Anne-Lise Wie (ed.)

Improving Adult Learning

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

Three institutions for adult teaching, Kaunas Region Educational Centre, Lithuania, EURO Training, vocational Center, Greece, and Nesna University College, Norway have since 2002 been working together on the project "The Modules for Improving Professional and Social Competence for Adults" - IMPROCOMAS for short. Socrates, Grundvig, has founded the project.

The aims of the project have been the preparation of two modules:
1. Guides in the professional career of adults;
2. The methods and methodology in adult education.

The target groups for the modules are teachers of adults, educational staff, and professionals responsible for in-service teacher training. There is a special emphasis on the educators of adult learners in suburban and periphery areas.

This publication is the result of the work on Module 2, and the content of this anthology is "methods and methodology in adult education". The aims are to introduce teachers to the specifics of adult education, and to present the main teaching and studying methods and their applications, and to be able to help adult educators to prepare themselves in theory and practice to apply the modules in adult education.

INTRODUCTION

Modern life requires new knowledge, skills, and abilities; thus there is an essential need for offering and completing secondary education and choosing further professional development. Many adults themselves choose to go back to school again, while others return to studies following unemployment and/or a shift in the job market. A connection between a low level of education and unemployment has frequently been observed. High unemployment creates an increased need for further education, skills and competency that are crucial for the unemployed to be able to re-enter the job market.

Most adult educators have a pedagogical education, but it is not so usual to specialize in andragogical (teaching adults) education. The teachers use recentpedagogical methods, but old paradigms are used in their work. Adults do not learn in a different way than children and youths, but they have other assumptions. The two groups of learners have different qualifications and they need an education adjusted for this.

The content of this anthology is specific features of adult education and methods in adult education. Different topics are experimental teaching, distance teaching, and analysis of different cases, group project work, guidance, and social competence.

What are the specific features of andragogical education? What are the essential differences between pedagogy and andragogy? These are the topics for Dr. Harald Nilsen and Ms. Laimute Ruzgiene in their articles in the first section. Dr. Nilsen introduces the Norwegian Competence Reform of life-long learning for adults in insecure working conditions, and presents the measures and aids that exist in Norway and in the Northern Norwegian region of Rana. The article mainly reflects the views of adult pedagogy on practical experiences with adult education at Nesna University College. Ms. Ruzgiene reflects on the increasing need of adult education, and how new teaching methods and innovation in strategy of education place great demands on the teachers of adults. Covering the topic of "learning as a social process", Prof. Amundsen put focus on social competence, what it is and why it is important and necessary in order to create positive human cooperation and relations.

Teaching adults and teaching children have similarities, but also differences. How does one deal with it? How do the teachers prepare themselves in theory and practice to apply the

modules in adult education? In the second section, Ms. Nina Loginova and Professor Anne-Lise Wie present different methods used in adult teaching. Ms. Loginova describes each method in the way that it reveals both its advantages and disadvantages, as well as the targets, i.e. to understand and memorise the information, and to develop problem solving abilities. Prof. Wie in her presentation describes some of the methods that are currently used in adult teaching in Norway. None of the authors have set out to describe all possible methods, but emphasize ways of teaching activity which encourage active learning, critical thinking and education of social skills. It is important to be aware that giving lectures is not in itself a bad teaching method, but if it is the only method preferred it is not good enough. Problem based learning is considered a good method, but not if it is the only method used. All different methods have their strengths and weaknesses. Using different methods for different topics will give the best learning.

In the third section, different teachers share their practical experiences from adult teaching. Dr. Nilsen writes about principles and methods that work in adult teaching. We note that Dr. Nilsen gives specific attention to language, and claims that language competence is the presupposition to improve workplace competence and quality of life in general. Dr. Elsa Løfsnæs sees the main challenge in all teaching combining theory and practice as well as insuring the students are engaged in their own learning processes. The teacher's and the students' joint consciousness is an important part of the learning processes in a teaching situation.

Professor Patrick Murphy gives us a view of the use of the electronic classroom. The need to create a clearly identifiable learning environment for the adult distance learner is accounted for, as is the need to see the traditional teacher as a mentor and facilitator of the construction of knowledge. In her article about methods used in Norway, Prof. Wie writes about how the adult students bring with them considerable experiences from life, and how it in teaching adults is important to be able to use the knowledge and the experiences a student bring with him/her. In this section Prof. Wie presents a project were the Internet was used to gather such information.

We hope that this anthology will be of interest to educators who want to develop their skills in how to teach adults.

1.
Specific features of Andragogical Education

ADULT EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION

Harald Nilsen, Nesna University College, Norway (2003)

The article introduces the Norwegian Competence Reform of life-long learning and presents the measures and aids that exist in Norway and in the Northern Norwegian region of Rana for adults in insecure working conditions. The article mainly reflects the views of adult pedagogy at Nesna University College on practical experiences with adult education. The article furthermore presents some central points of Knowles' Andragogy in action[1].

BACKGROUND

According to the Norwegian Competence Reform, life-long learning and organised education for adults should be basic principles. The Norwegian Ministry of Education[2] has made adult education into a basic right. The aim of this measure is to strengthen competency of adults whose working conditions are insecure so that they can compete on the labour market and thus improve the security of their social position. An action plan for the realization of the Competence Reform is currently being formed. The following groups in shifting and challenging working conditions will benefit from an improvement of competence:

- Persons with low education and in insecure working conditions
- Persons unemployed but seeking a job
- Persons with higher education and with stable working conditions who want to improve their competency

EDUCATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

A connection between a low level of education and unemployment has frequently been observed. The unemployment situation in Norway is relatively good, and an overview from spring 2003 shows that 3-5% of the total work force was unemployed (2002-2003). The unemployment figures from our project partners in Lithuania and Greece are much higher (up to 20-30% in some regions)[3]. High unemployment creates an increased need for further education, which is crucial for the unemployed to re-enter the job market. The job market is increasingly becoming more specialised and demands higher education and specialisation. At

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[1] 1984

[2] www.kuf.no

[3] Ruzigene, personal communication, Lithuania, January 2002

the same time it is a fact that the job market is constantly changing and that therefore one of the most important competencies is the ability to adapt to a changing job market. Norway has created an institution, The Norwegian University Network for Lifelong Learning that provides information about education and vocational training for adults at university and college levels[4]. The Nordic countries Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, as well as the other EEA countries, currently develop a social security system for the unemployed[5]. However, even though a social security system safeguards the material existence of a person, it is known that a safe workplace is a prerequisite for the identity, self-image, and social adaptation of the adult individual.

MEASURES FOR ADULTS

Regional studies[6] have demonstrated that among teachers who teach adults there are relatively many (60-70%) who do not have a specific education in adult pedagogics.

In the future more and more adults will seek education because they want to improve their vocational competency. Furthermore it is known that teaching adults of an age between 30 and 60 demands a different set of teaching strategies than is needed for ordinary university and college students. In order to improve the adult vocational competency it is necessary to educate teachers who have knowledge and experience in the field of teaching and supervising adults who want higher competency to improve their overall life-situation.

The Norwegian Institute for Adult Training and OPUS (Regional Center for Adult Training) point out in their study plans and brochures that "adult pedagogics represents an enormous variation." According to the Institute, educators in adult education have to know the total life-situation and learning conditions of their students.

The following statements are from pedagogues who have experience with the teaching of adults at Nesna College and the Rana region in Norway. It can be assumed that their experience is representative for adult education in Norway.

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[4] www.norgesuniversitetet.no
[5] The Nordic Convention on National Insurance / Unemployment Benefits in EEA Countries
[6] Ruzigene, L. 2002 in a study of the Kaunas region, Lithuania, and Nilsen, H. 2003 in a study of the Rana region, Norway

EDUCATORS WITH EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF ADULT EDUCATION

Educators in the fields of adult education and vocational training in the Rana region state: Many adults enter the teaching arena with little studying experience and with a varying self-image. Therefore relevant teaching strategies are activities that improve a weak self-image as well as activities that can affirm a strong self-image. Adult students enter the teaching site with very different life and learning experiences; therefore a good teaching strategy will entail differentiated plans. Many adults who come to the teaching site have strong resources on special fields and want to be visible and accepted because of their abilities. Good teaching activities will enhance the self-esteem of students and use their large potential. Adult students want to see a clear connection between the learning process and a future life situation where they will be actors and enhance their individual value. A good practice in teaching situations will therefore clarify the connection between formal learning activities and a future reality where students will act in.

Pedagogue Dr. Elsa Løfsnæs (Nesna College, Rana region, Norway) has long and varied experience with adults who improve their competency to meet new and challenging activities at their workplace. She claims that the most important challenges are to combine theory and practice and to engage adult students in their own teaching and learning processes. The most important aspect is, according to Løfsnæs, to connect formal learning processes with personal experiences and future life situations. Life situations in this context means social abilities, family relations, and vocational identity. Løfnæs stresses the awareness and responsibility of adult students for their own learning.

Pedagogue and Special Pedagogue Per Amundsen (Nesna College), a specialist in the field of adult pedagogics, points out that social competency is a basis for a good life situation. He stresses that social competency can influence the experiences of adults in life, their motivation, and various vocational aims. It is decisive to create awareness about a good learning environment, and this means that participants of a teaching-community have to be socialized to share responsibilities, different roles, and strategies for cooperation.

Pedagogue and linguist Anne Lise Wie (Nesna College) points out that adults bring many different life experiences into learning situations: "It is important for both student and teacher to be aware of what kind of knowledge each student has, and mix old and new experiences (...) in a learning process to create a new understanding." Wie points at the fact that being a

student is time-intensive, and that this factor becomes more important for adult students who, besides their studies and training, often have a job, a family life, and various social engagements. This means that these students have less time at their disposal than those who "merely" are students.

Special pedagogue Karin B. Johnsen has, in cooperation with the **Center for Special Pedagogics** of the Ytre Helgeland region, pointed out that adult students need better language competency in order to meet the challenges of their life situations. An improved language competency will improve both social and vocational competence. In this point Johnsen agrees with the linguist Harald Nilsen who claims that language ability is the best tool for an individual for mastering a reality where written language has become an integral part of culture.

Pedagogue and linguist Dr. Harald Nilsen (Nesna College) shows that almost all literature in the field of adult pedagogy stresses the varied life experiences of adult students and that this fact must have consequences for methodology. In particular Nilsen points at the "dialogic room," the "symmetry of relations between the parts in a learning and teaching situation" and at the factor of co-responsibility[7]. Nilsen furthermore refers to professor Løkengard Hoel who stresses the socio-cultural perspective of learning and the learning and teaching community, that is learning through communication and interaction interwoven with a complex cultural, social, and material context[8]. Nilsen is a linguist and stresses the indisputable connection between linguistic competency and success in a social context and at the workplace. An improved linguistic competency means an improved communicative competency, which is an important prerequisite for quality of life.

E. C. Lindemans book, *The Meaning of Adult Education[9],* was published for the first time in 1926, was the precursor for the modern view on adult education[10]. Lindeman stresses that adult education must have the aim to improve the quality of life, and to provide "new meaning for life, new reasons for living"[11]. He states that all learning must be based on significant experiences from many different situations in life:

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[7] See Nilsen: "Prinsipper og metoder i voksenlæring", part III
[8] Ludvigsen and Løkensgard Hoel, 2002
[9] 1926/1961
[10] "Andragogy," Knowles 1984:6
[11] 1961: 110

(...) it is not wholly correct to say, *'Bring knowledge to bear upon experience'*; knowledge, rather, emerges from experience. Intelligence is the light which reveals educational opportunities in experience. Life is experiencing and intelligent living is a way of making experience an educational adventure. To be educated is not to be informed but to find illumination (*'enlightenments'*) in informed living[12].

Lindeman stresses that the ultimate aim of all learning should be to master familiar and new situations: "What is important is that the mind should be sensitive to problems and skilled in methods of attack and solution"[13]. The creator of the system of andragogics, M. S. Knowles mentions in his book *Andragogy in Action*[14] that many of his ideas and inspirations are derived from Lindeman.

M. S. Knowles bases his book ***The Modern Practice of Adult Education***[15] on his own experience with teaching adults. In 1984 he systematizes his ideas for adult education in the book ***Andradogy in Action*** and explains his position of adult education versus "ordinary" pedagogics in five points. A summary of these five points follows:

1. *Regarding the concept of the learner.* The adult learner is self-directing; one who has arrived at a self-concept of being responsible for her/his own life, of being self-directing.
2. *Regarding the role of the learner's experience:* The andragogical model assumes that adults enter into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youth. This difference in experience has several consequences for education; the adults are richest resources for one another, there is greater heterogenity in groups of adults, and consequently, in adult education greater emphasis is placed on individualized learning plans.
3. *Regarding readiness to learn:* The andragogical model assumes that adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know something in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of their lives.

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[12] 1961:110
[13] ibid: 115
[14] 1984
[15] 1970

4. *Regarding orientation to learning:* Adults are motivated to learn after they experience a need in their life situation; they learn in order to solve a problem, or live in a more satisfying way. This attitude stresses upon organizing learning experiences (the curriculum) around life situations rather than according to subject matter units.

5. *Regarding motivation to learn:* although adults will respond to some external motivators – better job, salary increase, and the like – the andragogical model predicates that the more potent motivators are internal - self-esteem, better quality of life, self-actualization, and the like[16].

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[16] Methodical implications; Wie 2003, Løfsnes 2003, Nilsen 2003 in this anathology

STRATEGIES AND REFLECTIONS UPON ADULT EDUCATION

Laimute Ruzgiene, Kaunas Region Educational Centre, Lithuania (2003)

In this article the main differences between pedagogics and andragogics discussed. Special attention is given to the aims, needs, motivation, skills, self confidence, learning conditions and responsibility of the students. The teaching programs are mentioned as well. The andragogical principles guarantee learning success and quality of adult education.

The author presents the Norwegian partner's /Nesna university college/ model of androgogics that helps the adults' teacher to comprehend the most important peculiarities of work with the adults. It is contained of: process design, framework, participants in the in the fellowship of learning, the roles of the supervisor, course contents and principles of methodology.

Special attention is paid to a teacher's role, functions, professional and social requirements in teaching/learning process.

THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEDAGOGY AND ANDRAGOGY

Everybody must know the essential differences between pedagogy and andragogy, especially if the person is involved in adults' education. The main aim of both of them is teaching. But the young and the adults have different life experience, needs, hopes, aims and even their social and psychological maturity is different. And this is the main reason why the principles and methodology of didactics of the adults have to be different from methodology of young learners.

PEDAGOGICS	ANDRAGOGICS
A teacher points out the aim of learning.	*A learner himself determines the aim.*
A teacher works according to the standards of teaching and compulsory programme of education. He knows what the students must learn but the students do not if they ever think on that question. So, a teacher defines the aims and the objects.	An adult learns because he has the aim, that is he has the real view of the present and the future context where his knowledge will be put into practice. All by himself or with the help of a teacher he foresees the objects and needs of learning and discusses the relation between the present and future situations: where am I now? Where do I want to go? What possibilities will the acquired knowledge give me and how is my life

	going to be changed because of the new situation?
The motivation of learning is not high It is influenced by the external factors / marks, diploma papers, fear, punishment, rewards. The values of education of young people are still being formed, that is why the teacher has to play an active role in this process.	*The motivation of learning is clear and high.* Inner stimulations /self – expression, the willingness to achieve the results, satisfaction with achieved results/settle this motivation. But there are always those who come to classes without any motivation. In this case the adults have an advantage compared with young learners: a teacher usually emphasizes the fact that it might be useful to learn this or that. So, the motivation is directly connected with the expediency – if a person has an aim, it means he has a clear motive to act[17].
Learners have no practical experience Young people have no practical experience and often base their knowledge on the information they get. In this case the authority of a teacher is very significant.	*Learners have practical experience* In the cause of active life and learning the three different processes are in progress future /planning/, present monitoring and the past. Adults have already got the acquired knowledge, only they add new and then compare and classify it. If needed he recalls and puts it into use. That is why the adults' teacher in the educational process must refer to the experience of the learners, their knowledge and work in that way that students could integrate the new knowledge.
Strictly determined teaching program. This is influenced by ready-made standards of school subjects and educational programs. These standards are based on the settled educational requirements of the society.	*Flexible educational program.* It is orientated towards the ability of a learner, the level of preparation, learning style, needs and personality.
Teaching methods. The methods of frontal teaching and individual tasks are applied.	Mostly active teaching methods are used such as group work, communication, projects, and discussions. A learner chooses subjects and teaching methods himself.
The educational environment is usually formal, unfriendly based on racing, evaluation and self-confidence is low.	Safe, friendly educational *environment* is based on confidence and favourable conditions /adults achieve knowledge more successfully when they feel no fear and suitable psychological, social and intellectual climate is organized/.

