

The Bridging Barriers project in European Context



16th of February 2022

Günter Hefler

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Presenter

Günter Hefler

Researcher and project manager at 3s - Vienna

Cross-country comparative research on LLL, formal and non-formal adult education, firm-provided training and workplace learning, competence development; educational statistics

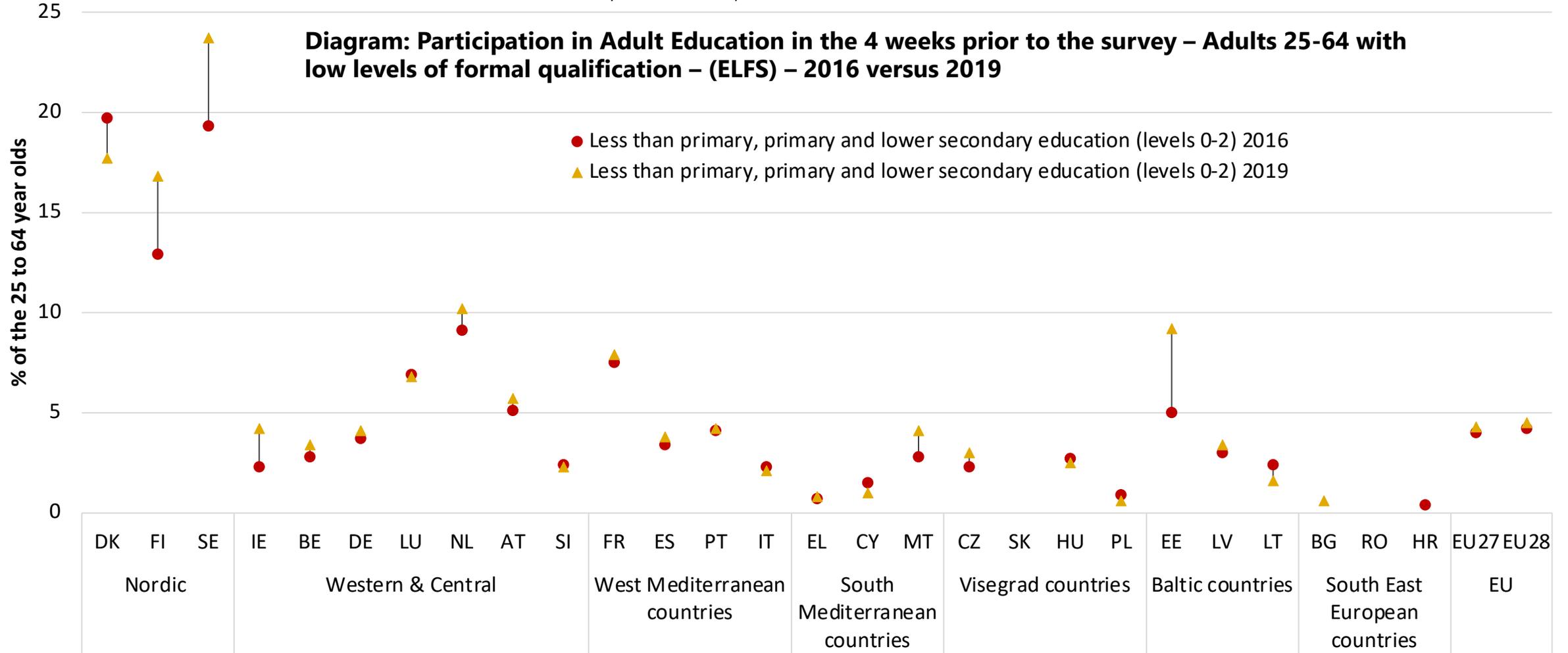
Role Bridging Barriers: Senior researcher



European Policies unleashing adult learning for the *Forgotten Half**

*William T. Grant Foundation. Commission on Work Family and Citizenship. (1988). *The forgotten half : pathways to success for America's youth and young families : final report*. Washington, D.C. (1001 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 301, Washington DC 20036-5541): The Commission. <http://www.aypf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/The-Forgotten-Half-Optimized.pdf>
 See also: Göhring, S. (ed.). (2018). *Die vergessene Hälfte - Erwachsenenbildung für Bildungsbenachteiligte in der Zusammenschau von Wissenschaft und Praxis - Isotopia 2018/96*. Isop Graz.

