

**Athens Institute for Education and Research
ATINER**



**ATINER's Conference Paper Series
EDU2018-2467**

Competence? Self-competence!

**Sebastian Lerch
Professor
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz
Germany**

An Introduction to
ATINER's Conference Paper Series

Conference papers are research/policy papers written and presented by academics at one of ATINER's academic events. ATINER's association started to publish this conference paper series in 2012. All published conference papers go through an initial peer review aiming at disseminating and improving the ideas expressed in each work. Authors welcome comments

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos
President
Athens Institute for Education and Research

This paper should be cited as follows:

**Lerch, C., (2018). "Competence? Self-competence!", Athens: ATINER'S
Conference Paper Series, No: EDU2018-2467.**

Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209 Email: info@atiner.gr URL:
www.atiner.gr
URL Conference Papers Series: www.atiner.gr/papers.htm
Printed in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute for Education and Research. All rights reserved. Reproduction is allowed for non-commercial purposes if the source is fully acknowledged.
ISSN: 2241-2891
10/07/2018

Competence? Self-competence!

Sebastian Lerch
Professor
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz
Germany

Abstract

The article deals with the category of personal competences, which is important in educational science. Through an empirical approach, the field of self-competences is outlined and the possibilities and limits of such categories are explored. Particular attention is paid to the group those sets the requirements, i.e. the expectation of employers via job profiles as well as interviews with human resources managers in the fields of medicine, engineering and education. The aim is to disclose an approach to the complexity of self-competencies and thereby also to make the associated appropriations of human beings visible.

Keywords:

Introduction

Various programs and techniques are discussed in public, educational policy and disciplinary discussions that appeal to the self. In addition to concepts and ideas such as "self-efficacy" or "entrepreneurial self", "self-expertise" is also emerging. The call for new formulas of (self-) optimization is hardly surprising. One should wonder, however, why working with them in theoretical and empirical studies is taken for granted (cf. Dehnbostel/Gillen 2007, Gillen 2006). Of course, it has to be distinguished whether these are justifications for proof or instruments for the determination of self-competences.

In both cases, however, there remains a *theoretical gap* that can be seen in the fact that one works with results as if one knew exactly what lies behind the theoretical construct of self-competence(s), as if the concept had the "status of a clarified category" (Vonken 2001, p. 504). The contribution will not be able to close this gap with its "rampant and problematic loss of theoretical clarity" (Faulstich 2002, p. 15, cf. Seeber 2010), but it should contribute to narrowing its content.

For this purpose, in section 2, first the processes are described, which led to the inclusion of the topic. Section 3 systematically describes the concept of competence and, in the following, self-competence. Afterwards, the empirical data used for the contribution will be explained, the methodical procedure will be outlined and the results discussed (section 4). In a final section (chapter 5) further research questions are formulated.

Self-competencies: Reasons for Relevance

There are good reasons for an increase in considerations of self-competencies. This also has to do with different entrepreneurial strategies and programs that make people more accessible. Such tendencies of the appropriation of human beings are, for example, lifelong learning, and the subjectification of work, outcome-orientation or the optimization of the self.

Lifelong Learning and Subjectification of Work

Factors such as lifelong learning, as well as changes in working conditions on the part of companies and enterprises, play a role in the emergence and relevance of the debate on personal competences.

The sociological collective term for these phenomena of the upheavals of the working world is the so-called "subjectification of work".

From a formal point of view, the process of subjectification means an intensification of the interrelationship between subject and (gainful) employment (cf. Elster 2007, p. 49): individuals carry more of their personality ("subjectiveness") into the work and/or the work demands more and more of the individual's personality (cf. Kleemann/Matuschek/Voß 1999). Thus, subjectification describes two aspects: On the one hand, against the backdrop of intensified competition from the globalized

market economy and the resulting pressure on costs and innovation, companies are forced to transfer the creation of work processes increasingly to the responsibility of their employees.

In addition to savings, they also hope to gain access to the subject's previously unused potential (cf. *ibid.*, p. 10 et seq.). Here, individuals are presented with an expectation to which they must ultimately respond; on the other hand, employees themselves are placing ever greater demands on the subjective development potential of their work. In addition, however, this also means that workers not only have to compensate for the thinning out of structural requirements, but have to actively shape their activities more and more often, even though they remain attached to the operational control logic (i. a. visible in quality management, project work).

The subject is domesticated by operational goals. Although technical competences are still essential, at the same time interdisciplinary competencies (social, methodical and self-competences) become more important (cf. *Int. Med 1, Int. Ing. 3*). The turn to the concept of competence can be explained in particular by an increased operational interest in human capital. At its core, the apparent freedom of creative latitudes aims at making people more adaptable to change and, moreover, to make them believe that they can still shape themselves.

Outcome Orientation in the German and European Qualifications Framework

A further tendency of the subject's appropriation through competence is evident in the DQR. As an implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), it serves to make the knowledge, skills and competences acquired formally, non-formally or informally in Germany more comprehensible and comparable within Europe (cf. Reglin 2010) and thus to promote the mobility of employees between EU member states (cf. Bohlinger 2007).