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[17] D. M. Juozaitis

The applicability of the information will be tested in the future.	*The applicability of the information is tested at the present moment.*
The audience is more trustful.	*The audience is more critical.*
Marks are the means of evaluation. A teacher is an estimator. If a low mark is given for knowledge it effects the motivation of a student to some special subject, besides, sometimes it becomes the reason for losing an interest for learning.	*The type of evaluation can be chosen.* An adult has possibility to evaluate his development and results constantly. A teacher and a student may come to an agreement about the final evaluation of the full course: the teacher's evaluation; self – evaluation of the student using the tests; the evaluation of colleagues and experts.

VALUABLE PRINCIPLES OF ADULT EDUCATION

The adults' education didactics principals are different from traditional education:

Individual differences:

- Adults have their own interest and needs;
- The intellectual and social level of the adults is different;
- It is a long time adults left their school;
- The time for achieving results is different;
- Adults have their own style of learning and acquiring the knowledge.

Self-esteem

- Adults like to be noticed, evaluated and appreciated as individual personalities. The relationship between students and adults' teachers are based on symmetrical role relations, both parts working together in a learning process.

Responsibility:

- Adults understand that learning demands efforts; sharing the information and experience, they are responsible for the results themselves;
- The learners must see the immediate connection between the teaching program and improvement of future knowledge; between theory and practice.

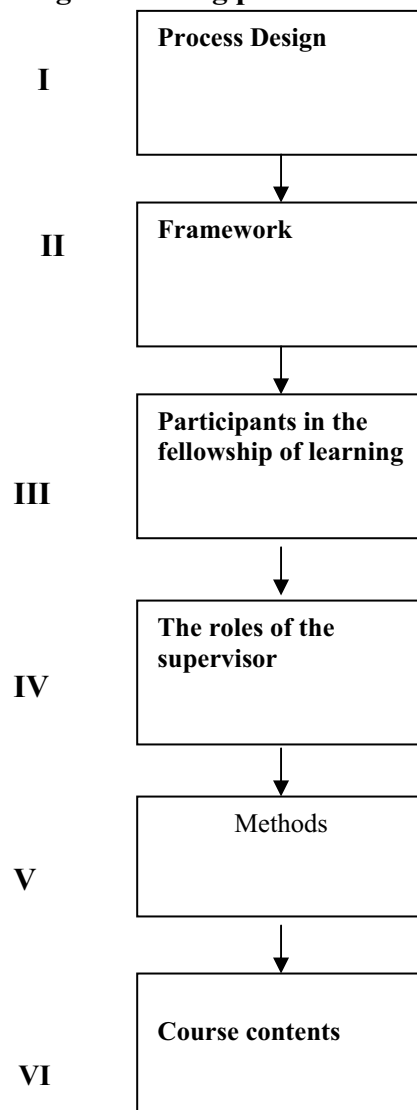**Flexibility and sensitiveness**:

- Adults can change the aims and even their point of view in the process of education quite flexibly. An andragog has to react to learners' needs, aims and

even change the teaching material if necessary.   Due to the adults' changing mood and needs a teacher must change teaching strategies in order to hold learners' attention and interest.

A CONTEXTUAL VIEW ON TEACHING ADULTS

The Norwegian partners / Nesna university college/ propose the model of planning of learning process for adults[18] that helps the adults' teacher to comprehend the most important peculiarities of the work with the adults.

Figure. A model of planning of learning process for adults [19]

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Process Design      │
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└─────────────────────┘
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II

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Framework           │
│                     │
└─────────────────────┘
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III

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Participants in the │
│ fellowship of       │
│ learning            │
└─────────────────────┘
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IV

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ The roles of the    │
│ supervisor          │
│                     │
└─────────────────────┘
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V

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┌─────────────────────┐
│      Methods        │
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└─────────────────────┘
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VI

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┌─────────────────────┐
│ Course contents     │
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[18] Doctor Nilsen, Talk, IMPROCOMAS seminar, Nesna, Norway May 13
[19] Nilsen, Talk, seminar, Nesna, May 13 refer to: Knowles and ass. (1984), Lindeman (1961), Nordskog & Popperud (2000; norw. version only), talk with norwegian adult teachers, dec. 2002.

I   Process Design

Co-ordination: supervisor and participants will together reflect on the coherence between the present situation and the future: *Where are you? Where do you want to go?*

Realism in the learning plan: What is the probability of a participant succeeding improving his or her quality of life?

The learning process: The instructor must give the participant the feeling of active participation when planning partial- and final aims, as well as methods of work and evaluation.

Evaluation: The agreement of instructor and participant on means of evaluation en route; the instructor's overall evaluation, and the instructor and participant's evaluation of self.

II   Framework

Time: total time for disposal, learning periods etc.

Quality of location and teaching material and tools.

Number of participants.

Relevance: relating classroom learning to relevant practice.

Instructor's competence: applies to the coherence between the instructor's ambitions and his or her competency

Cultural background and disposition for learning; learners and instructor functioning in a relatively well-founded fellowship of understanding

Atmosphere and fellowship of learning; experience shows that a positive learning atmosphere stimulates the fellowship of learning[20].

III   Participants in the fellowship of learning

Individual background and experiences; individual differences may result in great diversity of the disposition for learning ("readiness").

Responsibility; the main group of adult learners will have the need to be responsible for their own learning; while others will have to be taught to take that responsibility.

Respect; adult learners have a strong need to be regarded as valued ("I want to be valued!")

The desire to be noticed; the desire to be noticed must be seen in the context of being regarded as valuable[21].

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[20] Lindeman 1961, Knowles et al. 1984, personal experience
[21] E. Fagerheim, teacher of adults, quoted in Nilsen, part 1

Realisation; the need to master the process of learning to realise a better, future quality of life (social confidence and acceptance)

Confidence; adults often meet a learning fellowship with low self-esteem, and therefore have the need to construct social confidence[22].

IV   The roles of the supervisor

To be **distinct**. The supervisor must be distinct as

- an authority of knowledge
- a facilitator
- a co-learner
- an empathetic listener

To cooperate. The supervisor must be able to cooperate in symmetric role relations, yet at the same time he or she must be able to display individuality as an authority on knowledge, facilitation, and supervision.

To supervise. A competent supervisor facilitates and supports the participant's quest for individual thinking, rational actions, reflections, realisation, achievement of goals, and evaluation.

To motivate. Motivation implies the support given to the participants in their recognition of the value of acquiring new competence and improved strategies leading to personal satisfaction, improved quality of life, improved ability to meet financial problems and time-induced stress, and realism in the art of succeeding[23]

To evaluate. The supervisor must be able to evaluate his own learning strategies, as well as those of the learners in all parts of the learning program[24]

To be realistic. The supervisor must be realistic regarding personal ambitions; that means that the personal goals and physical demands must be in coherence with personal qualifications and given framework.

V   Course contents

The course contents must relate to the current subject/course/learning regimes, and must also comply with needs within the respective countries/regions. The contents must therefore be

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[22] Adult educator S. Jørgensen's experience, quoted in Nilsen, part 1
[23] *Eccles*, in K. Bredrup et al, 2003:12-13
[24] conf. the Utrecht model in: T.L. Hoel, 2002: 448-459

detailed when we know the totality that is to include a learning process and a learning community.

The following principles may be regarded as guidelines for contents:

- Clearly formulated
- Realizable
- Show a clear coherence between the course contents and an improved quality of life
- Be challenging
- Be motivating. Subject matter is motivating when it is clearly formulated, realizable, challenging and valuable to future work and social relations.

VI   Principles of methodology

The methodical guidelines must be closely tied to factors stated in II-V above. Furthermore, the methods must partly be linked to the participants' cultural background/previous experience, funding and other personal resources as well. Methods available will partly depends upon learning practice and -regimes in the individual countries and regions, as well as national and local culture. Some principles will none the less be valid regardless of cultural differences, learning regimes, framework, number of participants, motivation etc.

Controlled flexibility: It is important eventually to alter the study programme under way. However, the participants must feel that the programme retains the initial focus and structure.

Predictability: It is important that the participants know what awaits them and what is expected of them in order to attain and retain confidence.

Repetitive strategies: The adult learners' experience with learning activities shows the need for repetitive strategies.

Own activity: The adults' manifold experience indicates that they should be active constructors of knowledge and competency – rather than merely passive recipients.

Challenges: The working methods should challenge and stimulate self-confidence, but at the same time be predictable.

Finances: The working methods will always have to negotiate financial factors.

CONCLUSION REMARKS

Growing needs of the adults for education, new teaching methods and innovation in strategy of education make great demands of adults' teachers. He comes to the auditorium and is determined to share his experience with the audience. He comprehends the difference of his

role and the conceptual originality of the adults' educational process. The success of such a lecture or seminar depends not only on the lecture's competences, but the resources of the practical experience that are accumulated by the audience which stays calm and only listens, still remain unused. The professional role of an adult teacher has been changing during the last decades. The teachers and the instructors become orientators, advisers and mentors, trainers, consultants, moderators. What kind of a teacher do we want to have? What personal and professional features are characteristics to such a person? Discussing the peculiarities in adults' education we often put a stress upon what a teacher should do or how he would behave. In Hallands' model the roles of adults' teachers are described in detail. That is why we would like only to generalize the most peculiar abilities, characteristics features and functions of the adults' teacher.

Knowles[25] distinguishes seven dominant functions: (I) Favorable climate and conditions, (II) Planning, (III) Diagnosing of learning needs, (IV) Prevision of aims, (V) Planning of methodology, methods and strategies of teaching, (VI). Involvement in the process of education, (VII) The evaluation of the teaching / learning results.

Pr. M. Teresevičienė singles out such roles in the process of education: (I) Creation of the teaching conception of his own, and (II) Teachers' / as personality's / realation to:

- The aims of the learners,
- The aims and needs of the educational institutions,
- The aims and needs of the society.

The andragog's essential characteristics features that could help the adults to create psychologically friendly learning conditions are considered to be:

- Knowledge of the subject,
- Disposition for hearing others and listening to them,
- Analytical and integrational abilities,
- Disposition for learning by himself,
- Flexibility,
- Physical energy, vitality,
- Attentiveness to the details and general observation,
- Positive self – evaluation.

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[25] 1975

To sum up the ideas of practics, scientists and andragogs, the professional competence occurs to be in great importance alongside with the social competence of the adults' teachers.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE, A DIMENSION IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND PREPARATION FOR LIFE.

Per Amundsen, Nesna University College, Norway (2003)

Communities need active, responsible, and creative people who can carry on values, cultures, and a positive attitude and contribute to the development of society. This article is about the challenge that all abilities and competences should be developed as an important part of adult education and cooperation in companies and organisations. The focus will be on social competence, what it is and why it is important and necessary in order to create positive human cooperation and relations. Learning as a social process in problem based methods and different social skills are briefly described. Values and norms that people would like to be identified with are also focused upon. For the development of general social competence it is furthermore important to focus on the social competence of the group-leader or the teacher. In the end the article discusses different axes of didactic action in order to develop social competence.

Social competence in general is the ability to interplay with other persons in ways that are positive for all who participate in the play. Sometimes it is about to be able to work together with other persons in learning activities. In the future everyone must acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are needed for their lifelong learning process and as strength for their social and personal lives. There is a new orientation concerning learning and development of competency that requires that peoples' development and learning must be organised more differently than previously. To succeed in one's profession and in social life is a challenge for all human competences.

We know that learning is a social process and that cooperation with other people often gives both social skills and a better learning of knowledge. Learning in cooperation with others, for example through problem-based methods, also provides the opportunity to meet and reflect about our personal values and norms. For learning knowledge, skills and bearings it is essential that learners are active and use all their abilities. The learning process often should be more like a social process without one correct answer. Education in general and especially adult education should be founded on the assumption that learners already have acquired a

good competence. The challenge then is to use and develop all their competences in learning situations, knowledge, social and emotional competences and responsibility. It is important and necessary for adults to have their opinions concerning their own education heard, for example in order to define their best learning strategies.

Why is social competence, especially from a pedagogical, psychological and sociological point of view seen as more important these days? There are several answers to the question. One of the reasons is that emotional and social intelligence are highly regarded today. It is furthermore impossible to get by in the world lacking social competence. Social competence contributes to good cooperation and self-esteem and prevents behavioural problems and mobbing. Social competence also corresponds with mental health. In Norway, as in many other European countries, people stay in education processes in schools and are connected to their profession for many years, almost one third of their life. Education and learning therefore is not only a question of preparing for life, it is life itself. Social competence is required to master problem-based learning and other new work forms in education. From this point of view there is a strong connection between social competence, personal awareness, and academic competence. Learning social competence strengthens knowledge learning and the other way round.

Norms and values are changing continually, and individuals must find their own set of values. It is when people work closely together that norms and values are challenged. The development of norms and values must start in pre-school and school but in learning situations it is often necessary for an adult to focus and reflect on values they would like to be identified with. Prominent values in many societies are the desire to wish others well, to be believed and to take part in something meaningful. It is of great value to succeed on a daily basis and also to have the opportunity to make choices. Democratic participation, tolerance, faith, and respect are values that are highly regarded in many societies. Reciprocity described in social exchange theory is also one of the values we have to deal with. This value is about giving and having attentiveness in relation to other people. However, the golden value or rule, as it is usually called, is "to do to others the same that you want them to do to you"

What is social competence? Social competence is defined as relatively stable characteristics concerning people's knowledge, skills, and attitudes that make it possible to establish and maintain social relations. Social skills have a dimension of thought (learn, interpret, evaluate),

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a dimension of action (succeeding in social interaction, adaptation, inclusion, etc), and a dimension of senses (to feel competent, the will and ability to positive interaction). It is a goal that children are to develop and not only adapt. People become social when their integrity is attended to.

Social competence can be more concretely expressed as social skills in five categories[26]. Pro-social or positive social competencies describe the ability to have a positive attitude to be helpful and to cooperate with people. It means to have the best intensions to active listening. A positive social person has the will and ability to solve conflicts and disagreements and make compromises. He or she also often has the ability to bring forth ideas for good solutions to joint challenges. A pro-social competency involves awareness of a group's norms and social rules, the ability to express fellowship and to follow up agreements. A positive social person knows how to communicate with people and keep friends. He or she is also aware of using eye contact, voice, and body language to maintain a good atmosphere through the communication.

Empathy, which is at the core of friendship, mainly implies not to focus on ourselves. It is about compassion, understanding, to see things from the others' point of view, and furthermore it is about showing consideration, help, share and being including. Empathy is to praise positive behaviour, support, encourage and being positive and obliging. Empathy also is the ability to establish a common bond between oneself and others. A person with much empathy is able to put words to feelings. A positive self-image seems to be necessary to be able to care about others.

