Project working group: Qualified to teach project consortium

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The Dutch National Report on the outcomes of the Qualified to Teach Delphi study

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Qualities and qualification of the adult learning professionals in the Netherlands

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[1] Some parts of this chapter are derived from Dellen, T van & Kamp, M. van der (2008). Work domains and Competencies of the European Adult and Continuing Educator. In Ekkehard Nuissl & Susanne Latke (Ed.): *Qualifying adult learning professionals in Europe.* W. Bertelsmann Verlag, Bielefeld.

Qualities and qualification of the adult learning professionals in the Netherlands

1. Setting the scene of the study

Like in most other European countries, in the Netherlands there is not something like an 'adult learning profession' (Bron and Jarvis, 2008). Despite the non-existence of the profession there are many adult learning professionals in the Netherlands. The concept of adult learning professional is used in a broader sense. It includes all people being *primarily* responsible for the learning (processes) of adults in various contents or purposes, as well as different contexts.

In the Netherlands adult learning professionals are mainly working in the following four contexts:

- educational institutions providing *formal adult education* in basic, general, and vocational competences up to the secondary level (the broad Regional Educational Centers (ROC´s), or otherwise institutions providing education in only one vocation);
- labour market education programs provided by higher vocational and academic institutions up to certified, skilled or professional level (*formal adult education* at the tertiary level);
- popular adult education institutions offering *non-formal adult education* (some examples are Senior Web, adult education center and Association in the public interest);
- corporate and function- or work-related *non-formal training and development* in companies, firms, organizations and public institutions.

The formal adult education is publicly funded and leads to formal certification or qualification. In contrast, the non-formal popular adult education is mostly privately paid for. In some instances popular adult education institutions are subsidized by local or national authorities. Although there are local exception the popular adult education most often doesn´t lead to publicly recognized qualification. The same holds for the non-formal training and development in companies, firms et cet. Training and development of this kind is always related to work or organizational development and mainly paid for by the employers or sometimes the employees themselves.

The most recent figures of participation in educational institutions providing formal adult education at secondary level (school year 2008-2009) are that 36.572 adults followed adult education, e.g. education in social self-reliance, professional self-reliance qualifying or not qualifying and moreover some minor categories focusing on educational self-reliance and literacy (CBS, 2010). One third of the participants are immigrants and almost half of the immigrants have no Western background. The latest numbers concerning these contexts of adult learners and learning show that in 2008 1.322.000 adults (aged between 17 and 64 years) participated in corporate and function related non-formal training and development (12,5% of the total population in this age range). It concerned mostly (78,7%) work related courses or programs (Dutch Board for Training and Development (NRTO), 2010). In addition, in 2008 a little more than 200.000 people participated in courses or programs of continuing adult education in formal educational institutions at the secondary and the tertiary level (NRTO, 2010). In the Dutch context this is called educational services delivered by contract. With respect to the labour market education at the tertiary level and the non-formal popular adult education,

there are no figures available. Finally, figures of the non-formal (popular) are available however not very reliable. These figures indicate that there are may be 6 to 7 hundred thousand participants yearly (Doets, Van Esch, Houtepen, Visser and De Sousa, 2008). This means that in the Netherlands at least 15 percentage of the population participates in the non-formal education (Doets et al., 2008).

Within the described four contexts of adult learning the qualities and qualification of the professionals in the Netherlands are, like in many other European countries, highly differentiated. The study on Adult Learning Professions in Europe ALPINE showed clearly the following European observations in this respect (in Research voor Beleid, 2010):

1. One characteristic is the enormous variety in the field of adult learning (the variety concern needs, topics, methods, target groups and the concept of adult learning).
2. The teachers and trainers in adult learning fulfill a broad range of tasks and activities in particular tasks contrasting their *primary function* (organization, management and development).
3. Most adult learning professionals have found their way into the adult learning contexts from a variety of backgrounds or as career change without specific training to become an adult learning facilitator.
4. The assurance of quality and qualification of adult learning professionals is still lacking.

These observations indeed hold for the Dutch situation, however, some progress with respect to the quality and qualification of adult learning professionals has been made in the past already. This progress is connected with the Dutch act ´Beroepen in Onderwijs´ (BIO, translated: Vocations in Education) and the organizations of professionals in the non-formal training and development context (examples: Dutch Association for Human Resource Development and CEDEO). However, it is important to keep in mind that the four adult learning contexts vary a lot in their way to professionalism.

The aim of the forthcoming study is to understand the competent adult learning professionals through their key competencies national (the Netherlands) as well as transnational (CH, DE, IT, NL, PL, SE, RO, UK) in the perspective of developing a national respectively transnational Qualification Framework (linked with the European Qualification Framework). To understand the competent adult learning professional a Delphi study has been executed in each participating country (n=8). The Dutch national results of this research are presented in this report, accordingly transnational outcomes are presented in the transnational report in which all countries participate.