Decisive for the "allocation of qualifications to a certain level are only proven competences and not education path or duration" (Viertel 2011, p. 10). So, in Germany and Europe, the focus is on learning outcomes ("outcome orientation"). This tendency shows up with a slight restriction, also in the description of the DQR to self-competence. It is characterized as the "ability and willingness to act independently and responsibly, to reflect one's own and the actions of others and to further develop one's own ability to act" (German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning 2009). Although this definition sounds general, it is also professionally fixed: It is about your own *professional* ability to act and, associated with this, the expectation that the individual has to develop in the service of entrepreneurial interests.

Self-Optimization of Work and Life

In view of the dissolution of the individual life worlds [German: *Lebenswelten*], divergent role models, changed values and the necessary readjustment of life and waged work, the "necessity of divergently self-organized action for the subject" (Erpenbeck and Rosenstiel 2007, 2nd ed., p. XXXVII) increases. The subject just

has to optimize him- or herself, constantly adapt and continue to learn. This does not only mean professional knowledge, but also personal potential.

Developments at two levels are addressed: (1) It is obvious that changing working conditions (on-call, home office, etc.) place increased demands on the whole person as an instrument of work.

Beyond individually negotiable, profit-oriented functions, these expectations aim at subjectivity and depths of the person. Everyone becomes their own center of excellence. Self-reflexivity and the willingness to include all areas of life into the work context, beyond the sphere of employment, are demanded.

That dissolves the separation of work and life: an "individual self-organization disposition" (Pongratz 2005, p. 37), which until now has been rather of importance in the private life and contains elements such as creativity, imagination and trust, is now increasingly demanded in the sphere of gainful employment.

Such elements have to be reflected and cultivated by the persons more intensively as competences that are relevant for employment. In the same way, purely professional competences (e.g. efficiency, planning, cost orientation) have become more important in the private sphere (cf. Arnold 1996, pp. 197-208). In order to achieve professional and non-professional goals, key qualifications are taken for granted. At the same time, they are renewing themselves "as a perpetual motion machine of professional and private usability on an ongoing basis" (Lerch 2007a, p. 33).

Although they must always be preserved by the individual or certain facets have to be renewed, social and professional requirements are constantly changing anew (cf. *ibid.*, p. 33). This is accompanied by a permanent adaptation to changing work requirements as well as the willingness (and ability) to lifelong learning. This provides individuals with the basis for being able to functionally relate to subjectified work in a functional way as a workforce. The "compulsion to an elevation in efficiency" (Pongratz 2010, p. 133) is increased.

From changed employment conditions, three requirements for the employee (cf. Voß and Pongratz 1998, p. 140-144) or with a different accentuation, namely more broadly related to the whole life, can be summarized to the type of "entrepreneurial self" (cf. Bröckling 2007):

1. First, the entrepreneurial self has sole responsibility for maintaining its employability, so that it must develop and market its competences in line with the market. The individual is increasingly blamed for its own career and that of the company, also because it is forced to actively involve its subjective potential and personality in the process of work (or the search for new employment) (Pongratz and Voß 2004, p. 24). As a result, this means that it is no longer only companies that bear the entrepreneurial risk of investing capital and labor, but increasingly the employees. The individual must have self-control.
2. Second, it has to organize and control its work as far as possible within the scope of operational goals. Although this self-regulation is limited to the work context, it ultimately has an effect on the connection between gainful

employment and life: it produces a total absorption of the whole life under the primacy of self-economization.

3. Third, the employee is forced into an efficient and employment-related organization of everyday life in which he has to reconcile work and private life time and time again. The own work needs to be actively structured and rationalized (compare Moldaschl and Voß 2002, p. 14). On the one hand, this describes the extended access to the individual part of the companies, and on the other hand, this leads to "the complete subjugation of the lifeworld to the system rationality" (Elster 2007, p. 54). The shift from formally acquired qualifications to competence that has been developed individually in the most diverse areas of life takes the individual deeply into its duty to personally take care of its "employability" (self-rationalization).

The arguments set forth indicate that the process of subjectification of gainful employment leads to an increase in those demands that are directed at the whole person and their personal abilities: the human becomes the means. It has to optimize itself between life and work, it has to and needs to develop its (self-) competences.

Theory: Basics of Competence and Self-Competence

In contrast to other scientific terms, the concept of competence has already become part of our day-to-day world and language. We are competent in building houses, in eliminating garbage or in planning our journeys. There are experts for everything; experts, who claim competence for their area and maybe even have it. And if there are areas in which one is not competent, then one is not incompetent, but at least still has the competence to appear competent.

But what exactly is behind this notion of competence that is dealt with, as if it were self-evident? How does it distinguish itself from other terms such as (key-) qualifications? Of what use is the distinction in subject, method, social and self-competence?

And is something new formulated with the concept of self-competence or is it just a new term for an old thing, such as the idea of education? What is the specificity of a concept that becomes the "semantic projection screen for attributions that have something to do with abilities that contribute to life and work and at the same time are possible to acquire" (Orthey 2002, p. 9)?

Competence has its origin in the Latin verb *competere* (to concur, to coincide, to strive for something together, to require by law or to come) (cf. Knoblauch 2010, p. 238). The adjective "competens" has the meaning 'appropriate', 'lawful', 'responsible' (cf. Strehl 2008, p. 94). This meaning was known in Roman law (cf. Müller-Rückwitt 2008, p. 94).