Diagram: Participation in Adult Education in the 4 weeks prior to the survey – Adults 25-64 with low levels of formal qualification – (ELFS) – 2016 versus 2019



EU Policy Paradox – Important driver in the past, fading emphasis

- The positive impact of EU level policies on adult basic education delivery, in particular ESF funding, can be traced in the majority of member states in the past two decades.
- Important drivers had been the Action Plan for Adult Learning (2007), the report of ‘EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy’ (2012) the PIAAC results (2013 onwards)
- The ‘Upskilling Pathways recommendation’ (2016) received a ‘reserved’ reception
- Bold statements supporting the field, however, have been rare recently

European agenda for adult learning 2021-2030 (NEAAL 2030 – 29th November 2021)

- ‘A new learning culture should emphasise the relevance of basic skills for all and of continuously acquiring relevant knowledge, skills and competences, at all levels within formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts, throughout one’s life.’
- ‘Raise the occupational status of and support the professionalisation of adult educators and trainers and improve their initial and continuous education and training and professional development’
- European Skills Agenda (2020): Raising participation of low qualified adults by 67% (to 30% with the past 12 month) from 2016 to 2025



Adult Basic Education – A vital field of activity in search of representation

__ Notwithstanding its much longer tradition, Adult Basic Education (ABE) has emerged only within the past two decades as field of provision in its own right in many European countries – or is just about to enter this stage of development.

__ Only a few people outside the field have a clear vision of what Adult Basic Education is all about and what is going on within the courses



Youth course – Vienna (Interface)*



Adult Basic Education – A vital field of activity in search of representation

It is key to acknowledge the variety of participants in adult basic education, and their

__ manifold learning goals (literacy, numeracy, ICT, any really ‘useful knowledge’; Learning the locally dominating language as a Second Language without an ‘academic’ background)

__ manifold needs, that need to be sufficiently met, so that they can enter the course, stay with the course and make progress in their learning/ by help of the course



Adult Basic Education – A vital field of activity in search of representation

It is essential to represent what educators in Adult Basic Education actually do and what professional competences they apply in their work

__what they do to make learning happen and helping participants to stay with the course and progress *against all odds*

__how they develop their professional competences, contribute to their field, defend their professionalism and fight for sustainable employment conditions and fair pay.



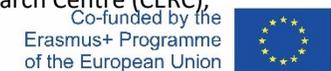
Adult Basic Education between ‘formalisation’ and social movement driven engagement

Paolo Freire’s Capital sins of formal education	<i>Adult learning as a social movement (own summary)</i>
(1) Teacher teaches, students are taught	<i>Students and teachers learn together</i>
(2) teachers knows everything, students nothing	<i>Students and teachers are equally knowledgable</i>
(3) teachers think, students are thought	<i>Students reflect and represent themselves</i>
(4) teachers speak, students listen	<i>Students and teachers speak and listen equally</i>
(5) teachers discipline, students are disciplined	<i>Students organise their framework for learning, teachers facilitate</i>
(6) teachers choose, student comply to the choices made	<i>Students choose, teachers supports choices made</i>
(7) teachers act, students join the illusion of acting through their teachers’ activities	<i>Students act, teachers facilitate</i>
(8) teachers choose programmes’ content, the students adapt to it	<i>Students select content, teachers facilitate</i>
(9) teachers proclaim their claims for professional authority and the authority of knowledge, violating the students’ freedom	<i>Students are invited to select from or to reject what is offered, being empowered in their identities as knowledgeable adults</i>
(10), teachers are the subject, the students are the object of the teaching (and learning) process	<i>Students own their learning process</i>