Self-control is about learning to become "a master in one's own house". A person with self-control is able to control emotions with thought and to postpone the satisfaction of needs and learning to deal with adversity. Self-control is the ability of admitting one's faults, lower ones demands and forgiving others. Self-control also involves the ability to evaluate and plan one's own behaviour and gets to know one's feelings.

Self-assertion is about becoming more self-assertive and making oneself visible. Self-assertion is the quality that is to stop people from conforming to and being subjected to, for

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[26] Ogden Terje 2000, 1995, Kari Lamer 1997.

instance, the school system. It includes taking initiative to social contact, to voice one's opinions, desires and needs. Self-assertion is to be able to express disagreement in a socially accepted manner and to withstand pressure and to claim one's rights when applicable.

Play, joy and humour is an important quality in life. It is important to be able to experience joy through play and humour. Joy and humour are about interpreting the signals of play and having a frame of mind for play. It is a positive dimension in life to be able to contribute to situations and topics of play and to show frankness, flexibility, and a good imagination. To be childish and spontaneous, and let oneself be carried along is another quality in life from this point of view.

In Norway and other countries in Europe there are many books about how to deal with behavioural disorders, and many efforts have been made. Some characteristic features of people who lack social competence may be the lack of respect for the property of others, impolite and even rude behaviour, and sometimes the bothering of fellow people. Often one can recognise dishonesty and lack of respect for the opinions of others. Noisy behaviour and use of vulgar language can be other marks. Sometimes little respect for rules can be observed. Terje Ogden[27] writes about the socially competent person. The socially competent person develops positive relations to fellow people and is normally positive and likable in his or her contact with others. When she disagrees with someone, she gives reasons for this and suggests constructive alternatives when criticising friends. Furthermore, the socially competent person is more conscious of group norms and social rules and will therefore join groups of friends more easily. A socially competent person knows more about situational behaviour and is more competent to create a sense of solidarity between him- or herself and others through exploring what one has in common, prior to exploring differences. Their communication promotes contact, and a person with a high degree of social competence is more accurate in his or her verbal and non-verbal communication. The social competent person also has fewer negative opinions of him- or herself than other persons of a lower competence.

There are different axes of didactic action in order to develop social competence connected to knowledge learning. One can for instance teach social competency during specified class hours. One also can teach pupils about social competence and positive interaction through

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[27] 2001

stories, illustrations, and examples from real life and thus give a concrete meaning to the term social competency.

One can also use cooperation in mixed age groups and develop people' learning strategies and problem-based methods. Furthermore the local community that generates responsibility and organises tasks such as local events can be used. People also can have defined responsibility tasks in teaching situations. One can have conversation about social competence in class meetings and have conversations based on stories, poems, and illustrations. Dramatisations are often a valuable way of focusing on social competence. Systematically learning problem solving, with the leading person as a role model, is another didactic axis.

In order to focus on social competence for learning social skills, we also have to discuss the social competence of the supervisor or supporter. The leading person will, in many ways, become a model. The leader must master social competence him- or herself. He or she must have the ability to view individuals on their own terms and adjust his or her own behaviour accordingly, without resigning leadership, though. The leader will also have the full responsibility for the quality of the relation. The leader or the teacher must have an insight into his or her own strong and weak social spots. He or she should have the ability to speak with other people in a subject (more relation between subjects than a subject-object relation). He or she also must be prepared to take responsibility for personal mistakes as they are discovered.

If a teacher or a supervisor makes an agreement with another person about emphasizing or developing social competence empathy, it might be a strategy first to analyse ideas that are central for empathy. These could be ideas such as understanding feelings and get to know one's own feelings. We know that feelings change and that feelings can be conflicted. One may anticipate feelings and convey feelings to other persons. One also could discus wishes and desires as well as reasons and consequences connected to social relationships with other people. One also may have to deal with related issues such as one's own intentions, justice, and purpose. A leader has to work with you're his or her ability for active listening and showing compassion.

Different skills are required for interacting with other people. One should; for instance, request to participate and interrupt politely, if one wants to be a part of a group or a play or if

one wants something one does not possess. One should be able to ask for help in a positive manner or ask for permission to take part in social interaction. Sometimes one has to resist peer pressure and the temptation to help other people achieving their goals. Rather than giving in, one should reflect on one's own goals.

One way for learning social competences is to observe the persons who are about to develop their social competences. Observing social competences in practise one may look for some of the following examples: Self-assertion can become visible as an ability to take initiative to talk with others and to express one's own opinions, desires, etc. Pro-social behaviour and empathy can manifest itself as active listening, respecting others during interaction, and support and encouraging of others. Self-control can become visible as flexibility and being able to solve problems and accept compromises. When it comes to play, joy, and humour one may look for how the person is able to get involved and carried away playing. It may also be a question of ability to make suggestions, being creative and taking the initiative concerning jokes and fun.

Social competence is a human resource that can be developed. It is a competence that should be developed in pre-school and in school as well as for adults in different situations. It is never too late to be aware of one's competences and to reflect on how to develop better competences. To create results in the development of social competence it is necessary to have a wide perspective on developing the total human capital and to work systematically. Focusing on good planning and good structure and working systematically could make the difference in terms of results. A socially competent person will contribute to make the social learning process and social relationships in general positive. Focusing on social competence will help people towards consciousness about their own values and behaviour and prepare them to cooperate and take responsibility within the family and in democratic processes alike. To succeed in professions and in life in general and to develop all human competences is, at last, the most important measure that can be achieved through focusing on social competence.

2.
Teaching and
Methods in adult education

ADULT EDUCATION METHODS AND METHODOLOGIES

Nina Loginova, Kaunas Region Educational Centre, Lithuania (2003)

This article contains various teaching and learning methods (individual, frontal, group) and their applications. We believe that each method and its application should be described in a way that reveals its advantages and disadvantages as well as its target,

The author's aim is to introduce teachers to the specifics of adult education, to present the main teaching and studying methods and their applications and to help adult educators to prepare themselves in theory and practice to apply the modules in adult education.

Teaching and learning methods are an interaction between teacher and student. (This interaction is also called the action model or strategy, which allows students to gain new competence (i.e. knowledge or skills). Adult teaching and studying methods may be classified in various ways. We base our classification on the number of participating people. Therefore, the methods are frontal, group, or individual.

THE VARIETY OF METHODS

How to choose a suitable method? Which learning and teaching method is the best? Methods of education are an integral part of education. The purposive and motivated choice of the methods is based on: 1) personal and sociocultural expectation; 2) goals and tasks of education; 3) the content of education; 4) psychological criteria (student's background, maturity, common and individual characteristics of different ages, psychological and other regularities of learning processes); 5) socio-cultural context; 6) general cultural education of the teacher, civil and moral position; his/her professional preparation, individual interests and abilities, life experience. Referring to "*Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*"[28], by E. Jensen[29] and R. J. Arends[30] it was attempted to relate levels of knowledge to the methods of teaching and learning and other elements of teaching processes as well.

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[28] 1965
[29] 1998
[30] 1994

Table 1: **The levels of cognition and organization of teaching process for adults**

The levels of cognition / The elements of the teaching process	Knowledge	Perception	Practice	Analysis	Synthesis	Assessment
	Finding of the facts, flashback, description, recognition, reproduction, evaluation	Retelling, interpretation, explanation, description, paraphrasing	Asks questions which require retelling; offers activity which helps students to interpret	Revelation of relations – separation of the material into components, evaluation of methods for systematizing – finding the relation, relating, separating, classifying, grouping, evaluating the category	Making completeness from separate components – designing, combining, formulating, making hypothesis	Decision – assessment, argumentative, reasoned criticism, evaluation of the category
Teaching (learning) objectives	Give knowledge	Interpret (understand) knowledge	Use knowledge in a particular (new) situation	Divide phenomena into segments, systematize	Match the elements, relate and create	Evaluate the phenomena
Skills	Ability to reproduce and find the knowledge gained earlier Convergent thinking	Ability to understand the meaning Convergent thinking	Ability to use the gained knowledge in new situations Convergent thinking	Ability to analyse information, to understand its structure Convergent thinking	Ability to create, invent and make something new Divergent thinking	Ability to Evaluate and to reason using appropriate criteria and data Divergent thinking
Methods	Lecture Demonstration Work with sources	Conversation Seminar Interview Independent work	Practice Situational games Individual work	Researches Experiments Teaching while cooperating and other group work Consultation	Project Solution of the problems Patterning	Debates Discussions Creative work
Students' activity	Listen, ask questions, make notes, reproduce and find	Present the information in their own words, explain the sequence, say how and why	Look at new situation; seek for differences and similarities; use appropriate information or process while fulfilling the task	Divides information into separate components; evaluates the relations and the structure	Evaluates what activity suits his/her abilities best (if it can be chosen) working creatively use the gained information and skills	Formulates criteria; evaluates the solidity of the information; analysis the information; assess on the grounds of criteria
Teacher's activity	Gives the information, tells about the sources, checks understanding	Asks questions which require retelling; offers activity which helps students to interpret	Tests understanding of the information and skills learned; Presents a new situation or problem; tests understanding of the problem; maintains feedback	Tests knowledge and the skills for using it; offers activity which requires analytical skills and their development; maintains feedback	Tests if students have enough knowledge and skills for fulfilling the task; offers different activities which give the possibility to create; maintains feedback	Tests whether students have necessary knowledge and skills, if they understand the task; helps the students to formulate criteria or presents them; maintains feedback

The authors did not try to describe all methods, but wanted to emphasize how teaching activity encourage active learning, critical thinking, and education of social skills.

FRONTAL TEACHING AND STUDYING METHODS

Methods of frontal teaching are good for teaching large groups of listeners.

1. Listening and observing. This method is used to encourage <u>active</u> listening and <u>active</u> observing. The content of the method is that each member of the group gets a specific task, i.e. one group has to listen with a specific purpose and another group has to prepare a report. Having heard the presentation, group members say what they think about it and initiate a discussion, which later may be presented in an organized meeting. The advantages of the method are that it elevates active listening and active observing and helps to crystallize ideas. The disadvantages of the method are that the participant concentrates on one specific task; other important elements may be overheard.

2. Role-play. The aim of the method is to develop interpersonal abilities and to improve orientation in a concrete situation. Role-play focuses on the most important element of critical thinking, the ability to understand other people's point of view. Using this method in practice helps students to apply their knowledge in concrete situations while playing a certain role. The element of experience is essential for the application of this method. Role-plays are short episodes taken from real-life situations or can be a role for which the participant prepares in advance. More group members may participate in the play whilst the rest of the group observes. After the play, everyone expresses his or her ideas and thoughts. This is a method that encourages action, and live examples activate feelings. The disadvantages are that the 'actors' might benefit more than the audience, the success depends on the 'actors'; persuasion may be short-term.

3. Games. During the game the participants are encompassed in a complex problem, such as a future event or situation. During the game the rules for stereotypical behaviour, typical real-life situations and interpersonal relations are provided. The game should be discussed at the end. Willingness to participate is very important. This method initiates active participation and learning; uses experiences of different kinds; interpersonal relation or behaviour problems may be solved during the game. But it is essential to limit the time of the

game; during the game some participants may choose to remain observers, therefore they will benefit less than other participants; motivated involvement is the key to success.

4. Demonstration. This method is usually used for consolidation. A teacher shows how to perform a certain task and a student repeats it. Sometimes tasks are very difficult, and the student is unable to perform it, which may lead to negative consequences. Therefore it is useful to analyse tasks and divide them into separate units. The disadvantage of the method is that the skills demonstrated by the teacher may prevent the student from learning them in a habitual way.

5. Lecture. The aim of the method is to get acquainted with facts, principles, and terms. The content of the method is that a lecturer (one person) gives specific information. Although the listeners are silent, it does not mean they are not active. They can work intensively, trying to understand arguments of the lecture and its logic, estimate facts and proofs, distinguish essential facts from secondary, or follow the lecture in any other way. The lecture consists of introduction, main part and conclusion. During the introduction the listeners are acquainted with the structure of the material, during the main part the content is fully revealed and during the final part conclusions are made. This method if useful when the main aim is to provide information. In other cases this method may be used for introduction only, where listeners can place the information into their short-term memory. Before a different method is used it is useful to give outlines of the following subject. This method is not suggested if the material is complex or abstract, if it contains many details, or if the aim of teaching is to develop more complex cognitive processes, such as analysis, synthesis, or valuation. It is important that the material is understood and memorised; therefore active learning is essential. How to help students to systematize the content of the lecture? If it is explained to the students how the material was presented, it is easier for them to understand, remember, and use. Such presentation of the material is called the systematizing introduction. The systematizing introduction makes it possible not only to name separate facts, which are summarized by students but use inductive methods as well. Another way to help students to systematize knowledge and to remind what information they already have about the new topic and what can be important in future learning is oral questioning and short writing tasks. The main principles of giving a lecture are[31] the principle of integrity; the principle of sequence; the principle of suitable arguments, the principle of comparison, combination and explanation.

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[31] Gage, Berliner, 1994

This method is very useful when working with a big group of people or giving a lot of information, it is relatively cheap. The disadvantages of the method are that it might be little or no communication with the group, the group get too much information at once, they get acquainted with the information but not learning it, teaching skills are essential.

6. **Involving lecture** provides questions and exercises, and therefore the students are stimulated to think and search for answers independently. Such a lecture is a dialogue between teacher and student. More complex cognitive processes, such as analysis, synthesis, and valuation, are evoked. This method allows to use integration relations and methods as interview, group work, problem solving techniques, brainstorming, etc.

GROUP TEACHING AND STUDYING METHODS

Working in a group means to have an opinion, to be able to reason, to persuade others, and to be able to achieve one goal with the group members. Efficient competence is necessary for relating facts logically and to present the work. The teacher's role is very important. It is not enough to prepare the tasks, but it is also necessary to choose a topic and to organise work. The group work has the following advantages:

- It's interesting for students. It's helpful practice.
- Action and constant fluctuation make students more active.
- Interpersonal relations are formed during such activities. It unites students.
- The student has a chance to broaden his/her view while using computer, literature, and while associating with people.
- There is no stress.
- Independent work strengthens self-confidence.

1. **Debates.** The content of the method is a problem or a question, which may be viewed from two different perspectives. Students may analyse each point of view or write a report agreeing with one point of view and refusing the other. In this method the student are revealing contrasting opinions; demonstrating how different points of view can be analysed and evaluated; hearing specific arguments one may change his opinion on the issue or a problem; teaching to tolerate a different opinion. If only a relatively small group of people is involved; only those who are directly involved in the discussion are active; time has to be limited.

2.   **Interview.** The students ask questions prepared in advance to other students, guests, or others. Students have the task to find out concrete information or opinions using these questions. The topic and even some questions have to be prepared in advance. Later students write a report on the results of the interview. If there is only one interview, knowledge and understanding are stressed, if there is more than one, comparative analysis, synthesis, and evaluation may be carried out. When students use other people as a learning resource; there is a possibility to understand and evaluate the points of view of others, but there must be a specific goal; questions have to be well prepared in order to be able to use collected information.

