

# **Internationality of Higher Education: The Example of COMPALL**



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# Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning: The Joint-Module Methodology and its Context

**Abstract:** This paper analyses international contexts of adult education and higher education as a framework for the COMPALL Joint Module. The module is designed to develop international knowledge, comparative research methods, intercultural competences, didactical insights, and networking experiences. The lessons learned also inform joint modules for other subjects.

## Introduction

Building on long-standing cooperation between researchers in adult education and universities focussing on research and studies in adult education, the *Joint Module for Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning* (COMPALL) is being developed as part of the ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership COMPALL (2015–2018)<sup>1</sup>. The origins of the *Joint Module* go back to an initiative developed by Prof Licínio Lima (University of Minho/Portugal) in a seminar on *European Strategies for Lifelong Learning*. This seminar was offered for adult education students at the universities of Duisburg-Essen and Mainz (both in Germany). It was combined with field visits to European stakeholders in Brussels. The seminar was designed to analyse the policy activities of European stakeholders in the field of adult education and lifelong learning. Students were introduced to a policy analysis scheme that was used as an observation tool during the field visits. It helped students understand theoretical models and empirical reality in practice. As part of this project, a study text was developed (Lima & Guimarães, 2011). The need for exchanges between students in adult education from different countries also became obvious. This insight led to the application for an ERASMUS Intensive Programme, in which universities from Chemnitz/Germany, Florence/Italy, Glasgow/Scotland, Lisbon/Portugal, Minho-Braga/Portugal, Pécs/Hungary, and Würzburg/Germany organised a first Winter School on *Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning* in February

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1 Cf COMPALL homepage: <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/startseite/>, retrieved 19.09.2017.

2014 at Julius-Maximilian University in Würzburg/Germany. This ERASMUS Intensive Programme was developed in parallel to several international teaching projects in the field of adult and continuing education. The European Master in Adult Education (2004–2017) (Egetenmeyer & Lattke, 2017), as well as European Studies and Research in Adult Education (2013–2016)<sup>2</sup>, were both ERASMUS Curriculum Development Projects initiated by the German Institute for Adult Education (Prof Ekkehard Nuissl von Rein). Based on its practical experiences, DVV International developed and implemented the GLOBALE curriculum for the professionalisation of teachers and trainers in adult education in different countries during that time (Avramoska & Czerwinski, 2017). The need for internationalising adult education studies on the one hand and the strong commitment of the partner universities on the other hand led to a follow-up Winter School in 2015 (Németh, 2017).

Against this background, a partner consortium of seven European universities (Aarhus/Denmark, Florence/Italy, Helmut-Schmidt-University in Hamburg/Germany, Lisbon/Portugal, Padua/Italy, Pécs/Hungary, Würzburg/Germany) took the initiative to develop a Joint-Module-Methodology designed to allow universities to provide an international study programme for their master's and doctoral students in adult education according to their different needs. The consortium was created by universities and adult education professors who strongly appreciated the value of a joint module from an institutional perspective as well. This allowed the deep institutional integration of the *Joint Module* into the curricula of master's and doctoral studies.

This paper places the *Joint Module COMPALL* in its societal contexts: What are developments in the internationalisation of the *Joint Module COMPALL*? Which learning objectives are developed based on this analysis for participants? How is it structured to reach the outlined learning objectives? To answer these questions, the paper analyses the context of internationalisation in adult and continuing education as well as internationalisation in university contexts in Europe. Based on this analysis, it outlines learning objectives for various participants of the *Joint Module COMPALL*. Afterwards, the structure of the *Joint Module Methodology* is analysed with regard to its contribution to these learning objectives. Finally, the paper reflects on the transferability of these results to joint modules in other subjects.

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2 Cf ESRALÉ homepage, <https://www.esrale.org>, retrieved 19.09.2017.

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## **The internationalisation of adult and continuing education**

This paper understands current political and societal developments as a background for adult and continuing education research and practice, which makes single phenomena in adult and continuing education only understandable as parts of international contexts. Internationalisation in education, adult education, and continuing education – and hence comparisons with other countries – originally provided an impetus for ‘learning from the other’ (Reischmann, 2008). A classic example in the German context is using the perspective of the English University Extension initiative to consider the development of this activity at Germany universities, too. This differentiation between self and the other (country/context/case) is no longer given in this clear-cut fashion. Moreover, international phenomena are now interwoven into ‘national’ situations, cases, and contexts of adult education. Cultural theory discusses concepts of transculturality (Welsch, 2010) or hybrid subjects (Reckwitz, 2006). These concepts support the deconstruction of the dualism between national and international perspectives, emphasising the interwoven perspective of influences of different contexts on a phenomenon. For adult and continuing education, three arguments can be found for this interwoven situation, which are presented in the following. These arguments represent the background in which the employment opportunities of graduates in adult education are integrated.

### **International and European education policies**

Educational issues have traditionally been a national issue and in some countries even a regional one. The 1992 Maastricht treaties (European Communities, 1992), which regulated collaboration in the European Union, even contain a harmonisation ban for educational issues. However, education is understood by international organisations such as the European Union, OECD, and UNESCO as a very important instrument for developing societies. This is why international organisations act in so-called ‘soft-laws’ (Marcussen, 2004; Bieber & Martens, 2011) in educational issues. They convince member countries to agree on the formulation of policies (joint targets) in educational issues. Realising and implementing these targets, however, is the responsibility of the member countries. European policies on adult and continuing education can be found in several EU documents that target lifelong learning and education in general (European Union, 2012) or adult education as a specific area of learning and education (European Union, 2011). But they can also be found in policies, programmes, and benchmarking studies of UNESCO and OECD (e.g. GRALE-Report, PIAAC study). These activities created

some kind of transparency in education between its member countries. But furthermore, the international policies govern national policies. Local developments on qualification frameworks, on the recognition of prior and informal learning, credit systems, on literacy activities or quality management systems are only some examples that are realized at the local level but agreed on at the international level. This is why local activities are interrelated with international developments and only understandable in their international interdependence.

### **The internationalisation of societies**

Local communities and societies as a whole are going through an enormous internationalisation process. On the one hand, this is brought on by the digitalisation of peoples' daily lives. Neither communication nor social relationships, online reading and research, or markets and sale are local or national in nature. Moreover, they are localized through online access and available digital resources. This should not eliminate the borders of duty-free markets, which do not benefit people from all countries. Rather, this argument should focus on other kinds of boundaries and non-boundaries. Furthermore, the free movement of persons between several countries allows citizens of these countries easier mobility. The free movement of persons in the European Union also raises the numbers of people who move to different places for employment reasons (OECD, 2015). But international refugee situations, too, raise migration of people to other places inside and outside of countries. For adult and continuing education, this means that the population becomes more international. But it also means that non-mobile people have more possibilities to interact with people with a migration background. Thereby, the target group of adult and continuing education is becoming more diverse. As adult and continuing education has to adapt deeply to the needs and background of the target group, taking internationalisation into account is a fundamental basis for successful work in adult and continuing education.

### **The international market for continuing education**

The development of international trade agreements and duty-free markets also enables and supports the provision of services as continuing education. As part of the iMove project, the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research has initiated a platform to support German providers of continuing education to offer (and sell) their services outside Germany as well. Frequently, there are target providers who sell technical products and who, along with these products, also provide continuing education to help customers use and repair them. The iMove project can illustrate the increase of initial vocational and continuing edu-

cation, which is 'exported' from Germany to other countries. The trend reports name China and India as the places with the highest demand for German education exports (BIBB, 2016). Developing continuing education opportunities for an 'international market' may become a career field for graduates in adult and continuing education.

## **The internationalisation of higher education in Europe**

Concurrent with these internationalisation developments in adult education, there has also been international development in higher education, where adult education is found as a field of study. As a result, adult education as a field of study is part of international developments at universities that affect all academic subjects.

In Europe, the ERASMUS programme has provided mobility opportunities for university students for 30 years, and for several years also for teachers and staff of European higher education institutions (DAAD, 2017). As the mobility budget is raised every year, European mobility becomes an instrument to support many students. Student mobility has created a so-called 'generation ERASMUS' of mobile university graduates with international experiences. Besides the mobility programmes for staff and teachers, development programmes support the institutional development of educational activities. Within all these activities, joint developments became a respected but also broad activity of European universities. Today, joint international activities are less unique but more acknowledged and requested than a decade ago.

The international policies in education outlined above have brought intensive development to European higher education institutions. Bologna-compliant study programmes were developed in the last fifteen years. In a broad way, a three-cycle degree structure (bachelor, master, doctorate) is now in place throughout Europe (European Commission, EACEA, & Eurydice, 2015). Modular structures, credit points, the recognition of internationally acquired credits, and learning agreements are just some examples of this process. Beside the legitimate criticism of the structure and the reforms, the Bologna Process developed a system that makes mobility, joint activities, and the mutual recognition of credits formally possible as an integrated part of university studies. The development of a joint module can build on these structures, which ensures the formal and legal basis for the joint activity.

In this context, universities' explicit and implicit internationalisation strategies may support international activities. These strategies can include raising international student enrolment, facilitating the recognition of internationally

acquired credits, supporting international summer or winter schools, increasing the number of courses held in English, or providing additional funding for long-/short-term mobility. Support may not mainly be financial. But a university's commitment makes administrative and committee work easier, especially in terms of administrative and legal structures for international work. When it comes to the development of international programmes, a university's digital, technical, and media services may substantially support the development of digital and online support for international collaboration activities in teaching and research.

### **The educational objectives of the Joint Module COMPALL**

The *Joint Module COMPALL* is developed in response to the growing need for international insights among graduates in adult and continuing education on the one hand and a growing commitment of universities to international teaching activities on the other hand. It understands international insights as a need for international experiences that can neither be limited to academic subjects nor to selected competences. Rather, holistic and – as far as possible – broad-based experience in thinking, acting, and reflecting within an international learning environment is necessary to receive these insights. The goal is to cultivate

[...] a process of understanding international and intercultural phenomena. Comparisons in international groups provide new insights into other countries and into new aspects and variations of new models. They also facilitate a better and more detailed understanding of the situation in one's own home country. Furthermore, they give participants a sense of how difficult it is to compare situations in other countries, [...] to understand in a cognitive, emotional, and social way the limitations of our understanding of our own and other phenomena. Ideally, this insight leads to an attitude of further questioning one's own understanding in an ongoing endeavour to working on deeper understanding. An ideal 'result' of the Winter School is to never have a final result, but to continue the never-ending journey of personal efforts to try to understand each other. This also means searching for the things that link us to each other: to be aware of the always existing boundaries of our own understanding while developing an attitude of 'constantly trying'. (Egetenmeyer, 2016, p. 19)

Against this background, the following educational objectives should be understood as interdependent rather than isolated objectives.

**The academic objective** of the *Joint Module COMPALL* is to analyse European policies in lifelong learning that refer to adult education and the relevant policies of other international organisations. The analysis includes an insight into the diversity of forms in which international policies may appear and be implemented. It should make participants aware of the fact that European educational policies



must be adapted to diverse local situations, and that there are diverse forms of appearance inside and outside the European Union. The second academic objective is to provide participants with in-depth insights into one current research issue in adult and continuing education and its international forms of appearance. These issues change each year according to the current research questions of international experts teaching in the *Joint Module COMPALL*. This approach allows participants to study and research current trends and to gain an insight into cutting-edge research questions in adult and continuing education.

**The research methodology objective** is to cultivate participants' skills for analysing relationships between theories, policies/politics, and empirical practice in adult and continuing education. As there seem to be wide gaps between these fields, participants learn how to use a theoretical model to analyse policies/politics as well as empirical practice. In this way, they practice making analytical use of educational theories in general. Participants will be equipped with analytical skills to analyse practical contexts of their future employment contexts, too. Furthermore, participants apply comparative research skills in adult education in a research-based learning context. In this way, they are introduced to the comparative-interpretative research method of the *Joint Module COMPALL* and are guided to use it. Doctoral students are introduced to writing a joint comparative research paper. Furthermore, they are guided in the writing process and the quality assurance process (e.g. adaption to peer review, proofreading, publication).