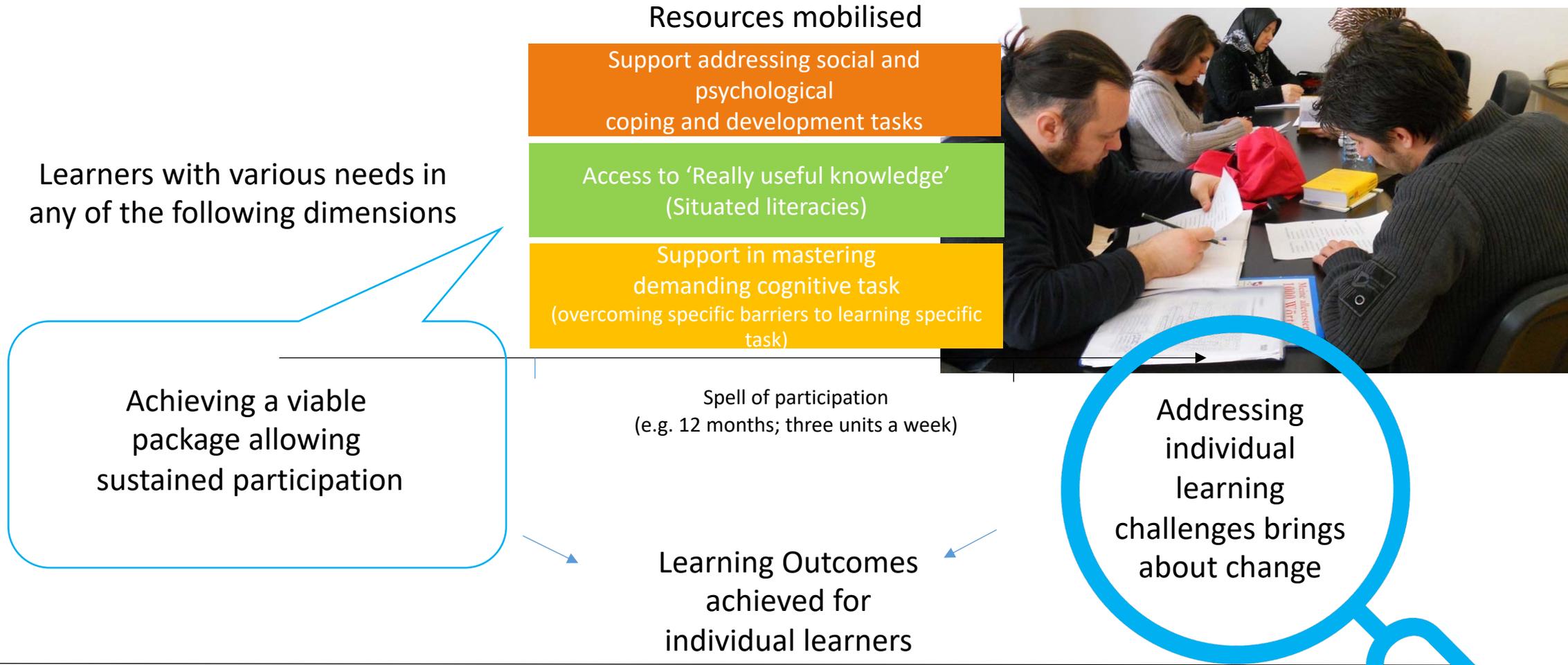
Educators are prepared to devote themselves to become one of the participants’ learning processes’ vital resources



Freire, P. (2005 [1971]). *Pedagogy of the oppressed - [30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION]*. New York: continuum. As quoted in Rogers, A. (2004). Non-formal education: flexible schooling or participatory education? CERC Studies in comparative education no 15. Hong Kong Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC), Faculty of Education, Hong Kong University.



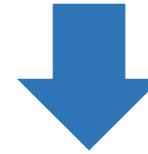
Responding to participants' needs allowing them to enter in, stay with and profit from Adult Basic Education



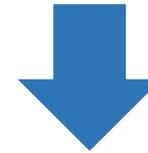
Solution-oriented approach to teaching in ABE as an emerging profession

Modelling types of tasks and levels of performance

Which (specific) tasks need to be accomplished?



Which competences of the teachers (bundles of competences) are mobilised in order to accomplish a task? How complex/demanding are these required competences?



How are these competences acquired? How can one support the acquisition of relevant competences? How can novel competences be systematically developed?