In the following chapter the theoretical background of the study is described. This theoretical background is based on an extensive literature review. In six related sections successively 2.1 introduction, 2.2. the concept of competence, 2.3 the concept of development of adult learning professionals, 2.4 the Dutch case: three groups of adult learning professionals, 2.5 towards basic key occupational tasks of adult learning professionals and 2.6 the national and European Qualification Framework, the Dutch temporary state of the art of the adult learning professionals is under issue in the light of quality and qualification. In chapter three the methodology of the study as well as the results and outcomes of the Delphi study are described. Finally, chapter four concerns the conclusions and discussion. Recommendations are also part of this final chapter.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Introduction

This theoretical background is based on a literature review with as topic the qualities and qualification of the adult learning professionals in the Netherlands. As a start it is necessary to define here the concept ´adult learning professional´. In this study the concept of adult learning professional is quite narrow. The focus is on the *primary role and activities* of the professionals with respect to adult learning processes. This focus contrasts the general view supported by empirical observations (ALPINE) that teachers and trainers fulfil activities in relation to organization, management and development. Indeed adult learning professionals fulfil such activities, these activities are in the opinion of the members of the QF2Teach research group, however, of less importance to become a competent adult learning professional. Although, the activities may be necessary, they do not belong to the heart of the growing adult learning professionalism. This position of the QF2Teach research group contrasts to some respect the conclusions and recommendations of the latest ´Research voor Beleid´ EU report *Key competences for adult learning professionals* (Buiskool, et al. 2010). In this report the proposed key competences of adult learning professionals consists of two layers of competences. The first layer contains seven generic competences, like being a motivator, being a fully autonomous lifelong learner, being able to deploy different learning methods, styles and techniques in working with adults. In this layer some competences are dealing with aspects related to the being of a professional, others are directed at pedagogical / didactical competences. The second layer contains twelve specific competences; the first six specific competences are directly linked to the learning process, such as teaching or counselling, while the second six competences are supportive, like being a ICT-facilitator, being a general manager or being a people manager. In contrast to the study of ´Research voor Beleid´ (Buiskool, et. al., 2010) in this study the basic assumption is that competence and professionalism of an adult learning professional comes from the heart of the profession: the adult learning processes. Further on in this chapter 2 this position will be elaborated and legitimized

2.2 The concept of competence

In the literature on competency there are three basic conceptions of competence: behaviourist, generic and integrated/holistic (Hager, 1993; Gonczi, 1994; Kouwenhoven, 2003). In the behaviourist or *specific* task conception competence is a simple series of discrete tasks. On the contrary in the generic conception *general* attributes, like knowledge or critical thinking capacity, are taken as a predictor for future performance. In the integrated and holistic approach Hager and Gonczi (1996) combine specific tasks and general attributes with the context in which the professionals show their competence. They define competence as follows:

> *"Competence is the capacity to realise 'up to standard' the key occupational tasks that characterise a profession. A competent professional shows a satisfactory (or superior) performance. Key occupational tasks are the tasks that are characteristic for a profession. A profession could be described by 20-30 key occupational tasks" (Hager & Gonzci, 1996).*

On behalf of the integrated and holistic conception of competence Kouwenhoven (2003) has built a model concerning the relations competence, key competencies and constituting domain-specific and generic competencies (figure 1 is developed on the basis of his model). To understand this model "*key competencies* (Kouwenhoven originally used the
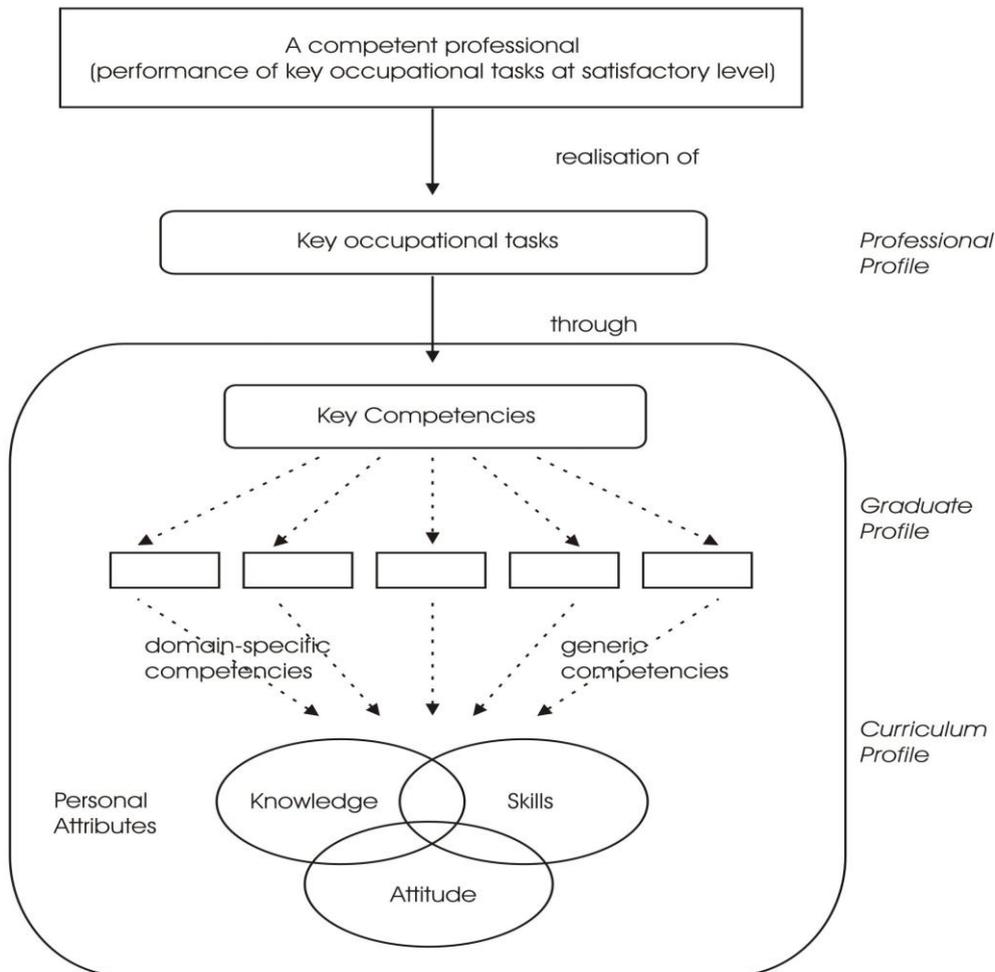
Figure 1 The relation between the competent professional, the key occupational tasks,