Beside the academic and methodological objectives, the development of **intercultural competences** plays a crucial role in the *Joint Module COMPALL*. One aspect of this objective is to develop the ability to use English as a language for international communication in adult education. This includes knowing specialised and professional English terminology, but it also means being willing and prepared to interact with colleagues in English – colleagues for whom English is not the native language either. Interacting in English means disclosing one's own limitations in communicating in a foreign language. But it also cultivates an interest in each other and helps getting to know oneself and other fellows in a new mutually respectful way. The aforementioned cultivation of an 'attitude of further questioning one's own understanding in an ongoing endeavour to working on deeper understanding' (ibid.) also needs a cultivation of distance to each other – respect for the 'normality of the other' (Hunfeld, 2004, translation by the author). The cultivation of distance allows for continuously asking what can be understood from the other and one's own and where further efforts at mutual understanding are necessary. Distance supports respect for the other, willingness to learn from each other, and a working climate of awareness about the differences.

This is essential for intercultural competence and shows why the cultivation of asking and re-asking is necessary for international work.

A further educational objective is the implicit development of *didactical insights* into the development of educational settings for adults. The *Joint Module COMPALL* is developed through intensive didactical reflections between the partner universities and serves as a kind of didactical model for education with adults. Participants gain insights into online learning settings, interactive learning settings, theory-practice learning settings, and programme design learning settings. The goal is to respect the diversity of learning settings of partner universities and participants.

*Networking experiences* are a further educational objective of the *Joint Module COMPALL* and stress the need for the development of international networks and partnerships. Participants are systematically brought into contact with each other during the whole joint module. In this way, a basis for the further internationalisation of practice and research in adult education is developed. Doctoral students have the possibility to write a paper in an international joint authorship, which is still a rare phenomenon in adult education (Fejes & Nylander, 2014; Käpplinger, 2015).

## On the structure of the Joint Module COMPALL

### Partnership and target group

The *Joint Module COMPALL* is developed as a partnership of seven universities from five different European countries with different emphases and expertise in the academic field of adult and continuing education. The joint module approach allows universities to also provide their students with academic opportunities based on the expertise of the partner universities. This is especially valuable for those partner universities that have only very limited teaching capacity in adult and continuing education. Furthermore, all partner universities can build on a context that appreciates the collaborative international development and provision of studies in adult and continuing education. Partner universities have integrated the joint module in different ways into their master's and doctoral programmes related to adult and continuing education (cf. Guimarães, Concetta, & Fridson, in this volume).

The *Joint Module COMPALL* is targeted at master's and doctoral students pursuing an academic emphasis in adult and continuing education. The *Joint Module COMPALL* consists of three parts: a preparatory part, the Winter School in Würzburg, and a follow-up part. As students have different backgrounds in

terms of their undergraduate fields of study but also in terms of their academic and research experiences (cf. Guimarães, Concetta, & Fridson, in this volume), *COMPALL* provides intensive possibilities but also requires rigorous preparation. This preparation part of the *Joint Module COMPALL* ensures that participants of the Winter School have a knowledge base that allows them take full advantage of the in-depth study and international experience during the two-week on-campus phase in Würzburg.

### **The preparation phase**

For the preparation phase, the Strategic Partnership *COMPALL* has developed several online tutorials, which on the one hand introduce participants to the structure of the *Joint Module COMPALL* and on the other hand guide them in a didactical way through the preparatory material, which consists of preparatory readings. To that end, a Moodle course has been developed, which allows participants to interact with each other and with lecturers. Furthermore, a participant booklet outlining the structure has been designed. In addition, all online tutorials are available as open educational resources via the project website<sup>3</sup>.

The second part of participants' preparation work is developing a transnational essay relating to one of the comparative groups in which participants practice comparative research during the Würzburg Winter School. Each comparative group is guided by an international expert in the respective topic. Experienced doctoral students act as co-moderators supporting the international experts in preparing group participants. Each participant is assigned to one comparative group, which consists of about two students from each country. If possible, comparative groups represent between three and five different countries. During the preparation part, the Moodle course is used for communication between comparative group participants and moderators to agree on the topic of the transnational essay and its structure. The Strategic Partnership *COMPALL* provides participants with a guide for preparing the transnational essay. On top of that, partner universities offer on-campus meetings or seminars with students to prepare for the Winter School together.

This preparation phase takes place from November until January each year. The concurrent online and on-campus preparation as well as the guides allow for developing a preparatory phase adapted to the different needs of participants. It also allows for a differentiation between participants who have studied adult education

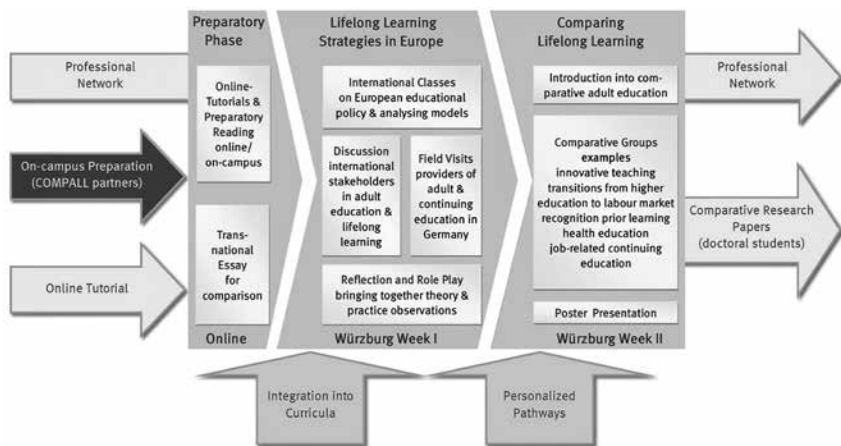
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3 Cf *COMPALL* homepage: <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/startseite/>, retrieved 19.09.2017.

in a broad way and newcomers in adult education, between master’s and doctoral students, and between internationally experienced and non-experienced participants. Coordinators at the local partner universities can decide according to the needs of their participants. Although such a level of heterogeneity among students has nowadays become uncommon in academic contexts, the experiences within the *Joint Module COMPALL* have been very positive. Differences in knowledge levels can be addressed mainly during the preparatory phase. Heterogeneity also provides a diverse reflection basis for intercultural communication, and it is used systematically for creating additional learning settings between participants. In a didactical way, it represents the diversity of participants typically encountered in adult and continuing education.

To enable participants of the *Joint Module COMPALL* to communicate with each other, they are invited to join an open and a closed LinkedIn network<sup>4</sup>. Via the participant profiles in LinkedIn, the network also serves as a long-term networking tool between participants. Furthermore, the COMPALL information tool provides participants with additional preparatory material in the field of comparative adult education.

Figure 1: Structure of the COMPALL Project



Source: COMPALL project

4 Cf COMPALL subpage: [https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/information\\_tool/](https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/information_tool/), retrieved 19.09.2017.

## **The two Würzburg weeks**

During the first week in Würzburg, participants study a theoretical model that can be used for analysing educational policies. They explore European policies in adult education and the structure of adult and continuing education providers in Germany. Besides being introduced to the model, students practice applying the model to international policies and using it during their discussions with adult education stakeholders and during their field visits to adult and continuing education providers. For that purpose, participants collaborate in international groups, giving each other insights into each other's contexts. Participants serve as information resources for their own countries of origin. To strengthen the exchange between participants from different universities and countries, participants are placed in the seminar rooms next to participants from other universities. This approach reinforces participants' international experience, because communication can happen in this way in informal settings as well. By the end of the week, participants reflect on their observations and, against the background of the theoretical model, develop an understanding of the interdependencies between theories, policies, and practice.

During the second week in Würzburg, the comparative groups are introduced to comparative research in adult and continuing education. Each participant acts as a representative of his/her country of origin, and the comparative groups work to identify comparative categories that work for their case. Comparative groups look at the different cases (e.g. countries or other contexts) in juxtaposition and try to come up with an interpretation by contextualising the differences between the compared cases. The second week ends with an open-space presentation, in which each group presents their comparison to all other groups.

## **Follow-up part**

Doctoral students are offered the exclusive possibility to co-author a comparative paper together with other doctoral students in their comparative group and possibly also with the group moderator. To that end, the authors select a few categories and cases for their comparison. The doctoral students receive guidance from the moderators with structuring the paper and with the writing process. Papers are subject to peer review, and successful papers are published joint volumes at international publishers (Egetenmeyer, 2016a; Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff, & Boffo, 2017; Egetenmeyer & Fedeli, forthcoming).

## Lessons learned: Outlook for developing other joint modules

The experiences in the development the *Joint Module COMPALL* show that ***institutional support*** is essential for developing a joint module and integrating it into existing degree structures. Written and unwritten strategies facilitate administrative but also financial support. This does not mean that smooth administrative ways for implementing the joint module into local curricula are already in place. Moreover, experience suggests that long-term planning and a flexible adaption to the situations at the different universities may be most successful for integrating the project into local curricula (cf. Guimarães, Concetta, & Fridson in this volume). But getting there requires a strong commitment to internationalisation by the universities.

Joint modules enable universities with ***limited teaching capacity in some subjects*** to broaden their course offerings. Therefore, it is essential to involve partners with varying degrees of expertise that can be connected to each other. Developing a module together allows for a broad adaption to the different needs and an in-depth ***reflection of subject-specific didactics in higher education***. With this approach, the joint module can contribute to an overall increase in subject-specific teaching quality at all partner universities.

The design of the joint module ***supports an insight into the diversity of research in adult education*** in other universities and countries. The joint module thereby supports joint and internationally adaptable research and the development of a joint international terminology in a field characterised by wide-ranging diversity and different forms of local institutionalisation. In fact, the comparative groups challenge their own research perspective by looking at the others' perspectives. By this approach, moderators benefit from comparative group work as well regarding their research perspective. Another aim of supporting doctoral students in international comparative adult education research is to strengthen that research field overall.

A joint module has the potential of acting as ***catalyst for further internationalisation activities*** at the partner universities. At some partner universities, we can observe an overall increase of seasonal schools offered during the project period. In the COMPALL project, we observe not only an overall increase in international exchange students attracted by the joint module but also an increase in visiting professors at the partner universities and in the number of courses taught in English. Currently, even the possibilities of a double-degree master's programme and dual doctoral programmes between some universities are being discussed.

The *Joint Module COMPALL* requires ***rigorous preparation from all participants*** (completion of six online tutorials with readings; preparation of a transna-

tional essay). We observe that all participants fulfil the preparatory requirements before meeting during the Winter School. Most importantly, we observe that it is highly advisable to support master's students in particular with their preparations in regular meetings at their home campus. In this context, the COMPALL project experienced that providing guidance material for the partner universities is very helpful, as it will enable new partners or invited teachers to gain a detailed understanding of the joint module methodology as well.

Regarding the **job placement of graduates, the partners observe a high need for international competences**, which students acquire during the *Joint Module COMPALL* (cf. Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, & Egetenmeyer, forthcoming). This need is especially evident in explicitly internationally oriented fields in adult and continuing education. But it is also evident in the mobility of graduates, who sometimes move to one of the partner countries for employment or further studies (e.g. doctoral studies).

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Natália Alves & Paula Guimarães

## COMPALL Winter School Students' Motivations

**Abstract:** Based on a questionnaire-based survey supported and interviews, we discuss students' motivations to be involved in the 2016 COMPALL Winter School, an ERASMUS mobility programme aimed at promoting scientific, cultural, professional, and personal experiences and the internationalisation of higher education policies and institutions.

### Introduction

Comparative Studies on Adult and Lifelong Learning (COMPALL) is an ERASMUS + project, which started in September 2015 and will end in August 2018. COMPALL aims at developing and implementing a joint module on Comparative Studies on Adult and Lifelong Learning targeted at master's and doctoral students from several European Union member states and non-European countries. The project intends to contribute to the training of highly qualified researchers and practitioners in the field of adult education by providing students with the knowledge and skills that enable them to incorporate an international dimension into their future work, studies, or research. It is also expected that the acquisition of skills in international comparison and work will improve students' employability<sup>1</sup>.

The *Joint Module COMPALL* is based on online and on-campus teaching paths at each partner university, as well as an intensive face-to-face course: the International Winter School. Participation in the International Winter School requires students' engagement in a very short-term mobility programme and involves three parts. The first part takes place at students' home university. It consists of a preparatory phase during which participants prepare themselves by reading scientific literature made available on the server of the University of Würzburg and by writing a transnational essay on one selected topic linked to one of the several comparative groups offered. The International Winter School *Comparative Studies in Adult and Lifelong Learning* takes place at the University of Würzburg and lasts for two weeks. During the first week, which corresponds to the second part of the International Winter School, students attend courses focussing on lifelong learning concepts, strategies, and policies in Europe, and are introduced

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1 Cf COMPALL homepage: <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/startseite/>, retrieved 16.06.2017.

to a conceptual model of policy analysis. They also participate in field visits to different adult education organisations, where they have the opportunity to learn from German experience and to get in touch with local stakeholders. The second week is devoted to comparative work group and corresponds to the third part of participating in the intensive course. During this week, and based on the individual transnational essays previously written, participants develop a comparative analysis on a selected topic. The results of each comparative work group are presented to all participants at the end of the second week (Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, & Egetenmeyer, forthcoming).