3.   **Discussion.** This method is used most often in adult education. Discussion can be free, which means that the participants choose a theme and the teacher is free to decide whether or not to interfere. These methods aim at solving a problem, form an opinion, create interest, share knowledge, and increase self-confidence. Students develop analytical skills and the ability to make decisions, and these are evaluated afterwards. The teacher can also choose the theme and develop it by giving specific questions to the students. Finally the teacher solves the students' arguments and summarizes the conversation. In order to make the discussion run smooth, the teacher has to create a good atmosphere and ask everybody's opinion, not only that of the active students. The teacher has to be prepared for the discussion, to know its aim, logic and the questions prepared in advance. There are four criteria in evaluating the effectiveness of a discussion: 1) the theme has to be interesting for everybody; 2) the participants have to know something about it; 3) there may be alternative points of view; 4) the theme has to be clearly defined and understood. These criteria are useful in planning the discussion, since adults may not participate in the discussion if they are not interested in it or they may think that they will not learn anything new. The following rules are important for the discussion: Respect for group members, listening to one another, to speak one by one, allowing everyone to speak, not mentioning particular names and surnames, admitting that every idea is valued (though it can be wrong), listening to others' opinion politely and respectfully, not criticizing and contradicting reasonably, being open, and sticking to the point. If the participants are interested, possibility to share one's thoughts, opinion, knowledge, and facts; everyone feels the duty to study and learn; it helps to increase self-confidence; discussion raises students' conceptual critical thinking, ability to reason their statements and forms democratic skills. On the other hand, the final result may not be

useful, flow and result depend on the participants' ability to express their thoughts, argue and listen to others; there is a possibility that several students will dominate and while the rest of the group remains passive.

4. Cooperative learning. The main cooperative learning strategy is an alternative to traditional learning models. It provides equal opportunities to succeed, it improves the emotional climate for teamwork, and it fosters self-confidence and the toleration of others. Learning while cooperating means teaching and learning in small groups of 2 – 5 students. In this way it is possible to encourage every student to actively participate in task fulfilment. This method helps to apply theoretical knowledge in practice and considers the interests or professions of the participants.

Table 2: **The Module of Learning While Cooperating**[32]

Stages	Teacher's behaviour
1. Stating of objectives and awaking of readiness	Teacher looks through the objectives and prepares students for learning
2. Presentation of the information	Teacher presents the information orally or provides the text
3. Organizing of teams in which students will learn	Teacher explains how to form teams and helps to re-form groups effectively
4. Help for teams in work and learning	Teacher helps the working teams
5. Testing	Teacher checks if students learned the material or the groups present their results
6. Acknowledgment of achievements	Teacher makes sure to acknowledge both individual and group efforts and achievements

Discussions are very common. The students do the task together. Working in a group they all think about one possible solution of a problem: the task is discussed and everybody expresses their opinion. There is a constant communication among the members. Communication, as a social process, influences the opinion of an individual, which later influences group decisions. Therefore a high level of learning while cooperating defines three elements: social interpersonal dependence of group members, use of necessary social skills, and analysis of individual and group work.

Table 3: **Levels of Cooperation in-group teaching**[33]

LEVEL	Process	Result	Task
High	The group has to have a clear goal for the activity. Most often students plan their activities and work together. There is a feeling of social dependence among the	The goal is to achieve one common result of the group activity that is the outcome of the group's agreement. The students are able to understand their own	The task encourages creativity; much effort is required from each group member. Each group member has a possibility to take part in the activity.

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[32] Arends, 1998
[33] According to Sharan, Sahlberg, Shachar, 1994

	group members. Varied cooperation dominates, and different social skills are used. The group members are able to control their activities.	and the group's activity and to analyse the results. The students work to gain benefits for the group but not for the teacher.	Everyone is trusted. Every person's ideas, attitudes, and values are important. The students take part in planning the curriculum. They understand that they fulfil tasks in order to learn but not to satisfy teacher's wishes.
Average	The students plan and work together when it's necessary or useful. The goal of the group can be common, but it is not absolutely clear. Partial dependence can be noticed (not necessarily social)	The students themselves conduct the creation of the group result and coordinate the contribution of the participants. They try to gain benefits for the members or group. The students discuss what happened in their group.	The task encourages creativity but the students need the teacher's help. Students often fulfil the task to satisfy teacher's wishes.
Low	The students belong to the group but they work individually. The goal of the group can be the same but it is not common. The group members do not depend on one another. The communication is two-sided social skills are poorly used. The group members do not control their activities well.	The students' work and their contribution do not depend on each other. The students narrowly understand their own and the group's learning process. The group members work to achieve individual results.	The task does not promote different attitudes and opinions. The goal of learning is to gain knowledge. Not much attention is paid to personal ideas and values. The students fulfil the task following the teacher's requirements and instructions.

This method teaches problem solving strategies, changes opinions, integrates learning, teaches co-operation, but it may be time consuming

5. One case analysis. The method is used in problem solving. This method teaches problem solving strategies, the integrated learning creates real-life situation; personal experience may be used, and it teaches co-operation. The disadvantages of the method are that it may be time consuming; it is difficult to evaluate reliability if the scenario is different from personal experience.

6. Brainstorming. The method aims to be a problem solving method with the integration of previous knowledge. The content of the method is creative thinking and generating ideas. The quantity of ideas or possible solutions is more important than their quality. The problem has to be presented exactly and without ambiguity, it must be clear for all group members as well. Ideas are being generated for a specific amount of time and no one is allowed to criticise them. All ideas are written down. It's important to agree who will put down the ideas of the group. However, someone (e.g. the teacher) has to observe, if the main rules are followed:

a. Calls the group and presents the problem, which they will have to solve;

b. Thinks over several ideas, which are presented during the break;

c. During the activity tries to keep a working atmosphere.

Afterwards, the group analyses the ideas generated, and a consensus may be reached. When the ideas and experience of the participants are used; they take part in intellectual activity. This method may be time-consuming; part of the students may refuse to participate; teacher's professional skills are important.

7. Seminar. A topic prepared in advance is presented for the group. One or a couple of group members may be responsible for the presentation. The presented topic has to be clearly formulated; it should be controversial. The disadvantage of the method is that the presenters learn actively while listeners may remain passive.

8. 'Snowball'. This method is useful in the beginning of any course; it helps the group to get to know each other. It may be a time-consuming activity, and therefore it is important to limit time. In the beginning each member gets a task and completes it, then everybody works in pairs and the conclusions and common results of the pair-work is formulated. In this way, a person may share his or her ideas with another member of the group. After that, the groups of four people are formed, and the process is repeated. Knowing that a student has his or her partner's support helps to raise a discussion. At the end of the work each group chooses a speaker who will report the final results in a plenary meeting. This method has a clear advantage; even if there are many participants, everyone is actively involved in work.

9. Problem method. The content of the method: the teacher raises a problem, which the group tries to solve. The problem method does not divide the activity between teacher and students, they communicate, analyse, and investigate the situation together. The process of problem solution consists of five stages: 1) Realisation of the situation – search and evaluation of the problem (a small problem often has a wider context); 2) Formulation and correction of the problem (ask questions: Who? Where? When? How many? What exactly failed? 3) The search of reasons of the problem (the problem will exist as long as the reasons are not found and eliminated (ask question why?); 4) The search of the solution (it's possible when the reasons of the problem are known); 5) Realization of the solution. After choosing the solution it is important to discuss by whom, where, and when and how, the solution is going to be realized. The solutions of the programs are summarised and the optimal variant is chosen.

How to make the problem solution easier? While evaluating the variants of problem solution, give concrete reasons. They do not have to be general such as in: "useful", "unreal", "good", etc. Try to expand and make them more concrete such as in: "it is useful for us, because...", "this solution is unreal because...". Never stop halfway. Challenge old ideas and actions. Remember that for working creatively you need the wish to change yourself and look for new methods in solving the problems. Pay attention to random thoughts because they can be very unexpected. The ideas and experiences of the participants are used causing intellectual activity. The method may be time-consuming; some students may not participate; the teacher's mastery is important.

10. Cognitive apprenticeship method. In order to develop students' cognitive abilities, the student gradually has to learn more and more complex material. The teacher or another more experienced student may help by asking questions. The cognitive apprenticeship method has proven to be very successful. In order to find out whether the method will be effective, it is important to evaluate the following factors: 1) Students' present cognitive state - the ability to solve problems independently; 2) What can be achieved with the help of a teacher. The gap between the two factors is called *sphere of nearest future development.* The understanding acquired while communicating with a teacher or other students in the sphere of *nearest future development* becomes individual understanding.

11. Preparation of the projects. Project work can be defined as a teaching method where students research and solve problems in cooperation with teachers and other people without losing touch with social reality. Therefore, the work is being done with a wide perspective, trying to gain more knowledge. Problem solution is many-sided, and the methods and means are chosen according to the chosen problem. The task of the teacher is not only to provide knowledge but to initiate, encourage, help, and to define the work as well. The work must end in concrete results e.g. an oral presentation or a written report. The stages of project preparation consist of critical evaluation of the situation. The first stage is choosing a theme, the next stage is defining the problem of the project and defining the optimal solution, the next stage is making the plan of the project, and finally; fulfilment of the project; completion, presentation, and assessment of the project. The method of the project consists of active practice, real surroundings, problem solving, and gained experience. Various indirect results are achieved using the project method such as: integral knowledge; integral creativity, thinking ability and experience, which is impossible to get from the textbook but it is gained

in practice; some knowledge of how to coordinate thinking, practice, and interests can be gained as well.

Project work means learning to find what you need. It enriches the teaching process and motivates and develops creativity. Project method is a learning method that allows the student to consider different students' abilities, activity and interests; learning changes teaching. In this method teacher and student become partners. More sources of information are used; theory is applied in practice and vice versa; learning is personalized and individualized. There is a possibility to learn cooperatively; group work helps to develop tolerance. There is a possibility to move from reproductive to interpretative pedagogics; projects motivate students. This method has some disadvantages: sometimes it is difficult to find the necessary information; it can be difficult to coordinate the activity of group members and it can also be difficult to evaluate the contribution of each participant.

12. Computer studies. This method can be used for group or individual teaching. Special programs are used for fulfilling particular tasks and learning new material. The information about the results can be kept for a long time. The information can also be presented with the help of sound and view. The computer program can be adapted to students with different abilities. This teaching method facilitates the assessment of students' knowledge by using different tests and through the fact that each student can assess himself/herself and see the result.

13. Croquette. The aim of this method is to involve many people in a discussion. This method may have best results when used indoors, where all participants can sit in a circle. Two circles are made. Two or three people are invited to the inner circle, where the discussion takes place. People in the outer circle only watch and keep silent. If they want to make a contribution they can switch with one of the people in the inner circle when he or she is silent. The person from the outer circle approaches the one in the inner circle and touches him or her on the shoulder in order to signal the switch. This can happen many times during the discussion. If it is necessary the teacher can take part in the discussion or encourage changes in the inner circle. This method allows everyone to participate in the discussion. Before the discussion starts, a time limit has to be set. When the discussion is over, the group has to summarise the results.

14.   Compound. The aim of this method is that the team has to learn every aspect of the theme. Big groups are divided into smaller ones of 4-6 people. The first stage consists of forming groups for cooperating and distributing material. Each group member has to learn different material and present it to the others. During the second stage the expert groups prepare to teach. The expert groups are formed from members of the groups who had to learn the same material. The experts first read and study the material, then try to find the most efficient ways to learn it, and finally plan how to check whether the team members have understood it. The third stage is return to the cooperating groups for teaching and checking. The students return to their groups and present their material to one another. It is very important that all students learn the material presented. The groups are responsible that every group member learns all the material. The advantage of the method is that each member of the team becomes an expert of some aspect of the material that he or she first learns and then teaches to others.

INDIVIDUAL TEACHING (LEARNING) METHODS

Individual learning/teaching methods are oriented towards the learner and make it possible to individualize the teaching process

1.   **Individual learning.** This method means that students are given the tasks according to their interests and abilities. Thus students can use the ways and styles that suit their individual temperaments. All students can move forward at their own speed. The advantage is that this method is that it encourages students to work and study independently.

2.   **Independent learning, self-teaching**. The aim of this method is to motivate independence. The teacher gives the student a task to work on independently. The following features are characteristic for students working according to these methods: they believe that the activity and its aims are meaningful; learning is important for them; they control themselves in order to do the task; they collect knowledge from people and other sources; their results are better than without these methods. The success of independent learning depends on correct choice of the level of independence. The teacher can watch the students and lead them. At a higher level of independence teachers and students plan to work together and students are watched less and their work is corrected less. A typical situation may look like this: students work almost independently, choose the problem, plan their

actions and present the final results to the teacher. The advantage of the method is that learning becomes interesting for the learner.

3.   **Discovery learning** is a **teaching** and learning method where students formulate ideas and laws as if they make discoveries. This method does not involve direct teaching; students observe and analyse phenomena but teachers can lead them.

4.   **Programmed teaching.**   Every student is given a part of the subject's content. Students have to solve problems and answer questions. They are informed at once if their answers are correct. Material provided later is compared to material provided at an earlier stage. This method stimulates students for learning; the students get feedback, and it; allows them to use as much time as they need.

ADULT TEACHING IN NORWAY

Anne-Lise Wie, Nesna University College, Norway (2003)

In this article, Prof. Wie introduces different methods used in Norway for teaching adults. The article emphasizes the importance of the knowledge and experience a student brings into teaching. There is also a presentation of various types of team work, such as Project work, Problem Based Learning, and Process Orientated Writing. New means of communication makes us less dependent on the synchronicity of time and space. The Internet is now in common use for distance education in Norway. In all of these methods, the teacher's role is different from that of the traditional teacher. Using these methods, the teacher will be a resource, tutor, and evaluator, guiding the students in their problem solving efforts. Teaching adults demands good cooperation and dialogue between teacher and student.

Teaching adults and teaching children have similarities, but also differences. Most methods used for teaching children can also be used when teaching adults. However, when planning we have to considerate the fact that the students are adult. Their background needs, and expectations of the teacher are different. The adult has a different point of view from that of a child. This article concentrates on methods used in adult teaching in Norway.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCES

At Nesna University College, one of the student groups I teach is in pre-school teacher education. One of the topics for this particular student group is how children develop a language. Many of the students are themselves parents, have younger brothers and sisters, or have experience working with children. They have all experienced children learning to speak. When the students are taught the theory behind language acquisition, they make the connection to their personal experiences, and thus realize how much they already know about the topic. Acquired experience makes the topic potentially more varied and interesting, and not the least easier to come understand and come to terms with. The students bring examples from real life in to my teaching as foundations for relevant discussion. Some students have experience with children with various speech problems. They have through experience felt the need to learn more about when and how to help these children, and thus see the importance of

learning the theory. These students are an essential asset when teaching and working with the topic of children with special needs.

The adult students bring with them considerable experiences of life, and in teaching adults it is important to be able to play on this and exploit this knowledge and the experiences for the benefit of the learners[34]. In doing so, it is of importance that both teacher and students are aware of the knowledge and competencies the individual student is in possession of. Using prior experience and knowledge as a platform to construct further knowledge is of great value – and so is the necessity of ensuring that the individual student is valued for the bespoke experiences.

There is great learning potential in the planning of fieldwork. After putting the plans into action, there is the need to sum up and look back at what was learnt. What do we learn when everything goes as planned - and what do we learn when it does not? How do we work out what to do better the next time? The students are required to learn to evaluate their own learning. Reading theory, they will find that other people have similar experiences. Some students are more insecure and need closer guidance to achieve independence. As a teacher it is my job to challenge their own ability to evaluate their own work. It is all about going from practical experiences to theoretical understanding. The students achieve a more complete understanding of their own experiences. They learn the vocabulary to explain what they already know, and to see how important their knowledge is.

Students have different experiences that inflect their ability to learn. It might be concerning knowledge, skills, or emotional experiences. The experiences each student has, can either push them further ("I want to learn more about this"), or stop them from learning more ("I tried this before, it does not work"). What kind of experiences that interfere in the learning situation might be hard to tell. As a teacher one has to be observant and humble towards the background each student has[35].