In the 16th and 17th century, a competent person was someone who behaved properly: "Competens, proper, orderly, lawful, becoming, authorized, modest and responsible [...] Competencia, kompetenz, convenience, feasibility, affiliation [...], the authority." (Zedler 1733, Sp. 969-870). Whether today the word "convenience" is included in any competence assessment, which by now includes "medical and legal

competence, digital competence, intercultural competence, subjective competence, reflexive competence, competence for weather and climate [...] [up to] facade competence" (Müller-Rückwitt 2008, p. 111), remains to be seen.

What is striking about this old designation is that the term was apparently used first and foremost as a legal term in the 18th century (cf. Erpenbeck and Rosenstiel 2007, 2nd ed., p. XVIII). The application of competence or authority is still used today in the field of jurisprudence, and has been transferred from persons to institutions. However, in the 19th century, an innovation essential to the present context is added: in addition to responsibility with regard to an institution (cf. Müller Rückwitt 2008, p. 104), now this competence includes persons as well. It is the individual to whom competence is referred.

To further elucidate the concept and its environment (cf. Koselleck 1979, p. 21), the word "competence" itself will have to be characterized once again: the inflationary use of the concept of competence is based on its attractiveness, which leaves room for interpretation and is always positively occupied (cf. Faulstich 1996, p 367). Even in discussions within the context of vocational and adult education, the popularity thus generated can be demonstrated, indeed, a certain "competence spirit" (Strauch et al., 2009, p. 11) can be maintained, although the term itself is used "not uniformly and differentiated" (Gnahs 2010, p. 19, cf. Vonken 2001, p. 504). Reasons for this can be seen in different theoretical assumptions, which are undergirded and which indicate a certain "lack of tradition" (Arnold 2002, p. 31), or in the fact that the term itself appears to be affirmative and thus the actual need for sharpening is considered unnecessary. How can competence be grasped further?

First of all, it is possible to make a rough and straightforward distinction between two directions of reference to competence arguments– at least in vocational and adult education discussions:

- (1) Erpenbeck and von Rosenstiel, for example, refer in their definition of the concept of competence to (psychological) theories of self-organization such as synergetics or autopoiesis: competences are described as "dispositions of self-organized action" (Erpenbeck and Rosenstiel 2007, 2nd ed., P. XXIII) which can refer to a world other than the self as well as to one's own mental world. Thus, the essential difference of qualification and competence is revealed: competence cannot be decoupled from the person in principle. It is related to the individual, while qualification is limited to the fulfillment of specific external requirements (cf. Arnold 1997, p. 269 et seqq.). According to this, qualifications are "positions of a mechanically demanded examination action, are knowledge and ability dispositions" (Erpenbeck and Rosenstiel 2007, 2nd ed., p. XVIII), which are determined by temporally limited purposes of the commercial utilization of human labor (cf. Heid 2007, p. 590 et seq.). If qualification can be understood as the goal of continuing education, then the concept of competence refers to the "creative subjects" (Erpenbeck and Rosenstiel 2007, 2nd ed., P. XIX), who can act surprisingly and inventively. "Skills, knowledge, qualifications are just as much competences as the creative, unique self-organization dispositions of the

craftsman with the golden hands or the scientist with the world-changing ideas" (ibid., P. XII). In the concept of competence, the learner's perspective is taken and, contrary to the qualification discussion, their ability to self-directed learning is assumed.

- (2) In contrast, numerous other representatives of adult education science (including Hof 2002) ascribe the roots of the concept of competence to Noam Chomsky. With him, the concept of competence undergoes a first substantive expansion and specification. In his concept-guided term of competence from a communication science perspective, Chomsky (1969, 1973) understands language competency as "the ability of speakers and listeners to form potentially infinite new" (Erpenbeck and Rosenstiel 2007, 2nd ed., XVIII) sentences with the help of a limited inventory of combination rules and basic elements (cf. Chomsky 1980, Weinert 2001, p. 47 et seq.).

Through a learning process, the human being is thus able to understand and form grammatically correct statements. Another element of this discussion line is Habermas' key concept of "communicative competence". Common to both is the notion of individual's self-belief, by which they are able to act appropriately in situations. In order to use the competence construct in the context of the study, it is necessary to depict the term itself and its deep structure. With Christiane Hof, competence can be understood as a "relation between person and environment" (Hof 2002, p. 85).

Thus, the person with their respective resources and their specific requirements are taken into consideration, as well as the environment or the situation. Christiane Hof therefore understands competence as a situational and not as a general capacity for action, that is as "the ability to achieve goals and to realize plans in situations taking into account the personal preconditions for action and the external conditions of action" (Hof 2002, p. 85), i.e. "being able to act appropriately in specific situations" (Hof 2001, p. 151).