Since the launch of the ERASMUS programme, a significant number of research studies have focussed on higher education students' motivations (Lesjak, Juvan, Ineson, Yap and Axelsson, 2015; Fombona, Rodríguez, & Sevillano, 2013; Doyle et al., 2010; Pietro & Page, 2008) and on the political and individual outcomes of short-term international mobility (EC, 2015, 2014; Teichler, 2012, 2007, 2004; Mitchell, 2012; Oborune, 2013; Janson, Schomburg, & Teichler, 2009). However, very few focus on the motivation factors and perceptions of the students engaged in intensive courses. This is what the present paper aims to do.

## **The ERASMUS programme: A brief overview**

Influenced by student mobility policies in the United States, European countries and the European Commission in the 1970s started to promote temporary mobility programmes for university students aiming at increasing intercultural dialogue and understanding, and improving foreign language proficiency (Teichler & Janson, 2007). The Joint Study Programmes supported by the European Commission from 1976 to 1986 proved to be highly successful initiatives on which the ERASMUS Programme would be built. Targeted at university students, the Joint Study Programmes supported study periods from 6 months to one year at a European university.

The ERASMUS Programme was established in 1987 to support international students' wide-scale mobility within the European Union ensuring equality of opportunities for male and female students; to promote cooperation among higher education institutions; to harness the intellectual potential of universities; and to strengthen the interaction among the European member states' citizens (EEC, 1987). As González, Bustillo Mensanza, and Mariel (2011, p. 412) stated, the ERASMUS programme 'has been one of the first initiatives to implement the fundamentals of the European Space for Higher Education and lies at the heart of the Bologna Process'. Curiously, and contrary to what we may think, the name of the programme is not related to the famous Latin scholar Desiderius

Erasmus of Rotterdam. It is an acronym for *European [Region] Action [Scheme] for University Students* (Corradi, 2015).

In 2006, the European Parliament and the European Council approved a decision<sup>2</sup> establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning. Under this action programme framework, changes were introduced to the ERASMUS programme, giving rise to what could be labelled as a second-generation programme. The range of individuals and organisations eligible to apply was diversified. The second generation of the ERASMUS programme was not only directed at tertiary education and training students and aimed at promoting higher education institutions' dialogue but also at teachers, trainers, and other staff working at these institutions, associations, and representatives. It involved higher education, enterprises, social partners, and other representatives of working life, public and private bodies responsible for the organisation and delivery of education, research centres, and bodies providing guidance, counselling, and information services relating to lifelong learning (EC, 2006). In addition, ERASMUS programme could also play a role in pursuing the objectives of the Lifelong Learning Action programme. Furthermore, being established by the Bologna Declaration, it was to support the achievement of a European Area of Higher Education by the year 2010 and to reinforce the contribution of higher education and advanced vocational education to the process of innovation. Beyond these more general objectives, operational ones were defined: to raise students' and teachers' mobility to 3.3 million students by 2012; to enhance the quality and the volume of multilateral cooperation between higher education institutions and between higher education institutions and enterprises; to increase the transparency and compatibility of the qualifications acquired; to facilitate the development of innovative higher education practices and their transfer between countries; and finally, to support the development of innovative ICT-based contents, services, pedagogies, and practices (EC, 2006). To achieve these objectives, the programme was to support the following actions: the mobility of students, teaching staff, and other staff at higher education institutions or enterprises; intensive programmes; and multi-lateral projects and networks.

In 2013, a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council<sup>3</sup> established a new programme named ERASMUS+, to be implemented from 1 January 2014

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2 Decision no 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an action programme in the field of lifelong learning.

3 Regulation (EU) no 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing ERASMUS+<sup>1</sup>: The Union programme for education, training, youth and sport.

to the 31 December 2020. This programme brings together former European programmes such as: Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, ERASMUS, ERASMUS Mundus and Youth in Action. The ERASMUS+ programme covers three different fields: education and training including school education, vocational education and training, adult education and higher education; youth and sports. Contrary to what happened with Decision no 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, which kept the ERASMUS programme autonomous, the present regulation makes higher education one among other education and training domains. There are, however, some specific objectives related to higher education that are worth mentioning. The ERASMUS+ programme is to: enhance the international dimension of education and training, in the field of vocational education and training and in higher education, by increasing the attractiveness of European higher education institutions; increase the mobility of students and teaching staff in all cycles of higher education; promote cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices by supporting strategic partnerships between education and training organisations, in particular higher education institutions, and between them and the world of work; and improve the use of ICT platforms allowing for collaborative learning, virtual mobility, and the exchange of good practices (EU, 2013).

Since the ERASMUS programme launch, the number of higher education students enrolled in short-term transnational mobility has not stopped increasing. In 1987, they were 3,244; in 2014, 270,000 students spent a period studying or training abroad. By the end of the 2013–2014 academic year, the ERASMUS programme had supported 3.3 million students, and it is expected that by 2020, at least 20 per cent of all graduates should have been involved in some kind of short-term mobility (EC, 2015).

A key issue with respect to the ERASMUS programme is the extent to which the programme objectives have been achieved. From a policy viewpoint, empirical evidence shows that ERASMUS plays a central role in

- implementing a European Higher Education Area and increasing internationalisation, cooperation, and innovation among higher education institutions (EU, 2014; Teichler & Jansen, 2007; CHEPS, INCHER, & ECOTEC, 2008);
- strengthening the European Union's position as a knowledge-based society (Rodríguez et al. 2011);
- enhancing social inclusion (EU, 2015);
- fostering European identity and citizenship (Oborune, 2013; Mitchell, 2012).

From an individual viewpoint, short-term transnational mobility helps

- equip students with transferable and soft skills, in particular, the eight key competencies for lifelong learning<sup>4</sup> (Kumpikaittė & Duoba, 2013; Vaicekauskas, Duoba, & Kumpikaittė-Valiunienne, 2013; Marques & Almeida, 2014);
- improve foreign language skills (Mitchell, 2012; Teichler, 2004, 2012);
- develop intercultural awareness (EU, 2015; Conradi, 2015; Williams, 2005);
- enhance job search process and graduates' professional careers (Paweł, 2015; EU, 2014; Teichler, 2004, 2009).

However, in recent years, some empirical research has questioned the direct effects of participation in short-term mobility on the emergence of a European identity and on graduates' employability. The relationship between ERASMUS and European identity and citizenship became one of the most controversial issues in the academic community. Whereas some scholars presented empirical evidence supporting the idea that short-term mobility induces a European identity (van Moll, 2013), others show that students who identify themselves as Europeans are not more likely to engage in ERASMUS (Wilson, 2011; Sigalas, 2010). The assumption that ERASMUS enhances graduates' employability is strongly supported by empirical evidence. Nevertheless, the 'distinct professional value of temporary study in another country is declining over time' (Teichler & Janson, 2007, p. 486). Two related reasons are pointed out for this decline. The massification of the ERASMUS programme, one of its most successful results, produced a mismatch between the competences acquired through 'massive' participation in transnational mobility and the demand for these competences from employers. Additionally, the diffusion of international competences among European youth made them less exclusive and hence less valuable in the labour market (Rivza & Teichler, 2007; Teichler, 2007).

## ERASMUS students' motivations

There is not much research about ERASMUS students' motivations and even less when intensive courses are concerned. Maiworn and Teichler (2002) are among the few researchers who developed an analysis on students' motivations to get in-

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4 According to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, these competencies are: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competences; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; cultural awareness and expression.

volved in short-term mobility. Under the scope of the evaluation of the conditions, processes and outcomes of ERASMUS student mobility in 1998/1999, a representative survey was undertaken. The questionnaire named 'Experiences of ERASMUS Students 1998/99' included questions that asked the students to select the motives that influenced their decision and to prioritise them<sup>5</sup>. As the authors point out, there were many reasons to study abroad, but the motives with the highest scores were: the opportunity for self-development and learning a foreign language – 87 per cent of the respondents considered these motives to have a 'strong' or a 'rather strong' influence on their decision; the wish to gain academic learning experience in another country (82%); the wish to improve understanding of the host country (73%); the wish to improve career prospects (71%); and the wish to travel (71%), (Maiworn & Teichler, 2002, p. 88). Two years later, Teichler (2004, p. 397), referring to these results claimed that 'students expect the four major benefits of temporary study abroad frequently quoted by experts, namely, academic, cultural, linguistic and professional benefits'.

In the 2006 ESN Survey (Krzaklewska & Krupnik, 2007, p. 14), students were asked to point out the importance of each motive listed<sup>6</sup>. The most 'important' or 'very important' motivations indicated by the respondents were: to have new experiences (98%); to practice a foreign language (90%); to learn about different cultures (90%); to meet new people (90%). These results were similar to the findings of Maiworn and Teichler (2002). However, Krzaklewska and Krupnik's research showed that there were important differences when age, gender, income, and country or region were taken into account (Krzaklewska & Krupnik, 2007, pp. 14–15).

The quantitative research conducted by Lesjak, Juvan, Ineson, Yap, and Axelson (2015) used an ERASMUS mobility motives scale. The scale was composed

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5 The suggested motives were the following: wish to become familiar with subjects that are not offered at your institution; hope to obtain better marks/examination results after your return from the study period abroad; wish to become acquainted with teaching methods that are not used at your institution; wish to gain academic learning experience in another country; wish to have access to specific laboratories and equipment; learning a foreign language; wish to travel (e.g. ERASMUS offered convenient/cheap means of going abroad); other friends were going; wish to have another perspective on your home country; wish to improve career prospects; wanted a break from your usual surroundings; opportunity for self-development; and you did not think much about it (e.g. it was required for the degree programme) (Maiworn & Teichler, 2002, p. 88).

6 The motives used in this research were: to have new experiences; to practice a foreign language; to learn about different cultures; to meet new people; to live in a foreign country; to have fun; to enhance future employment prospects; to improve my academic knowledge; and to be independent (Krzaklewska & Krupnik, 2007, p. 14).



of fourteen items<sup>7</sup> and measured on a 5-point scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. The most important motives to get involved in ERASMUS mobility were consistent with previous research findings, presented above. The respondents wanted 'to experience something new' (mean=4.67), 'to grow personally' (mean=4.55), 'to learn about different cultures' (mean=4.5), 'to meet new people' (mean=4.5), 'to have a semester away from home' (mean=4.41), 'to improve foreign language' (mean=4.32), and 'to experience European identity' (mean=4.01) (Lesjak et al., 2007, p. 854).

Based on autobiographical narratives and interviews with ERASMUS students, Krzaklewska (2008) identified four motivational areas and eleven different motives to get involved in short-term international mobility<sup>8</sup>. Three of the motivational areas are similar to the major benefits identified by experts (Teichler, 2004): academic, cultural, and linguistic. However, when students were asked to freely write about their motivations, the professional motives lost importance and were replaced by personal ones. This finding, along with the relatively low scores of the items related to employability motives used in the quantitative research mentioned above, allows us to question the importance given to the employment and professionally related motives by some scholars and European policy-makers.

## Methodology

The aim of this article is to answer to the following question: What were the motivations of the students that attended the International Winter School in 2016 (Lattke & Egetenmeyer, 2016)<sup>9</sup>? The analysis of this article is based on a qualita-

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7 The items were: experience something new; grow personally; to learn about different cultures; meet new people; to have a semester away from home; improve foreign language; experience European identity; experience different educational system; to improve my academic knowledge; enhance employment opportunities; new contacts in field of studies; academic support for my thesis; take advantage of ERASMUS grant; it was compulsory (Lesjak, Juvan, Ineson, Yap, & Axelsson, 2015, p. 854).

8 The eleven motives are distributed by the four motivational areas as follows: '1. Academic (improving academic knowledge, studying in a different system, hoping that it will be useful for future employment/work) 2. Linguistic (practicing a foreign language); 3. Cultural (learning about different cultures, living in a foreign country); 4. Personal (having new experiences, having fun, meeting new people, being independent, developing as a person) (Krzaklewska, 2008, p. 9).

