Lifelong Guidance 5.0 Workpackage 2: What Tomorrow's Consultants Need – Competencies for a Changing World

This paper forms the basis of the further training in the Erasmus+ project Lifelong Guidance 5.0[1]. The aim of the training course "Lifelong Guidance 5.0 - Future-oriented guidance skills for a networked world in transition" is to qualify guidance counselors in education, work and employment in line with the latest requirements for guidance counselors, for example in the field of digitalization. Following an initial pilot with training participants from Germany and Austria, the aim is to be able to adapt this training in different countries once the project is complete. The challenge in developing an adaptable training course is the diverse starting points in the different partnering countries. The design of further training courses always requires a comprehensive understanding of the target group and their specific (required) skillsets. In the case of the various international partners, this posed another particular challenge. A four-stage process was therefore used to determine the required skills in order to develop a tailor-made training course and to define learning objectives and content in line with the given requirements.

1) Firstly, the underlying competence frameworks of the two partners in WP2 from the field of guidance, the Landesnetzwerk Weiterbildungsberatung BW and Wiener Volkshochschulen GmbH, were used for an initial overview and as a basis for the coordination process [2]
2) In a second step, three international competence frameworks were considered and a brief summary was prepared as a basis for discussion and for the development of the stakeholder workshops (p.2)
3) Requirements for the stakeholder workshops were defined on the basis of the summary of competences from the international competence frameworks (p.2[3])
4) Two stakeholder workshops with a total of 28 participants were held in May 2024 and subsequently evaluated. The training was then developed based on the specific training requirements.

In addition to determining the training content, the way in which the learning content is communicated is also crucial to the success of trainings. The way in which content is presented and skills are taught has a significant influence on participants' learning processes. Effective communication therefore does not only require specialist knowledge. Furthermore, interactivity, practical relevance and feedback also play an important role in the teaching of skills as part of continuing education.

In summary, the skills that are being taught as well as the training format and methods of teaching were of central importance in the run-up to the development of the LLG 5.0 training course. Through

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[1] This paper is not a scientific analysis of the topic of training for guidance practitioners. The description of the procedure for the development of further training for guidance counselors in the Erasmus+ project LLG5.0 is supported at certain points by literature and analyses of existing concepts and competence frameworks, but does not claim to be exhaustive, as this is not relevant to the project context.

[2] LN WBB - Kompetenzprofil für Beratende in Bildung, Beruf u. Beschäftigung

[3] A comprehensive analysis of the European competence frameworks is not part of the Erasmus+ project, which is why only three international competence frameworks were used as examples here.

the targeted analysis of existing skills and careful planning of the format, the LLG 5.0 training can be designed effectively for a broad target group, thereby maximizing the learning success of the participants and ensuring a sustainable transfer of knowledge. In this sense, the processing of the competencies and how they were explained was an important step in developing a high-quality workshop.

Summary of the competency framework as a preliminary consideration

Guidance counselors in education, careers and employment play a crucial role in supporting individuals to plan their careers. To provide effective support, guidance counselors need to have a wide range of competencies. This overview summarizes the competencies required by guidance counselors based on the following competency frameworks: IAEVG (2018): International Competencies for Practitioners of Educational and Vocational Guidance. Adopted at the IAEVG/IVSBB Approved by the IAEVG Board, 18th December 2018; CCDP (2021): Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals and Swiss Confederation (ed.) (2011). Qualification profile for vocational, academic and career counselors.

Communication skills
Communication skills are crucial for the success of counselors. This includes the ability to communicate clearly and precisely, both orally and in written form, while adapting to the needs and level of understanding of another person (e.g. clients or colleagues).
Intercultural and ethical competence
Counselors demonstrate appropriate ethical behavior towards all people and an awareness of cultural backgrounds so that the interests and rights of those seeking advice are respected and protected.

Self-reflection and development skills
The ability for self-reflection and continuous development is crucial for counselors to improve their own skillsets and practices and to ensure a high quality in the counseling process. This also includes the integration of the latest developments in terms of, for example, counseling theories, changes in the labor market, etc.