Walter Bender emphasizes that competence always presents itself as a combination of discretion to act and existing conditions. While competence is related to a specific, usually professional action situation, the concept of subject generally refers to one's own actions. According to Bender, this means "being able to decide freely on one's own purposes and intentions" (Bender 2004a, p. 249), to carry out or refrain from doing something. First of all, a subject is to be understood as relatively free; it is only through professional appropriation with the concept of competence that it becomes a professional subject of action. For the present contribution, a concept of competence oriented on the subject is favored. This can also be explained by the fact that it is about the development and less about the measurement of humans. A definition of this can be found in the work of Walter Bender:

"Competence includes professionally relevant knowledge (proficiency), abilities (skills) and attitudes (will), which are self-organized and self-updating with regard to the execution of specific actions (responsibility) in the situational context (performance). In general, professional competence refers to a combination of

expertise as well as methodological, social and self-competence." (Bender 2003, p. 22)

In order to possess the possibility of action, the subject must acquire the skills necessary to perform an action. If, for example, a subject with a car wants to drive successfully into a parking space, then it requires a motivation to do so. In addition, it requires theoretical and practical knowledge to operate the car in accordance with the traffic regulations and a belief in his or her own ability to actually park. Finally, a car must be available and the action must be transferred or allowed to the driver. This competence becomes visible as a performance in the specific action.

In addition, the competent actor is able to justify his or her actions. This action, in which competence becomes visible, Noam Chomsky, in the context of his transformational grammar, called performance. In doing so, the observer concludes hypothetically that there is an internal disposition, a competence (cf. Reischmann 2004, p. 4).

Finally, having competence also depends on whether the employee trusts his or her skills and is therefore willing to exercise them. A willingness to take action arises when the employee assigns competencies an importance for his professional and private life, for example by recognizing opportunities in working at home for a better reconciliation of family and work.

Professional, Methodical, Social and Self-Competence

Following the mostly used classification (inter alia Roth 1971, p. 180), competence as occupational capacity to act is differentiated into professional, methodological, social and self-competence. For a long time, *professional expertise/competence* was regarded as the sole key to professionalism and employability (cf. among others Kraus 2006) but this point of view is changing. For example, in the field of vocational training, a shift from pure knowledge transfer to more comprehensive models can be identified, which in addition to professional competence, incorporate social and methodological competence.

Thus, not so much the profession but the whole person with their skills, knowledge and competences will become more important. This tendency is reflected in the modularization and Europeanization of higher education: in addition to the technical knowledge of the single disciplines, the focus is increasingly on "general vocational qualifying competences" (e.g. in module manuals). Thus, the process initiated with the formulation and recognition of lifelong learning is consistently taken into account. Increasingly it is about further learning and competence development. Not that the contents dissolve or become arbitrary, but it does seem that they become a template on which the competences of the individual want, may, should, and have to develop.

On the one hand, this tendency is based on the constant and rapidly changing demands on the employee, on the "entrepreneurial self" and the changed framework conditions within which the individual has to find its way. On the other hand, the concept of a sinking half-life of knowledge plays an essential role. The consequence of an ever more rapid obsolescence of knowledge is that methods allow the constant

acquisition of new knowledge, thereby enabling the individual to acquire knowledge systematically, self-regulated or selectively.

Methodical competence includes the handling as well as the purposeful and correct use of methods that are recognized and meaningful in the respective professional context. Thus, the methodological competence of a doctor is different from that of an engineer or a pedagogue. Although some commonalities could be noted, the persons concerned not only have individual preferences for some methods, have been socialized academically or professionally, or have been guided in certain directions by their training/study regulations, however every profession offers a variety of inherent methods itself. The central question that arises from this is that of the different relationships between professional, methodological, social and self-competence. For what is more of a method in one profession may perhaps be considered as expertise in another.

Social competence has already been discussed extensively in the scientific and general public. The term is rather diffuse; Ulrike Karg confirms this with two references: First, with a reference to studies on job advertisements in which social competencies are repeatedly invoked and demanded; second, through the variability inherent in the concept insofar as all possible contents are subsumed under it (cf. Karg 2006, p. 45 et seq.).

"Although there seems to be a common understanding in psychological, pedagogical and andragogical literature, because there is a consentaneous justification for the necessity of social skills in dealing with each other in everyday working life, there is no consensus on the contents and methods of the acquisition of social competence" (ibid., p. 45) – the same applies to personal competencies.

In addition, it must be stated here that the delimitation of individual competencies in the areas of social and self-competence necessarily carries a certain degree of uncertainty.

This can be recognized, for example, by means of flexibility, responsibility or creative drive, which are regarded as "mostly already sufficiently overstretched semantic projection surfaces" (Geissler and Orthey 2002, p. 74), but which are still very popular.

Like social competence, *self-competence* is "so far marked by a conglomerate of assignments" (Kauffeld 2000, p. 36), which indicates the cause and necessity of systematization and more precise conceptual work.

According to Anke Bahl, self-competence can be generally characterized as "the willingness and ability to, as an individual personality, clarify, think through and assess the opportunities for development, the requirements and limitations in family, occupation and public life, to discover one's own talents and to create and develop life plans" (Bahl 2009, p. 29). It reveals the fundamental understanding of self-competence: this is based on an opening which, in addition to a professional attribution and internalization, describes individual, communal and social spheres of action as alignments of its carrying capacity; taking into account the fact that the debate on (self-)competence has genuinely occupational roots and therefore can only be removed with restrictions from this context.

What does that mean for "self-competence"? So far, it has been described as a reflexive and prudent way of dealing with oneself. This definition is found for

instance in the role of the doctor or the pedagogue. And even a tailor, then and now, has to think about his work situation, decide on the material, buy it and deal with customers.