'Deliberate Practice' as a model of learning

The roots of the concept

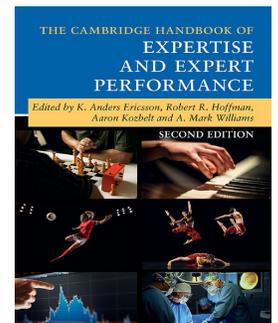
Rooted in the research on the acquisition of expert levels of performance in fields as different as playing the violine, playing chess, interpreting sonograms, giving military commands in combat situations

Not any practice, but a thoughtfully planned practice, with hints/targeted exercises provided by a knowledgeable expert teacher for how to overcome any difficulties, allows for the acquisition of higher level of expertise

He coined the term 'deliberate practice' (in the sense of planned, reflected, but also in the sense of negotiated between two parties) for a type of practice, where one expert shares his/her knowledge about how to approach a difficulty best with a student, the latter experimenting with this approach and coming back with his/her experiences; the transmission of expertise is a kind of guided practice based on mainly tacit knowledge hold by communities of practice on how to learn something presenting considerably difficulties to the learner



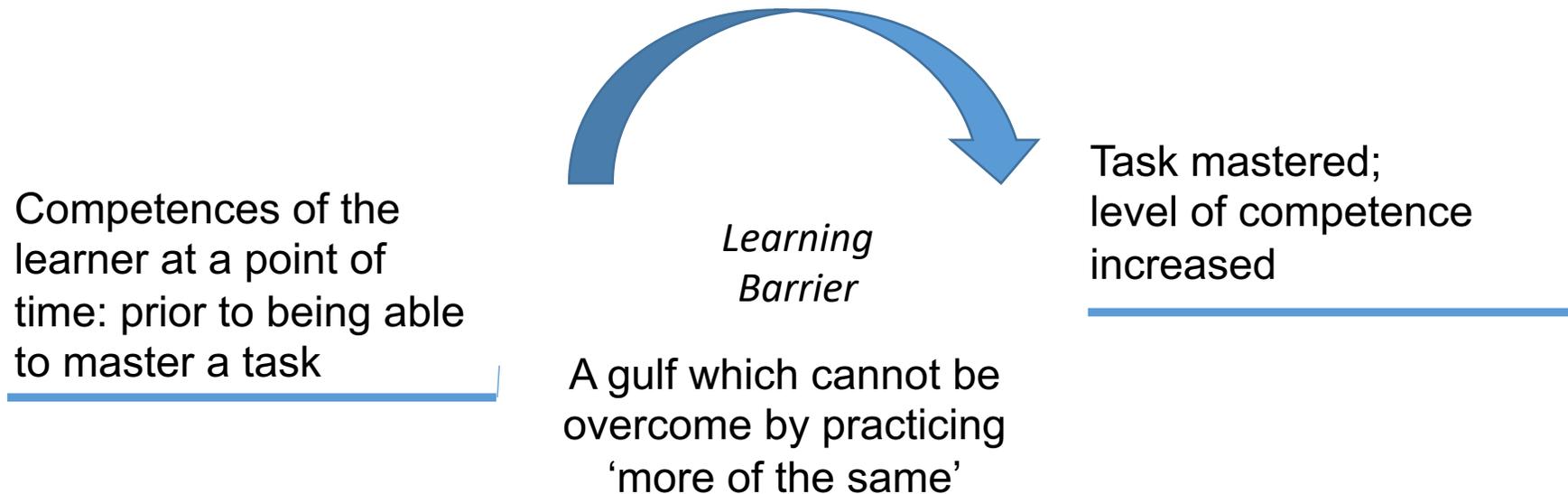
K. Anders Ericsson
1947-2020



Deliberate Practice as a model of learning/teaching

Deliberate Practice

ABE practitioner – based on their evaluation of the situation and experience/tacit knowledge) – proposes tailored exercises, the participant gives them a try, the outcomes of these attempts of working around the difficulty are reflected, further exercises are selected for making (any/further) progress and so forth