  levels of key, domain-specific and generic competencies and personal attributes

  (Kouwenhoven, 2003, p. 71)

the concept of *core* competencies, but here we use key competencies because of its use by the OECD (1996) too) are defined as sets of appropriate competencies needed to realise a key occupational task at a satisfactory or superior level" (Kouwenhoven, 2003, p. 72). So, according key competencies are integrated groups of domain-specific and generic competencies. The suggestion here is to use this model in the case of competent adult educational professionals. This means that first key occupational tasks and corresponding key competencies are to be explored. Secondly, the key competencies are articulated on the curriculum level in groups of domain-specific and generic competencies. Kouwenhoven (2003, p. 72) directed his model at "'what goes on in the head' in order to come to realisation of a task,

competency is implicit in the interaction between context, personality, attributes and meta-cognition (like reflection)". In this study, the profiles of key, domain-specific and generic competencies of the competent professional role (Bron & Jarvis, 2008) are defined in accordance with this philosophy. This means to the QF2Teach research group that an understanding of the intuitively developed tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1958) by experience is important in the defining of the intermediate graduate profile (see figure 1).

2.3 The concept and development of adult learning professionals

In 1999, Hake stressed the importance to offer the adult educator an academic status and identity: "There are few indications to suggest that adult education is regarded as an independent scientific discipline with its own theories and methods which distinguish it from other social sciences´´ (p. 136). He concluded that in the European countries, with the exception of the Netherlands during the 1970's and 1980's and some attempts in the former Yugoslavia and the UK ´´there have been no efforts to establish 'andragogy' as an integrative study of adult education" (Hake, 1999; p. 136). Nowadays, the lacking professionalism and recognition of the adult learning professional has been acknowledged widely by governments of European nations and the European Commission. There are many national and European initiatives to upgrade the adult learning professional and the importance for the reality of lifelong learning is stressed constantly by policy makers.
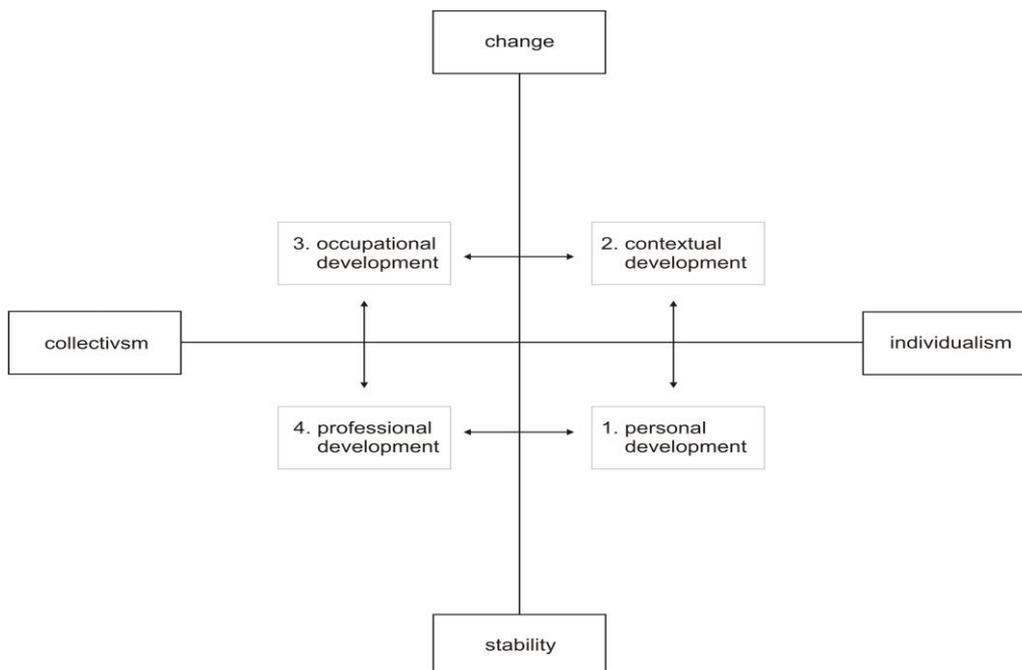

Figure 2 Professional development according to Van Dellen & Van de Kamp (2008, p. 70)