TEAMWORK

Teamwork is part of real life with its demands for professional and social competency. One person cannot within reason single-handedly conduct all research as well as presenting and

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[34] Elsa Løfsnæs 2003
[35] Geir Halland, modul 2, pp. 60-62.

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concluding a given problem or challenge. There is a basic need to cooperate. Workers who specialize in different fields, work together to find the best solution to a problem. Torpe and Kobyashi[36] define "cooperation" as follows:

"Cooperation is to give – it is to give others a part of oneself, giving up a part of the me-role. One cannot cooperate unless one is willingly to give. What one receive is others cooperation – something we cannot demand, we can only put demands on ourselves. Before we understand that what we receive is more worth we have not understood what cooperation is."

The participants in a team have to make an obligation; everyone has to do his or her best, for him or herself, as well as for the other participants. Developing social competence is especially important while working with and in groups. While studying, the students have to get used to this way of working, and experience this best by working together in smaller groups. The goal is to maximize the learning potential for all participants.

How does a group of individuals develop into becoming a good team? Normally we would describe this as four stages[37]:

Forming*:* The participants form a group, and get to know each other. At this stage, many of the participants feel uncomfortable and insecure.

Storming: At this stage, conflicts and individual differences appear. There might be a struggle for positions and roles within the group.

"Norming": The third stage creates clarification and order. The team develops norms and defines roles. It decides who should have the different roles, also who should be the leader of the group. Roles and norms about what the team expects from their participants is a condition for the group to be functional.

Performing: Now the group can start working in a goal oriented manner.

Conflicts are a part of everyday life; in the classroom, between colleges, and in any group were there is cooperation over time. Conflicts can be hidden or open, and they can be destructive or constructive. Misunderstanding, social problems, prejudice, hostility, poor communication, bad leadership, etc may be the cause of conflicts. In adult education, the

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[36] Torpe and Kobyshi, p. 51 (my translation).
[37] Stensaasen and Sletta, p. 32.

teacher may facilitate conflict solving. He or she has to listen to both parts of the conflict, and try to give the advice that may help the particular group to solve their own problems. To resolve a conflict, the group has to be open and willing to do so. It is important to be aware of the learning potential there is in resolving a conflict. In the classroom one could easily make a change in a team's composition in order to resolve the problems within a given group for the process to continue. *That* is something one is rarely able to do outside a learning context.

I will now present some methods were teamwork is involved, and these have successfully been tried out in Norway. The methods in question have many similarities, and participating teachers tend to use variations of the methods, largely depending on what kind of problem they are working on. The bottom line is the teacher's ability to acquire new methods and, as previously mentioned (in Learning from experiences), the "mix of old and new experiences" does indeed take on an extensive understanding.

PROJECT WORK

Project work is a method much used in Norwegian schools. It is a pedagogical method were students – in cooperation with teachers or others – undertake research and bring a matter up for consideration. This work will give a deeper acknowledgment and wider perspective, and the problems worked on and illuminated from different angles. Group work is regarded as beneficial to the realization of a project. The teacher's role is not to teach, but to serve as a facilitator and a catalyst - a motivator and a mentor.

Project work may be divided into five different phases. The first phase is an *introductory phase*. The teacher introduces the major theme, and seeks to motivate the students with lectures about the subject, fieldtrips, videos etc. The next phase is the forming of *groups*. The participants will through a brainstorming activity to provide ideas for the given theme and the following process. It is vital to display as many thoughts and ideas as possible prior to the structuring and organizing thereof. The groups may either be formed by the participants themselves based on the organization of ideas, or by the teacher. The next phase is *planning*. Each group has to make a work plan for the project, and divide the work among the participants. In the *working phase*, the students make their investigation, retrieve information,

and complete a product. In the last phase the project is *presented* and *evaluated*. Both process and product are to be evaluated[38].

Our society puts certain demands on the worker. We have many sources of information, and it becomes important to know how to sort out the useful information. As an employee, one has to be able to communicate, cooperate, make plans, analyze, be creative, make limits, organize, and accept criticism. Project work as a method gives the ability and competency to meet the bespoke demands.

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

Problem Based Learning (PBL) is a curriculum development and delivery system that recognizes the need to develop problem solving skills, as well as the necessity of helping students acquire basic knowledge and skills. PBL utilizes real world problems, not hypothetical case studies with neat, convergent outcomes. It is in the process of struggling with actual problems that students learn both content and critical thinking skills[39].

A smaller group of students work with tasks that contain a description of problems - phenomena or experiences from real life that need an explanation. The student group has to figure out how to solve the given problem. What do they already know about this problem or question? What do they need to learn to effectively address this problem or question? What resources can be accessed to determine a proposed solution or hypothesis? This will be the start of individual studies. Towards the end of the process, the group reconvenes to discuss views, explanations, and the understanding of the problem from a new point of view[40].

The work in the group can be described in seven steps:
1. Identify the Problem
2. Define the Problem
3. Analyze the Problem
4. Determine a proposed solution or hypothesis
5. Explore possible strategies. Form goal for learning

Individual work between gatherings in the group:

6. Act upon strategies. Accessing information

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[38] Gerd Bjørke, pp. 163-164
[39] SCORE History-Social Science, June 19, 2003
[40] Gerd Bjørke, p. 20

Second gathering in the group:

7. Evaluating and utilizing information. Construct a solution to the Problem

In PBL, the traditional teacher and student roles are modified. The students assume an increasing responsibility for their learning, facilitating intrinsic motivation and a heightened sense of accomplishment, setting the pattern for the successful life-long learner. The students acquire knowledge while becoming proficient in problem solving, self-directed learning, and team participation. For the teachers, PBL results in more preliminary work in order to design the problem; as well as ensuring that there are enough materials available (in print, online, and through human resources) for this methodological approach. Working with PBL, the teacher serves as a resource, tutor, and evaluator; guiding the students in their problem solving efforts.

PROCESS ORIENTATED WRITING

The American "The Bay Area Writing Project" of 1974[41] promoted new ideas about the writing process. Reaching the Norwegian schools in the early seventies, these ideas became known as "Process Orientated Writing" (POW). Writing occurs in stages, and in POW we concentrate more on the process than the product.

Pre-writing is the primary stage during which the writer needs to consider three main factors: topic, audience, and purpose. The writer needs and seeks sources of inspiration. Different ways of pre-writing can be free writing, brainstorming - individually or as a group - or by other means. Then it is time for *drafting* or *writing* a rough draft or a rough copy. Whatever the term used, it is still the same thing. However, one does need to be selective when deciding on the ideas to be included. The best ideas from the pre-writing should be included. Naturally, they need be related to each other and the topic in question. *Revision* is making decisions on how to improve on the initial draft. Probably the best way to revise a text is to get other students and/or the teacher to read through it, giving advice on how to improve the text. Another student will look at a piece of writing from a different angle, indicating passages where the text might be clearer, more interesting, more informative, and more convincing. *Editing* involves checking on spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, concord, and vocabulary. The final stage is *publishing*; the product of the writing process has to be presented in order to create an outcome for the goals the writer has set.

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[41] University of California, Berkeley, http://www.bayareawritingproject.org/ June 18, 2003

POW is a method used in primary education and secondary education in Norway, and consequently is a topic in initial teacher training. The method follows the principle of "learning by doing". The students write papers, give each other feedback, and re-write them. Using this method, the students learn a lot about genres, texts in general, and about the process of writing. While working with POW, the students experience the difficulties of both giving and receiving feedback. An important part of a teacher's job is to give feedback on students' texts – a competency not easily taught. As a teacher you have to think: "What advice can I give this student to make his or her text better?" Through peer feedback, the students learn how to read a text with a mind for feedback, and how to provide feedback without offending the writer. Thus the student learns strategies of studying; learning how to exploit peer assessment to improve ones paper and knowledge of the subject matter.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

New means of communicating makes us less dependent on time and space. Asynchronous communication means we do not have to be gathered to communicate or to receive the same information. This is something we can benefit from in teaching. At Nesna University College, we have been working with net-based education for initial teacher training as a part of our part-time teacher training classes since 1998. Our students attend the college for a couple of weeks, four to six times a year, to receive teaching on different subjects. Between gatherings we keep in touch using the Internet. This is a great opportunity for adults with family responsibilities and/or difficulties attending daytime school or moving to live at campus Nesna.

Each study or course has its own web page. Between gatherings the web page is used to provide information, lectures, and tasks and assignments. The teacher uses e-mail to keep in touch with the individual student. The web page hosts a discussion forum, where students and teachers can discuss different issues. A group of students can meet and discuss issues using a provided chat room. If they wish, a teacher may join the discussion. Even though they are geographically apart, keeping in touch with each other using the web page makes them feel part of a student group[42].

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[42] Patrick Murphy, 2003

Each student has to take responsibility for his or her own learning. The student decides when and how to study. Regardless, the teacher expects that the students have been trough the material provided on the web page prior to meeting for the next gathering. The teacher has to make sure that the teaching offers the students something more than the information provided[43]. The web-based information is thus used as a foundation for construction of knowledge. This interaction between information/lectures on the web and lectures at school has proven successful. Experience shows that it is important for the students to once in a while meet face to face among themselves, as well as with their teachers. A good social atmosphere is necessary in order to create a rewarding teaching situation[44].

MENTORING OR GUIDANCE

Research indicates that critical thinking and problem solving skills are not typically addressed in the classroom. A number of studies indicate that in the typical classroom, 85% of teacher questions are on the recall or simple comprehension level[45]. Questions that elicit synthesis and evaluative skills of thinking are rarely asked. In the previously mentioned methods, the teacher's role is different from that of the traditional teacher. Using these kinds of methods, the teachers is especially required act as a mentor guiding the students in their problem solving efforts.

Teaching adults demands good cooperation and teacher-student dialogue. Guidance facilitates the learner in his or her quest for answers, and clear communication is a pre-requisite for good mentoring or guidance. What is important is not what you say, but how it is understood. "The meaning of any communication is the response" (Genie Z. Laborde)[46].

Prior to giving guidance, the mentor has to observe each participant in order to comprehend his or her learning ability. The mentor therefore needs to analyze the learning situation in order to limit the challenges and tasks, and to be able to see the connections the participants do not see. The mentor is challenged to ask the right questions, and thus build confidence and trust as a foundation for further progress. The guidance must be individualized from criteria the student sets; it must start with the student's own intentions and conceptions. Practical experiences must be followed by reflection. Giving guidance is therefore regarded as a

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[43] Ibid
[44] Elsa Løfsnæs, 2003
[45] SCORE History-Social Science, June 19th, 2003
[46] Geir Halland, Modul 3, p. 45.

powerful tool to help the student find the connectivity between personal experiences and new knowledge.

CONCLUSIVE COMMENTS

This quote from Confucius, the ancient Chinese philosopher, tells us what it is all about:

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I hear and I forget;
I see and I remember;
I do and I understand;
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It not only tells us that many great minds have known for centuries that "learning by doing" is a superior form of education, but it also alludes to the multi-sensory act of comprehension. The focus has to be on learning, not education.

3.
Practical
Experiences with
Adult education

METHODS THAT MATCH IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES IN ADULT EDUCATION

Harald Nilsen, Nesna University College, Norway (2003)

While several of the authors in this publication write about specific teaching methods, I have chosen to focus upon methodical guidelines that, in my experience, are useful for adult education. In this paper I mainly discuss the cooperation between teachers and adult students in a teaching situation. Teachers have to assume a variety of roles in terms of supporting, cooperating, preparing, and guiding inside the "dialogical space". The dialogical space functions both in a common forum (macrostructure of the learning process) and in a smaller group structure (microstructure). In comparison to younger students, for adults it is more important to provide both meaningful teaching content and working methods, in the sense that these correspond to the future prospects and present life situations of the participants.

THE AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND

This article is partially based on my experience with teaching, supervision, and cooperation with adult students. My first experience with adults in a teaching situation dates back to 1984, when I taught a group of 15 students, most of them women. Students in that group were between 25 and 50 years old, some were unemployed, some were without a satisfying work, some were in difficult social life situations, some were married, while some were singles. The participants met in an ordinary classroom twice a week during 8 months, and the aim of the class was to develop study competency for improving the chances for a better job and for creating a better life situation in general. Even if this was a very heterogeneous group in terms of education, work experience, family situation, and quality of life in general, there was one element shared by all, namely a very strong will to improve their future life situation. After my first meeting with adults in a teaching situation, I later taught many more and different groups and have experienced a number of differences between the teaching situation of young "ordinary" students and adult students. In this article I will outline some of my experiences from interacting with adult students. It is important to point out that the term "teacher" is

problematic. For adult students the term should be replaced with "supervisor", "supporter" "scaffolder"[47], "coordinator", and most of all partners in a learning relationship.

ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

To play the role as an equal partner in a learning relationship

In my first encounter with adult learners I sat in front of the group, as it is common in classroom teaching. The adult students assumed their roles as students as they knew it from 10-20 years earlier. After some time I realize that it was not all right to create a group structure where the teacher assumed the role of an lecturer and instructor[48], and the participants were in receptive, and, to some degree, passive positions. In other words, the role relations of the teacher/instructor and the students were asymmetrical. The learning climate improved after I had explained to the students that I was not their omniscient "prophet" who filled them with knowledge but was their partner and cooperator, and that in the common room all, including the teacher, were part of the "we" of a learning community[49]. For a good learning environment it is important that adults shed their roles as "ordinary" students and regard themselves al valuable participants and cooperators in the creation of competency[50]. In their role as participants, adults experience an affirmation of their *identity*, they feel that they *mean* something and have *co-responsibility* for the learning process.

To show interest means to listen to the life-experiences of the participants

During my first encounter with adult students I experienced that they, through their life experience, bring a sizeable amount of knowledge into the classroom or into other teaching arenas. It is therefore important that the supporter points out explicitly that each of the students has a storeroom of knowledge that can be converted into common knowledge. All research in adult education underlines the important role of the participants' life experience as a valuable resource in a course of learning[51].

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[47] According to Vygotsky/Bruner's term "scaffolding"
[48] See also Loginovas discussion of "frontal teaching", part 2.
[49] See also Amundsen's discussion of "social competency", part 1
[50] Lindeman; in Nilsen part 1
[51] See Lindeman and Knowles in Nilsen, part 1, Wie, part 2, and Løfsnes, part 3

To be a supporter means clear presence and feedback

Many of the adult students have not had any formal teaching for a long time and therefore lack the experience of being a student. According to my experience with various groups of adult students it is crucial that the supervisor is clearly present and inclusive, shows genuine interest for the common and individual needs and interests, and provides relevant and supportive feedback. In regions with a spread out population it is often convenient to organize teaching as distance teaching for individuals or groups[52]. I have experience with electronically based distance teaching for individuals and groups. It can function well, but it is essential that the distance supervisor maintains a frequent and clear context and provides stimulating feedback to keep up motivation and study morale. The andragogue Knowles[53] claims that adults are clearly self-motivated when they see a connection between their learning situation and the possibility for a better future life situation.

Preparing individual learning strategies and courses of learning

I had my first encounter with adult student after having taught young students in an ordinary classroom situation for 10 years. During the first weeks I taught the group of 15 participants collectively, this means assuming that they had common interests, common prerequisites for being able to learn[54] and common aims and motivation for learning. However, my experience then and later confirmed that adults, more than "ordinary" young students, are a very heterogeneous group. In a new learning situation they therefore need to be met as *what they are* and *where they are*, and the learning situation must acknowledge *where they want to go*. These students clearly demand that a successful supporter makes a clear connection between the respective learning activity/situation and both the present life situation and the future, desired quality of life. These individual factors mean a considerable challenge for the supporter. There has to be both structure and clarity in the teaching process, as well as flexibility to meet individual needs, interests, and aims.

Are supporter and participants involved in a common language platform?