Counseling competence
Counseling skills include the ability to conduct individual counseling sessions as well as conducting needs assessments, setting goals and developing action plans.

Information transfer and skills in relation to the labor market
Information literacy involves the ability to provide well-founded information about educational and employment opportunities and to assist those seeking advice in researching and analyzing career-related information. This requires an understanding of the labor market, training opportunities and current trends in various sectors. It also involves obtaining and assessing information and passing it on.

Cooperation and networking skills
The ability to collaborate with other professionals and use networks is critical for counselors to provide comprehensive support and resources to their clients.

Technological skills
Technological competence includes the ability to use modern technologies to support the counseling process, such as online platforms, databases and digital communication tools.

LLG 5.0 Training Concept

Survey of skills requirements through stakeholder workshops

The following section was written by Prof. Dr. Peter Weber and Jenny Schulz (HdBA) as part of the evaluation of the stakeholder workshop.

Competence requirements for counseling (education, occupation, working world) have so far mostly been determined based on expert opinions or theory. The focus of this project to identify current and future skills requirements is the subjective, experience-based view of guidance counselors and other practitioners from this field of work. Two research questions were the starting point for the workshops:

- What are the competences that will be needed / expected of counsellors in the future?
- Which competences do the counsellors consider to be particularly important against the background of the current challenges?

The workshops were divided into 4 steps:
1) "Understanding the problem" - an exchange on current trends in society
2) "Researching the problem" - partner interviews on four key questions
3) "Development of synthesis" - design of a "persona": What could consulting look like in the future?
4) Brainstorming - differentiation of competencies into "basic competencies", "intermediate competencies" and "extended competencies".

The workshops took place on 13.5.2024 and 17.5.2024 with 13 consultants from Austria and 15 advisors from Germany as well as other stakeholders. The workshops were conducted online.

The documents were collected and made available as raw data to the client (University of Heidelberg, Scientific Continuing Education).
Evaluated materials
- Photo documentation (concept board) of steps 1, 3 and 4
- Interview notes from 13.5.24 and 17.5.24 counsellors on step 2 of the workshop

- (13.5 - 11 responses, 17.5 - 12 responses)

The evaluation was carried out with Max-Q-Da. The category system was developed with reference to the steps of the workshop. The categories for the competencies (Chapter 1) were created inductively. Paraphrasing and syntheses were partly derived with the help of an AI chat bot. The evaluation so far only refers to the two workshops mentioned. However, the same workshops were conducted in five other groups of counselors, and the data analysis can be expanded on this basis[4].

Lifelong Guidance 5.0 - Summary of the evaluation of the workshop results

The documentation includes the identification of key areas of competence and reflects current challenges that guidance counselors have to handle in their day-to-day work. In the long version of the report, the competences were divided into basic, intermediate and advanced categories.

Results and structuring of competencies:

Specialist knowledge

Guidance counselors need extensive knowledge of the profession and specific specialist knowledge, e.g. on funding opportunities, digitalization of the labor market and professions, health, psychology, law and migration issues. This content forms the basis for ensuring a high level of advice and addressing the individual needs of clients.

Counseling skills and methods

Key skills include communication skills, intercultural sensitivity and decision support. Methodological skills, such as the use of visualization techniques and time management, contribute to the successful structuring of consulting processes.

Digital competence

In the face of digitalization, the use of modern technology is crucial for advisors. This includes the use of AI-supported tools for information research and the application of digital advisory formats in order to be able to respond flexibly and effectively to clients.

Attitude and personality

Empathy, resilience and the promotion of self-responsibility among clients are essential. Counselors should also maintain a positive, resource-oriented attitude and respond flexibly to the different realities of the client's life.

Process design in counseling

The active design of counseling sessions includes goal-oriented discussion, structuring complex issues and the use of strategies to promote resilience. The aim is not only to inform clients, but also to increase their self-efficacy and ability to organize themselves.