According to Mok (1990) professionals are recognized by three aspects of institutionalization: a) *they* (the professionals themselves) succeed to develop a work domain of their own, b) *they* have societal recognition in this respect and c) *they*

succeed to develop an internal organization of professional codes, norms and values as a group of professionals. Van Dellen en Van der Kamp (2008) conceptualize and visualize the development of adult learning professionals along two dimensions. The first dimension is in accordance with the idea of reaching professionalism on a collective basis – that is becoming a profession or not. Collective professionalism shows qualities necessary for an occupation which can typically trained for in a profession. At the same time an adult learning practitioner might change his or her professional behaviour in his daily work because of contextual strengths and personal circumstances. Then daily occupational development and pragmatism and individualism may dominate the work behaviour. The second dimension concerns change versus stability of the profession. Change comes from the occupational work field in general as well as the typical contextual situation of individual adult learning professional. Figure 2 illustrates that development concerns four quadrants of competence development, namely personal and professional development (the latest in accordance with the European Qualification Framework), occupational and contextual development that relate with the general respectively specific work behaviors of the adult learning facilitators. From right below to left below (from 1. personal development to 4. professional development) the adult learning facilitator develops his competence with accents from the personal, the contextual, and the occupational circumstances to become a professional. However, in adult education professional competence and curriculum profiles the history of many individual adult educators has been crystallized over and over again. In this respect competence-based training should focus on professional, occupational, contextual and personal development from which the learning content for the adult learning facilitators can be derived. The figure illustrates the dynamics of becoming a profession. The model in relation to figure 2 is of use for the understanding of the various levels and stakeholders interests with respect to the competencies (key competencies, domain-specific and generic competencies and personal attributes) derived from the key tasks on the professional profile level (see figure 1). In the next paragraph the various levels and the stakeholders interest are the issue.

2.4 The Dutch case: three groups of adult learning professionals

In the introduction of this report the Dutch adult learning professionals are located in four contexts. These different contexts divide the Dutch adult learning professionals population in various ways. The professionals in the formal adult education belong to the public service and therefore their professionalism is legally authorized by the state. Moreover, the certification and qualification of the adult learners in this context are also formalized. This means that the teachers, trainers and counsellors in formal education on the secondary and the tertiary level (from here on the formal education within these two levels are combined in one context or group of adult learning professionals) have to regulate their professionalism according the Dutch act ´Vocations in Education´ (BIO, 2006). This act describes seven competency requirements. Following this act a good teacher shows to a ´competent´ level:

- interpersonal competence;
- pedagogical competence;
- subject-oriented and didactical competence;
- organisational competence;
- competence in cooperation with colleagues;
- competence in cooperating with the context of the organization;

- competence in reflection and development.

Recently, the National Platform for Vocations in Education finished a report commissioned by the former State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science finished a report on the *Competency requirements in teacher training. Framework for curriculum and examination* (Landelijk Platform Beroepen in Onderwijs, 2010). In the final section of this chapter the outcomes of this report will be discussed to legitimize the ideas and choices with respect to the basic professional profile (see figure 1) used in the Delphi study of the QF2Teach research group. First, at this place the other two contexts in which adult education professionals are working will be discussed.

In contrast to the formal education the professionals in the non-formal popular adult education as well as training and development in companies, firms, organizations and public institutions are not directly legally and public regulated. These two contexts in which adult learning professionals work, are also mutual very different and therefore will be discussed here separately.

The non-formal popular adult education is quite a sizable work field with a considerable number of smaller and larger organizations. Some years ago the Dutch CINOP Expert centre and the University of Groningen were commissioned by the governmental project management Learning & Working to do an explorative investigation to understand the targets, the character, the scale, the functionality and the effectiveness of the non-formal popular adult education (Doets, et. al., 2008). In the study 35 non-formal popular adult education institutions were approached of which 25 participated. The study didn´t report directly about the qualities and the qualification of the professionals in the non-formal education. However, some institutions of non-formal education assure the quality of their educational offers by various types of typical Dutch external assurance systems (e.g. INK, ISO, Cedeo, HKZ) or client evaluation. It is important also to mention here that one of the conclusions of the research was that the non-formal education is in a substantial amount organized and facilitated on the local and regional level. Finally, it is also worth mentioning that in the non-formal popular education many freelancers and volunteers are active. This implies that the quality and the progress of the non-formal activities depend to a considerable extent on non-formal work relations (Doets, et. al., 2008). The institutions in the non-formal education are therefore recommended to give more attention to the internal assurance of quality and in line with this to the training and development of freelancers and volunteers (Doets, et. al., 2008).

The last context in which adult learning professionals are working is the non-formal training and development in companies, firms, organizations and public institutions. It is a (international) discussion to make the choice to combine this context of adult learning professionals with the other contexts or not. On the context (macro) level there are at least three arguments to separate these contexts. Firstly, the primary educational content in the contexts makes it possible that the competent professionals may originally come from rather different disciplines. Secondly, the main or typical customers within these contexts may be different to some extent. This implicates, that the adult learning professional within each context of work needs another sort of contextual or costumer sensitivity. And thirdly, the contextual circumstances are different in a societal, political and social-economical perspective. Nevertheless, the Delphi study combined these contexts because that the adult learning professionals´ *primary functionality* is strongly influenced by the micro level and a smaller extent also the intermediate level. At the micro and the intermediate level the adult