In Norway there has been a growing awareness that we live in a society that demands good verbal-linguistic abilities, and that verbal language is a crucial prerequisite for mastering and improving one's life situation. As a linguist I am naturally interested in the aspects of

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[52] See Murphy and Wie, in part 3
[53] Quoted in Nilsen, part 1
[54] "readiness" according to Knowles, see Nilsen, part 1

language competency, particularly in terms of language as a "tool" for the articulation of known and of new life situations. In teaching adult students I found it surprising how often one meets students with a linguistic competence that is not sufficient for articulating experiences for others and themselves, and how many have a linguistic competence that is not sufficient for mastering the course reading and for being involved in class discussions. In order to improve the options and chances for adults to improve their quality of life in general, in many Norwegian regions action plans for the improvement of adult linguistic competence are currently implemented[55]. We live in a complicated reality, and in order to master this reality, language is a necessary "tool".

For the expert reader in the field of adult pedagogics I would like to point out that for me the most important factor for achieving useful learning (a circular, life-long process: experience + new knowledge + new insight/experience => new quality of life => new experience)[56] has been the teacher's role. It is, of course, necessary to provide a certain outer framework, and it is furthermore important to provide clear and realistic learning aims, structures and work methods, and to be predictable.

Most important, however, is the communicative sensitivity of the supporter, the role of the supporter as a genuinely interested cooperator who values the individual qualities of the participants and strengthens their self-image trough supportive feedback. Such a learning situation could best be called as *structured learning strategy with a supporter and equal participants in a learning community*.

METHODS THAT WORK[57]

About 10 years after my first encounter with adult students I came across *Andragogy in Action* by Knowles and associates an their view of adult pedagogics[58] and found a confirmation of my experience in andragogics. There is, however, one aspect that andragogics has not taken seriously enough, namely the importance of verbal language as a tool for the mastering of learning and life situations. Both content and methods in a course of learning

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[55] See Johnsen, in Nilsen, part 1 and Nilsen, part 1
[56] I refer to the ALACT-model: *Action, Looking, Awareness, Creating, Trial*. Hoel & Gudmundsdottir 1998:77. (In Norwegian only).
[57] For concrete methods see the articles in part 2, in particular Wie "Teamwork", "Project Work", "Problem Based Learning".
[58] Nilsen, part 1

depend on the fact that the linguistic competency of the participants matches the activities in the learning arena.

During the spring and fall terms of 2003 I taught three different groups of adult students, one group of 5, one of 14, and one of 11 participants. The courses were of relatively short duration but long enough to try out some methods that all can be subsumed under the common denominator *learning community*. In these groups I have for the first time registered and systematized the teaching methods that, in my view, are functional in many different courses of learning. There will always be a correspondence between the didactical WHAT (what is the topic and the aim) and HOW (methods). The didactical HOW is furthermore related to the conditions one works in, who is supporter or administrator, how many participants there are, etc. In connection to all these known and partially unpredictable factors one could list many hundreds of alternative methods. This, however, is not my aim. I will rather present a few methodical choices that have worked well in my experience.

Methods, in my view, correspond to cooperative situations where both supervisor and the learning student try to construct a learning community with a clearly defined aim.

1. The supervisor as a front figure in one-way communication

According to my experience it is necessary for all kinds of learning activities that the leader of the course (supervisor or supporter) already from the start shows his or her presence as a resource person. I have experienced that through presenting high competency in relevant areas the participants trust their supporter, and that this can create a safe atmosphere for the coming course of learning. I think that it is essential that the supporter use the necessary time for presenting himself or herself; implicitly through showing how one *is* and explicitly in a verbal introduction showing how one *will be* (see above about the teacher's role). I would argue that it should be the supervisor who takes the initiative in regard to the topic or learning activity in question[59]. To ask questions is a clear invitation to the participants to prepare for their role as active participants. Not more than one hour should pass between the beginning of the introduction and the invitation to the participants to become cooperators. Such an invitation marks the transition to the "dialogical space".

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[59] See Loginova in part 2: "Listening and Observing", "Demonstration", "Lecture Involving Lecture", "Involving Lecture", "Debates", "Discussion", and "Cooperative Learning".

2. The dialogical space

I have experienced that dialogue, conversation, and the voices of the participants are the most important factors in the collective learning situation. At the beginning of a course of learning it often happens that adult participants assume a passive role as listeners to the teacher. Changing this is a slow process, and a supervisor needs to be patient in making the participants assume the roles they want to be in, that means as cooperators and as mediators of their own experience and identity. Adults want to be visible, show themselves as being valuable, show responsibility for their own learning; all these are roles they can assume in conversations in the dialogical space. Furthermore, in a dialogue the supervisor can demonstrate his or her ability to listen, to be authentic in assuming equality between him- or herself and the participants, and foster a sense of equality between the participants.

The dialogical principle is functional for a common aim in a common forum of between 5 to 25 participants. It is important to point out that in addition to the production of knowledge of the subject and insight through conversation and reflection, dialogue is an important exercise of social competency[60] and an improvement of language competency.

Dialogue is a tool that is essential for project work and problem based learning. Here it is used in a common forum (in a macrostructure) as well as in smaller groups (microstructure) that are framed by a larger unit. This means that dialogue as a tool can be transferred from a superordinate level (common forum) to smaller groups with, among other factors, a different leader structure, new listening structures, and new social structures in general.

GROUP STRUCTURES

In a larger, common structure I experienced the following: Groups, where each group either works with a project or problem of its own or groups that work with parts of a larger task/problem that will be incorporated into a larger unit should not be left on their own for long. I experienced that it is the social macro-community (common forum) that visualizes choices, maintains motivation, functions as an aid, and creates focus for experiences and learning activities. For example, in a course of learning during an entire day I usually collect the groups in a common forum twice to have a conversation and to focus on study morale.

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[60] Amundsen, part 1

Conversation in a forum can create a feeling of safety and can result in a common "grammar" of the activities. The grammar can be systematized such: *where were we, what do we do,*

AUTHENTICITY OR QUASI-LEARNING

As mentioned before, adult learners are in a life situation different from young "ordinary" students. Adults have less time for learning and have a stronger focus to come through an effective course of learning where the learning activities clearly correspond with current personal aims that make a change of their life situation possible. This means that the learning content must be clearly defined, individually specialized, and geared towards relatively close aims that *mean* something for an improved life situation. The superordinate elements for all choice of activities and methods are clarity and proximity between learning aims (both partial and total aims) and a current process or a future life situation. Project work and problem based learning must, of course, contain elements that reflect reality. Furthermore, when activity is practiced in groups, the method of concomitant learning provides authentic life experience for such as: social adaptation, responsibility, ability to show respect, assume leader responsibility, training of thinking and reflection (cognitive level), and, last but not least, language abilities.

CONCLUSION: ATTEMPTING A POSITIONING

One may easily become resigned when considering the enormous number of methods that are supposed to correspond to all the explicit and assumed prerequisites. I have chosen to focus on the role of the supporter and his or her interaction with the course participants. The key is to create a learning atmosphere of safety and authenticity, an atmosphere of genuine equality and of cooperation, an atmosphere of respect and self-respect, and a common learning arena where the involved parts are valued as important. The ability to create and construct a learning community can be related to personal qualities, but one can also learn to become a successful creator. I would advise teachers to use the possibilities of the dialogical space or the learning community. Whereas one-way communication is necessarily marked by a chance for conflict and setbacks, dialogue always opens up for possibilities and developments.

TEACHING ADULTS

Elsa Løfsnæs, Nesna University College, Norway, 2003.

In this article I will put teaching of adults into a holistic perspective built on Alfred Schutz' (1982) phenomenological, sociological theory. The essence of teaching is the perspectives we choose when meeting the students in their learning processes, and how we organise their learning situations. A method for teaching alone does not help. The teacher and the students' joint consciousness, their meta-learning, is an important part of the learning processes.

Teaching adults is for me to meet the students where they stand, to start with their "knowledge at hand", their practical experiences, and to develop a joint consciousness about teaching processes, the methods used and the level of cooperation between the students. My teaching responsibilities lie within the field of pedagogy. The students are adult, and most of them are studying to become teachers. Becoming a teacher in Norway requires 240 credits, which is equal to four years of full-time study. Among the teacher training students at Nesna University College, there is one group studying full time and another studying part-time.

The students use portfolios as a tool when writing about their experiences from practice teaching and fieldwork, and how they see connection between theory and practice. The students are required to explain how they see theory as part of their practical understanding, and also give examples to show their comprehension. This is an important part of their portfolio. From the portfolio they pick out three texts that will be the subject for their final oral examination.

Both groups of students have to do a lot of studying on their own. They are given sets of exercises and practical problems to work with on their own or in study groups. During their working process, they use the Internet as a platform for communication. Traditional classroom teaching is a minor component of their study situation. When teaching in the classroom, different kinds of methods are used, such as: individual work, group work, lectures, and problem oriented learning and project methodology. Sometimes the lessons are organised as cross-curricular activities, and the students may also give lectures to each other.

If the students shall be able to use what they have learnt when they are to practice their profession, they must be reflective and connect their reflections to the practical challenges in their lives. The success of any practical work, especially teaching, is not achieved by applying the theory correctly through considering each individual case. Reflection is far too slow a process connecting it to theory.

When a person has learnt something in a deeper and familiar way, he or she is able to make decisions and judgements in the decisive moment. Real knowledge connected to practice has the form of common sense, and it is a type of knowledge that is personal and taken for granted[61]. Buchmann calls this kind of knowledge "the folkways of thinking"[62].

The ideal learning situation is one where the student may combine studies with field experience. Those who do so, have a better opportunity to connect theory and practice, especially when they are helped to reflect upon their own practical understanding.   The students' way of learning must be a personal process connected to practical understanding.

Herbart sees this learning process as a "thought-life" process[63]. Students who study full-time have just a few weeks of practice teaching included in their curriculum. In addition to reflecting on their own practice, they seem to be helped in their learning processes by case analysis.   Personal reflection on practice seems to help a great deal, especially when they are involved in discussions aiding the development of their personal portfolio. In the classroom, the students discuss central aspects connected to practical cases. Before discussing a practical case, the students may have been working with the topic. Other times we start with a dialogue about the topic, or a short lecture. When the students have discussed practical cases, we summarize together. Shorter lectures may be a part of this.

Adults necessarily have gained a variety of   experience of life, and their learning must start with their understanding of their experiences. Discussing their understanding of practice and how theory fits in with this understanding may enable the adult student to experience personal and meaningful learning.

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[61] Herbart, 1901; Sivertsen, 1996
[62] Buchmann, 1987
[63] Metz, 1995

Through the students' own learning situation in an educational setting, they can also learn something about learning-processes and the components in fruitful teaching and learning situations. It seems to be the same important components that are needed in all teaching, whether the learner is adult or a younger person or child. The important issue is how the adult or young learner is able to learn in different ways, and to be able to learn by himself. The learners must experience a teaching situation where they participate and learn through reflection, cooperation and active work.

The students are required to undertake an amount of pedagogical work in one or another way. Some of the students will work as teachers, while others may instruct people in different kinds of work. The students' learning situation should also be an example of how they themselves can help others to learn, how they can take care of both the processes of collective learning, the applied methodology, as well as each individual's feelings and sentiments in the given learning situation. This provides for a variety of ways in which the learner is activated.

The learning processes in pedagogical education imply many different aims and objectives. In a teaching situation, both in higher education and in many kinds of pedagogical work in practical occupations, many individuals should be able to learn together. The teaching situation should be experienced as relevant and meaningful for the persons who take part in the situation. The learning process must also include personal development, how to cooperate and to take responsibility in learning situations. The learning processes must develop thoughtful individuals. A thoughtful person is able to make correct decisions, see and feel life from the perspective of others, and say and do the right things when other people most need help and support. To be able to take responsibility and work together, some meta-learning is needed. Learning is a very individual process where established action patterns in the environment are important. If the teacher and the students collectively do not take responsibility and reflect upon their own choices, actions, and processes of understanding, much of the teaching will miss its aim. This is where the core and main challenge of teaching is located. The teacher must be able to notice when learning and meta-learning is part of the learning situation.

Teaching demands a common consciousness that facilitates communication about teaching aims and processes between students and between students and teachers. Such a

consciousness becomes visible in interaction patterns[64]. The students' understanding and feeling of action patterns tells them how to behave, how to work, and how to cooperate. There is thus a common ground of understanding and feeling in the environment, a prerequisite for being engaged and taking part in the learning processes.

Recognition must in many contexts of teaching, as in demanding group work, also be linked to the social part of the working process. The social dimension is an important part of the learning situation, where the students work either with their projects or with problem oriented learning. Without the development of a common consciousness about where one stands and which aims one wants to reach in this teaching process, an independent responsibility and feeling of property regarding the tasks cannot be developed.

Consciousness is, in other words, a dialogic and reflexive phenomenon. Conscious communication "holds on to the twofoldness in the levels of turning to and referring to that are the essence of conscious communication"[65]. Based on Bateson, Hansen[66] defines three levels of communication; on the first level there is communication as turning to (addressing), based on mutual observation. Communication becomes conscious on the second level, when the person acts dialogical with both turning to and referring to. On the third level communication becomes reflexive and conscious. Reflexive communication presupposes self-awareness and forms reflexive turning to and referring to.

It is consciousness on such a level, which Hansen calls a joint consciousness[67]. This consciousness is developed through meta-learning. To be able to do what is expected from them, he students need to know the means and the ends of the work. A joint consciousness is established through the students' taking part in the evaluation of both the working processes and the products. A joint consciousness creates a safe framework, gives the students a feeling of ownership of their work, and enables them to communicate with each other and the teacher about what happened in the working process. Such a consciousness creates action patterns that make the work and the communication about the work "flow easily" and create meaning for the students[68]. The development of joint consciousness must be understood as a process of

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[64] Schutz, 1982
[65] Hansen, 2000
[66] ibid
[67] ibid
[68] Schutz, 1982

communication and cooperation where respect for the integrity of the individual is central. Any individual statement must be respected. Clarity is the base for taking an independent stance. The criterion for the creation of joint consciousness cannot be understood independently from situation and development process. Consciousness must be built up step by step, and has to be seen in a developmental perspective. How different factors are constructed around such a joint consciousness can furthermore only be understood in an integrated context.

In teaching it is necessary to simultaneously consider a number of dimensions. In the attempt to develop the teacher training students' practice, it is a general problem that focus is put on single dimensions in the working process. When teaching is focused on primarily one dimension in the complexity of teaching, other dimensions are often not considered sufficiently in the balancing of the integral elements. Wagner (1984) calls this focus on single aspects a "knot", a term that demonstrates the imperative qualities in a person's thought. For a teacher this can mean that he or she is busy avoiding something happening, what she has to do, or what the students should do. Occasionally, these imperative qualities are violated or come into conflict with each other.

There are many dimensions of a learning situation to take care of when teaching adults. As learners they are involved with their personality, and learning is connected to mastering feelings and emotions as well as the situation. Hansen says that we have to abandon the dualism between teaching and learning when generally thinking about teaching. We should not see teaching and learning quite as opposites. He proposes that there should be a stronger focus on the meaning of communication in a pedagogical context, not just seeing the challenges in terms of the problems of motivation. Teaching and learning should be seen in the same way as learning and meta-learning as "Siamese twins". Dualistic thinking, where teaching and learning are opposites, is hardly a suitable path towards the creation of valid teaching for all students. It cannot be stressed enough that teaching where several people cooperate and interact makes great demands on the teacher's organisation as well as the pupils' responsibility. Organisation requires responsibility, and responsibility requires organisation[69].