9 The data are based on an external evaluation carried out within the ERASMUS+ Strategic partnership COMPALL, performed by the German Institute for Adult Education (Lattke & Egetenmeyer, 2016).

tive and comprehensive approach (Lichtman, 2006). To this end, the discussion focuses on empirical data collected by the evaluation of the 2016 International Winter School. It aimed at collecting data on students' motivations. The evaluation was supported by a survey, namely a paper questionnaire filled out by 82 of the 91 participants and on short interviews of 8 selected students, both master's and doctoral. A content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002) of data concerning students' motivations was performed to identify the main features discussed in next section.

## **Data discussion**

### **Demographics**

Students attending the COMPALL Winter school were 68.3 per cent female and 31.7 per cent male. The gender balance is consistent with other findings on ERASMUS students (EU, 2015; Lesjak et al., 2015; Krzaklewska & Krupnik, 2007; Maiworn & Teichler, 2002), confirming the higher participation rates of female students observed since the launch of the programme (Maiworn & Teichler, 2002).

In accordance with the Winter School target groups, 67.1 per cent of the participants were enrolled in a master's course at their home university, 30.3 per cent were doctoral students, and 2.6 per cent were enrolled in other study programmes. Students were from 17 different countries of origin: 66.6 per cent from European countries and 33.4 per cent from non-European ones. The most represented countries were Germany, Italy, and India with 51.2 per cent of all participants.

For the majority of participants (53.7%), the Winter School was the first international mobility experience. Those who did have a previous mobility experience attended an international conference, completed an exchange semester or/and an intensive international course, participated in a study excursion abroad or, more rarely, in an international internship or volunteering activity.

### **COMPALL students' motivational factors**

Winter School participants were asked to rank the importance of each of seven motives presented to them, using a 5-point scale (1- not at all, 5- very much). All the motives received high ratings, with means ranging from 3.72 to 4.65. The top motivations to participate were related to culture and academics. To meet lecturers and students from other countries were the most important motives to attend the Winter School (meeting lecturers from other countries, mean = 4.65; meeting students from other countries, mean = 4.50). Students were also motivated by the opportunity of improving their academic knowledge in the topics 'Comparative Studies' and 'European Lifelong Learning Strategies', the core topic

of the course (interest in the topic 'Comparative Studies', mean = 4.26; interest in the topic 'European Lifelong Learning Strategies', mean = 3.93), as already emphasised by Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer (forthcoming). To improve career prospects was another important motivational factor (improvement of your career prospects, mean = 4.14). This last result was similar to other findings (Krzaklewska & Krupnik, 2007; Maiworn & Teichler, 2002), revealing once more the belief in one of most important expected benefits of transnational mobility (Teichler, 2004). Further motives were related to language and culture (interest in travelling to Germany, mean = 3.74; improving English language skills = 3.72).

The motives to participate in the Winter School were strongly influenced by two educational and demographic attributes: the participants' educational level and country origin. Doctoral students' motives were consistently more academic and career-related than those of master's students. They were motivated by the specific Winter School topics, by interacting with researchers from other countries, and by improving their career prospects.

Table 1: Motives to participate in the Winter School 2016 (cf. Lattke & Egetenmeyer, 2016)

Motives	Educational Level		Country origin		Global
	MA	PhD	Eur	Non-Eur	
Interest in 'Comparative Studies'	4.08	4.52	4.08	4.71	4.26
Interest in 'European LLL Strategies'	3.70	4.22	3.68	4.42	3.93
Improving English language skills	3.84	3.74	4.12	3.26	3.72
Interest in travelling to Germany	3.71	3.75	3.61	3.92	3.74
Improving career perspectives	3.96	4.30	3.88	4.63	4.14
Meeting students from other countries	4.58	4.39	4.55	4.54	4.50
Meeting lecturers from other countries	4.52	4.83	4.70	4.54	4.65

However, the strongest differences in motivational factors were found between European and non-European participants. The latter were much more motivated by strictly academic motives – their interest in Comparative Studies and European Lifelong Learning strategies – and career perspectives than their European colleagues. Among others, two reasons may explain the importance attributed by non-European participants to these motives. Janson, Schomburg,

and Teichler (2009, p. 25) point out that one of the benefits of studying abroad is the ‘acquisition of academic knowledge (theories, methods and basic disciplinary knowledge) in areas of expertise which are not taught in the home country at all or only on a substantially lower level’. If this benefit can be perceived as one reason for getting involved in short-term mobility by European students, we can hypothesise that this reason was even more important for students coming from non-European countries, where most probably European lifelong learning strategies are not taught and comparative studies are less developed. The enhancement of career prospects has been presented as one of the benefits of mobility programmes and as one of the important motives indicated by ERASMUS students for being involved in transnational mobility (Krzaklewska & Krupnik, 2006; Krzaklewska, 2008; Maiworn & Teichler, 2002). If European students valorise the professional value of ERASMUS in the labour market, it is not surprising that non-European students value it even more and mention improving their career prospects as the second most important motive to attend the intensive course.

The answers to the open questions about learning and personal outcomes were consistent with participants’ motivations to attend the Winter School, as argued by Schmidt-Lauff, Semrau, and Egetenmeyer (forthcoming) as well. Students stated that they learnt about adult education policies and strategies in different countries:

‘I learnt about politics, policies and strategies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning’;  
 ‘I learnt about Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in different countries in terms of structures, demand and needs, funding, programmes, policies and frameworks of the programmes.’

Students also referred to learning about comparative research methodologies and skills

‘How to compare different aspects in different countries’;  
 ‘I learnt to do a comparative study, the procedure, the methodology’.

In terms of what is referred to as academic learning outputs, we can add the improvement of English language skills mentioned by several participants.

Contrary to the learning outputs, which were concentrated in three main topics, participants’ personal motivations were much more diversified. Similar to Krzaklewska’s (2008) findings, participants referred to their development as persons. Some claimed they became more self-confident and more tolerant when cultural differences were at stake:

‘To be more open-minded towards other people’;  
 ‘To reduce my prejudice’;

'Confidence in oneself';

'I met international friends. They raise my self-confidence'.

Others emphasised the acquisition of cultural skills and knowledge:

'I got in touch with so many cultures so I learnt to know and interact with them';

'I gained intercultural competencies through dialogue and an understanding awareness';

'Marriage in different cultures, religion, food, weather, language, behaviour, transport, education, clothes: intercultural experience!';

'While interacting with students from other countries, I learnt some words in their language and their national dishes (food), cultures'.

To sum up, students presented several motives to attend the Winter School. Our findings showed that participants engaged in this intensive course primarily for cultural and academic reasons (to meet students and colleagues from other countries) and secondly for the specific academic topics taught ('Comparative Studies' and 'European Lifelong Learning Strategies'). These results corroborate previous findings, reinforcing the idea of academically oriented motivations among ERASMUS students. Along with academically oriented motivations, career motives were also very important to these participants, as they were for most ERASMUS students.

When comparing participants' motivation factors with the most important outcomes they reported, we found that there was a high level of consistency between them concerning the acquisition of academic knowledge and skills. However, we also would like to stress the importance attributed to several aspects of personal development and to the acquisition of cultural skills and knowledge.

## Final remarks

Considered a successful programme, ERASMUS has a long history of promoting students' mobility in the last decades. Recent data concerning students' participation reinforce the idea that it facilitates relevant occasions for promoting intercultural dialogue and foreign language proficiency, among other aims. Additionally, ERASMUS is an important opportunity for increasing internationalisation and cooperation among higher education institutions.

In this article, students' motivations to participate in the intensive course COMPALL Winter School were analysed. Although most of existing research focused on short-term mobility, that is, one or two semesters abroad, very few studies looked at intensive courses, which usually last no more than two weeks, such as the one discussed in this article. Like many other studies, the COMPALL survey stressed students' personal academic, cultural, and linguistic motivations. These motivations were more pronounced among non-European students. Ow-

ing to the aims and extent of the COMPALL survey, it was not possible to get in-depth data about students' motivations. Therefore, it is important to note that data analysis for the purpose of this article alerts us to the need to include items related to cultural and personal dimensions in the list of motives. This proposal will allow us to, on the one hand, add complexity to the study of Winter School students' motivational factors, and on the other hand, to compare them with the motives of those engaged in short-term international mobility.

Complementarily, when considering the main aims of the ERASMUS programme, data analysis of COMPALL students' motivations revealed the wish to share academic knowledge, skills, and values for developing research on adult education and lifelong learning policies. Future studies on student motivation could explore how the ERASMUS programme has contributed to standardisation in higher education and to the reduction of adult education and lifelong learning policies to European perspectives, even though knowledge and research traditions in adult education policies are quite diverse around the world. This concern is very much linked to the fact that non-European students expressed higher motivations for attending the Winter School than European students. Such differences might also be studied by further research and evaluation surveys.

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## **COMPALL-Joint Module: Diversity of Participants and Models of Curricular and Local Implementation**

**Abstract:** The chapter provides an insight into the diversity of participants as a target group of the joint module COMPALL. It further outlines possibilities for personalised pathways and a range of options for an implementation of joint modules in local curricula and study programmes.

### **Introduction: Challenges of joint modules**

The debate on the internationalisation of higher education became a serious issue during the 1990s. Internationalisation is to be understood as ‘policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions – and even individuals – to cope with global academic environment’ (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290). The main motivations for internationalisation were enhancing commercial advantage, promoting knowledge and language acquisition, and developing curricula with an international content. These motivations were strongly connected to globalisation processes (Teichler, 2004). These became more evident in recent decades, involving economic, political, and societal forces pushing twenty-first-century higher education towards deeper international involvement. This involvement included the investment in knowledge industries, in which higher education institutions are relevant players, especially in Western countries; the emergence of the knowledge society was supported by several international organisations such as the European Union; the rise of the service sector and the high dependence of societies on highly educated workers for economic growth was noticed (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Internationalisation has involved an increase in mobility in higher education, which is now a common activity. Universities, still mainly nationally based bodies, can draw on international funding programmes, such as ERASMUS, as important resources for international mobility (Byram & Dervin, 2009). ERASMUS is one of the best-known funding programmes in the European Union. It was created in 1987, following a first generation of European policies from the 1970s. This first generation of mobility policies was intended to promote

higher education mobility programmes such as the ones existing in the United States at that time. They aimed at increasing intercultural dialogue and improving foreign languages proficiency. ERASMUS, a 'trigger to internationalisation of higher education' (Teichler, 2009), was conceived as a wide-scale mobility programme, ensuring equality of opportunities for all students, promoting co-operation among higher education institutions, strengthening intellectual potential as well as dialogue and interaction among European citizens. In 2006, the Lifelong Learning Programme included ERASMUS, extending the target groups of international mobility to teachers and staff of higher education institutions, research centres, enterprises, counselling services, and organisations designed to enhance knowledge and innovation. This funding programme became an essential pillar for building the European Area of Higher education as part of the Bologna Process (Byram & Dervin, 2009). Today, ERASMUS+ 2014–2020 additionally covers a wide range of educational areas (from higher education to advanced education, vocational education and training, youth and sports, among others). Therefore, it fosters the international dimension of education and training, increasing mobility and promoting co-operation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. Complementarily, it is intended to improve the use of information and communication technology (ICT), enabling collaborative learning and the building of networks of institutions or individuals (European Union, 2017).

Within ERASMUS+, several actions can be developed. Within intensive programmes, a joint module can be broadly defined as a strategy combining different educational steps and didactic approaches based on shared aims and directed at specific groups of students. Additionally, a joint-module intensive programme structure must be created and developed by multiple higher education institutions in order to involve a diverse range of academic staff and students coming from various countries and sharing several academic and research traditions. Owing to its characteristics, a joint module involves a high degree of creativity and innovation. The development of a joint programme involving higher education institutions from different countries has become more common but is still a rare phenomenon. Joint modules face several challenges: On the one hand, they face the challenge of implementing joint modules in higher education curricula structures. On the other hand, they face the challenges of diversity in such programmes, which also includes a high diversity of participants (Lattke, 2012). This diversity is not limited to the study level.

This paper analyses the diversity of participants in the *Joint Module COM-PALL*, outlining options for addressing this diversity. On the one hand, the paper

outlines the design of personalised pathways to accommodate the diversity of participants. On the other hand, it outlines models for the integration of the *Joint Module COMPALL*, which are implemented at the partner universities of the COMPALL project (cf. Egetenmeyer, in this volume). Finally, the paper reflects on lessons learned from the development and implementation of the *Joint Module COMPALL*.

## Diversity of participants

The *Joint Module COMPALL* is designed for master's and doctoral students studying subjects related to adult education and lifelong learning. The joint module is part of a degree programme at each university (see below), from which most students are selected. Participants for the joint module are selected by each partner university based on their academic performance in the field of adult education and lifelong learning and based on suitable English language skills (minimum B2). Despite this common framework, local strategies are implemented to collect students' requests and interests and to select the group that will join the Winter School experience.