Not all, but some of these traits would be bundled today under the conglomeration of personal competences. The term is thus new, but the meaning is not. Contrary to the assumption of the change and dissolution of occupations, it can be assumed, especially with regard to self-competence or the properties that are finally taken up by this concept, that these competences have always existed but were used less consciously as potential of the employees. Today, social and personal competences become a decisive factor in addition to the – still required – professional qualifications. This tendency is set by education policy, corporations, science and the public, and is thus brought to the individual from the outside (cf. Lerch 2010, pp. 143-145).

For their part, subjects have different possibilities of behaving towards this tendency: they can (1) follow this logic and class themselves thoughtlessly or reflectively under the dictum of economic action; they can pose as a "residual category" subject to these relationships and their own behavior (cf. Bender 2004a, p.251), namely (2) by behaving in accordance with the circumstances and thus preserve a kind of relative autonomy for their own thinking and acting; or (3) they can (or simply cannot) leave this frame and stand outside.

This decision also has to do with the changing self-images of working people as self-realizing jugglers of their work lives, the employers' perceptions and new vocation requirements, as well as with the changing economic and social conditions.

It is precisely the aspect of self-realization that sets limits to the scope of the individual and its customization displayed in the concept of competence: the subject must, can, wants and may concentrate its entire personhood on his or her professional ability to act. So, one interpretation of self-competence starting from the word aims at aligning the imputability and taming of the thoughts and actions of the individual on professional contexts. The human would become his or her own measure, but not in order to shape his or her humanity, to form him- or herself, to serve the community or to share in the idea of humanity, but to optimize him- or herself. It is about the production of egos – of individuals who are measured by their performance. This results in a peculiarity of the gait of the contribution: the semantic fuzziness of the term is seen as a way to determine self-competence more accurately. And possibly an empirical analysis includes not only optimizing aspects but also critical and resistant facets of the term.

Empiricism

Project Presentation

The data at hand for the research question originates from a qualitative research project, which on the one hand examines job profiles qualitatively and quantitatively and analyses the individual competences mentioned there and on the other hand includes qualitative interviews with human resources managers in selected

occupations (medicine, engineering and pedagogy).It examines self-competences semantically, but also with regard to the assessment and measurement of these competences in employment situations and further education in different occupational fields.

The research project shows the strong demand for self-competences, indicates the entry of subjectivation of gainful employment that has entered the real working process and its differentiation in the examined occupations. So far, about 500 job profiles have been analyzed and 12 interviews conducted and evaluated with human resources managers.

The category system used in the analysis has been deductively derived from competence assessment and measurement models such as e.g. KasselerKompetenz Raster, KODE, KODE-X, Kompetenzrad and additionally inductive, from the material itself.The interview guide was refined and amended after initial interviews. Both data and evaluation methods were initially used individually, but finally interpreted and linked together. This also provided in-depth insights into theses and previous findings (see: Gläser-Zikuda 2012, p. 8). In the following, empirical findings on "self-competences" are presented and explained in separate steps, first qualitative-quantitative and then qualitatively obtained results.

Presentation and Interpretation of the Qualitative-Quantitative Results (From Job Profiles and Interviews with Human Resources Managers)

The scheme is not selective, but it's heuristically useful to capture the breadth and depth of the self-competence debate:

- 1 Willingness [280]
- 2 Organizational Ability [211]
- 3 *Responsibility* [210]
- 4 Independence/Autonomy [176]
- 5 *Creative drive*[164]
- 6 Flexibility [143]
- 7 Willingness to learn [134]
- 8 (Self-)initiative [127]
- 9 Commitment/motivation [74]
- 10 Analytical Thinking [72]

Since it is not feasible to address all possible individual competencies within the context of the article, reference should be made to just two individual competences (exemplary: *responsibility, creativity*). This is done in order to display the complexity of the topic and to show that it has to be checked very accurately what exactly the object is – especially when it comes to measurement or didactics of self-competence and their individual competences.

Responsibility

Job Profiles

First of all, it should be noted that "responsibility" is ranked among the TOP 3 in all three occupational areas examined, and in the engineering sector even in the first place before commitment and flexibility. In the pedagogical field there are 64 formulations on "responsibility", whereby there is a disparity between application-related and scientific calls for tenders (including responsibility for data, ethical guidelines for research).

In the application-related calls for tenders, the demand for responsibility is much higher and refers to the coding "personal responsibility", "responsibility towards participants and clients" as well as "towards the institution" itself.

In the medical field, the spectrum of mentions (79) ranges from "medical responsibility", "responsible task" up to "managerial responsibility". This also highlights the field of activities, target groups and logics of action of medical professions. In the field of engineering (67), it becomes apparent that in addition to "responsibility towards employees and customers", it is also a matter of "proposed solutions" and "willingness to participate in responsible tasks".

This small selection of assignments reveals two aspects: (1) in structural terms, "responsibility" depends on organizational conditions, hierarchies, or roles; it must be allowed and wanted to act responsibly.

This explanation also serves to establish the determination of relevance of the term in different occupational fields. In addition, logics of action, areas of responsibility, target groups or even the realization of the positions should have to be included for an in-depth analysis. (2) In terms of content, "responsibility" can mean different things. The spectrum ranges from dealing with customers to a responsibility towards society. In order to further break down the semantically wide field, interviews with human resources managers are included.

