). Outcome orientation goes hand in hand with the belief that it is not enough to simply provide the learning content to the participants, but that the learning of the participants should be specifically stimulated, promoted, and enabled. Outcome orientation means that the micro-didactic detailed planning of the concrete teaching and learning activities, the methods, and materials to be used always takes place regarding the learning outcomes to be achieved. During the teaching and learning process, the achievement of the previously defined learning outcomes must be checked in the sense of a target-performance comparison. The teacher or trainer should determine the time, frequency and type of the learning performance checks according to the situation. The assessments should also be designed in such a way that the learners are encouraged to reflect on their individual competence development process. To this end, the teacher or trainer must be familiar with different methods and (digital) tools and be able to assess their suitability for the given context (e. g., type of learning objectives to be assessed, characteristics of the participants, examination situation) and regarding data protection aspects. In purely digital learning settings (e. g., in asynchronous courses on learning platforms), learning status and

learning success are often defined by the system. Here, it is necessary for teachers and trainers to know the data-based processes underlying these surveys and, if necessary, to make them available for their own assessment in case of use.

#### Outcome orientation

Aligning one's own teaching activities with the learning outcomes to be achieved

Selecting and applying suitable methods and (digital) tools for monitoring learning success, considering data protection aspects and the given context

## Competence area **guidance and counselling**

Teachers and trainers are constantly challenged in their practice to support and advise learners. This does not necessarily involve a problem, but rather the question of the conditions under which a learner's learning potential can develop properly. In this respect, guidance as learning counselling or support is to be distinguished from psychological or socio-educational guidance. In the competence area of guidance and counselling, a distinction is made between diagnostics and guidance as well as counselling/learning support. According to this understanding, learning guidance tends to cover problem areas and areas of action in the learning of individuals. Diagnostic tools and information help to identify and analyse obstacles to learning for learners. Learning guidance and counselling is understood as guidance for the learning process during the whole course/training. The teaching required for this can best be combined with diverse didactic forms of action. Successful guidance and counselling of learners presupposes the orientation of the learning offer to the participants themselves, their demographic characteristics, previous knowledge, interests, and resources as well as their active involvement.

## Competence facet **Learner orientation**

Participants can be distinguished from addressees in that participants are the people who show up for the respective course offer, while addressees are to be understood as a potential target group. Participants in that sense are the learners. Learner orientation includes the ability to consider knowledge about relevant characteristics of the participants when planning and implementing a course to adapt the learning offer as well as possible to the needs of the participants: for example, demographic characteristics and socio-cultural imprints, previous knowledge, (learning) interests, existing resources or limiting factors. In concrete terms, this means that the selected teaching-learning activities, methods, techniques, (digital) media, tools, contents, and materials should be in line with the participants' possibilities and interests as much as possible. From the point of view of democratic participation and empowerment, learner orientation also includes involving learners as much as possible in decisions concerning the course, strengthening their active participation and their self-direction and self-learning competences. Teachers and trainers should set the appropriate learning impulses and

stimulate and support learning. In adult and continuing education, the participants in a course usually differ more from each other in terms of age, ethnic origin and nationality, religion and world view, possible disabilities, or sexual orientation and identity than is the case in other areas of education. The same often applies to the previous knowledge and education that the participants bring to the course. With diverse groups of participants, learner orientation also requires the ability to differentiate and individualise teaching.

Learner orientation
Orienting offers to the characteristics of the actual participants (e.g., demographic characteristics, socio-cultural imprints, prior knowledge, (learning) interests, resources or limiting factors)
Involving the participants actively in the design of educational offers
Using (digital) media and tools that match the learners' expectations, prerequisites, contextual constraints (e.g., availability)
Strengthening the self-direction and self-learning competences of the participants through the use of learning-activating (digital) media and tools
Considering the diversity of the participants (age, gender, level of education, etc.)
Enabling differentiation and individualisation in the course with the help of (digital) media and tools

## Competence facet **Diagnostics and learning guidance**

Teachers need to analyse learners' learning backgrounds and prerequisites, such as prior knowledge, cognitive conditions, motivations, and interests, to provide optimal learning support. To give learners with learning difficulties support, it is first necessary to exactly identify the learning obstacles and problems as well as the reasons for them. To obtain the necessary information about the learners, teachers can use different diagnostic instruments and digital tools while respecting data protection regulations and evaluate the results. The results can be used to prepare learning guidance sessions which here are understood as direct individual and person-related interaction processes between teachers and learners. A learning guidance session is about reflecting on and identifying individual learning situations and problems of individual learners. Through joint reflection and understanding, individual reasons for learning can be identified and appropriate learning impulses can be set.