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[69] Hansen, 2000

In order to experience teaching as valid by all students, both the individual and the community must be taken care of. The experience of validity calls for a balance between organisation and that the students are given room for reflection, self-assertion, and independent choice. A very important part of being conscious are the students evaluating the setting for learning, both what the teacher does and what the student himself and his classmates do in this setting. To learn is also to be able to adjust to the learning situation, and to act in a constructive way.

Using methods that take care of a variety of aim dimensions simultaneously happen to strengthen the joint consciousness of both teachers and students, but of course only when there is a good communication between teacher and students. It is emphasised that the students should learn structures for "action patterns" in their work and their interaction, so that they can take part in defining the aims and evaluating the work. Such emphases appears to facilitate the development of abilities and frameworks of understanding that is needed to develop oneself towards an increasingly "self-administrated learning"[70], in other words, to take a more independent stance, regulate expressions, and take responsibility.

The teacher must therefore make sure that the students continually evaluate the teaching and their learning processes. They can write a log, or they can just talk about what happened and how they could have worked it out. The evaluation must be a dialogue between teacher and students. To understand the teaching processes is a part of learning. The adult students have to make experiences, take part in discussions, seek for information, coach each other, reflect and explain how they understand the theory connected to their understanding of practical cases and practical experiences.

The teacher must understand the effective learning processes. The development of valid teaching is about teachers and students who learn together. Established action patterns fall somewhat behind, which renders the question about teacher- or student-control obsolete[71]. In order to make the teacher's organisation effective, we have to picture how the students' learning process can proceed, and how joint consciousness about the learning process and the demands of the work can be communicated and developed.

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[70] Jerlang, 1991
[71] Grannis, 1978

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In order for the students to be able to take responsibility, they must, in teaching situations where communality should be taken care of, take part in the definition of aims on a broad level, aims that are connected to knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. It is all about the students' learning processes and the prerequisites for taking responsibility themselves on their own and in communal learning. In order to reach the aim that the students should be increasingly responsible for their own learning process, gradual organisation to facilitate the development of the prerequisites for such responsibility is necessary. *Teaching demands difficult balancing towards the aim of achieving the highest possible level of self-regulated and personally reflected learning.*

CONCLUSION

The teacher and the students must focus on the methods used, and as a part of that, the social dimension of the work undertaken. The teacher cannot use the methods in a technical way. Teaching forms an integrated situation for the student. This is a matter of case for the adults as well as for the younger ones.

The teacher's organisation and the students responsibility are two dimensions of the teaching situation that form a very demanding act of balance that can have many pitfalls.

USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN ADULT DISTANCE LEARNING - THE ELECTRONIC CLASSROOM

Patrick Murphy, Nesna University College, Norway (2003)

This article on the use of the electronic classroom is based on fieldwork carried out at Nesna University College, August 2002 to October 2003. The need to create a clearly identifiable learning environment for the adult distance learner is accounted for, as is the need to see the traditional teacher as a mentor and facilitator of the construction of knowledge. The article promotes the mirroring of the traditional classroom and on-campus academic and social activities to fit the framework of the electronic classroom. Much emphasis is placed on the need to communicate synchronously as well as asynchronously. The bottom line is that the electronic tools are in themselves not a solution to the challenge of quality distance learning, but merely instruments for the conscientious teacher to exploit well-founded pedagogical approaches within a new packaging.

The introduction to the use of an electronic classroom is based on experience gained in the use of information technology for distance learning at Nesna University College and research carried out at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire[72]. The course formats used are a combination of on-campus and distance learning. The students meet for three weekly gatherings at Nesna during the semester-long course, and the electronic classroom has been developed to serve the needs of the learners and facilitator during the periods between on-campus gatherings. The electronic classroom has been facilitated by Moodle[73], which has been used extensively during the past two years.

In times of an explosive development and availability of technical tools and solutions, a great deal of focus has been placed on how innovations may be used to advance distance learning. In order to put the use of ICT for these purposes into perspective, it is necessary to appreciate that distance teaching as such is not new. Australia had by the 1960s put the short wave radio

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[72] The courses taught using electronic classrooms are *Language 1*(autumn 2002 and autumn 2003) and *Didactics 2* (autumn 2003). In addition the author is currently heading a project instituting a new approach to part-time teacher training, where the e-classroom is one of the foundations for learning. Research undertaken at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, January to July 2002.

[73] Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses. The software is used all over the world by universities, schools, companies and independent teachers. Http://www.moodle.com

into broad use for educational purposes, and in Britain the Open University was rather unique[74].

The Australian approach is an example of the wide-spread population pattern itself displaying a need for distance teaching. The Open University approach, on the other hand, was developed in order to encompass groups of students that have different backgrounds and occupations from those of the traditional college students. The Open University approach thus seeks to provide distance teaching to students based on circumstances of life, rather than of a purely geographically need. An increasing amount of today's distance learning – as opposed to teaching[75] – provides the facility of studies for population groups based on other criteria than purely geographical ones. Today's inexpensive technical based tools create the possibility and option of studying off-campus.

New technology and tools have developed with an awe-inspiring pace. The fascination thereof, at times interlaced with fear and misplaced respect for the tools themselves, has been regarded with such an importance that the potential educational aims and objectives may have been obscured by the fascination of the tools themselves. Once this fascination has had the chance to wear off, the need to construct an environment for learning becomes evident. With the clear focal point that electronic innovations are merely tools, in practical terms one may regard the electronic learning environment in terms of a traditional classroom and campus. Facilities previously found in the traditional classroom and on campus should be mirrored by the electronic classroom – or the e-classroom.

Facilitating learning requires a high-quality learning environment. In order to create such an environment, there is a need to re-create the functions of the traditional campus and classroom; which need be mirrored as the e-classroom. I strongly believe that regardless of technical solutions in the form of software etc, the e-classroom could well be constructed and structured as the traditional classroom: the tools that support the ICT based learning are merely a framework, and it is up to the learners and the teachers to fill the framework with academic substance and construction of knowledge.

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[74] The Open University is an educational system that makes use of television, radio and correspondence courses in order to qualify for a degree. The first teaching programmes appeared on the air and screen in January 1971 with clerks, farmers, housewives, teachers, policemen and many others as students. Study centres have been set up all over the country so that students can attend lectures say once a week, and once a year they will spend a week at one of the university's summer schools.

[75] Distinguishing between *teaching* and *learning*, the first concept focuses on presentation of information, while the latter requires construction of knowledge.

There is an assortment of appropriate software available to serve the needs for setting up an e-classroom; some of which fetch premium license fees, while others are share-ware or free-ware. Disregarding the unavoidable question of funding and budgets, providing a given program performs as required, it is in principle an appropriate tool. Years of occupying myself with the use of electronic tools for teaching display a general notion that more time and effort than strictly necessary is spent on the comparison and selection of software. Whether you drive a Mercedes or a Toyota, the machine will probably capable of reaching its destination. One of the challenges of distance teaching is the fear of the tools – techno phobia. This fear of technology manifests itself chiefly as a) the fear of not mastering the tools, b) the fear of not obtaining the best tools available, and c) the fear of change. These fears are not perceived to be principally different to those of innovation in general in traditional teaching. There is today little or no need for the teacher facilitating distance learning to master the skills of programming[76]. To illustrate, the computer may be viewed as a washing machine: one knows what items one has (clothes), what one wishes to do with them (wash them), and the desired out-come (clean clothes, no discolouration or shrinking). By selecting the appropriate program (approach/methods), one's goals will be met (the learner's construction of knowledge). How the internals work technically is less relevant to the perception of the tool and how it may be put into good use.

It is essential to differentiate between *providing information* and the *construction of knowledge*. Too often ICT in distance learning has been viewed as - and indeed put into use as - a practical means of presenting and conveying information. Placing a lecture on a web site as a substitution for giving it in class has been a typical approach. However, this in itself contributes little to the learner's *construction* of knowledge. The e-classroom needs to facilitate the construction of knowledge, and thus requires additional facilities to the mere posting of information. Responding to this requirement, there are some basic needs that need be met: a) an academic content and the facilitation of construction of knowledge, b) a teacher-student interaction, and c) a student-student interaction.

The presence of an academic content is obvious, and may as a starting point be regarded as providing subject-matter for information purposes. However, it is the facilitation of *how* the learner may digest and construct meaningful knowledge that is the challenge. Not going into a

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[76] This applies to subjects other than studies related directly to information technology as such.

detailed description of methodology, it is the teacher who by asking relevant questions, as well as serving the function as mentor, that truly makes him or her facilitator of learning in the true meaning of the word. Mentoring and guidance requires good communication between mentor and learner; in both senses of the word. Here it is of interest to show how ICT can provide and facilitate tools of communication. Communication between the parties of knowledge building is arguably the most important application of ICT in adult learning. There are numerous ways of communication within, and in combination with, the Moodle-based e-classroom: the forum, the journal, chat, e-mail, video conferencing, telephone, and SMS.

While asynchronous communication gives the flexibility of student and mentor not needing to be available to communicate at the same given time, synchronous communication does have the added dimension of contact of a more personal nature. Asynchronous communication is indeed an old form of communication, but it is the speed and flexibility of new communication tools that is epitomised in the e-classroom. The addition of asynchronous communication adds the dimension of *time* to the dimension of *place* being eradicated in distance learning through the use of ICT. The move towards a learning environment that is asynchronous both in time and place, typically the e-classroom, is regarded as a new way of studying and learning to be reckoned with. Enrolling in studies based on distance learning may bring about the assumption that not having to break up from his or her local community to attend an institution of education; the student will have the option of having both a job and a family. This is an assumption that for many has proven to be real. The question of how a family and/or job may influence the quality of study will not be addressed here. However, distance learning has brought about a marked shift in the hours devoted to studies. Traditional on-campus teaching sees the student generally attending lectures and studying during daytime Mondays to Fridays. The off-campus student's combination of work and family responsibilities leaves time for studies after regular working hours and during weekends and holidays. The asynchronous learning environment permits this shift, and, it may indeed promote it. This shift in times of studying may well be anticipated and expected, and in a learner centred environment the student is entrusted with planning his or her study hours. However, there seems to be less development and change observed among the teachers or facilitators of the desired learning process. Communication and mentoring are key factors in the construction of knowledge; the teacher as mentor needs to be readily available for the student. The off–campus students are not offered the option of knocking on the professor's door to seek advice and counselling, as would the on-campus student. In order for the e-

classroom to mirror the traditional classroom or campus, it is necessary to facilitate also synchronous communication between learner and facilitator. To accommodate the needs for synchronous communication, it is thus the order of the day to consider rearranging the teacher's traditional working hours[77] (which to some extent is a response to the students' rearranged times of study).

The forum is one of the newer forms of asynchronous communication. The use of forums has been tried for educational purposes with a varying degree of success. The failure of forums is evident through a lack of response and the dwindling of interest – they become quieter and quieter, and students finally give up checking the forums for new postings. A main reason for this failure is arguably the lack of something to communicate *about*. Forums of all types abound on the Internet, and a great many of these are a success for the simple reason that the members of the forums have something concrete to share and discuss; be it hobbies as classic automobiles or butterflies. The teacher will play an important role creating the framework of a learning situation, where the forum ideally hosts and promotes the concrete need to discuss issues or to seek out information. This is one of the many tasks that truly see the teacher a facilitator of learning. Facilitation of problem-based learning through a forum has been carried out with success by professor Wie[78]. The forum in question was purposefully set up to facilitate the exam preparations for students of Norwegian as a compulsory subject in teacher training. The common interest and need for communication was naturally the forthcoming exam, and served as a help-line to vent frustrations of a more general nature, in addition to purely academic issues. By actively using the forum, the students would be able to find answers also to questions on why headlines in a document would not appear as desired, as well as getting the assurance that they are not the only ones struggling. Though the teacher is the facilitator, the very nature of the forum sees the need for the teacher to check the forum for postings, and indeed to actively participate for the duration of the forum. Again, there is the need to create and maintain an interest. An effective way of achieving this is running the forum for a limited period of time. The conscientious teacher will also appreciate that the demands on him or her are great under this duration.

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[77] At Norwegian institutions of higher education, regular office hours would typically be Monday to Friday, 8 AM to 3.30 PM.
[78] Professor Anne-Lise Wie, Nesna University College. The type of forum been adopted by other faculty members.

As an observer to professor Wie's initial experiment and follow-up, there is little doubt that this type of specifically designed forum does smooth the progress of social bonding, as well as leading to a greater appreciation of the teacher who shows care and consideration for his or her students.

In order to maintain an active forum, it is obviously necessary to access the forum to check for new postings. Experience shows that the more active the forum, the greater the need for frequenting the forum. Moodle makes this a less arduous task by automatically sending all postings directly to each participant's e-mail account.

Asynchronous communication clearly has its advantages in the e-classroom. However, there will be times when synchronous communication is more desirable. This will often be the case where the teacher's role as mentor is prominent. Nothing can fully substitute face-to-face communication. In these times of technical innovations and development, it is still important to recognise the telephone as maybe the most accessible means of synchronous communication for the distance learner. The student photos and information provided by Moodle's e-classroom provides an added dimension to telephonic communication. Personal experience is that communication with a student by phone is enhanced when the student's photo and personal presentation is present on the computer screen. This is especially applicable during the early days of a new course. The use of electronic video conferencing tools may also be an option.

The adult learner is popularly regarded as responsible for his or her learning process. This notion is enhanced by the structure of distance learning. Though adult, the learner is dependent on guidelines and follow-up from the facilitator. The adult distance learner will often not have been to school or studied for some time, and it may be a challenge to organise ones new learning situation depending on a facilitator, peers and the demand of an outcome. Moodle provides the tools to ensure that the facilitator has the possibility to be attentive and to a degree observe whether the learner has received posted information.

Figure 1. This screen dump shows the students' name, location, and last access to the e-classroom.

Logging student activities raises a question of ethics: does the facilitator have the right to this information? Side-stepping the debate on ethics, presenting the options given to the facilitator was met with a positive attitude. The clue is to actively use the potential that lies within the logs, and regard the use of the tool as mentoring, rather than monitoring; thus taking the role as the bonus pater familias. The conscientious and concerned facilitator may by aid of the logs discover whether students are active, and query the learner's progress, thus enabling the facilitator to mentor a desired development and construction of knowledge. This type of concerned mentoring – as opposed to prying monitoring – has proven to be an important consolation for the distance learner.

The tools available for both synchronous and asynchronous guidance and mentoring in distance learning invite and appeal to a greater flexibility for the teacher. But, it will depend largely on the individual teacher whether he or she wishes to exploit the possibilities given by a systematic use of ICT. Checking e-mail - and responding to student queries – outside of office hours has been regarded by the students as invaluable. So also the option for the

students using ICQ or MSN[79] to contact me when they see that I am logged on and free to communicate, thus inviting synchronous communication on the students' premise. The main purpose of evening/weekend availability is facilitating a best possible learning environment and process for the distance learner. However, this desire to facilitate learning on a student premise brought about an unforeseen consequence – and a pleasant one as such. The students where overwhelmingly positive to the approach of increased availability, and even though many did not contact their teacher outside of regular office hours, the consensus was that the students felt that the teacher really cared about them as students and individuals. This sentiment has been an important factor building a good working and social relationship between students and teacher.

For many a teacher, there is always the question of how much work to put into one's job. This is especially applicable to countries where faculty have a contracted number of working hours per academic year. In light of this, it may in many a colleague's eye have been daring to put SMS into use as a tool for facilitation of learning. I provided my students with my cell phone number, and encouraged them to use SMS for queries during the final ten days leading up to their phonetics exam. Such a move provided the student with a tool to be aided before total frustration set in. Typically, an SMS query would be relatively short. If the response required was short, an SMS would promptly be returned. But, if the incoming SMS would require a longer feedback, or indeed a discussion, I would simply call up the student in need. Though the students were informed that sending a query by SMS was in itself no guarantee of an immediate response (typically during late/early hours, or during work or socially related engagements), the vast majority of SMS queries were actually given an immediate response. Inviting student queries in this manner may blur a clear separation of work and leisure time, and rightly be a cause for concern. The change of working routines does not necessarily extend working hours, but must be regarded as a new distribution thereof.