Interviews

"Responsible action" can be found, for example, in an interview of the magazine *Pädagogik* with a human resources manager at Bahn AG:

"You also need a certain willingness to take responsibility. In other words, you have to know that what we do here will affect 200,000 to 300,000 people later on. Then we also take responsibility for processes in personnel development, for finances and for the fact that this is subsequently implemented on site. [...] Every job has to do with a sense of responsibility. Even our cleaner on site has to do his job responsibly." (Päd 3, 41)

This shows that responsibility is seen as very important and that this awareness affects many different areas of a large corporation. With regard to the segment of executives, a further distinction is made:

"Responsibility for oneself as an executive, for the employees and for strengthening their responsibility, responsibility towards the company, in a way, and responsibility towards society or the public." (Päd 3, 76-77)

Responsibility is a central theme here. The differentiation regarding players, levels, target groups and modes of action is very conscious. This means that the topic, which was initially phrased rather generally in other interviews and job advertisements, is described here in detail and thought-out and is outlined in its various ramifications.

Responsibility is also an important aspect in the field of *engineers*. However, responsibility in this area is different from that of pedagogy and medicine, as it is more a matter of responsibility towards customers and employees. And depending on the specific field of activity, it is subject to different characteristics, e. g. in the automotive sector, there is the engineer's responsibility towards the company, customers or colleagues (cf. Ing. 1,78). In addition, the focus is also on personal responsibility:

"Personal responsibility. This is very, very important for us. So, do not always hedge with the supervisor. We need people who are autonomous, who work independently. That is a very, very important point." (Ing 3, 62)

And depending on the instance in question, there are different objects of responsibility (e. g. avoidance of traffic accidents, costs for the buyer). In addition, it becomes clear that the position in a company also has an impact on the understanding and meaning of responsibility. For example:

"Acceptance of Responsibility/the ability to act responsible: I interpret this for myself as follows: Am I prepared to take on managerial responsibility in the company – that is, not just towards the participants or trainees, but also managerial responsibility towards the employees?" (Ing 2, 24)

For the field of *medicine*, responsibility (towards the patients, their dignity, their nature etc.) is of particular importance. In addition to a social and public mission, medical practitioners also have a direct and indirect responsibility towards their patients and their relatives. Depending on the faculty, this is certainly distributed and weighted differently, and it also makes a difference whether a radiologist identifies a tumor based on a picture or whether a physician has to communicate this finding. In general, of course, there is responsibility in both cases. It is interesting that in the interviews with doctors of different disciplines relatively strong reference is made to the hierarchical system within a hospital and also responsibility is weighted in this way:

"Responsibility is not so crucial right now, because we have – we have a hierarchical system – senior physicians and chief physicians. The senior physicians are also instructed to always check that and we as chief physicians

then finally have the absolute review and are ultimately absolutely responsible."
(Med 1, 25)

Since there are still senior physicians in the background, assistants are *relatively* responsible:

"But, of course, the assistant also has a certain responsibility. That's for sure. [...] There is, of course, a certain inherent responsibility in the job. That is important."(Med 1, 28)

If one starts from a definition of competence that includes not only knowledge, attitudes, willingness and performance, but also the availability of means, it becomes clear that there is an inner and an outer side of responsibility: (1) The *innerpresupposition* for responsible action lies in the personhood: self-responsibility is tied back to an idea of a moral consciousness, and the dignity of the person is associated with the idea of autonomy. This reasoning cannot be found in the interviews, but there are mentions that refer to an inner side as a will and an awareness of responsibility. (2) Another aspect that is found in both, the scientific literature and the interviews, refers to the *outer side* of responsibility: in order to act responsibly, the context must be considered, i. e. to what extent an action is voluntarily carried out or under pressure generated by the company (inter alia obligation, internalized external control).

Creative Drive

Job Profiles

After "commitment", "organizational skills", "responsibility" and "independence", "creative drive" ranks in fifth place from a TOP 10 of individual competences. This demand for "creative drive" formulated in job profiles as well as by human resource managers is not only important for the job, but also important in private fields. It is necessary to deal with current and future tasks, to shape one's own life, which includes both private life and gainful employment.

In an analysis of the claim for creative drive in the examined occupational fields, it is notable that "creative drive" is most commonly asked for by the segment "education", followed by "engineering" and only then "medicine".

Certainly, there are a number of reasons for this finding regarding this different ratio of the weighting of this individual competence. In addition to various logics of action, areas of responsibility, target groups, it would also be necessary to include the creation of job advertisements for a more in-depth analysis, which asks for patterns for the emergence of "creative drive". For the present context, the only point of interest is the perspective of the human resource managers. This view makes the requirements visible to (potential) employees. Tendencies can be noticed – the conducted empirical research included the following: "a dedicated personality", "joy", "interest in the further shaping of the company", "ability and

will to further organizational development" or "further development of a team", "further development of study programs", "taking pleasure in making things happen", "conception and development" and "shaping the working environment".

This Small Selection Alone Illustrates Two Aspects

(1) Creative drive as a self-competence is always involved in a tension between the person and the environment. This means that in order to successfully organize an organization, a work process or a team, will, attitude, self-efficacy beliefs and desirability are required. In short: creation requires an element outside the self as the addressee of the process.