For example, at the universities of Würzburg and Hamburg, students are invited, first of all, to self-register for the Winter School through the COMPALL platform. Furthermore, in case there are more registrations than seats, students are selected by the programme coordinators, even though the universities make the effort to include all interested students in the course.

The University of Padova gives priority to first-year master's students and PhD students, followed by second-year master's students, due to an internal agreement concerning the programmes of study. Finally, at the University of Florence, students are asked to self-register through the COMPALL platform and through the 'Albo ufficiale di Ateneo' (university register). Selections are made on the basis of an excellent academic performance and/or practical experience in the field of adult education.

Despite the integration of the module into adult education and lifelong learning programmes, the partner consortium experienced a high level of diversity among participants, which is influenced by a wide variety of factors:

## Disciplinary background of students

At the various partner universities, studies in adult education and lifelong learning are situated in very different study structures and disciplines. Whereas some partner universities already have a broad spectrum of adult education offerings

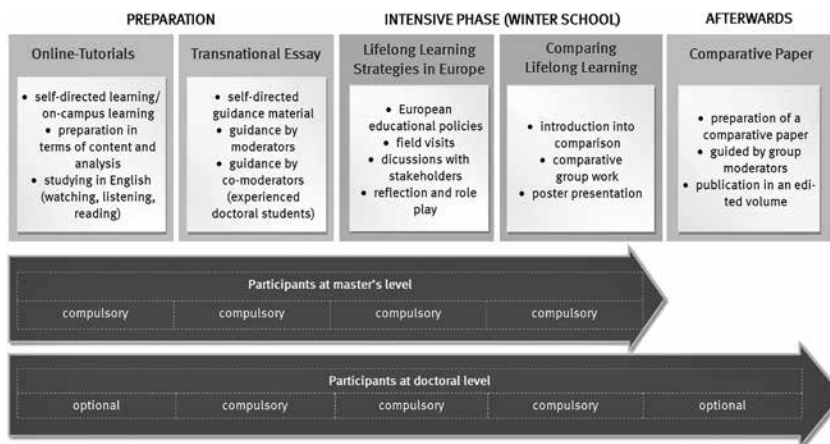
at the undergraduate level, other partner universities only offer some lectures and modules in adult and continuing education at the master's level. At other universities, it is common to focus on adult education only during doctoral studies. As a consequence, knowledge about discourses and research results in the adult education sector of their home contexts (frequently from a national basis) varies strongly between participants. Diversity is found with regard to

- English language skills: students' English skills and confidence in writing and talking in English based on their cultural and educational tradition;
- on-campus preparation at partner universities: the structure and organisation of preparation at each home university;
- previous participation in the COMPALL Joint Module: students' previous enrolment in a former Winter School that allows them to face the experience with more self-confidence and readiness;
- peer experience and learning: the presence of former students allows for implementing peer learning experiences beginning during the on-campus preparation phase at their own universities;
- extent of ECTS recognition: each university awards a different number of ECTS credits, according to local rules and policies;
- participants' study level of participants: as mentioned before, master's or doctoral level.

## **Personalised pathways**

Owing to the differences between students joining the *Joint Module COMPALL* in terms of previous disciplinary background, knowledge of lifelong learning and adult education policies, English skills, essay-writing experience, and so forth, the need of having personalised pathways becomes clear. The establishment of such pathways involves requirements, such as considering the fact that students have different learning biographies which have an impact on the knowledge they will develop and on their performance while preparing themselves for the intensive programme, as well as during the intensive programme and afterwards, when writing the comparative education article.

Figure 1: Personalised pathways within the Joint Module COMPALL



Source: COMPALL 2017

Joining the *Joint Module COMPALL* involves three steps. After registering, students are asked to prepare themselves for attending the intensive programme. The preparation phase includes diverse strategies aimed at supporting students. Several universities have developed different preparation pathways, including various steps of learning and discussion. Professors at students' home universities, whether joining the COMPALL project or not, guide students in their exploration of topics concerning adult education and lifelong learning. This phase generally starts in September and October of the year prior to the intensive programme. This preparation phase includes watching online tutorials available via the Moodle course of the *Joint Module COMPALL* and as open educational resources at the project website (COMPALL, 2017). These online tutorials are aimed at promoting on-campus preparation at students' home universities through self-directed learning tutorials (such as videos asking students to read books, articles, and anthologies and to perform specific tasks). These tutorials prepare students in terms of both content and analysis. There is also an attempt to enhance students' English skills by having them watch and listen to videos and read existing materials (PowerPoint slides, articles, anthologies, etc.). This preparation phase is compulsory for master's students but optional for doctoral students. Apart from the work based on the online tutorials, both master's and doctoral students have to prepare a transnational essay of 5–6 pages on one specific issue to be debated

in small comparative groups during the second week of the intensive programme. This transnational essay is a written document, structured and written according to academic writing criteria, on a specific problem or issue significant for an understanding of adult education and lifelong learning policies. It is also a document that somehow reflects the debate on this specific problem or issue in students' home country. This document is used in the second week of the intensive programme in the comparison of national approaches in adult education and lifelong learning.

In this transnational essay, information and evidence are presented, analysed, and applied to a particular problem or issue. This problem or issue has previously been identified as a subtopic to which the group work is devoted. This transnational essay has to be a response to the general questions, drawing on the defined contexts and categories of comparison provided previously by the intensive programme. It has to follow the structure identified by the participant guide for writing the transnational essay: students must include a cover page, a summary, a table of contents, an introduction, some chapters, conclusions, references, and an appendix. For this transnational essay, master's students can be expected to need more guidance than doctoral students. For the purpose of writing this transnational essay, the Moodle course of the *Joint Module COMPALL* provides self-directed guidance materials. Additionally, students may receive guidance from the moderators of the comparative groups under development during the second week of the intensive programme. Experienced doctoral students may also give additional guidance to students.

Attending the intensive programme in face-to-face sessions during two weeks in February each year is the second phase of the *Joint Module COMPALL*. In the first week, students are asked to join classroom sessions directed at debating lifelong learning strategies in Europe. In addition, students discuss issues concerning adult education and lifelong learning policies, make field visits, and debate relevant matters with guest speakers. This first week includes classes aiming at debating transnational issues such as European education policies and analytical models to be used in these discussions. Students are joined by scholars and stakeholders in adult education and lifelong learning as well as providers of adult and continuing education in Germany. Apart from that, reflection is the preferred pedagogic strategy for combining theory and practice based on the observations made during the field visits and the input from guest speakers. Finally, students are invited to join a role play on adult education and lifelong learning policies.

In the second week, students join small groups on specific topics related to the transnational essays they wrote during the preparation phase. The aim of these



groups involves comparing lifelong learning and adult education policies. For achieving comparison, this second week includes discussion on how to compare and what to compare when considering adult education and lifelong learning policies. Afterwards, students work in small groups based on their previously written transnational essays. The transnational essay is presented by students during the second week in their respective comparative groups. It is discussed by comparative group professors and other colleagues in order to further prepare the authors for writing a comparative scientific article on a specific topic to be published after peer review.

Students' attendance of the intensive programme, the second step of the joint module methodology, is quite different from the first step. It is intended to encourage debates on lifelong learning strategies in Europe and to foster comparison between the different countries represented. This group work is directed at finding similarities and differences between adult education and lifelong learning policies. Each student analyses these similarities and differences as well as the contextual and historical dimensions that justify comparison. During this second week, students are asked to prepare a poster presentation for all students attending the intensive programme. They use the posters to present the content of the discussions held and the results of comparing national educational and learning policies.

The two face-to-face weeks are attended by master's and doctoral students. These are different students in terms of the level of higher education they attend. However, the face-to-face weeks follow a similar path for both groups of students, even if the evaluations by professors supervising the first week or by those supervising the comparative group work may identify differences in the quality of discussion and comprehension of the problems and issues debated. During these two weeks, students are asked to attend lectures, complete tasks, and develop various activities, regardless of whether they are master's or doctoral students.

The third step is the post-campus phase. This phase is optional. It consists of preparing a comparative paper to be submitted and published. Students are organised into smaller groups for writing a comparative paper. Guided by comparative group moderators, the writing involves comparisons of different adult education and lifelong learning policies, according to a specific topic raised in the second week of the intensive programme. The academic papers are to be published in an edited volume.

Therefore, the aim of the third phase of the intensive programme is to write research papers be presented to academic journals or books. It is specifically directed at doctoral students. This phase happens in the months following the face-to-face phase of the intensive programme. The papers to be written are comparative re-

search papers that follow general academic criteria. These papers are informed by the transnational essays written by the doctoral students, the debates and tasks completed during the face-to-face phase, and by further readings, writings, and guidelines provided by the professors supervising the writing of each of these papers.

The post-campus strategies include activities to value, share, and disseminate the intensive programme experiences, for example through peer tutoring activities after the intensive programme or through strategies to integrate the results of the *Joint Module COMPALL* in the local curriculum and dissemination actions. The University of Würzburg devotes specific attention to this phase. After the intensive programme, participants are asked to elaborate the results of their group work in a paper of about 10–15 pages. A former participant of the intensive programme presents his or her experiences to future participants in one of the preparatory sessions. Students can contact that former participant for advice and guidance.

After attending the *Joint Module COMPALL*, the doctoral students are made aware of other international study possibilities and get the opportunity to report their experiences to other doctoral students during their colloquia.

## Curricular implementation of the Joint Module COMPALL

The implementation and local recognition of the *Joint Module COMPALL* are influenced by local situations. In fact, it had to be adapted to the characteristics of each specific context, defined by universities' purposes, policies, and constraints, as well as meso-level factors. Therefore, even if there has been a high level of sharing among partners in the process of defining and implementing the *Joint Module COMPALL*, there are various levels of integration into local curricula, resulting in varying degrees of ECTS recognition at each university partner.

As shown in Table 1, there are four main models of integration within the COMPALL consortium and four related ways of awarding ECTS credits for the various local degree programmes:

1. Modular integration into master's studies in education: this mode of integration is realised when the *Joint Module COMPALL* is part of the local study courses;
2. Recognition as part of qualification programmes at the doctoral level (e.g. in graduate schools): For doctoral students, no ECTS recognition is possible, but the programme is included in the doctoral learning path;
3. Issuing of extracurricular certificates, which represent evidence of in-depth studies of international adult education and which students can receive next to their regular studies (e.g. International Adult Education at the University of Würzburg);

4. Opportunity for exchange students, who do not have to follow local curricula that closely, and for whom the intensive programme provides additional value as part of their international studies.

Table 1: Modular integration of the Joint Module into local curricula

University partners	Courses of study	ECTS
Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg Germany	First year of master's degree course: <i>Bildungswissenschaft</i> (Education); it is realised in the module of <i>Bildungsmanagement</i> (Educational management)	6
Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg Germany	First and second year of master's degree course: <i>Bildungs- und Erziehungswissenschaft</i> (Education) realised in the module of <i>Theoretical and methodological approaches to research in adult education/ further education: Project learning</i>	2-6
University of Florence Italy	First and second year of master's degree in <i>Adult Education. Lifelong Learning and Pedagogical Science of the University of Florence</i> ; students can ask for recognition of the Joint Module	12
University of Padua Italy	Part of the master's degree course in <i>Management of Educational Services and Lifelong Education</i> . It includes two different courses: i) <i>Development and management of educational services</i> ; ii) <i>Adult and continuing education</i>	2+2
University of Pécs Hungary	The Joint Module is part of the new curriculum of the master's programme in <i>Andragogy/Adult education</i>	4

Source: Authors' own

At all university partners, the *Joint Module COMPALL* includes the preparatory phase and the intensive programme organised every year in Würzburg, but the information summarised in Table 1 shows both the different levels of recognition of the *Joint Module COMPALL* (owing to the diverse characteristics of local and national contexts and policies) and the fact that doctoral studies are not organised in terms of ECTS at any partner university.

At the University of Pécs in Hungary, Joint Module credits were recognised by the M.A. programmes in *Adult Education* and the M.A. in *Human Resources Counselling* for the 2016 academic year. In the 2017 academic year, a new aca-

demographic curriculum was established, in which the *Joint Module COMPALL* is recognised by the M.A. programme in *Andragogy/AE*. In addition, the COMPALL Joint Module is integrated as a subject addressing adult learning and education research. This shows that the *Joint Module COMPALL* also has to adapt to regular changes within the master's programmes at the partner universities.