Diagnostics and learning guidance
Using suitable instruments and digital tools to analyse the learning situation, learning prerequisites, learning motivation, learning obstacles, learning difficulties for diagnostic purposes
Evaluating and interpreting diagnostic data and information
Using diagnostic data and information for individual counselling of learners
Setting learning impulses in guidance sessions

## Competence area **Communication and interaction**

Communication and interaction in and with the learning group are among the essential elements of the teaching activity. This area of competence includes social interaction within a group as well as interpersonal communication. In interaction contexts within the group, persons fulfil a common purpose for a certain duration and in doing so develop feelings of belonging, common goals, behaviour patterns and role differentiation. Teachers must use communication and interaction processes to steer cooperation with others, and to accompany and moderate work and development processes. For professional communication, it is essential to conduct conversations in a professional manner, respecting common etiquette and creating a cooperative and constructive culture of conversation.

## Competence facet **Group facilitation and management**

In adult education, learning often takes place in a group. A group is an assemblage of individuals in which social learning unfolds with its own quality and dynamics. The learning opportunities and limits are influenced by the manners and communication styles of the group members. Teachers need to have knowledge of group dynamics and structures to understand and lead groups. Furthermore, teachers should have the ability to moderate and steer communication processes and facilitate networking among learners. This type of group leadership aims to activate and utilise the group's performance potential. Groups can work together both in physical and in virtual, digitally supported teaching-learning settings. (Online) group processes need to be sensibly controlled and structured through appropriate (digital) tools and (online) moderation techniques. This also includes dealing constructively with technical problems and disruptions within the group. In managing group processes, the challenge is to create a trusting atmosphere for discussion, to give learners space and to create a learning atmosphere in which participants feel safe and comfortable, are motivated and can show their individual performance potential. A distinction can be made between synchronous (i. e., simultaneous) and asynchronous (i. e., delayed) processes. Synchronous communication processes take place both in the classroom and in digital-supported teaching-learning settings. Asynchronous communication takes place primarily through digital media and with the help of digital applications, tools, and instruments. The moderation or control of asynchronous groups requires the teacher to structure and filter the contributions well.

Group facilitation and management
Understanding group dynamics and structures
Facilitating and managing groups and (synchronous & asynchronous) communication processes
Using (digital) tools and techniques to facilitate and manage groups
Supporting the networking of learners
Creating a trusting atmosphere for discussion
Dealing constructively with technical problems and disruptions within the group

## Competence facet Professional communication

The relevance of professional communication is evident at many points in the teaching-learning process. Within and outside the classroom, good manners and professional conversation are fundamental. The communication processes can be shaped by the teacher. Teachers need to observe general rules of etiquette and must be able to create a cooperative conversation culture. In addition, teachers need to ensure and control organisational communication processes. These can be supported with the help of digital media, tools, and instruments, for example by using various digital communication tools for the exchange with the participants (e.g., to clarify organisational aspects). This improves organisational processes and provides additional information. In the digital space, too, it is necessary to build commitments among learners and to establish rules of conduct for joint communication, such as netiquette. In doing so, it is important to consider the specifics of verbal and non-verbal communication (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, body language) in digital learning environments.

Professional communication
Conducting professional conversations while following general rules and etiquette
Shaping a cooperative conversation culture
Managing organisational communication processes
Communicating with participants using digital communication tools while following the netiquette
Considering the specifics of verbal and non-verbal communication in digital learning environments



## Competence area Organisation

Most educational offers are embedded in organisations and require cooperation and agreements on contents, methods, framework conditions and target groups with potential clients or employers. This requires, on the one hand, cooperative competences such as communication skills and negotiation skills. On the other hand, it requires a good overview of the regional adult and continuing education landscape and its networks. This enables an optimal placement of one's own offer. In addition to cooperation with clients, networking and collegial cooperation with other teachers and trainers also contributes significantly to the (further) development of one's own educational offers.

### Competence facet Cooperation with clients

Teachers in adult and continuing education should be able to cooperate well with (potential) clients or employers, regardless of their employment situation (freelance or permanent). Cooperation is necessary in the development or expansion of information exchange services and in the search for joint solutions to problems. This requires social and communication skills, negotiation skills, persuasiveness, conflict skills and problem-solving skills. Freelance teachers who want to initiate new collaborations must also be able to obtain relevant information about potential clients or employers, for example about their goals, addressees and programmes, specific fee corridors, available (media) equipment as well as their organisational culture and values. This requires skills in researching and assessing information using appropriate (digital) channels, tools, and instruments. Teachers can use social media to make potential employers aware of their professional profile and offers.