learning professionals are quite identical when it concerns their professional profiles (see figure 1 and the next paragraph later on). In the dominant private sector of training and development quality and qualification of the trainers, coaches and consultants (the adult learning facilitators) are directly accounted for by the customers and/or the systems of quality assurance regulated by the providing (training and development) organisations (e.g. Cedeo, NRTO) or the organisations of professionals (e.g. NVO2, NVP). The question may be ask whether there something like a training, coaching or learning consultant profession? Following the definition of Mok (1999; see the preceding paragraph) at least trainers and coaches have developed to some extent a work domain of their own called Human Resource Development (which started in the end of the nineties). This work domain also has some societal recognition. And finally there are ethical codes held by the members of most professional organizations. Nevertheless, this professionalism and the regulation of it by the mentioned institutions, the expertise, and profession of (adult) trainers and coaches (the learning consultant is further left out because their professionalism is not developed that far and still in progress) is an everlasting topic. The reasons for this are multiple. One reason is the diversity in professional background of the trainers and coaches. There are educational scientists, physicists, philosophers, ,psychologists and theologians (Cnossen & Tjepkema, 2002). Even though their university background there seems to be a sort of general consensus between the professionals and the professional organisations that a higher vocational training and education is enough. At the same time it is hard to find a higher vocational qualifying program to become ´a trainer´ or ´a coach´. For that reason most training and development institutions, in particular the largest ones, professionalize their trainee employees (trainers and coaches) themselves. Finally, it is worth mentioning that trainers and coaches often believe in the high practical and pragmatic part of their profession. And even more that experienced trainers and coaches sometimes handle intuitively but not unconsidered (Cnossen & Tjepkema, 2002). The expertise of experienced trainers and coaches is internalised and is therefore hard to grasp in professionalisation.

In this paragraph three groups of adult learning professionals have been described with respect to the institutionalized context they belong to. These contexts show considerable differences when it concerns features, like infrastructure, sources, role of policy and participants (see table 1). However, the adult learning professionals working in these contexts show high similarities in their primary occupational activities. These similarities will be presented in paragraph 2.5. Here, this paragraph will end with a description of the three groups of adult learning professionals, the Dutch case, with respect to the institutionalized contexts they are working in. What do the societal context, the accordingly infrastructure, the sources, the role of policy and the participants (see table 1) of the three contexts mean when it concerns the functionality of the (non-)formal education and the position of the professionals within. Finally, what are the consequences for the role and identity of the according professionals in the three contexts. The first consequence of the various features of the three contexts is a different functionality of formal education, non-formal education and training and development. The second consequence is the different position of the professionals in formal education, non-formal education and training and development.

The functionality of formal education is like everything else in the formal education given legally. This means that the position of the teachers and trainers in formal education does not give them much professional space of free behaviour. When a formal continuing qualification of teachers and trainers comes in addition (BIO, 2006) the space free behaviour

may become even smaller. Therefore, the role and identity of the teachers and trainers in formal adult (and continuing) education are not very strong because of their small amount of professional autonomy. At the same time the adult learning professionals in formal education are in public service which may guaranties some security of job and future.

Table 1. The three groups of adult learning professionals in the institutionalized contexts

	Formal education	**Non-formal education**	**Training and development (non-formal)**
Societal context	Central government involved and responsible, influenced by the labour market	Liberal market of education and social work	Liberal market, no direct role of government, strong economic influences
Infra-structure	Formal institutions regulated by the state	Various sorts of institutions with different legal identities	Private and profit organizations
Sources	Public funding	Partly publicly (locally) funded	No public funding
Role of policy	Administrative, quality and level (national QF)	Self-regulating content, some external regulation of quality	Self-regulating quality
Participants	Adult students, sometimes together with young adults and special groups (like immigrants)	Variety of citizens and special groups	All sorts of trainees, managers sometimes dominant

The functionality of the non-formal popular adult education is quite another thing. Non-formal education services a number of functions, like promoting inclusion, integration, social cohesion, societal participation, and personal well-being and development (Doets, et. al., 2008). These functions lead to a different position of the professionals, freelancers and volunteers in non-formal education. This position is very much triggered by societal and social engagement and involvement. Therefore the role and identity of the primary professionals in the non-formal education may to some persons be a stronger one for romantic or idealistic reasons. At the same time their security of job and future is not quarantined because it is influenced by social, economic and political factors.

At last the functionality of the non-formal training and development in companies et ct. is driven by the liberal market and therefore strongly interdependent with the client organizations or sometimes individual clients (open enrolment). Training and development is a service not a product. Services are very quality dependent. The non-formal training and development belongs to the service sector and this influences the position and role of the adult learning professional strongly. Their position is a double triangle: one with the client organisation and the trainees and one with the client and their own employer. Their role therefore is client and service directed, however, their identity is mostly connected with the trainees or learners. They are, like the predominant ´teachers´ in the formal and popular non-formal education, people-people. This is the common identity of the adult learning professionals in every context and therefore their

primary function is facilitating the learning processes of adults. This function makes them what they are. This function should at least be dominant in their professional profile of key occupational tasks as input for the key competencies which are the starting point for the domain-specific and generic competencies (Graduate profile) and leads to the personal attributes (knowledge, skills and attitude) for (continuing) learning and experiencing through education, training (curriculum profile) and development (see figure 1).