The different levels of *Joint Module COMPALL* recognition are connected to grading criteria when master's students gain ECTS and have to show a grade. But there are several participants who do not target a formal recognition within their studies. Their priority is developing their English language and essay-writing skills, being part of an international experience, and learning about comparative methodology. These are the really important aspects of the learning experience for all participants.

The most important and common grading criteria are related to the preparation of the transnational essay and the presentation of the results of their pre-campus work. In addition to these grading criteria, the universities of Hamburg and Würzburg also consider the subsequent and compulsory delivery of a 10–15-page paper about the results of students' comparative group work, including some reflections that emerged during and after the intensive programme phase.

The case of University of Florence deserves special attention because it awards 12 ECTS credits, showing how the *Joint Module COMPALL* is relevant to the students who choose to participate. It represents a specific unit of analysis (see the box below).

### ***A brief presentation of the case of the University of Florence***

This box is devoted to the way the Joint Module COMPALL is integrated into the curricula of the University of Florence, because the processes of promotion, participation/selection, pre-campus preparation, post-campus experience, evaluation, and recognition of the Joint Module COMPALL are quite substantial.

- i) The process of promotion requires that the Joint Module COMPALL is presented on the website of the Department of Education and Psychology starting in August each year; then during the classes Methodology of research, Adult education, Pedagogy of educational and social policies, and Laboratory of educational project management, during which some feedback by former participants is provided.

This first process is also supported by the Albo ufficiale of the university, a public register of competitive bursaries or scholarships, which also provides useful information on the COMPALL scholarship for students. The purpose is to comply with academic rules, according to which all scholarships must be awarded in a public and transparent manner.

- ii) The second process refers to the selection criteria for the participation in intensive programme. Among those criteria for students who choose to attend the pre-campus preparation phase and the intensive programme in Würzburg is that they must be enrolled in the first or second year of the master's degree in Adult education. In addition, students must be attending or have attended the classes Methodology of research in education and Adult education. The participation requires that students apply for the intensive programme scholarship both via the Winter School website and via the Albo ufficiale di Ateneo.

The possibility to participate in the whole project depends on some specific selection criteria such as: a) students' ability to write a paper of quality for presentation during the Winter School; b) good or excellent academic performance; c) knowledge of or practical experience in adult education; d) at least B1-level English language skills; e) strong motivation.

- iii) The selection process leads students to the third important phase of pre-campus preparation, realised through scheduled meetings. This phase is generally common at all university partners, but at the University of Florence, the explicit focus is both on essay writing, with proper attention devoted to the theoretical framework of comparative studies, and on the soft skills needed for the group work activities.
- iv) The evaluation phase is another relevant aspect at the University of Florence, because students have to write a paper of at least 30 pages in English about their Winter School experience. The paper assessment criteria are related to the level of accuracy and the use of scientific terms, as well as the structure of the paper. The grading criteria of the whole experience also include students' regular and active participation in the on-campus preparation activities.
- v) During the post-campus phase, students are asked to write a 10-page paper about the Winter School experience; it includes a description of their motivation for participating; a presentation of the Winter School experience including a comparison of their expectations, learning outcomes, and future perspectives. The purpose of this paper is to show the level of improvement in students' English language, writing, and analytical skills.

To receive 12 ECTS credits for the Joint Module COMPALL for their local curricula, Florence students must complete the entire process: from pre-campus preparation to the post-intensive programme experience, including all the tasks presented in the previous paragraphs.

## Conclusion

One of the most important aims of European policies is to support the internationalisation process and to promote dialogue and co-operation among higher education institutions, as required by the necessity of young people's mobility, and enforced by globalisation and innovation. The COMPALL consortium has attempted to face that challenge, requiring all partners to be able to share their expertise, their knowledge, and to create new knowledge, questioning their teaching and didactics, their traditions, identifying their strengths and their weaknesses, and implementing a strong process of peer-learning among them. The output of this process is the development and the implementation of a common joint module involving students with different educational and cultural backgrounds to take part in the intensive programme in Würzburg as a place of learning and peer-learning.

The success of the COMPALL consortium can be identified in the possibility to mitigate the differences between the various teaching, didactical, and cultural perspectives by bridging them through the *Joint Module COMPALL* while at the same time respecting personal and local traditions and being aware of the constraints of contexts and policies.

Another important result has been the commitment registered among partners to advocate for some changes in their local contexts and to obtain increasing ECTS recognition as part of their local degree programmes.

In conclusion, the aspects outlined above are the most important lessons learned from the whole project, because the implementation of shared knowledge (*Joint Module COMPALL*), built on the responsibility, commitment, availability of understanding contexts, cultures, policies, the willingness of learning and exchanging expertise, welcoming the diversity of participants, and thinking about the relevance of a personalised learning pathway, need to be interpreted as the possibility to connect the differences, to find out a common language, and a common ground on which higher education institutions can build the process of co-operation, innovation, and exchange good practices.

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# The COMPALL Blended Learning Path: Online, On-campus, and Intensive Phases

**Abstract:** Blended learning is a suitable learning form for several kinds of learners, including international groups made up of students from different levels, countries, and institutions. The COMPALL blended learning path is a combination of different approaches and tools, which contains also a certain possibility of flipped classroom process.

## Blended learning definitions and framework

Blended learning is one of the most flexible forms of learning: it is suitable for multiple learning groups (Garison, Vaughan, & Norman, 2008), it is good for differentiation modes, and it can maintain the required levels of ICT support. There is more than one definition of blended learning, depending on the specific approach. There are four main concepts, each based on a different point of view (Stacey & Gerbic, 2008):

1. To combine forms of instructional technology with face-to-face, instructor-led training.
2. To mix modes of web-based technology (learning management system, live virtual classroom, streaming video, audio, and text, interactive online games) to accomplish a certain educational goal.
3. To combine different pedagogical theories/approaches to produce an optimal learning outcome.
4. To combine instructional technology with job tasks to create a real-world effect of learning and working.

The two most common approaches are 1 and 2, which put instructional technology at the centre of learning support. Nowadays, as web-based or even web 2.0 and mobile internet technologies have become the dominant technologies, we can combine those approaches into one, based on various forms of digital (online) instructional technologies mixed with face-to-face, instructor-led training.

In e-learning history (Holmes & Gardner, 2006), there are many examples of approaches 1 or 2 in the area formerly known as computer-supported instruction or computer-supported learning. After ICT and internet penetration reached a certain level (in terms of the numbers of regular users and websites), it was called web-based education. One form of this was spread mainly through higher education

institutions, where educators and students started to use learning management systems, learning content management systems, and later community-based websites. Regular classes were still held still face to face, but between sessions, educators and students communicated via learning management systems and/or community portals, and assignments and other assessment tools were mostly transferred to digital channels. This is how traditional means of education were supplemented by digital network tools. But as these tools came to the front not only as learning supporters but also as essential parts of everyday life, electronic learning support started to produce its own methods and aspects (Bonk & Graham, 2006). One aspect is based on a very old pedagogical approach known as learning by doing (or learning by activity). Networked users can identify themselves and fellow users mainly by their visible activities, so learning by doing in the digital space is not one of the competing educational approaches but the natural way of learning. Accordingly, in digital and networked learning, we can build more on students' activities than when using traditional instruction materials (like textbooks and lecture notes) or multimedia-based approaches that mostly consist of providing study materials (like recorded class lectures). That is why educational games and apps became extremely popular in the last few years. Besides, a relatively recent and not very widespread educational method, the flipped classroom, found its way to the spotlight.

Although there is not an exclusive model for it, the basic idea of the flipped classroom (Tucker, 2012) is to flip the traditional instructional approach: with the help of teacher-created interactive study materials (quite strongly built on recorded online videos), instruction that used to occur in a classroom setting is now accessed at home, in advance of class. As a result, class can be the place to work on issues, problems, and advanced concepts, and to engage in collaborative learning. Both online study time and face-to-face classes can be resourceful and activity-based in a most effective way. Although originally created to help absent students catch up with class lessons, the flipped classroom approach proved much more useful for present students as well. Today, many forms of flipped classroom are known from early high school to higher education. It seems particularly suitable for intensive courses and trainings where a short, very rich and busy face-to-face phase is combined with other learning phases when participants and contributors do not actually meet (Herreid & Schiller, 2013).

## **COMPALL blended learning model**

At first glance, the COMPALL model of blended learning is a typical example of approach 1 of blended learning: a combination of online learning forms (via a learning management system and professional online network sites) and face-to-

face instruction phases. Beyond that, however, its main pedagogical approach is closer to the flipped classroom than to ‘traditional’ blended forms. In the so-called joint-module methodology, adult education professionals adopted various teaching approaches to reach out to students from several European and even non-European countries (Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff, & Boffo, 2017). The Strategic Partnership COMPALL developed a joint module in “Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning”. Seven European partner universities are integrating the joint module into their master’s and doctoral study programmes on adult education and lifelong learning; in addition, participants from various non-EU universities help enrich content, methodology, and research results.

The learning process has three different sections:

1. Preparatory phase: on-campus preparation completed with an online tutorial phase through a commonly used learning management system (Moodle – WueCampus) for students at all partner universities.
2. Intensive phase: a two-week face-to-face instructional phase (Winter School at the Würzburg, Germany, campus), based mainly on international seminars and group work.
3. On-campus activities at each partner institution; optional publication by doctoral students and colleagues.

Each phase of learning support works with a different methodology based on different content. The sections have their own methodological toolkit designed to serve the pedagogical goals of each phase.

The Winter School, as a central part of the learning process, offers topics on international policies in adult education and lifelong learning as well as comparisons on selected issues within adult education and lifelong learning. During the preparatory phase, students are taught through on-campus sessions in four main areas:

- introduction to and overview of the *Joint Module COMPALL*;
- issues in European and international policies in adult education;
- issues in adult education in their local and national contexts;
- analytical strategies for performing comparative studies in the field of adult and continuing education.

The areas represent the primary goal of this phase: to equip students with suitable preparatory content and analytical skills for their comparative study and assignment, the required comparative essay. During the preparatory phase, each student is asked to choose more issues within the field of (comparative) adult and continuing education that they would like to investigate in more depth.

This session has a face-to-face and a distance learning part. The former is a preparatory course built into the curricula of the partner institutions; the latter is supported by online tutorials, which are currently being developed in a joint effort by all partner universities. The COMPALL expert group developed a certain content structure and multimedia design pattern for all online tutorials, based on pilot pieces and student evaluations. Each online tutorial provides an introduction to a basic topic (e.g. European policies regarding adult education) in the form of an introductory video, a reading assignment (a policy document or scientific paper), and a reflection video. They are designed to build on students' current knowledge, including their actual language skills. The introductory video is designed to get students interested in/curious about the reading assignment<sup>1</sup>.

To this end, the video is connected to the text but does not repeat its content. It frames the text by giving students an idea about the broader discourse around the topic into which the text gives an insight. It also provides guidance for analytical reading by offering questions or tasks for students to keep in mind when reading the text. The video includes many graphical elements (slides based on pictures, figures, graphs, and animations), also showing the instructor (professor, educator). After watching this video, students read the text and answer the tasks/questions provided with the text. The texts help students reflect on the specific topic and serve as analytical material for answering the questions or working on the task. The reflection video wraps up students' work and helps them understand what they have learned. It leads them through the result of their analysis, giving them an impression of their learning results (not by providing answers but by outlining the main learning outcome students have achieved). Based on this, all participants prepare on campus by writing a transnational essay on one of the selected issues in adult and comparative education.

The Würzburg Winter School is made up of two main parts (Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff, & Boffo, 2017)

- Lifelong Learning Strategies in Europe (first week): participants learn through international classes, discussions, field visits, and reflections based on role plays. Online tutorials serve as preparation and starting points for this phase.
- Comparing Lifelong Learning (second week): participants attend one comparative group session on a selected issue in adult education and lifelong learning. These issues include learning cities, learning regions, and learning communities and competencies in formal, informal, and vocational education and

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1 All videos are available as Open Educational Resources over <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/index.php?id=196082>

are moderated by international experts. Transnational essays are written for supporting this section. Results of these comparisons are presented to other groups at the end of the week.

Participants can be master's and doctoral students. Doctoral students integrate the results arising from the comparative groups into their research for more in-depth comparison.

For help students and educators get oriented, the COMPALL project offers three online guides: one for universities about on-campus preparation, one for moderators and co-moderators about comparative groups, and one for participants about the whole learning process.