#### Cooperation with clients

Obtaining relevant information about (potential) clients/employers for the acquisition of teaching assignments (e.g., objectives, target groups, salary, organisational culture)

Marketing of own offer via suitable (digital) media and tools (e.g., via social media)

Collaborating and exchanging with clients/employers when designing and expanding services and solving problems

### Competence facet Teamwork/Collaboration and networking

In order to locate their own offers, teachers need knowledge about the structures and offers of the institution they work for. In this way, they can establish cross-connections to other offers. This requires skills in collegial and communicative cooperation within and outside the commissioning institutions as well as in interdisciplinary teams. When solving technical or subject-specific didactical questions, cooperation with interdisciplinary teams or networks

can be profitable. This also includes the creation and exchange of free learning and teaching materials that can be shared under open licence (Open Educational Resources, OER). The networking and cooperation of teachers can take place through various formalised and informal formats such as collegial exchange, specialist conferences, networks, professional learning communities or via social media.

Teamwork/Collaboration and networking
Locating one's own educational offer in the overall programme of an institution and establishing cross-connections to other educational programmes
Collaborating with other teachers and trainers within and outside of the commissioning institutions
Collaborating in interdisciplinary teams or collegial networks through various formats (e.g., collegial exchange, expert conferences, learning communities, social media)
Exchanging open educational resources (OER)

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## Competence aspect SUBJECT AND FIELD-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

### Competence area **Field expertise**

In contrast to other educational sectors, adult education is characterised by great heterogeneity in its structure and framework conditions and pursues very specific goals with its individual sub-sectors. What these have in common is that their participants are adults. Teachers and trainers should have general knowledge about the field of adult education and of the sub-sector they work in, as well as of the specifics of adult learning. This includes knowing the requirements of institutions and the structural environment in their specific sub-sector as well as having knowledge that relates to the whole field of adult and continuing education and training. This also includes knowledge about specific requirements or framework conditions of institutions in different fields of adult education, their specific objectives and principles, their target groups, and clients, to plan and implement educational offers and to be able to position them well. This requires an understanding of the motives and interests of adult learners who are to be addressed by adult educational programmes.

### Competence facet **Target group**

The addressees of a particular teaching-learning offer are its potential target group, i. e., all persons to whom the offer is addressed. In contrast, participants are those persons who show up for the respective course offer. The addressees of an offer are characterised by certain features (e. g., a certain age range, certain interests, professional goals, life situations, previous knowledge), based on which they can be counted among the target group of the respective course. Dealing with addressees is relevant for teachers especially in the planning phase of the offer. Teachers must have knowledge about the relevant characteristics of the addressees (e. g., interests, habits, preferences, needs, fears, available resources, usage habits regarding digital media and tools, existing restrictions, and barriers, etc.). In addition, teachers need to know that the group of addressees can change through digitisation, as digital teaching-learning offers enable participation independent of location.

#### Target group

Knowing the target groups of your own offers (e. g. interests, habits, preferences, needs, fears, available resources, existing restrictions and barriers)

Knowing the attitudes, usage habits, barriers and competences of the target groups with regard to digital media and tools

## Competence facet **Field-specific knowledge**

Teachers in adult and continuing education should have knowledge about the field of adult education as a whole and about the different fields of action. Regarding adult education, teachers should know that this field is structured differently and follows different demands than the formal education sector. Furthermore, teachers need knowledge about the specifics of learning in adulthood. Furthermore, there are different fields of activity in adult and continuing education, which are defined by their socio-political mission, a specific understanding of education, the function, their topics, and their addressees. These fields of activity include vocational, in-company, general, scientific, political, and denominational adult education. Teachers should have knowledge about the different fields of activity with their respective specific goals and principles, and they should know to field the training institution(s) they work for belong. This also includes the particularities regarding organisational and legal framework conditions of a specific field.