2.5 Towards basic key occupational tasks of adult learning professionals in the Netherlands

A competent professional performs key occupational tasks at a satisfactory level through key competencies (Kouwenhoven, 2003). These key competencies are combined sets of generic and domain-specific competencies (graduate profile) which ask for personal attributes of the adult learning facilitators in the meaning of integrated knowledge, skills and attitude (curriculum profile; as such a relevant input for an European Qualification Framework)(see figure 1). In this paragraph the issue is to define basic key occupational tasks of adult learning professionals in a Dutch as well as an European perspective. The idea is that such a basic professional profile (see figure 1) is helpful to start with in the Delphi study.

An adult educator is a role professional (Bron & Jarvis, 2008) who is working in one of the three described contexts of adult and continuing education (or otherwise lifelong learning) and is committed to a sort of 'adult educator identity' (Bron & Jarvis, 2008). In this paragraph the development of a 'professional profile in adult learning' in the three contexts will be discussed.

Table 2 Basic professional profile (key occupational tasks) of the three groups of adult learning professionals (see also Van Dellen & Van der Kamp, 2008)

Formal education	Non-formal education	Non-formal training and development
Educating adults	Educating adults	Training of adults
Assessing general and occupational learners' needs	Assessing societal and learners' needs	Training needs assessment
Developing and using teaching techniques	Developing and using teaching techniques	Designing and practice training techniques
Planning and managing the learning process	Planning and managing the learning process	Planning and managing the learning process
Assessing the outcomes of learning	Monitoring the outcomes of learning	Evaluating the effects
Be a professional in specialist (subject) area	Be a professional in specialist (subject) area	Be a professional in specialist (subject) area
Reflecting on one's own professionalism and meeting professional qualities	Reflecting on one's own professionalism and meeting professional qualities	Reflecting on one's own professionalism and meeting professional qualities

In 2008 Bechtel to some extent summarises key occupational tasks that have been defined for UK, Germany, France and Switzerland. He shows that these profiles differ on a conceptual level in respect to the definitions of competence (profiles) and personal attributes. However, the content of the key occupational tasks of adult education staff shows significant similarities across these four countries of which three (France is the exception) participate in the Delphi study. In table 2 these similar occupational tasks for the European adult learning facilitator (professional) are described in the first column (formal education; the former FENTO standards of the UK are the most similar ones). By means of extrapolation these basic occupational tasks are transferable to the other two contexts (column 2 and 3 in table 2). To agree on such basic occupational (see the forthcoming paragraph on the Delphi instrument) tasks wasn´t easy for the Delphi study QF2Teach research group. However, because of a general lack of empirical cross-national research the question is: how do we get more insight into the development of the key competencies necessary to fulfil these basic occupational tasks? The forthcoming Delphi study is a first attempt. In the Dutch case it is emphasized that (narrow) the professionalism of the primary processes in formal education, the non-formal education and the non-formal training and development have much in common, despite the described differences in the institutionalized contexts concerning functionality, and role and position of the professionals. This starting point is taken for a number of reasons.

1. The content of the functionality of the formal and the non-formal education have strong correspondences.
2. Both fields of formal and non-formal education stress the importance to work together in particular in relation to certain target groups.
3. Benchmarking between the three contexts with respect to adult learning professionalism may be of benefit for every context (Van Dellen & Van der Kamp, 2008).
4. The basic extrapolated occupational tasks in each context are very similar and may be recognized within each context to become a start for the qualities and national qualification of adult learning professionals in a broader perspective than formal education alone.

In the final paragraph of this chapter the Dutch discussion on the qualities and qualification of adult learning professionals is described in relation to the national and European Qualification Framework.

2.6 The national and European Qualification Framework

In the Netherlands the qualification of teachers in formal adult education is regulated as described shortly in paragraph 2.3 b the Dutch act Vocations in Education (BIO, 2006). In the past few years this law has strongly influenced the content and configuration of the curriculums of the educational programs for teachers given by higher vocational schools and universities. The temporary teacher educational programs in higher vocational institutions for primary education (basic degree), secondary education (first degree) and teacher educational program in universities (second degree) use the seven competences in the qualification of the students. The qualification of teachers in the competences of the BIO act has become even self-evident in the education of student teachers. Accordingly, in the report of the National Platform Vocations in Education (LPBO) the seven competences mentioned in the act are experienced as flexible (LPBO, 2010). These competences give educators of teachers much space and freedom for interpretation and implementation. Even stronger the different programs admit that the implementation of these quality requirements contribute to the quality of the programs. The contributions mentioned by the representatives of the teacher educational

programs are: curriculum improvement, incentive to professional development of students, increasing cooperation with schools, more dialogue, to hold on in quality assurance and profiling the teacher professionalism (LPBO, 2010). In this respect the law seems successfully implemented. However, at the same the seven competences to qualify for received critical considerations with respect to seven aspects:

- the lacking concreteness of the content of each competence;

- the low recognition of the importance of the subject-related content competence;

- the flawed levels in the qualification of competences;

- the relative value and importance of various competences;

- the order of the competences (in line with the preceding critic);

- the completeness of the seven competences;

- the connection with the Dublin descriptors.