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[4] https://www.hdba.de/forschung/drittmittelprojekte/cgc-digitrans/

<u>Dealing with diversity</u>

Counselors come from a variety of cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds. Appropriate skills for dealing with this diversity are essential in order to do justice to clients in a diversified environment and to adapt counseling content individually.

<u>Self-management and self-care</u>

Self-reflection and the ability to set emotional boundaries are important for the mental health of advisors. Resilience and targeted self-care help to meet professional demands in the long term.

<u>Adaptability and lifelong learning</u>

 Consultants should be able to react flexibly to social and professional trends, including the ability to constantly integrate new knowledge and innovative approaches into consulting. To do this, they need the awareness, ability and willingness to actively shape their learning.

<u>Reflective formats of professionalism</u>

In addition to further training in terms of content, the advisors attach importance to formats that enable reflection and practice transfer. Methods such as supervision and peer counseling can strengthen the counselors' counseling skills and professionalism in the long term.

Preliminary considerations regarding the format of the course

A key consideration in the development of the LLG 5.0 training course was the adaptability of the content in European countries while at the same time regarding the preference of the target group to have personal exchange with colleagues and lecturers throughout the training. Due to large distances of the participants location, the training was designed as a blended learning format, using each formats potential to create a course design that promotes learning.

The sandwich principle, which was adapted for virtual formats by Eggensperger et al. (2023), was used to structure the modules.
The sandwich principle is a teaching-learning arrangement "for events in which phases of collective knowledge presentation (instruction, often by the teacher) alternate with phases of individual processing of this new information by the students, for example with challenging tasks individually or in group settings. Both phases (input vs. processing) must be reasonably linked by "joints", such as the instruction of the task to be completed or the summary and evaluation of the results from the work phase." (Eggensperger et al. p.43f.)
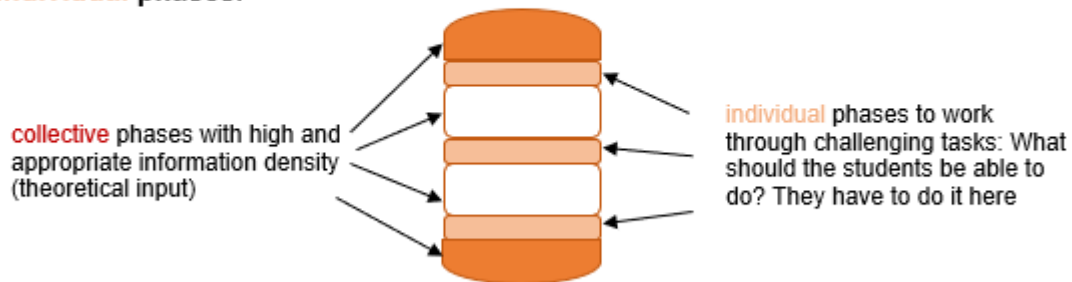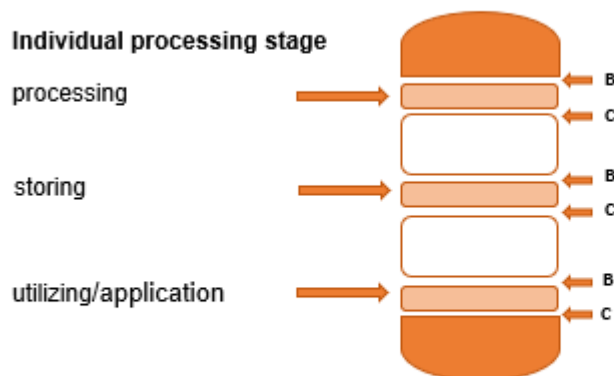
1. Figure translated from Eggensperger et al., 2023, p.45

In order to make optimum use of the joint learning phases, the didactic format of the flipped classroom was used. Here, learning content is provided by the lecturers for (asynchronous) self-study phases. This allows the synchronous parts of the training to be used for interaction, exercises as well as joint reflection and feedback (see Eggensperger et al. 2023).

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