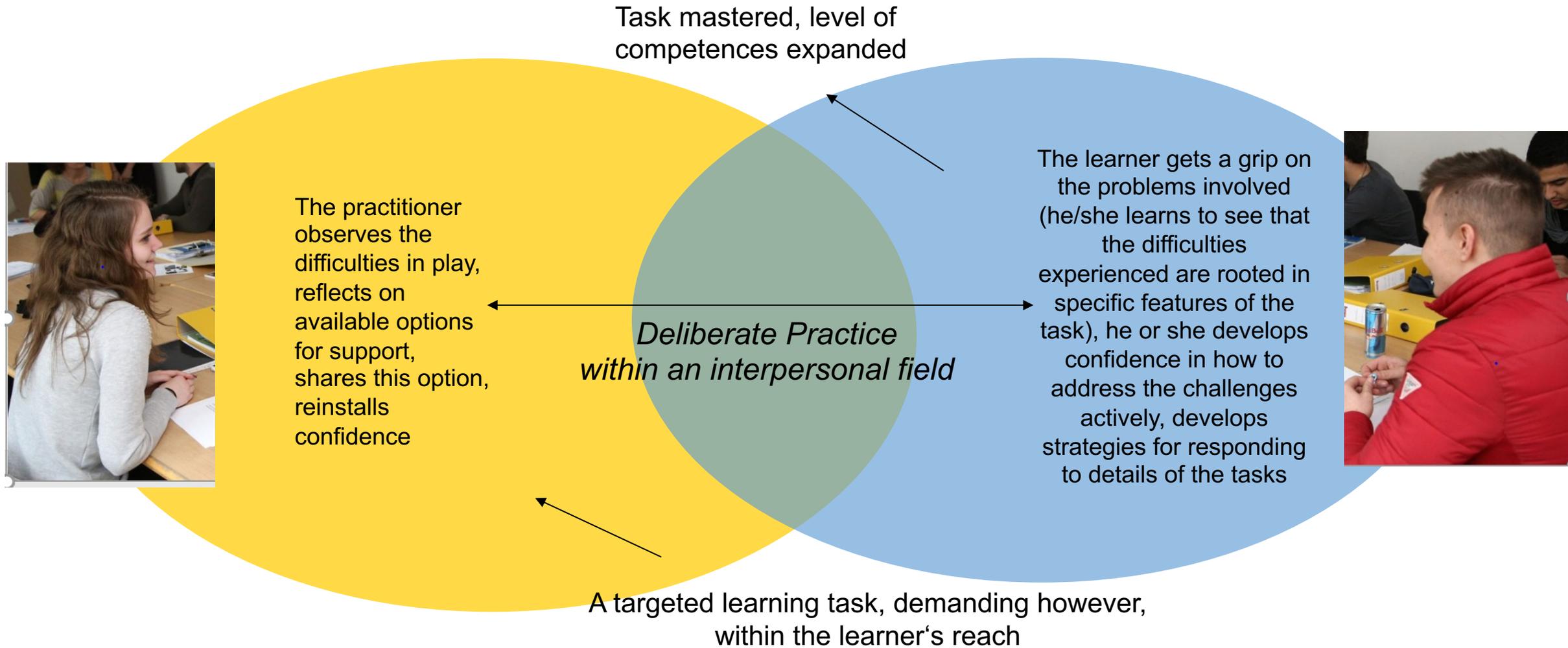


Deliberate Practice as a Model of Learning

Example general	
	Piano playing
Learner encounters an unsolvable barrier	Complicated fingering pattern/rhythm/phrasing
Teacher recognises the barrier and suggests a solution ('detour')	Suggestion of an exercise (e.g. more complicated but specific, easier but more focussed)
Learner takes the 'detour' (practices), 'unlearns' the problem, learns to differentiate approaches ('take the right turn')	Learner practices while getting further support (e.g. feedback, encouragement)
Learner goes back to initial task and A) learns to solve it and (partly) generalises the experience or B) the deliberate learning process starts over	Learner goes back to initial sequence of music and A) succeeds or B) fails and restarts the process with another alternative

Transfer to ABE	
Learning to read	Teaching reading
Learn a language	Teaching a language
Connecting letters; pronounce a certain sound	Not successful in supporting the learning process with usual set of exercises.
Suggestion of an exercise	Sharing the experience on which exercises may support possible barriers and which signs may lead to possible pathways of solutions ('professional confidence')
Learner practices while getting further support (e.g. feedback, encouragement)	Learner practices while getting further support (e.g. feedback, encouragement)
Learner goes back to initial letters/sounds and A) succeeds or B) fails and restarts the process with another alternative	The learning barrier can A) be overcome (in a good enough way) or B) not be overcome and the process to search a solution starts over

Learning as an interpersonal experience



Conclusions

- _ Helping learners to 'work around' – to bridge – highly specific (individual) learning barriers is a vital area of competences of teachers in adult basic education
- _ Making the tacit knowledge available in the field visible, thereby supporting the opportunities for transfer between educators, is key
- _ Identifying the gaps and the available approaches for overcoming learning barriers is an important field for future development
- _ Bringing back in the 'mission' of adult basic education onto the current policy agenda is key