As an additional component, for developing and supporting group-based learning both in face-to-face and in distance learning settings, COMPALL uses a professional online network. This includes two types of community portal groups and the COMPALL website. The latter<sup>2</sup> is a central navigation and starting point to help students get acquainted with the project and the learning process itself. Its information tool section<sup>3</sup> is especially helpful in this regard, containing not only professional contents in adult and lifelong learning as well as comparative research material in that area but also a starting kit of specially selected preparation materials for the Winter School. Besides, students, educators, and partner experts can use the website to log in to learning management systems for online preparation, collaborative spaces, or professional online network community portal groups.

LinkedIn has been chosen as the online networking site for COMPALL. Here, the project maintains one public group for students, professors/educators, and experts working in the area of adult and lifelong learning to connect and collaborate, and one non-public group for the students, educators, and organisers of each Winter School. Besides these public and non-public LinkedIn groups, partner institutions or groups of students can contact each other through ad-hoc institutional or national community portal groups, but these are temporary and do not involve many participants. The LinkedIn groups are the platforms providing sustainable information, communication, networking, exchange, and research for participants and other individuals (especially experts) interested in international studies in adult and lifelong learning. The more specific targets of these groups are to create

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2 Cf COMPALL homepage: <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/startseite/>, retrieved 19.09.2017.

3 Cf COMPALL subpage: [https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/information\\_tool/](https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/information_tool/), retrieved 19.09.2017.

- sustainable (online) contacts based on (changing) professional profiles;
- a communication space for short-term announcements;
- an information space with sustainable information on international study and research opportunities in adult education;
- the possibility to use profile information to get an overview of Winter School participants;
- the possibility for participants to connect right away during the Winter School and to exchange information only between participants (without) professors;
- networking opportunities within and beyond individual winter schools;
- the possibility to connect COMPALL to other relevant stakeholders and networks, to ensure updated information.

The public LinkedIn group *Professional Network for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning*<sup>4</sup> is used quite frequently by project members, mostly by students and other partner institutions. At the time of writing (July 2017), the group had 606 members with more than one hundred posts. Obviously, membership includes more than all past Winter School participants (students and educators), and participant numbers increase every day, regardless of the current phase of the learning process. There is at least one daily update (sometimes even more) of group posts, which ensures the group's visibility in everyday LinkedIn data traffic. Apart from important links (to the project website, the information tool, other LinkedIn groups, etc.), contents shared in the group are related not only to the Winter School and other COMPALL events but also to international conferences, information about fellowships/scholarships, research projects, papers, professional newsletters, online presentations, and group members' professional thoughts, comments, or even brief discussions about various adult education and lifelong learning topics.

Non-public groups, in terms of their content, members, and activities, are more closely and exclusively related to current Winter School cycles. Students and educators start joining during the preparatory phase, and the group exclusively consists of current Winter School participants, educators, and organisers. Although it is uncommon for participants to leave the group, group activity fluctuates depending on which phase of the learning process students and educators are in. In the preparatory phase, this is the second (or sometimes first) platform for students to get in touch with each other and to get acquainted with the project. Therefore, every piece of practical information regarding the learning process and especially Winter School events are shared here in advance. Questions are also

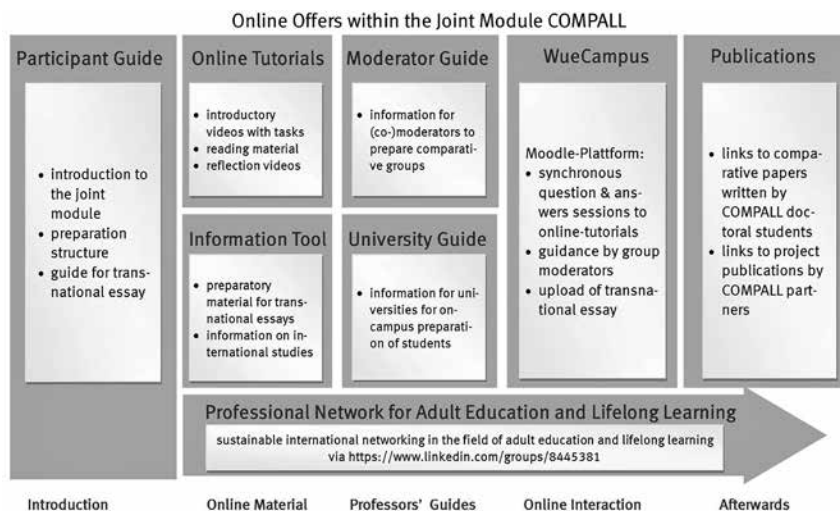
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4 Cf. LinkedIn group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8445381>, retrieved 19.09.2017.  
Regina Egetenmeyer, Paula Guimaraes and Balázs Németh - 9783631736258  
Downloaded from PubFactory at 06/16/2019 03:37:45AM  
via free access

answered here by the coordinators. During and shortly after the intensive phase, the Winter School LinkedIn group is also busy with participants' communication. After the end of the Winter School cycle, the group is still maintained (meaning there are more Winter School groups on LinkedIn: one for each year), but activity levels eventually go down – participants contact each other more regarding specific issues such as a current project, research, or other type of professional cooperation (for example, there is a very successful long-term collaborative project between Delhi and Pécs participants).

To make further opportunities for collaboration more effective, participating students are encouraged to fill in their community (LinkedIn) profile regarding professional data in as much detail as possible. Coordinators suggest a structure for participants' profile, including particular data types such as institution, location, research topics, language proficiency, and contact information. Although sharing profile data effectively facilitates cooperation, making students aware of personal data protection is very important, too. That is why students may also choose not to create a personal LinkedIn profile. Students are asked to be aware that sharing information online means losing some control over it, and to consider whether sharing their particular data is safe enough for them or not.

Figure 1: COMPALL Online Offers



Source: COMPALL, 2017

## Flipped classroom elements in the COMPALL blended learning process

As stated above, the flipped classroom methodology has a few common elements independent of the particular circumstances and individual methods of each learning process (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). These are noticeable in the COMPALL blended learning model as well, although this model is not an explicit form of flipped classroom. One of these elements is flipping the processing of primary content and the work on tasks: the former is done by students mainly during the preparatory phase and through online channels. Online tutorials are a pure expression of this approach, with additional interactive use of professional online network groups. The latter takes place in the intensive phase in the form of expert-moderated comparative groups. As a result, the combination of content-based interactive online preparation and task- and communication-based face-to-face learning leads blended learning methodology towards an extended flipped classroom process.

According to participants' feedback and evaluations, the COMPALL model of learning and instruction, by trying to articulate different teaching approaches, channelling them into a flexible and activity-based learning process, and maintaining a sustainable cooperation pattern, seems to succeed in reaching students and professionals from multiple countries and disciplinary traditions. Furthermore, it has become a working model for supporting efficient project-based learning and group work across various cultures and institutions.

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# Benefits and Potential of an International Intensive Programme: Insights from an Evaluation of the Joint Module COMPALL

**Abstract:** This paper presents some findings from an evaluation that has accompanied the implementation of an annual winter school as part of the Joint Module ‘Comparative Studies in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning’ (*Joint Module COMPALL*). The focus is on the benefits and outcomes of this module as perceived by the participants. Drawing on these findings, some reflections on the particular format of an international short-term programme such as the COMPALL Winter School will be proposed.

## Introduction

The *Joint Module COMPALL*, which is the key focus of this paper, is part of the ERASMUS+ strategic partnership COMPALL, which aims to address the need for more highly qualified researchers and practitioners in adult learning, who are able and motivated to work in international environments and engage with international issues. The *Joint Module COMPALL* is designed to contribute towards this aim. Following a short presentation of the *Joint Module COMPALL* framework, this paper presents, in the first part, some selected results from the external evaluation of the module. In the second part, some general reflections on the potential of this particular didactical format in the context of adult education studies are proposed.

## The evaluation of the Joint Module COMPALL

### The evaluation context

The *Joint Module COMPALL* includes an on-campus international intensive programme that targets master’s and doctoral students in the field of adult education and lifelong learning (Egetenmeyer, 2016; Egetenmeyer, Schmidt-Lauff, & Boffo, 2017; Németh, 2017; Egetenmeyer, forthcoming; Schmidt-Lauff,

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Semrau, & Egetenmeyer, forthcoming). During the preparatory phase of the *Joint Module COMPALL*, participants are required to do some preparatory reading. Additionally, all participants write an essay on a selected aspect of adult education and lifelong learning in their home country as a contribution to one of the comparative groups that are organised later during the on-campus phase. During the preparation phase, students are further supported through online tutorials offered by the COMPALL partner consortium<sup>3</sup> and through special preparatory courses at their home universities. In February, participants meet in Würzburg for the Winter School, which lasts for 10 workdays. The intensive phase is structured in two parts: During part 1, 'Lifelong Learning Strategies in Europe', students are offered various classes and activities. They are introduced to basic concepts of lifelong learning strategies and policies in Europe and to a model of policy analysis. In addition, they learn about adult education structures in Germany and have the opportunity to do various field visits, attend guest lectures, and engage in discussions with German and European stakeholders in adult education.

Part 2 is dedicated to comparative group work. After having received an introduction to methodological issues for this group work, students work in groups on a pre-selected topic on which they have previously written a transnational essay during the preparatory phase. The group work results are presented on the final days of the Winter School. Doctoral students also have the possibility to contribute to an edited volume, published after the Winter School based on some of its outcomes. The Winter School programme is supplemented by a range of social activities (guided visits, social evening, intercultural role plays). An additional offer includes two LinkedIn networks (one closed, one open), set up by the organisers to support the professional networking of participants among themselves and with a broader specialist audience in the field of adult education.

First pilots of the Winter School were run in 2014 and 2015. Since 2016, in the frame of the COMPALL project, the winter school has been further developed as part of a joint study module on comparative studies in adult education and lifelong learning within a strategic partnership of seven European universities. All Winter School participants are enrolled as master's or doctoral students at one of the COMPALL partner universities. Due to the enrolment of exchange students at the partner universities, however, participants' countries of origin vary more

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de Lisboa, Portugal: Prof Paula Guimarães; Università di Padova, Italy: Prof Monica Fedeli; Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Hungary: Prof Balázs Németh; Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg, Germany (Coordination): Prof Regina Egetenmeyer.

3 The online tutorials are provided to all interested students as open educational resources over the webpage <https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/compall/startseite/>  
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widely, including additional countries from Europe as well as countries from Asia and Africa. Also since 2016, the winter school has been supported through an ongoing external evaluation with both formative and summative purposes. Regarding the formative aspect, the evaluation is interested in how participants assess the quality and usefulness of (different parts of) the Winter School, which elements they like best, and what changes they suggest. Regarding the summative aspect, the evaluation is interested in assessing the impact of the Winter School with regard to the project aims, in particular regarding the school's impact on developing participants' motivation and competencies for international work.

The evaluation design relies exclusively on participants' own perceptions and, in terms of methodology, on their feedback, which is gathered through questionnaire surveys as well as individual participant interviews.

### Sample and data base

The quantitative data presented in this paper relate to a paper questionnaire given to all Winter School participants in the years 2016 and 2017 on the final day of the event. The total number of questionnaires received was  $n=166$ , corresponding to a response rate of 90 per cent (2016) and 100 per cent (2017). Roughly two-thirds of participants in each year came from European countries, one-third from countries outside Europe<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, about two-thirds of participants were studying at the master's level; one-third were PhD students (Table 1). Respondents came from 17 (2016) and 14 (2017) different countries, of which 9 were European countries in both years.

Table 1: Characteristics of the sample

<i>n</i>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>All responses</i>	82	84	166
<b><i>By country group</i></b>			
<i>from Europe*</i>	50	51	101
<i>from outside Europe</i>	25	27	52
<i>no answer</i>	7	6	13

4 Here and elsewhere in this paper, 'country' refers to participants' countries of origin, not the place of the university at which the participants were enrolled at the time of their participation in the Winter School.

<i>n</i>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>By study level</b>			
<i>Master</i>	51	50	101
<i>PhD</i>	23	32	55
<i>Other/no answer</i>	5	1	6

\*includes EU and non-EU countries, including Russia and Turkey

Source: Lattke's own, based on COMPALL external evaluation data

Data from both years were analysed separately, but since the response patterns are very alike with regard to the questions of interest here, in the following only the total numbers for 2016 and 2017 together are reported.

### The evaluation findings

In the questionnaire, participants were asked to rate on a 5-point scale how they perceived the Winter School's impact on their own interests and motivations on the one hand (Table 2) and on the development of a number of skills on the other hand (Table 3).