In addition, (2) it is already clear from the job profiles that sometimes the self-competence "creative drive" depends on organizational conditions, hierarchies or roles; it must be allowed and wanted for a person to shape himself or herself, something or a group of people. This explanation is also useful for the findings of the relevance of the term in different professional fields: in the medical field, for example, there is hardly any mention of creative drive in the job profiles; one of the reasons for this is that the examined professions were not only limited to hierarchically high-ranking positions. A similar situation can be observed for engineers, but with the addition that the designing of objects, the shaping of processes or sequences is an essential element here and perhaps therefore this individual competence among others is in demand. And in the pedagogical field, "creative drive" in terms of "openness to new things" (i. a. towards target groups, participants or tasks) is especially expected.

Interviews

The presentation and interpretation of results from the analysis of job profiles as well as of interviews is not carried out in separate steps, but the evaluation of job profiles, which can expose quantitative structures and have to be interpreted qualitatively, is always supplemented, compared or refuted by the insights gained in interviews into the understanding of the players.

Overall, this approach aims at a "broadly secured dimensioning" (Seeber et al. 2010, p. 8) of self-competences. The inclusion of qualitative interviews not only contributes to the in-depth analysis of the semantic structure and inner logic of the respective self-competences, but it is also possible to obtain information on aspects that were previously ignored in the analysis. Through use of the word "will", the option of companies or organizations being considered as agents with a creative drive is excluded. It is the creative drive of individuals or, as the case may be, groups. In addition to the implementation process contained in the term, it is also important that the employee anticipates changes, recognizes the requirements placed on him or her and incorporates these aspects on the way to optimizing processes, workflows and results of his or her own accord.

Creative drive can be understood as the ability to shape a wide range of situations: "creative drive is the prerequisite for dealing with problems, obstacles

and personal stress. Creative drive, as the personal drive to shape or redevelop something, requires the existence or development of creative skills and goals." (Heyse/Erpenbeck 2009², p. 230)

This trend was obvious in the interviews with engineers (cf. Int. Ing 1, 41; Int. Ing 2, 13). In the medical field, which is very different with regard to this individual competence, depending on the field of study, working environment or medical goal, it is not considered to be central (cf. Med_ges.: 24). However, the function of teams is emphasized here. In addition, hierarchy plays an essential role:

"Creative drive is great, I believe, but only then, if you have the opportunity to do so. And that means that I want to and can ascend within the hierarchy, which is simply there with us, then. [...] Creative drive is, I believe, now relatively low for an assistant." (Int. Med 2, 42)

In this statement as well as in others by physicians and pedagogues (cf. Int. Päd 3, 41), the concept of is strongly tied back to a high position within an institution. A slightly different view of the topic of "creativity" can be found in two statements from the pedagogical field. Here, creativity is related to microdidactic aspects and microstructural conditions:

"Then, I think it's important to be creative, because like I've said, I can only define a framework, what our client says, what is required of us, the seminar leader has to actually design the whole thing, adapted to the individual participant." (Int.Päd 1, 53). And: "Then perhaps the desire to shape, to develop something. [...] How can we bring this into the company? [Because] that also reflects the identification with the institute." (Int. Päd 2, 56)

All this focuses on a creative drive that follows an economic orientation. The free play of the forces, that is inherent in the wording "giving shape to something", is broken in two ways: On the one hand, will and ability (because from an operational point of view creative drive already implies the proficiency) lie in the entrepreneurial goals. The creative drive is thus limited at all times and always already permeated by foreign mechanisms, from which there is no escape for the subjective competence to form and create. On the other hand, the subject has already internalized the intention itself as operational intention. (cf., inter alia, Hendrich 2005, p.25). Thus, creativity is also seen as a self-competence, which points beyond the work-related process to life and in this respect, offers critical, perhaps emancipatory, potential.

Critiques

Critique I: Turn of the Terms

If one considers self-competencies such as "creativity", "self-initiative", "independence" or "responsibility", then it should first be noted that, although the terms have a general connotation, as competences, they are professionally dominated.

In addition, the perspective of the terms reverses: Although the self is emphasized, it is about instrumentalized and effective action. This shows that the entire self-competence debate places the individual at the center but does not allow it to escape from an economic logic. It is about forming the subject according to the requirements of the current as well as the future market. The individual is only of interest as a means to an end. One could even think that the "dissolution" of the subject is an operationally accepted consequence. Companies have different strategies for full access to the entire person. One possibility is the attribution of increased self-regulation of the working time or project work:

"These are the basic tasks in the project and you solve it yourself. You cf. how it works. You do not specify who should take which role, but of course you cannot let anarchy prevail. That means, you specify the framework in which the process has to take place." (Ing F, 41)

In general, it can be stated: "All pedagogical elements that were once intended for autonomous formation of the subject, project learning, situational learning, complex learning arrangements and much more emerge as new means" (Röder 1989, p. 186). They serve as a utilization of the subject. At the same time, however, there is an inherent paradox: In this utilization of the self lies self-negation, for it is not directed towards the self. Instead, it is interchangeable and merely of interest as a subjective factor in the strategies and programs (cf. Rau 2005, p. 104).

