

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

COMPARATIVE STUDIES IN ADULT AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The Strategic Partnership COMPALL is developing a joint module in „Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning“, which will be offered in study programmes related to adult education and lifelong learning.

The joint module includes a preparatory phase, a two-week intensive phase at Campus Würzburg, Germany and a publication possibility for doctoral students and colleagues. Furthermore, COMPALL is developing an online network for young graduates and researchers in adult and lifelong learning.

COMPALL is offering annual public events. International experts in adult and lifelong learning are invited to discuss with us the use of COMPALL-results along with further development.

PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



SUPPORT

This project is funded with support from the European Commission (project number: 2015-1-DE01-KA203-002203). This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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1. DISCIPLINARY FOCUS OF THE COMPARATIVE GROUPS

Comparisons within the winter school focus on questions of adult education and lifelong learning. Questions within adult education refer to the learning processes of adults and their integration into diverse (educational) contexts. In international contexts – especially within international organizations – the term *lifelong learning* is common, and is frequently associated with adult learning. The winter school is looking at questions and discourses surrounding lifelong learning from the perspective of adult education.

The winter school is divided into two weeks. In the *first week*, participants will study international policies in lifelong learning. It is intended that participants develop during this first week a common vocabulary, which is related to the interplay of discourses in lifelong learning and adult education.

The *second week* of the winter school focuses on the comparison of selected aspects of adult education in transnational contexts. Through cross-national comparison, a single means of comparison will be achieved. The winter school has a further developed mean of comparison as it will also take cases and contexts into account, which will be compared with other cases and contexts. For example, adult education providers or institutions, adult education study programmes at different universities, or adult education regulation in different contexts (e.g., regions, employers, nation states) can be compared. The contexts of comparison will be different in each comparative group. They must be selected by the moderator according to the research question of each comparative group.

Within a transnational setting, the contexts compared are understood in a transnational and international way as interrelated with other contexts (e.g., other adult education providers, international policies, regional regulations). It can be understood as characteristic of transnational developments that the interrelationships of different contexts are arranged in a diffuse way. Comparative relationships need not be (but may be) hierarchically, horizontal or vertically opposed to each other. They can also be peripheral, overlapping or irrelevant to each other. This means that the relationship of contexts to other (non-)interrelated contexts must be researched within the comparative group. For example, the comparison of National Qualification Frameworks in different countries may detect quite different roles of and interrelationships between European policies, nation states, regions and institutions. For the development of a comparative group it will be essential that the question and subject will be related to adult education and learning. Furthermore, the context of research along with the interrelated contexts must be developed in advance.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT OF COMPARATIVE GROUPS

2.1 FUNCTION OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Within the announcement of the winter school in July each year, the descriptions of comparative groups will be included. The main function of the announcement is the overview of comparative groups for potential participants. Based on the announcement of comparative groups, applicants will choose within their enrolment three alternative groups in which they would like to work during the winter school.

2.2 SUBJECT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

For the announcement of the winter school, the COMPALL project is providing a template that moderators are asked to fill in. The template should help moderators to develop and focus on a selected question within their comparative group. It should ensure an effective preparation of the group fellows, allowing them to achieve comparable perspectives. The following points are requested to be observed by the moderators:

- Title: please formulate a concrete and precise title for your comparative group
- Keywords: please formulate 3-5 keywords on which your comparative group will work
- Relevance of subject and learning outcomes: please outline the relevance of the subject for comparative research in adult education and the expected (comparative) learning outcomes of your comparative group. (max. 250 words)
- Comparative research question: please formulate one comparative research question for your group. This question should be narrow enough for the participants to be able to work on similar issues in their transnational essays. It should be broad enough to allow participants to formulate a further concrete question to complement the research context.
- Context of comparison: which contexts or cases will be compared (e.g., institutions, regulations/laws, regions, nations)? What relevance of interdependencies to other contexts will be taken into account (e.g., local adult education, international policies, regional regulations)? Please formulate a concrete context that will give participants a focus during their preparation.

- Categories of comparison: please try to develop 3-5 categories for comparison that the students should focus on in their transnational essays. The categories should be named and, in addition, outlined with one sentence. The categories formulated form a kind of assumption of the moderator. They formulate rough categories for which the moderator expects a reasonable comparison will be possible. The categories will form a kind of preparatory structure for the students. They should help participants to prepare comparable data within their transnational essays. The categories will be further developed during the winter school.
- Literature: please name a maximum of three literature hints for preparation. Further literature can be provided over the WueCampus site after the groups have been formed.
- Moderator information: please provide some background information on yourself and your research emphasis. Please be aware that only colleagues with a PhD may be a moderator of the comparative groups.