High tech innovations have created the potential for the lonely, off-campus student; probably not the ideal learning situation for the learner studying to master a social profession. There is an acute need to provide the social and academic interaction that once took place in the traditional classroom. True, the pedagogic flux has come to regard the construction of knowledge in a learner centred environment as beneficial. However, this does not license the

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[79] MicroSoft Network ©

schools of education to create lonely learners, but rather demands a far greater attention to the learners than during the teacher centered days on campus.

Social relations are a key element in the e-classroom. In order for off-campus education to create an e-classroom that mirrors the traditional classroom, there is a need for a presentation of self, as would typically be undertaken the beginning of any study. The need to have the applicable information at hand is met by a photograph and a short presentation of the participants in the e-classroom. The participant's picture is included in any posting made by the student, and thus a certain dimension of personal contact is maintained.
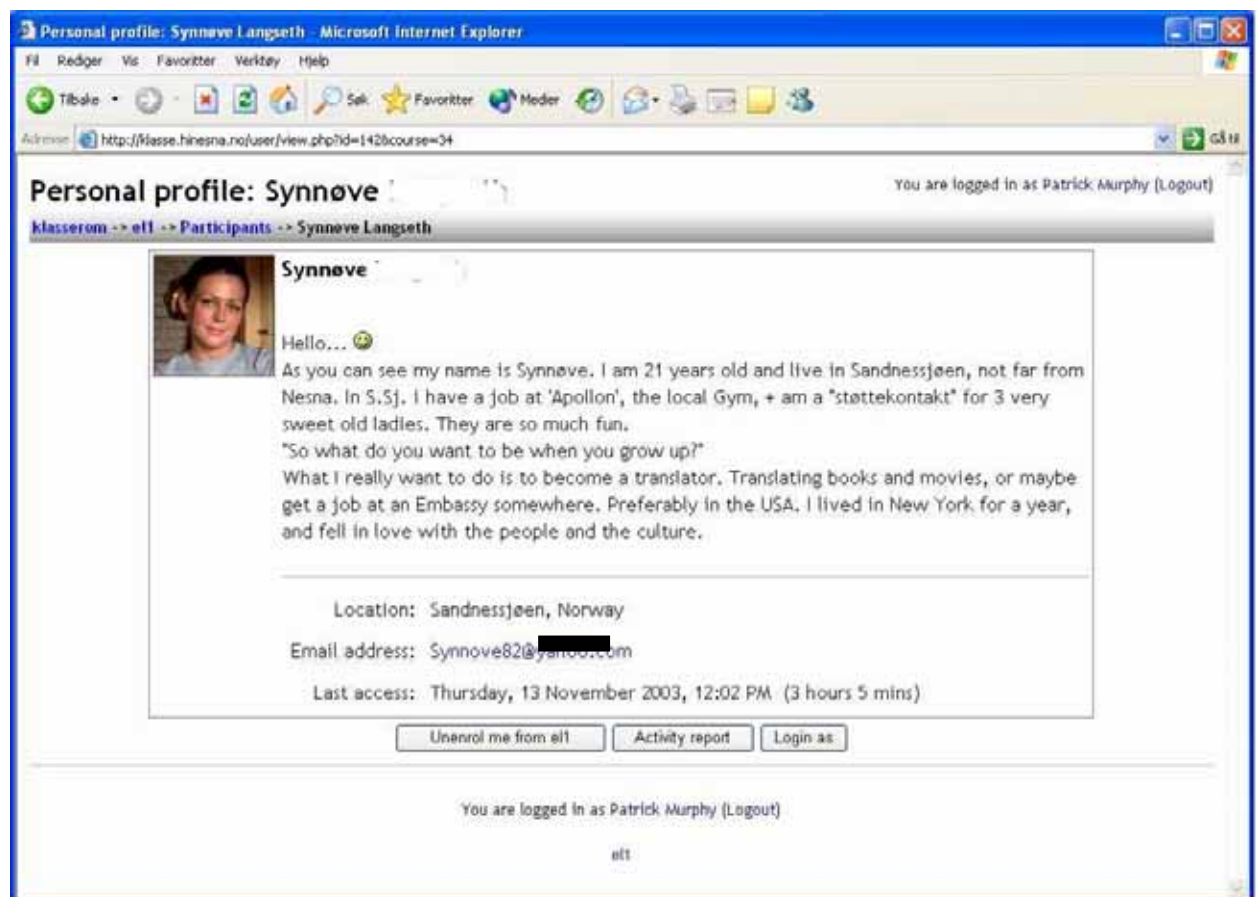

Figure 2. This screen dump shows a sample of a student's Personal profile; mainly a presentation of self and means of contact/communication.

A positive social environment, and the sense of belonging *to* and *within* a group, is a significant contributing factor to an enhanced learning situation. Achieving this may be realised by tying non-academic bonds. Ensuring student awareness of what the college and the local community has to offer when the students are gathered on-campus is essential for the planning of a beneficial time as a *student* - involving the social relations that form and bind a

group. The e-classroom has been put actively into use when planning, preparing and summing-up social activities. Practical examples are posting pictures/video/sound-clips from on-campus gathering to be shared with the entire group; as well as the need to be able to talk in groups, or indeed in full class. The latter is provided for by the chat function. Typically, a number of students will bring along cameras to a field trip. On-campus students will easily be able to gather to view pictures in a social setting that may provide for a bonding within the group. This option will – in most cases – be precluded among distance learners, but may be partially met by posting over the web.

The success of distance learning is based on the ability to create a learning environment where the student can truly identify his or her responsibility, potential and options as a learner. The e-classroom may provide the framework for a good learning environment, while the teacher as mentor facilitates the actual learning process. The use of ICT in adult distance teaching is not so much a question of tools – it is more a question of their practical application based on solid pedagogical reflections and methodology.

STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN LIFE AND ICT

Anne-Lise Wie, Nesna University College, Norway (2003)

In this article, Prof. Wie shares her experience of communicating with students over the Internet. The objective is to gather information about the students' prior experiences that may affect their present studies.

The students at Nesna University College are adult, and they naturally bring with them considerable experience from life that may be of great contributing value for many of the topics taught. In a classroom discussion, experiences are exchanged and reflected on. Using the students' experiences is a most valuable way of teaching[80]. This methodological approach places an increased responsibility on the teacher: the need for a better knowledge of the individual student – a task that in itself is time-consuming for teacher and student alike. The following is a presentation of a project where new methods for getting to know the background of the individual students - and the students as a group - we tried out. The project was undertaken with one student group during the fall semester of 2003. This particular group of students is enrolled in a part-time teacher training program. The students gather on campus four times a year for face-to-face teaching, and the Internet is actively used for communication between gatherings. The following four subjects are obligatory in Norwegian teacher training: Norwegian literature and linguistics, mathematics, religion and ethics, and pedagogy. I teach Norwegian linguistics, which forms the backdrop for my work with the student group.

## GATHERING INFORMATION ON THE DISCUSSION FORUM

At Nesna University College each study or course has its own web page that hosts a discussion forum, where students and teachers can discuss different issues. The success of a forum is having a concrete issue to discuss. The discussion forum was also used as a place where I could get to know the individual student and gather information that could be valuable for my teaching. The entry questions were:

"What do you remember from your school time according to the subject Norwegian literature and linguistics? What was interesting, and what was not? Why?"

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[80] Elsa Løfsnæs, 2003

Asynchronous communication lacks the personal involvement of face-to-face communication. This missing dimension of asynchronous communication was partly solved by Moodle[81] facilitating the option of the participants downloading and embedding a photograph in their profile. The screen dump of the Discussion Forum illustrates how a picture of the responding participant accompanies each posting. The embedded photograph proved to enhance communication by making it easier for teacher and students to connect face and ideas presented.
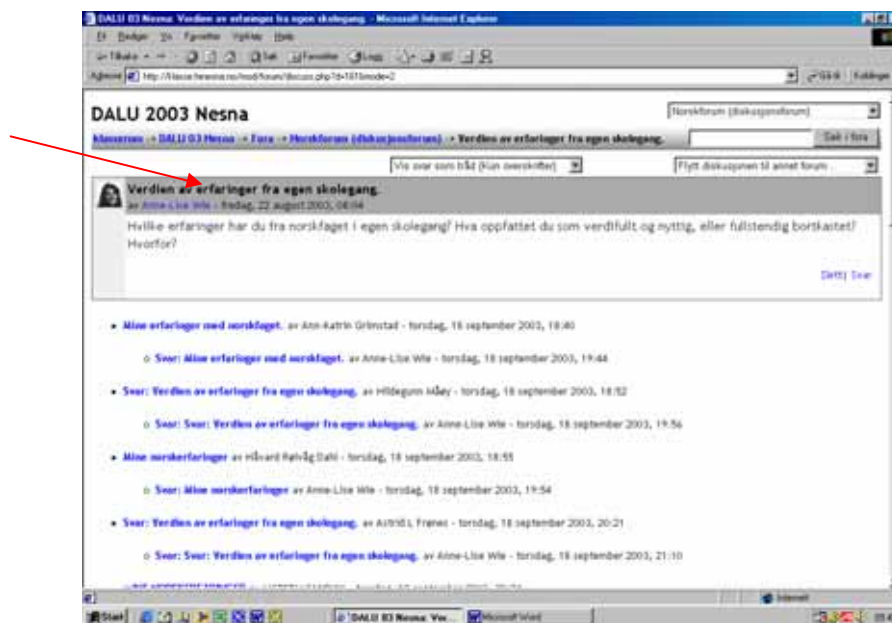
Screen dump: The Discussion Forum.

A problem based discussion forum requires of the teacher that he or she is committed to a regular follow-up of the on-going activity, thus facilitating a fruitful forum. The discussion forum in question was checked a couple of times every day for a fortnight. During this period, about 50 % of the students had responded to the opening questions. The time spent on forum response and facilitation amounted to some fifteen minutes to one hour daily. The length of the response varied according to the issue and contents.

The students showed great variety in what they remembered as difficult and as interesting when working with Norwegian back in their school days. Some of the students found grammar impossible to learn, others found it easy; some liked literature, other disliked

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[81] Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses. The software is used all over the world by universities, schools, companies and independent teachers. Http://www.moodle.com

analysing poems. Many students have had problems writing correct New Norwegian[82]. One student told about her dyslexia, which really can be problematic for a teacher to-be. Each student was given responded to individually, attempting to motivate him or her according to what seemed to be his or her predicament. The answers given sought to show the interconnectivity of the different topics contained within the wide subject Norwegian.

The entry questions on the forum have resulted in an increased knowledge and understanding of the students, and the response provided has indeed been in the form of guidance and mentoring. As the discussion forum is open for the peer students, each student will learn something by reading each other's contributions and responses. Valuable experience has been gained through the forum, which may be put into good use when planning teaching. The teacher needs to be humble, and acknowledge that the adult learner may have experiences the teacher does not have. The teacher should give the students an understanding of this, supporting a student's self-esteem. The bespoke student with dyslexia will be an invaluable asset when the topic of dyslexia is to be discussed. First-hand experience gives an insight in how the issue may be dealt with – or indeed, how it may *not* be dealt with.

The questions at this time were meant to give information about the students' experiences from school. Next, the students will be asked questions about experiences gained during teaching, which will be of great value when the topic of teaching is didactics and methods.

Communication on Internet produces written texts that are closer to oral texts. Asynchronous communication leaves room for misunderstandings that may not be sorted out "there and then". It is very important that the teacher is aware of possible misinterpretations, ensuring that the responses are thoughtful and constructive.

CONCLUSIVE COMMENTS

This article started with pointing out the issue of time; for adult students with family responsibilities, time always being an issue. The students meet on campus for only two weeks per gathering, and these two weeks are filled with teaching. It can therefore be difficult to find time to get to know the individual student. This is especially applicable to the group of forty-nine students in question. The students want the on-campus gatherings to be filled with

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[82] Norway has two official written languages: "Book language" and "New Norwegian". The students are required to use both.

traditional teaching, enabling them to learn as much as possible in the shortest possible time. When communicating over the Internet, both students and teacher are free to choose when and how to respond. The time spent on getting to know the students was rationalised by using the real, practical learning environment as the web pages are. What initially was an exercise performed with the intention of rationalising time, also proves beneficial that the students have a better understanding of each other when they meet as a group. The entry question demanded a presentation of self through a disclosure of personal experience. As all students could read each other's contribution and responses, the students got to know each other, which support student fellowship. In a while another issue to discuss will be given, and we will all be learning more.

PRESENTATION OF THE AUTHORS:

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He has taught in primary education for many years, and has been employed at Nesna University College since 1991. In his job at the college, he teaches adults in pedagogical matters. The last few years he has been teaching teachers how to deal with learners with special needs in primary and secondary school, as well as in adult education. He is currently researching on social pedagogical items and inclusion of children with special needs in ordinary groups and classes.

Nina Loginova, Kaunas Region Educational Centre, Lithuania

Nina Loginova has a teacher's diploma in the subject Russian language and literature from Russia, 1986. She also has a master's degree in the subject education science from Kaunas University of Technology in Lithuania, 2001. She has educational practice from secondary schooling. Nina Loginova has been working as a chief specialist at the Kaunas Region Municipality since 2000. Now she teaches teachers in the subject of connecting theory of education to practical work.

Associate Professor, Dr. polit. Elsa Løfsnæs, Nesna College, Norway

She received her Dr. degree in 2002 doing a research on teachers' thinking and planning. She has been a teacher in primary education for many years, and has been employed at Nesna University College since 1987. In her job at the college she teaches adults in pedagogical matters. Some of the students she teaches are studying to become teachers, but she also teaches a class where the students hold different kinds of jobs where they themselves teach or guide other adults. In her present research she is working with how to teach the students to connect their processes to their practical life.

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Dr. Nilsen has a master's degree in the subjects of pedagogy and psychology (Curriculum Planning, theory of education, theory of learning, andragogy (mainly the Theory of Billett and Knowles)), and a master's degree in the subjects of Nordic language and literature, both from the University of Trondheim. He also has a master's degree in the science of universal literature from the University of Oslo. In 2000 he received his Doctor's Degree in the research of applied linguistics from the University of Trondheim.

His educational practice has mainly been from secondary school and adult students. He has been employed at Nesna University College since 1991. In his job at the college he teaches adults in the subject Norwegian literature and linguistics. In his resent research he focuses upon giving feedback on students texts.

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Patrick Murphy has his cand. philol. degree from the University of Oslo (1994), which is supplemented with a practical-pedagogical education received from the same university. Murphy has since 1995 been involved with the use of information and communication technology in teacher training and particularly within his own subject, English. He has participated in national and international projects involving the use of information and communication technology in teacher training. In his work with the use of electronic portfolios, Prof. Murphy was in 2002 employed by the University of Wisconsin to conduct research on the topic. Prof. Murphy has also produced electronic multi-media course material for teaching English phonetics to distance learners. Patrick Murphy is currently employed as assistant professor, department of English at Nesna University College, Norway.

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Wie has her cand. philol. degree in the subject Nordic linguistics and literature from the University of Tromsø, Norway 1997. At the College she teaches adults in the subject Norwegian linguistics and literature, which she teaches both in primary teacher education and in pre-school teacher education. Prof. Wie has since 1999 been involved with the use of information and communication technology in teacher training and particularly within her

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