The forthcoming Delphi study should produce a catalogue of key competencies for teachers, trainers, coaches, counselors etc. (adult learning facilitators) for the three contexts that is empirically derived and that covers both a transnational as well as a contextual dimension. This means by implication that the discussed basic professional profiles which have also high concordance with the seven competences of the BIO act serves very well as Dutch input for the transnational Delphi study. Elaborating the basic professional profiles the participating countries decided to use only one profile with a number of domains which represent the profiles of each and every country well and moreover in the Dutch perspective tried to overcome the above critical considerations with respect to the seven competences of the BIO act as far as possible. In this last respect the forthcoming Delphi study instruments focused on the first five considerations because the research group decided to rate a large number of categories within the domains on their importance for the competent adult learning professional. In the following QF2Teach national workshops the possibility will be taken by each country to focus on the last two considerations: the completeness of the catalogue and the connection with a national qualification framework and an European Qualification Framework.

3. **Methodology and results**

3.1 Methodology of the study

3.1.1 Delphi study

The Delphi-method was originally (in the 1950s) designed in order to predict military scenario`s on the basis of sound expert assessments (the name 'Delphi-Method' refers to the Delphi oracle in ancient Greece). Today the method does not only serve prognostic purposes but is as well applied to evaluation or planning problems. In our case it is used to explore expert assessments concerning present and future core competencies of adult learning process facilitators in Adult and Continuing Education. On this basis a qualification framework might be constructed.

The Delphi-Method is an expert-panel research design operating both with standardised as well as with open questions and analysing data both with quantitative as well as with qualitative procedures. Experts are asked in several (usually

two or three) waves. For every new wave the results of the foregoing are submitted to the experts who then get the opportunity to reflect and to modify their *independently* uttered opinion on the background of the aggregated feedback of the group. Thus, a *dependent* statistical group opinion is created

The Delphi-Method in this study is used for various reasons.

1. A Delphi-study allows for formulating a well-founded competence profile on the basis of sound assessments of acknowledged experts.

2. Since the selected experts come from all fields of Adult and Continuing Education (see below) the gained results will emerge from a consensus among the experts and will thus be an appropriate tool for establishing a societal consensus in the aftermath of the empirical study. This is important because the results should finally lead into the implementation of a general qualification frame.

3. Moreover, some specific competencies for selected fields of Adult and Continuing Education can be identified.

4. Future trends can be assessed because the Delphi-Method is especially designed for predictions.

5. Dissent among the experts might stimulate additional empirical research.

3.1.2 The background of the instruments

The aim of the forthcoming study is to understand the competent adult learning professionals through their key competencies national (the Netherlands) as well as transnational (CH, DE, IT, NL, PL, SE, RO, UK) in the perspective of developing a national respectively transnational Qualification Framework (linked with the European Qualification Framework). The QF2Teach research group decided to use in the first wave an instrument with both a quantitative and a qualitative character. The quantitative character was a little dominant because the research group agreed on nine work domains (may be considered as the key occupational tasks) that are basic in primary daily work of the competent adult learning processes facilitator. These work domains are quite congruent with the basic professional profile Van Dellen and Van der Kamp (2008) suggested (table 2) as well as with the seven competences of the Dutch BIO law. The next table 3 shows the similarities and differences between them. Three domains or tasks are mentioned complete similar by Van Dellen & Van der Kamp, in the Dutch BIO act and in the Delphi study: subject-related specialist domain, personal and professional development and reflection and the planning and management of the learning processes by education, through training or coaching. In addition another three tasks belong to the content of Delphi study and the Van Dellen & Van der Kamp´s basic professional profile (table 2): access and progressions learners, monitoring and assessment of learning processes and didactical-methodological domain, although the ´didactical-methodological´ adjective got the meaning of ´teaching techniques´ in Van Dellen & Van der Kamp (2008). Two domains used in the Delphi study are very similar to ´competences´ of the Dutch BIO act: interpersonal behavior and communication with learners (interpersonal competence in the BIO act) and cooperation with the external environment. The last domain has in the BIO act two equivalents, namely competence in cooperating with the context of the organization as well as competence in cooperation with colleagues. This difference is understandable considering the typical Dutch team culture in schools. In the Delphi study ´personal qualities´ was added as a sort of prerequisite personal attributes domain. This ninth domain has been added based on the model and ideas of Kouwenhoven (2003; see figure 1). This issue will be

discussed later on again. Finally, in the Delphi study there was not something like a pedagogical domain as we do have in the Dutch BIO act. The reason for this may be that in most other countries ´pedagogy´ has the general meaning of education.

Table 3 The Delphi study key occupational tasks(domains) related to the BIO act and the by Van Dellen & Van der Kamp (2008) suggested basic professional profile for the formal and non-formal education as well as training and development.

Dutch BIO act	Van Dellen & Van der Kamp (in Koob, 2008)	Delphi study
interpersonal competence		interpersonal behavior and communication with learners (IB)
pedagogical competence		
	developing and using teaching techniques	didactical-methodological domain (DM)
subject-oriented/ didactical competence	be a professional in specialist (subject) area	subject-related specialist domain (SD)
organising competence	planning and managing the learning process	planning and management (PM)
competence in cooperation with colleagues		
competence in cooperating with the context of the organization		cooperation with the external environment (CE)
competence in reflection and development	reflecting on one's own professionalism and meeting professional qualities	personal and professional development and reflection (PPD)
		personal qualities (PQ)
	assessing general and occupational learners' needs	access and progressions learners (AP)
	assessing the outcomes of learning	monitoring and assessment of learning processes (MA)
	educating adults	

3.1.3 The first and the second wave instruments

The first wave Delphi instrument contained the nine work domains described in the preceding paragraph, however it started with an open question: what are in your experience and opinion the main characteristics of professionals who are really competent to help adults learn?