3. PARTICIPANT ENROLMENT AND COMPOSITION OF GROUPS

Winter school applicants will be asked to provide a research question based on which they intend to work within their transnational essay (see below). This request within the application process will stress the research-based teaching focus of the winter school. Furthermore, the research question will support participants in their analytical preparation.

Please be aware that participant enrolment from 2017 will only be possible if a supervisor/expert in adult education or lifelong learning provides a letter of recommendation. This should include confirmation that participants are able to speak English at least to level B2. Furthermore, the recommendation letter confirms that it will be possible to work on the proposed research questions in the respective contexts (e.g., research on study programme in adult education will only be possible if there is a university that has implemented a study programme in adult education).

Based on the applications (which means: enrolment via the online-registration form, curriculum vitae with emphasis on work, research question, letter of recommendation by a university professor), the Würzburg team will form the comparative groups. It is intended that each group will work with a maximum of 8-10 participants. As far as possible, each group will include participants from four different contexts (e.g., universities or countries). Furthermore, it is intended that each group will work ideally only with one non-European country. This should make the selection of contexts as well as the comparative-interpretative work easier and less challenging. As the winter school intends to gather an increasing number of PhD students, there will be a preference for PhD students.

During the last year, several post-doctoral researchers have also participated in the winter school. Post-doctoral researchers can also attend the comparative groups. They are also invited to present the perspective of their related contexts in the comparative group. However, the comparison will be done only by master's and PhD participants. This regulation should stress the research-based working focus of the teaching process and the limitation on in-depth analysis of selected contexts.

4. PREPARATION FOR COMPARATIVE GROUPS

4.1 ENROLMENT IN THE WUECAMPUS

After the grouping process has been finalized, the University of Würzburg will enrol all moderators and participants in the WueCampus. It is planned to finalize the enrolment of all participants in the first half of November each year.

The WueCampus acts as a preparation platform for the winter school. It supports the preparation for part 1 and part 2 of the winter school.

For part 2, each comparative group will get their own discussion forum. This forum will be available for discussion solely within each comparative group. All moderators are asked to support their group members from the first half of November onwards in the following way:



Support Plan:

1. Introduce yourself within the comparative group and encourage all your participants to introduce themselves, too. Try to get an overview of who the participants in your comparative groups will be (from which universities, disciplinary background, study phase etc.).
2. Support the participants in the research questions of their transnational essay. All students are asked to prepare a transnational essay based on a selected context. This research question should fit into the overall research question you have provided in the description of your comparative groups. You are also invited to support the participants in the development of the structure of their transnational essays.
3. Literature/bibliography: you are invited to provide some material or literature as preparatory reading for the participants of your comparative group. If it is a section of a journal or a book (maximum 15%), it is possible to upload scans of these texts.
4. Country contexts: the COMPALL-information portal provides links to country reports in adult education: http://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/information_tool/ Where this could be valuable, participants are invited to refer also to national contexts while reflecting the relevant contexts.
5. Uploading of transnational essays: participants are asked to upload their transnational essay on WueCampus by 15 January. All transnational essays will be provided for all winter school participants. It is advisable that all group members read the text from their group colleagues. If more than one participant is researching one context, it is possible to allow participants to write the transnational essay together.

4.2 ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

The moderator should work continuously on the relationship with and among the students of the comparative group. They should give their full attention, both emotional and intellectual, to students in order to lay the foundations for the educational relationship that will reach its peak in the winter school. Moderators educate participants as a teacher themselves, through the other students, and within the winter school context. As a consequence, moderators should be aware of their role and importance. Mindfulness should characterize his/her pedagogical approach.

At a basis for this, there is the didactical approach that relies on the establishment of good relationships between moderators and students, and among participants. In this sense, the didactical support of PhD students with expertise in the winter school is fundamental:

- They represent the middle point between moderator and students, and should be able to secure positive communication between each type of participant
- They will constitute a support structure that can ease the transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary comparison.
- Their expertise will ease the organization of group work and thus the educational relationship.