### Field-specific knowledge

Knowing field-specific objectives and principles

Knowing field-specific organisational and legal framework conditions

Knowing the specifics of adult learning as well as the structures and demands of adult education as a whole, in distinction to the formal education sector

## Competence facet **Curricular and institutional framework**

Teachers must deal with the requirements of the training institutions they work for. In contrast to other educational sectors, there are different specifications and framework conditions in adult education which teachers need to know. Knowledge of curricular and institutional framework conditions includes both knowledge of the specific sequence of subject content and knowledge that relates to the appropriate materials and (digital) media required for this. For example, teachers must be familiar with the institution's digital equipment and the internal specifications regarding software use, the institution's internal framework curricula or module plans (including information on the design of learning environments, aspects of quality assurance, preparation, and acceptance of examinations). Teachers also need to know advisory and support capacities that are available in the respective field and in the institution.

### Curricular and institutional framework

Knowing about the institution's internal curricula or module plans

Knowing the counselling and support capacities of the specific field and the specific institution

Knowing the institution's internal digital equipment as well as the requirements and expectations of the institution regarding the use of software



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## Competence aspect PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

### Competence area Professional ethics

Teaching in the field of adult education means working closely with people. This requires that teachers act in accordance with moral concepts. This refers to ideas about professional (qualification) standards as well as personal integrity. Hence, professional practice refers to a normative claim, in the sense that teachers and trainers have a duty to provide help and support to individuals on their life's journey. Teachers and trainers in adult education and continuing education and training should be guided by humane, social as well as pedagogical values and thereby assume ethical commitments towards the learning group and the individuals. Through the interplay of internalised human images and the pedagogical values guiding practice, teachers and trainers can live up to the professional ethos of adult education and align their practice accordingly.

### Competence facet Concepts of humankind

The competence facet "concepts of humankind" includes the teachers' ideas about people and thus also about their participants. Teachers have a certain image of humankind that reflects their ideological orientation. Different concepts of humankind can be distinguished, such as the humanistic, the cognitive, the behaviouristic, and the psycho-dynamic conceptions. Teachers should model a concept of humankind for the learners that encourages self-development and self-realisation. Furthermore, teachers must be aware of the influence of the concept of humankind on the teaching-learning process and its quality.

#### Concepts of humankind

Being aware of the influence of one's own concept of humankind on the teaching and learning process

Having a concept of humankind that reflects one's own ideological and theoretical orientations

### Competence facet Pedagogical values

Teachers' professional practice is based on personal values that shape and influence this practice. These values include attitudes and values that teachers have internalised and of which they should be aware. Teachers should be empathetic and understanding of partici-

pants' feelings and concerns. They should also treat their participants with respect, esteem, and appreciation. Teachers' values are also shaped by their awareness of and responsibility for the well-being of participants. The internalisation of professional ethical standards and principles is also important for the professional behaviour of teachers. Teachers' professional actions are based on personal values that shape and influence their own professional actions. These values include attitudes and values that teachers have internalised and of which they should be aware. Teachers should be empathetic and understanding of participants' feelings and concerns. They should also treat their participants with respect, esteem, and appreciation. Teachers' values are also shaped by their awareness of and responsibility for the well-being of participants. The internalisation of professional ethical standards and principles is also important for the professional behaviour of teachers.

#### Pedagogical values

Internalising values such as empathy, respect, and appreciation towards participants

Being aware of and taking responsibility for the well-being of participants

Internalising professional ethical standards and principles

## Competence area Professional beliefs

Professional beliefs include the awareness of and identification with one's own professional role as well as teachers' and trainers' subjective assumptions and theories about teaching and learning. The pedagogical attitudes and beliefs resulting from the subjective assumptions regarding the performance of the professional activity influence the quality of the learning processes. Teachers usually have different ideas regarding the pedagogical support of their participants' learning, which co-determine their actions and shape their attitudes. These professional beliefs are partly based on conscious and reflected, but often also on unconscious and implicit subjective theories.

## Competence facet Awareness of own professional role

The teaching profession has changed over the past decades. The traditional role of providing information has receded into the background. Instead, the tasks of guidance as well as accompaniment and support in the learning process in the sense of enabling didactics have gained in importance and profile the role of the teacher as a learning companion or learning supporter. Likewise, there is a variety of role expectations for the teaching activity, as can be seen from the diversity of terms (learning facilitators, teachers, trainers, teammates, or lecturers, etc.). Teachers need to be aware of the expectations and demands on their role that are placed on them from different sides (e.g., by participants, clients) and critically deal with them. This is the only way they can be clear about them, draw boundaries and respond

to them productively. In addition to an awareness of and identification with one's own role, it is also important to be able to switch flexibly between different roles as needed depending on the teaching-learning situation (accompanying, imparting knowledge, etc.) and the teaching-learning setting (hybrid, face-to-face, online).