Looking at the results, it is striking at first sight that all single items score rather high, with almost all of them scoring above 4.0 or only slightly below. The first thing to conclude, therefore, is that participants obviously gained a very positive overall impression from the Winter School (which is also confirmed by equally high satisfaction ratings in the questionnaire) and that they attribute a rather high and multifaceted impact to the Winter School. This impression is further corroborated by the open comments given in the questionnaire as well as by statements from the interviews.

It also seems that this perception is quite uniform across different groups of students. As a general trend, students from countries outside Europe tended to give higher (more positive) ratings than their counterparts from Europe – a finding that was consistent throughout the questionnaire and may possibly be attributed at least partly to cultural reasons and different mentalities. In any case, these differences were of a limited extent, and even considering the 'European' scores only, the lowest value to be found across the items reported in Tables 2 and 3 would still be as high as 3.73 (item 'The winter school improved my methodological skills for comparative research work'). Doctoral students furthermore tended to give slightly higher ratings than master's students, but again, these differences were usually not very prominent and, in addition, this finding may also be due to the

fact that in the PhD group the proportion of non-European students was higher than in the master's group.

Table 2: *Impact of Winter School on participants' interest and motivation*

	<b>Question: "Did the winter school increase the following?" (5-point scale, 1=Not at all, 5 = Very much)</b>				
	<i>Your interest in adult education/ LLL in general</i>	<i>Your interest in trans-/ international and comparative adult education/ LLL in particular</i>	<i>Your motivation to do more mobility abroad in the context of your studies</i>	<i>Your motivation to focus on trans-/ international aspects in your further studies</i>	<i>Your motivation to have a trans-/ international focus in your future <u>professional activities</u></i>
<b>Valid n</b>	166	164	162	165	161
<b>Mean</b>	4.08	4.05	4.35	4.02	4.17
<b>SD</b>	.09304	.9609	.8595	.9968	.9236

\* n includes only master's students

\*\* n includes only PhD students

Source: Lattke's own, based on COMPALL external evaluation data

Table 3: *Impact of Winter School on participants' competence development, as estimated by the participants themselves*

	<b>"How much do you agree: The winter school improved my ..." (5-point scale, 1=Not at all, 5 = Very much)</b>						
	<i>English language competencies</i>	<i>Analytical competencies</i>	<i>Methodological skills for comparative research work</i>	<i>Helped me to see adult and lifelong learning in my own country in a new light/from a different perspective.</i>	<i>Professional networking competencies</i>	<i>Competencies in interacting with people from other cultural backgrounds</i>	<i>Understanding of adult and lifelong learning in other countries</i>
<b>n</b>	161	164	165	165	163	163	166
<b>Mean</b>	3.67	3.91	3.87	4.14	3.99	4.37	4.32
<b>SD</b>	1.2236	.9387	.9142	.9747	.9263	.9227	.7710

Source: Lattke's own, based on COMPALL external evaluation data

This participant feedback indicates above all that the Winter School was highly valuable in the eyes of participants. As regards student satisfaction and motivation, the Winter School's impact can be seen very clearly directly from the feedback. Regarding its impact on students' actual competence development, the limitations of an evaluation based only on students' feedback are equally obvious. Certainly, the reported figures alone cannot claim to provide 'hard' evidence of an actual increase in respondents' competence. To collect such evidence, more sophisticated research designs involving pre-post competence tests would be required but are beyond the scope of the COMPALL project. Nevertheless, the students' perceived impact on their own competence development does provide a basis for proposing some exploratory reflections on the potential of an educational format such as the Winter School in the context of a degree programme in adult education. This is elaborated in the remaining part of this paper.

## **Reflections on the Winter School format**

The Winter School of the *Joint Module COMPALL* can be considered an example of the specific educational format, meaning an (in this case: international) intensive programme for higher education students that is characterised by a particular temporal and didactical structure.

Based on the insights from the evaluation, I suggest that a) this format is particularly well-suited to respond to the complex claims and demands being made upon higher education in the context of contemporary policy reforms; and b) that in order to fully exploit the potential of such a format, it is necessary to widen its scope, as it needs to be systematically linked to other offers or services in the context of a degree programme.

## **The Winter School as an engine of internationalisation**

A core feature of the Winter School is its international focus, which not only refers to the composition of the target group but also to its central topic (comparative studies). In the field of (adult) education studies, this international focus can still be considered an innovation in both senses. Compared with other disciplines, (adult) education studies still show a lesser degree of internationalisation (cf. Nuissl, Lattke & Pätzold, 2010 p. 10; Lattke & Jütte, 2014, p. 9; Egetenmeyer, 2016, p. 156), thus trailing behind a trend that is being powerfully promoted through European policy agendas, first and foremost the Bologna Process, and through general globalisation.



There are good reasons for this delay, because the field of education in general and adult education in particular are very much rooted in national traditions and linked to regulatory frameworks at the national level. Nevertheless, current trends of internationalisation have an increasing impact on the education sector as well, offering new opportunities for adult education professionals – both practitioners and scholars – but also placing new demands on them. Thus, adult education professionals today may have to deal with multinational student groups, become involved in international networks, go to work or look for employment in other countries, keep up to date with international policy developments, and understand their implications for their own work – to name just some of the challenges.

Against this background, the Winter School seems to be able to make a significant contribution to enhancing the international dimension in the field of adult education. For half of the participants, the Winter School represented their first academic mobility experience ever. Other participants had attended conferences abroad before but never before had such an intensive international experience as the Winter School provides. This added value of the Winter School also emerges very strongly from the open answers in the questionnaire, in which the encounters and intensive interactions with fellow students and lecturers from a broad range of countries were very much stressed as a particular highlight. And to quote from the interviews, one participant put the difference between Winter School and ‘normal’ conferences in this way:

I participated in some conferences abroad in recent years, but this was the first like really not only a conference that you are sitting and listening and somebody is presenting, but you are actually producing something. And also various and really different people that you meet here, that's something that's really really good for the winter school. (PhD student, external evaluation of the 2017 Winter School)

The Winter School itself is an outstanding opportunity for student mobility – one of the main concerns of the Bologna Process – but its impact in this regard does not stop there. As seen above (Table 2), increased participants' motivation to undertake even more mobility activities in the future was among the highest-rated perceived effects of the Winter School. Several participants were also attending the Winter School for a second time – or expressed their intention to do so in the next year(s). Some of the interviewed participants even stated that they were considering going abroad for work after their studies and that they had been able to make relevant contacts through the Winter School which might be useful for them in this regard.

It is also interesting to note that the learning outcomes most frequently stated in the questionnaire's open comments included increased self-confidence in as-

serting oneself in an international and multicultural environment and increased intercultural competencies, including in particular a more open mind set and tolerance.

Considering all these indicators, it can be concluded that the Winter School promotes internationalisation in adult education not only – and maybe not even primarily – through its academic outcomes (competence for international comparative studies) but to a considerable extent also through its impact on motivational and attitudinal aspects, as well as through its support for building relevant social networks in the form of international contacts.

### **The Winter School as a multifunctional microcosm of higher education**

The Winter School format, with its intensive, two-week on-campus phase, differs significantly from the standard teaching provision at universities, where most teaching formats are either intensive over a few days (e.g. weekend block seminars) or with lessons distributed in smaller portions over a longer period of time (e.g. two hours per week over a semester).

Due to this prolonged as well as intensive schedule, the Winter School format presents a very suitable opportunity to combine a broad range of different types of teaching-learning activities within one complex overall learning experience. Teacher-centred activities (e.g. lectures) are combined with a variety of more learner-centred activities (e.g. group work); knowledge-centred activities (inputs) are combined with practical application exercises (e.g. comparative analysis) and forms of social learning (e.g. role plays). Field trips, furthermore, provide an opportunity to make connections between the ‘real world’ and theory and to apply analytical and reflective skills in making this connection. Besides those explicit and planned learning activities, the Winter School format provides many opportunities for informal learning (e.g. intercultural encounters during breaks and free time). These informal learning opportunities are not completely incidental – they were deliberately included by the organisers in the Winter School concept. However, they differ from the other explicit learning activities, as the Winter School only provides the broader setting for the learning to take place but does not intervene to shape and structure the learning processes in more detail.

In that sense, a short-term intensive programme like the Winter School can be somehow considered a microcosm of higher education, combining in a compact way all kinds of didactical approaches commonly applied in this sector.

This character of a microcosm, which can be found on the input side (didactical arrangements), is also mirrored on the outcome side (students' competence development). According to the evaluation, participants attribute to the Winter School a high and at the same time multifaceted impact on their competence development. This becomes visible when the evaluation items are placed in a matrix along two axes representing different facets (cognitive, social-communicative, motivational) and scopes (specific vs. generic) of competence (Figure 1). The Winter School thus seems to have a good impact on both cognitive and social-communicative skills, on both subject-specific and generic skills, and, added to that, on motivational aspects as well.

Figure 1: Competence facets addressed by the Winter School

motivational		cognitive ←	→ social-communicative	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>interest in AE/LLL in general</i></li> <li>• <i>interest in international/comparative AE/LLL</i></li> </ul>	<b>subject-specific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>understanding of adult and lifelong learning in other countries</i></li> <li>• <i>methodological skills for comparative research work</i></li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>motivation for further study mobility experiences</i></li> <li>• <i>motivation for further international studies</i></li> <li>• <i>motivation for further international work</i></li> </ul>		<b>generic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>see adult and lifelong learning in one's own country in a new light/from a different perspective</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>English language</i></li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>analytical competence</i></li> </ul>	

Note: Several evaluation items do not belong to one single category of competence aspects but represent a mixture of cognitive/social-communicative and subject-specific/generic elements respectively; e.g. 'English language' includes cognitive understanding as well as communication skills, everyday language as well as subject-specific terminology. The relevant axes of the matrix should therefore be understood to represent a continuum rather than distinct categories.

Source: Lattke's own design

The Winter School thus not only presents itself as a multifunctional didactical format but also seems to fulfil in an almost ideal-typical way the demands placed on higher education as a whole. According to these demands, higher education is supposed to develop not only students' subject-specific expertise but also their generic and personal skills to enable them to deal with varied and complex challenges in the labour market and in society (Brinker, 2015, p. 10). The Bologna Process in particular has contributed to establishing these high expectations of higher education as a guiding objective (cf. European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, 2007, para 1.4).

In fulfilling this multifunctional purpose, the Winter School follows an 'integrative' – as opposed to an 'additive' – didactical approach that aims to promote generic skills (or 'key competences') in parallel with subject-specific skills through the same learning activities at a time. This approach is considered to be especially apt for ensuring the practical relevance of the competences gained (In der Smiten & Jaeger, 2010, p. 7), thus also contributing to students' employability.

## Conclusion

In the previous sections, I have argued that the Winter School, thanks to its special characteristics as an international intensive format, is particularly suited to successfully address all kinds of demands placed on higher education in general. But obviously, the Winter School as a single event has its limitations. One Winter School lasts for a certain time (e.g. two weeks), and this time frame alone confines its potential regarding both comprehensive and sustainable competence development. Its intensive character, which allows for a particularly complex and multifaceted learning experience, can be seen as a clear strength, but it is obvious that this intensity cannot be extended over the whole course of a study programme. A short-term intensive programme such as the Winter School therefore needs to be seen as a building block that can make a significant contribution to the aims of a given (degree) programme of study in adult education, but which also needs to be linked in a meaningful way to other parts of this programme. Otherwise, there might be a danger of the Winter School remaining an isolated addendum, which will provide an individually inspiring experience to the participants each time, but whose impact in terms of sustained competence development is likely to remain limited.

The *Joint Module COMPALL* has addressed this issue in various ways in order to realise a systematic integration of the Winter School with local curricula in adult education studies. Central elements of this integration are:

- the integration of the Winter School in a comprehensive joint module, giving participants the possibility to earn ECTS credits for their master’s studies;
- the inclusion of an extended preparatory phase prior to the Winter School, with mandatory assignments for students and related support services;
- provision of follow-up activities, which help to maintain the Winter School’s momentum and allow participants to study in-depth the subjects discussed during the Winter School (one example is the involvement of Winter School participants as co-authors in the COMPALL follow-up publication);
- in individual cases: support of students’ long-term engagement through repeated active involvement in winter schools in increasingly responsible roles, such as co-teachers, co-moderators, or co-organisers.

It is certainly possible to think of further options for extending and deepening the impact of a short-term intensive programme such as the Winter School (e.g. links with internships or research projects). And in a longer-term perspective, it might be a worthwhile task to perform career-tracking studies to explore how such integrated approaches have impacted on the professional pathways of former graduates.

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