The success of the winter school and the COMPALL-project will be revealed from the former students. If they can replicate the winter school in the future or transfer some contents/academic thoughts or findings into their professional work when they are adult educators, it will mean that the COMPALL-model has been successful.

With the aim of giving the same chance to external participants (i.e., students enrolled in universities out of the COMPALL-universities or associated universities that cannot have access to the on-campus tutorials), the moderator should take part in every lesson of the winter school (starting from the preparatory part) in order to create a strong relationship with all members of the comparative group. A good relationship will guarantee the success of group work, including:

- good results in terms of comparative work
- the creation of a transnational group that works well together both within and beyond the comparative group.

4.3 ASSISTANT MODERATOR

Each comparative group will be supported by one assistant moderator. The assistant moderator can be a PhD student participating in the winter school. Ideally, this person is a PhD student who has already attended the winter school once and knows the overall structure. It can be a PhD student from the university of the moderator.

Moderators are warmly invited to name an assistant moderator, a process that will be highlighted in the winter school booklet. For all other moderators, the Würzburg team will propose assistant moderators.

The assistant moderator supports the moderator with online communication on the WueCampus-forum. Frequently, it is the case that single participants must be contacted individually to ensure participation in forum communications. The assistant moderator supports this process. Furthermore, the assistant moderator works as a kind of “group representative” for the comparative group during the winter school. As moderators frequently just arrive in the second week, they can arrange informal meet-and-greet meetings (e.g., at lunch time) within the comparative groups. Furthermore, the assistant moderator supports communication between the Würzburg organizational team and the respective comparative groups to provide an atmosphere of self-sufficiency and organization (e.g., the arrangement of rooms, beverages).

The assistant moderator will also join the group during the “testing of comparative categories” – which is the final preparation for the open-space presentations. During this time, the moderators and all participants with a PhD will leave the group – to ensure a high degree of self responsibility and intensive work between the master’s and doctoral students.

4.4 TRANSNATIONAL ESSAY

The transnational essay forms the central element of preparation in the comparative groups. As it is expected that most groups will not focus on the comparison of national states, the transnational essay will focus on the contexts the moderator agrees with their participants.

The COMPALL-project provides a participant’s guide for preparing the transnational essay. Moderators are invited to use this guide for supporting participants with their writing.

5. COMPARISON OF COMPARATIVE GROUPS AT CAMPUS WÜRZBURG

To allow comparison within groups, we advise focusing within each group from the beginning on the further development of comparative categories. It will be an essential task of each moderation to support students with the identification of comparative categories and to reduce them to 2-3 categories. Only a few categories will allow a deeper comparison and may avoid solely side-by-side presentations (juxtaposition) of the contexts under evaluation.

For the on-campus work in Würzburg, it is proposed that the structure below be followed. There are different time slots (see announcement). Moderators are welcome to adapt these time slots according to their needs.

(1) Introduction to the comparative group work

Please propose starting with a meet-and-greet session in the group.

As a next step, it is advisable to work on a joint understanding of the overall research question and the central terms of your comparative group. The target of this first session should be a joint understanding of the central terms. Based on the reading of the transnational essays in advance of the winter school, moderators can decide if it will be

Example

One can start with a “metaplan-card” task. The moderator can ask participants to write cards about their understanding of the central aim(s). Afterwards all participants present their cards. Through this discussion, the group can try to develop an overview and a structure for a common understanding of the central term(s). It is advisable to write only one aspect one each card. This will allow moderators to move cards around during the comparative group work and cluster them afresh according to respective needs.



(2) Participant presentations and development of comparative categories

The next sessions are for the presentation of the transnational essays by the participants. Participants present (e.g., with PowerPoint) their transnational essays. Group fellows have the possibility to raise questions. It may make sense for participants from one country to do a single joint presentation. Please contact your participants beforehand. The assistant moderator can also do this. It is advisable to ask the participants to ensure their presentation is no longer than 10 to 12 minutes. The central issue at this stage is the further development of the comparative categories by raising questions with each other. This will support the clarification of goals.



Furthermore, it can allow for the development of additional categories or for work on sub-categories. By this approach, participant presentation and development of comparative categories will be an interrelated process.

The result of this phase will be categories that are further developed, which will allow the commencement of the testing phase.

(3) Testing of categories

Based on the decision of the categories, the group is invited to start the comparison. The group should discuss for each category and each context:

What do we know from each context concerning this category?