Awareness of own professional role
Being aware of one's own professional role
Examining critically the expectations and demands on one's own role (e.g., as expressed by participants, clients, etc.)
Identifying with one's role as a teacher or trainer in adult education
Changing one's role flexibly depending on the specific situation (guiding, imparting knowledge, etc.) and the learning setting (hybrid, face-to-face, online)

## Competence facet **Subjective assumptions about learning and teaching**

Teachers have concrete ideas – so-called subjective assumptions – about how learning and teaching work and should be designed. These subjective assumptions can be divided into constructivist and transmissive theories. In constructivist theories, learning is understood as an active learning process and learners are ascribed an active role in engaging with the learning object. Teachers take on the role of a learning guide who facilitates and accompanies learning and, above all, promotes the learners' independence. In transmissive theories, on the other hand, learning is seen as a one-way information transfer process in which learners have a passive role. Teachers take on the role of a knowledge broker and are primarily responsible for the transmission of knowledge. Teachers' own subjective ideas about teaching and learning influence the quality of teaching-learning processes, with constructivist subjective theories being more positive for the quality of teaching-learning processes. Teachers should be aware of their subjective assumptions and their influence on the teaching-learning process.

Subjective assumptions about learning and teaching
Being aware of one's own subjective theories of teaching and learning and their influence on teaching and learning processes
Being aware of one's own ideas about the conditions under which learning succeeds

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## Competence aspect PROFESSIONAL SELF-MANAGEMENT

### Competence area **Motivational orientation**

Motivational factors have a considerable influence on professional teaching activities. Motivational orientations of teachers and trainers in adult education include, on the one hand, the positive experience during the teaching activity, which results from an enthusiasm for the subject as well as for the teaching activity itself. On the other hand, it includes the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers and trainers, i.e., the belief that they have the necessary competences, skills, and resources even in challenging situations and that they can achieve the set objectives. These facets are mutually dependent: a pronounced self-efficacy leads to greater enthusiasm for the activity and vice versa.

### Competence facet **Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy is understood as the belief that one has the abilities and means necessary to successfully cope with given demands or to achieve goals. For teachers, this means that they are convinced that they can cope with new or difficult situations based on their own competences. In addition, they confidently assume that they have control over the teaching-learning processes and the achievement of goals. Self-efficacy beliefs influence, among other things, the demands that teachers place on their own adult education activities. They are also closely linked to the perception of success, failure, and stress. High self-efficacy is characterised by goal-oriented action even under challenging conditions.

#### Self-efficacy

Being convinced that one has the skills and resources necessary to cope successfully with given requirements

Being convinced that one can cope with difficult situations based on one's own competences

### Competence facet **Enthusiasm**

Enthusiasm refers to the degree of positive emotional experience during the performance of the teaching activity. This includes the enjoyment of the activity as well as the fact that teachers act out of their own interest – free from external pressure or control. Enthusiasm as a motivational orientation means the personal commitment and enthusiasm of teachers for their subject and the teaching activity as such.

### Enthusiasm

Enjoying the practice/performance of one's own profession and the specific subject

Being aware of the importance of personal commitment and enthusiasm for one's own professional teaching activities

## Competence area **Self-regulation**

For teachers and trainers in adult education, the ability to self-regulate in the sense of a responsible use of their own personal resources plays a special role. Teachers and trainers often work under precarious employment conditions – while at the same time being highly motivated. On the one hand, they are challenged to show a high level of commitment to the subject matter, the participants, and the activity, and on the other hand, they must be able to distance themselves from excessive burdens or expectations. The ability to self-regulate is also demonstrated in the constructive handling of feedback or criticism related to one's own person and one's own teaching activities.

## Competence facet **Coping with feedback and criticism**

Feedback and criticism play a special role in teaching-learning situations. In addition to giving feedback, it is also important for teachers to deal with feedback or criticism in relation to themselves and their own actions. In concrete terms, this means that teachers should be able to deal with feedback and criticism constructively. This includes responding appropriately to positive and negative comments from participants as well as finding appropriate times and places to resolve problems and conflicts. The medium through which feedback is communicated, is equally important for the impact of feedback and criticism is. Being able to take feedback and criticism enables productive handling of irritations and can facilitate sustainable self-reflection.