Critique II: Optimization of (Professional) Life

The manner of enhanced efforts in the competence debate leads to consider not only gainful employment, but the whole life under the aspect of utility. In addition, difficulties, rifts or sadnesses of life are reinterpreted as profitable conditions that promote the economization of life and work. This argument applies to the whole competence debate. Regardless of whether the focus is on social, personal, professional or methodological competence, it is mostly a question of adapting the human identity to external requirements (cf. Int. Med 1,77, Int. Med 3,45). This is expressed in a "coherence of the self", which takes up all subtleties and deviations, but integrates them immediately. That, however, leads to a type of human who cannot and must not be resisting or critical. Thoughtful or imperfect subjects that are aware (or not) of this will be lost. They are superseded by the belief in performance and competition.

Prospects

From the previous theoretical analysis and the empirical evaluation there are some possibilities for further research, which can only be outlined here:

Empiricism

Depending on the orientation and comprehension of (self-)competences, it is possible to analyze and discuss personality-psychological (e. g. on performance motivation) and socio-psychological research (e. g. on self-concept or self-management). In addition, not only work-related aspects could be included, but also life and learning as a whole could be researched. It would be interesting to see, for example, how people learn by shaping and managing of transitions in life and work.

Practice

In adult and vocational educational discourses, models dominate which want to balance the characteristics of the person objectively and summatively (cf. Gillen 2006, pp. 108 et seq.) by means of self-assessment and external evaluation in order to obtain comparable statements about employees for further personnel development measures. At the same time, there are also models that follow a subjective, qualitative approach and are designed as tools for the self-assessment of competencies. Further investigations could be directed at the analysis and development of models for self-assessment of competence in general or, more specifically, of the creative drive. In this context, it would be important to know which other competences are still hidden in the shaping of transitions or how such moments are experienced by people.

Theory

For a further analysis of self-competencies in general as well as of the creative drive in particular, it would be fruitful to further link work sociological, andragogical and qualification-related theories. In this way, the complexity of the topic could be taken as a starting point in order to advance theoretical foundations.

Reference

- Bohlinger, S. (2007): Kompetenzen als Kernelement des Europäischen Qualifikationsrahmens. In: Europäische Zeitschrift für Berufsbildung 3/2007, p. 112-130.
- Bröckling, U. (2007): Das unternehmerische Selbst: Soziologie einer Subjektivierungsform. Frankfurt a. M.
- Dehnbostel P./Gillen, J. (2007): Der Kompetenzreflektor - Ein Verfahren zur Analyse und Reflexion von Kompetenzen. In: Erpenbeck, J./Von Rosenstiel, L. (Hrsg.) (2007²): Handbuch Kompetenzmessung. Stuttgart, p. 459-471.
- Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen für lebenslanges Lernen (2009, 2011), verabschiedet vom Arbeitskreis Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen (AK DQR). In: <http://www.Deutscherqualifikationsrahmen.de/> [asconsulted online on 03.08.2011].

- Elster, F. (2007): Der Arbeitskraftunternehmer und seine Bildung. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Faulstich, P. (2002): Verteidigung von „Bildung“ gegen die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern. In: Nuissl, E./ Schiersmann, C./Siebert, H. (Hrsg.), REPORT 49, Bielefeld, p. 15-25.
- Gläser-Zikuda, M. e.a. (2012): Mixed Methods in der empirischen Bildungsforschung - eine Einführung in die Thematik. In: Gläser-Zikuda, M. (Hrsg.): Mixed-Methods in der empirischen Bildungsforschung. Münster e.a., p. 7-14.
- Gillen, J. (2006): Kompetenzanalysen als berufliche Entwicklungschance. Eine Konzeption zur Förderung beruflicher Handlungskompetenz. Bielefeld.
- Kleemann, F./Matuschek, I./Voß G. G. (1999): Zur Subjektivierung von Arbeit. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung. Arbeitspapier.
- Rau, A.: Von der Psychotechnik zur Psychopolitik. Eine gouvernementalitätstheoretische Skizze zur "Subjektivierung von Arbeit". In: Arbeitsgruppe SubArO / (Hg.), 2005: Ökonomie der Subjektivität - Subjektivität der Ökonomie. Forschung aus der Hans-Böckler-Stiftung. Berlin: editionsigma, p. 139-164.
- Röder, R.: Funktionalisierung von Bildung im Bereich informations- und kommunikationstechnischen Lernens. In: Gieseke, W./Meueler, E. E./Nuissl, E. (Hrsg.): Zentrifugale und zentripetale Kräfte in der Disziplin Erwachsenenbildung, Mainz 1989.
- Reglin, T.: Der Deutsche Qualifikationsrahmen. Ein Transparenzinstrument für Europa. In: Karlsruher Transfer, no. 40. 2010, p. 27-32.
- Seeber, S. e.a. (2010): Kompetenzdiagnostik in der Berufsbildung. Begründung und Ausgestaltung eines Forschungsprogramms. In: Beilage zu BWP 1/2010, S. 1-15.
- Viertel, E. (2011): Qualifikationsrahmen zwischen Sinnhaftigkeit und Ideologie. In: Education Permanente 1/2011, p. 10-13.
- Vonken, M. (2001): Von Bildung zu Kompetenz. Die Entwicklung erwachsenenpädagogischer Begriffe oder die Rückkehr zur Bildung? In: Zeitschrift für Berufs- und Wirtschaftspädagogik, p. 503-522.