Do we have enough information on this category in each context?

Are the categories too narrow or too broad to research the selected contexts?

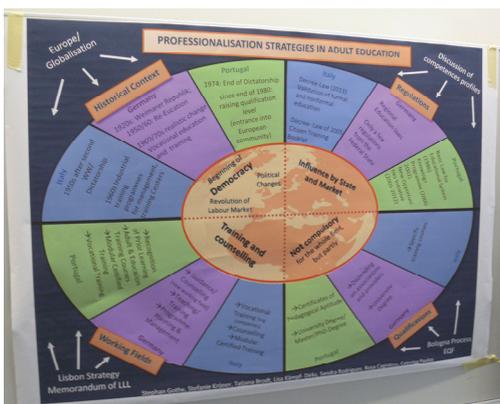
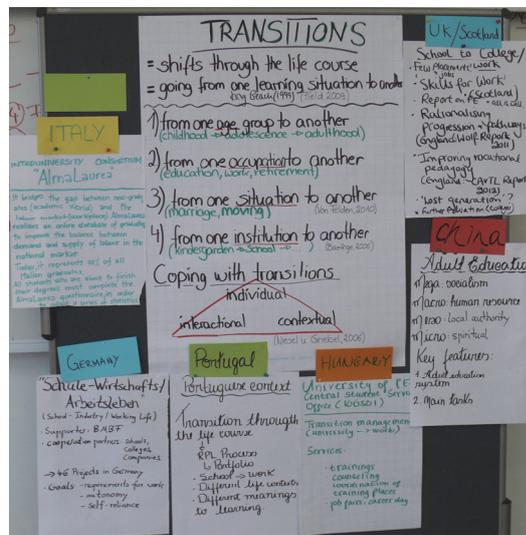
Based on the testing phase, the interpretation and comparison can be done. At this stage, moderators are just starting to do the testing together with the group. If the comparative categories are working, moderators are invited to leave their groups to finalize the juxtaposition and going over to interpretation in a self-directed way.

(4) Interpretation and comparison

On Wednesday late afternoon, the comparative groups are left by moderators and all post-doctoral researchers. Following on from the categories assessed, master’s and PhD students work in a self-directed way on the interpretation of their categories.

As a core step of the comparative groups, comparison will be completed. Therefore participants will be invited to work on interpretations. The main aspects of the comparison are the following questions:

- Which similarities can be observed concerning each of the categories between the contexts studied?
- Which differences can be observed concerning each of the categories between the contexts studied?
- Which relationships can be observed between the contexts studied? Which interrelationships can be observed between other contexts?
- Which reasons can be found for these similarities and differences?
- What might a rough overall interpretation/rationale for the similarities and differences look like?



The result of this step is a kind of poster(s) presentation, which participants will present during an open space presentation. It is possible to prepare posters by writing on a range of presentation material that we are happy to provide. If the group decides to design a file, it is possible to print a big poster. Please inform your participants that they should send us their poster by Thursday, 14:00. Alternatively, they can also project their presentation digitally.

We also advise you to be only a moderator at this stage and leave the group to their self-directed work.

6. DISCIPLINARY FOCUS OF THE COMPARATIVE GROUPS

On Friday, there will be the open space presentation. Each group will have a room for a presentation in which they can welcome all the other groups. The participants are welcome to arrange the rooms to suit their presentation.

The presentation rounds will last around 20 minutes. In each presentation round, a different participant of the comparative group will do the presentation. Please ask the participants who will do the presentation in which of the rounds. For each group, a template will be provided to organize the presentation. Participants in the multiplier event will join for part of the presentation.

All participants are asked to visit each round the presentation of the other groups. The presentation round should also be used for discussions between the participants of the different comparative groups. They can try to make links between the results of their groups.

At the end of the presentation, there will be an award for the best comparative group presentation. As this should not put pressure on participants or moderators, it is advised that the groups are informed only on Wednesday evening about the award.

7. SUPERVISING COMPARATIVE PAPERS

After the Winter School, doctoral students will have the chance to co-author comparative papers with other doctoral fellows and/or moderators. This option will only be given to doctoral students. At the end of each Winter School, there will be a discussion in each comparative group to arrange the comparative papers.

The following guidelines are designed to help moderators supervise the comparative research papers.