### Coping with feedback and criticism

Responding professionally and constructively to criticism and feedback

Allowing time and space to resolve issues and conflicts

Considering the medium through which feedback is communicated



## Competence facet **Commitment and distance**

The ability of self-regulation is shown in the responsible use of one's own resources. This means a balanced degree of commitment and the ability to distance oneself from the activity. Especially due to the increasing dissolution of boundaries through digitalisation and the possibilities to work anywhere and at any time, it is important to handle one's own resources consciously. The combination of high commitment and good distancing ability prevents teachers from exhaustion and enables them to deal effectively with challenges in their pedagogical activities. The ability to manage one's own resources in a healthy way has an impact on the quality of the teaching-learning processes as well as on the professional well-being of the teachers, which ultimately also benefits the participants.

Commitment and distance

Using one's own resources consciously

Balancing a high level of commitment with a good ability to distance oneself

## Competence area **Professional experience**

Teachers and trainers acquire a large part of their professional competences through individual professional experience in concrete practical situations. These competences, once acquired, are not to be understood as completed, but as competences that must continually prove themselves and develop anew. Therefore, teachers and trainers should have both an awareness of the importance and a willingness to reflect on and further develop their own professional practice. What is meant here is a willingness to change and to develop one's own teaching skills constantly further. Accordingly, a professional teacher or trainer is not only characterised by the fact that he or she has the knowledge and skills required for the current situation, but also by the fact that he or she constantly develops and reflects on his or her professional practice with about the changing practical requirements. This includes an open-mindedness towards, but also a critical examination of new professional and pedagogical topics.

## Competence facet **Reflection on own teaching practice**

In order to be able to demonstrate appropriate and innovative teaching again and again, it is necessary for teachers to self-reflect on their professional actions. This also includes being able to put oneself in the shoes of the participants and to take on their perspective. Reflecting on teaching is a prerequisite for ensuring that teachers do not remain stuck in the experiential knowledge they have acquired in their professional practice. A reflection of the teaching can take place either already in the action or after the action. This means conscious reflection

during or after the teaching situation. Teachers should be able and willing to actively engage in such reflective thinking. A reflection on the teaching can take place in an open form and in a structured way alone or with the support of third parties.

#### Reflection on own teaching practice

Being aware of the importance of reflecting on one's own teaching

Being willing to reflect on one's own pedagogical behaviour during or after an teaching situation

Being willing to take on the perspective of the participants

## Competence facet Professional development

Subject content and professional knowledge are changing under the influence of developments in society as a whole. In part, these changes are taking place at a considerable speed, as the example of digitalisation makes clear. Teachers must not see their knowledge and skills as static and rigid but must take care of their own competence development and see it as the basis of their professional action. In the sense of individual professional development, this includes an open-mindedness towards different pedagogical and professional topics as well as a critical examination of them in relation to oneself and one's own professional activity. What is required is an awareness of the necessity of such professional development as well as the willingness to identify one's own competence development needs and to continuously develop oneself.

#### Professional development

Being aware of the need for professional development

Being willing to continuously develop regarding professional, pedagogical and societal issues

Being open-minded towards new professional, pedagogical and societal issues

Analysing professional, pedagogical and societal issues critically

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## Abstract

The growing importance of teachers' and trainers' competencies in dealing with digital technologies in the field of adult and continuing education is undeniable. In order to take this development into account and to increase the visibility of digital competence as part of the professional competence of teachers and trainers, the GRETA competence model developed at the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Center for Lifelong Learning (DIE) was fundamentally revised and systematically expanded to include digital competence components. In the sense of a structural model, it thus maps generic adult educational and digital competence requirements relevant for teaching in the field of adult education. In addition to the graphical representation of the competence model, this handout contains information on the development and the revision of the model as well as detailed descriptions of the competence areas and facets included in the model.

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## About the authors

Vanessa Alberti has been a research associate at the Bonn Centre for Higher Education at the University of Bonn since 2022. Previously, she worked as a research associate in the Department "Teaching, Learning, Counselling" at the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE) in the GRETA project. Research and work focus: teaching competence, qualification in higher education teaching.

Sophie Hillerich has been a research associate in the Department "Teaching, Learning, Counselling" at the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE) since 2021 and worked in the GRETA project. Research and work focus: teaching competence, competence development, digital competence, professionalisation.

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Dr. Anne Strauch has been a research associate in the Department “Teaching, Learning, and Counselling” at the German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE) since 2004 and worked as project coordination of the GRETA project. Research and work focus: competence validation, teaching competence, competence development, digital competence, professionalisation.

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