7.1 MEETING DURING THE WINTER SCHOOL

Please arrange a meeting with the doctoral students during the Winter School in order to explore their interest and to underline the importance of their commitment. Try to identify the topic and initial general criteria (comparative categories, method) for the paper. Please also point out the formal deadlines as well as the first internal deadlines.

Date	Target/Activity
22 Feb	Initial Skype meeting to discuss the modalities but also to begin the joint conversation on the working title, main research question, categories, etc.
27 Feb	Submit first draft of the abstract (internal deadline) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmed Authors • Title • Introduction • Main research question • Methodology • Highlights of preliminary findings
1 Mar	Official submission of abstract
15 May	Submission of draft paper
Mid-June	Feedback from expert peer reviewer
1 Jul	Submission of revised article
1-15 Aug	Professional proofreading

Figure 1: Example of a list of internal deadlines

It is advisable to schedule a first online meeting shortly after the end of the Winter School (e.g. one or two weeks after the Winter School). This will help you verify the doctoral students' commitment in the writing process and possibly allow you to change or cancel the paper early on.

For the first online meeting, it is advisable to ask one of the doctoral students to prepare a document with the results of the Winter School meeting. Consider using a cloud-based service (e.g. Google Docs) for these documents to ensure that all your members have ongoing access to the writing process.

This document may contain the following information:

1. Authors/team
2. Deadlines (internal deadlines, formal deadlines, etc.)
3. Main categories for the comparative paper
4. Method (e.g. document review, paper analysis)
5. Theoretical focus
6. Level of analysis (mega, macro, meso, micro)
7. Main research question
8. Topics circulated by the editors
9. Working title

7.2 FIRST ONLINE MEETING AFTER THE WINTER SCHOOL

During the first online meeting (e.g. via Skype), it is advisable to discuss the points listed in the document one by one. The meeting may take 1-2 hours, depending on the complexity of the document. It is advisable to develop the structure of the paper together with the doctoral students. Furthermore, it is advisable to give the doctoral students a rough idea of how long each chapter should be. Please also try to guide them concerning the following general issues of writing an academic paper:

1. **Abstract:** It is advisable to write the abstract at the end of the writing process. Please be aware that the overall argument as well as the results of the comparison should be included in the abstract.
2. The introduction should include the reasons for writing the paper and the authors' reasons for pursuing a comparative approach. It should also outline the paper's comparative research question and its structure.
3. In the theoretical part of the paper, the comparative categories should be developed. That part should focus on the paper's comparative nature.
4. Try to advise the doctoral students that interpreting the juxtaposition they make is the clear target of the paper. If authors use several comparative categories, it may be advisable to structure the paper along these categories. It will help authors make direct comparisons and give short interpretations after each category – and hence keep them from simply presenting pieces of information next to each other. Authors may also consider introducing a discussion session to interpret their findings.
5. Please ask the doctoral students to avoid abbreviations as much as possible. It is quite difficult for readers to understand texts with abbreviations.
6. **Interpretation:** The interpretation should be the central aspect of the paper. Authors should avoid limiting their interpretation to only a few sentences. They may find that there are obvious differences or similarities for which they cannot find an explanation. It is good to include this perspective in the paper, too.

As result of the first online meeting, you should split the tasks between the authors. You should also agree on further internal deadlines for the writing process.

For instance, the main author of the paper might write the introduction and put together the paragraph about the theoretical framework provided by all the authors (for example, each author might provide literature for a specific national context); a different author might write the paragraph on methodology.

Using Google Docs can support collaborative writing in terms of gathering data in tables.

It is advisable to have a second Skype meeting during the process before discussing and interpreting data, and possibly another one in the final stage to provide students with more support during this important writing phase.



7.3 THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

- The moderator can monitor the writing process if documents are stored in a cloud (e.g. Google Docs).
- He/she can add comments and suggestions during the writing process.
- He/she can monitor the students' commitment and make sure they observe the deadline; if necessary, he/she can e-mail them to remind them of deadlines.
- He/she should be available to give feedback or to address doubts during the process if requested by students.

8. RECOGNITION AND ECTS POINTS

Based on successful preparation, participation and presentation, participants will receive an attendance certificate worth 5 ECTS.

Due to the different needs of ECTS points and examination regulations in the different study programmes, the different partner universities offer different examination options for their students. If participants do not have the option of doing an examination in the context of their study programmes, Julius-Maximilian's University of Würzburg offers the opportunity for an individual examination to gain up to 10 ECTS points.



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