After that with respect to each domain (table 3 third column) we asked the participants to indicate whether *today* within each domain certain qualities and behavior of the adult learning professionals are irrelevant (score = 1) up to indispensable (score = 6) (or everything in between) (six point Lickert items) to be competent. In addition each of these features within each successively domain was rated in *2015* to be 'less important', 'equally important' or 'more important' (scored as 1, 2 respectively 3). And finally, at the end of each domain there were two open questions asking for remarks / comments with respect to the features listed or not listed within the respectively domains.

The first wave survey questionnaire ended with questions related to the participants thoughts and opinions about the necessary qualification of adult learning facilitators, their development in the future (2015), their ways of learning and finally some personal features like gender, age, subject field of education or training, whether they work in the field of vocational or non-vocational education and training, and whether they focus on imparting knowledge, train skills or behavioral and / or personal change.

The second wave Delphi instrument was quite similar to the first one. It contained again the nine work domains but as such not again every feature within each domain again, because the first wave gave the information that some features could be left out. In addition, based on the qualitative analyses of the first we added also new features within the domains. The main question in the second instrument was whether a feature (sort of competence within the domains) yes or no is a necessity to be a competent adult learning facilitator (professional).

The two instruments can be found on the Qualified to Teach website.

3.1.4 Analyses

The use of Lickert items in the first wave instrument with respect to the nine domains and the qualities and behavior of the competent adult learning professionals gave the opportunity to do an explorative factor analyses with all the 6-point items. The criteria to decide to admit certain items to factors were: the load of the item on the according factor was greater than .6 and lower than .4 on all the other factors.

For the analyses of the data of the Delphi study concerned descriptive statistic and in some instances comparisons of means and percentages.

3.1.5 Descriptive statistics of the two groups of participants

In this paragraph the participants of the Delphi study are described. In table 4 the main characteristics of the two response groups (wave one and two) are presented. In both groups the number and percentage of different experts are

almost similar. This is also the case because a high amount of persons (n=28) participated in both waves. So 14 participants of the first wave have not participated in the second wave; this percentage of 33 loss, is quite common in Delphi studies. In the second wave 8 ´new´ participants - not being able to do the first wave – were nevertheless willing and able to fill in the second instrument.

Table 4. Number and percentage of the Dutch participants in the first and second wave

Delhi Experts	First wave		Second wave	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Teachers	7	16.7	8	22.2
Trainers	5	11.9	4	11.1
Teachers/trainers	8	19.0	7	19.4
Trainer/coach	12	28.6	9	25.0
Management/policy	5	11.9	4	11.1
Researcher	5	11.9	4	11.1
Total	42	100.0	36	100.0

3.2 Research results

3.2.1 Dutch quantitative outcomes of first and second wave

In the next table 5 the quantitative outcomes of the items used in the first and second wave are presented together. The table contains five columns. The first column is a description of a single item within the according domain (between the brackets) or a description of a group of items which came out the factor analyses (the according factor and the items within have a blue background). The second column contains the mean overall score from all the participants of all the countries. Next the Dutch mean is presented in the third column. In the fourth and fifth column the percentage of participants that confirmed with ´yes´ that this item is indeed a characteristic of a Dutch competent adult learning facilitator respectively respondent from all the countries together (second wave). The arrow below the scores in the second and third column indicates that at least 25% of the participants have the opinion that this item will even be more important in 2015.

Table 5. Outcomes of the Dutch participants of the first and second wave

Mean score (rank) and percentage ↑ (in 2015 at least 25% up)	Overall (n=208) 1st wave	NL (n=42) 1st wave	NL (n=36) 2nd wave	Overall (n=202) 2nd wave
Item (factors in blue)				
Be open minded (PQ)	5.41 (1) ↑	5.38 (1) ↑	94%	95%

Create a safe learning atmosphere (not intimidating)(DM)	5.31 (2)	5.20 (2)	100%	97%
Update their domain specific knowledge and skills continuously (SR)	5.28 (3) ↑	4.90 (9) ↑	92%	97%
Assess the needs of the learner (MA)	5.21 (4) ↑	4.95 (7) ↑	91%	96%
Group Management and Communication (α= .81)	5.19 (5) ↑	4.92 (8)		
- Communicate clearly (IB)			97%	99%
- Manage group dynamics (IB)			92%	98%
- Handle conflicts (IB)			78%	86%
Enable learners to apply what they have learned (SR)	5.13 (6) ↑	4.88 (11) ↑	missing	missing
Motivate/Inspire (α= .72)	5.08 (7)	4.96 (6)		
- Motivate (IB)			94%	89%
- Inspire (IB)			77%	84%
Efficient Teaching (α= .69)	5.06 (8) ↑	4.78 (17)		
- Tailor teaching offers for the needs of specific target groups (PM)			91%	94%
- Plan teaching offers according with the resources available (time, space, equipment, etc.)(PM)			94%	94%
Be emotionally stable (PQ)	5.06 (9) ↑	4.98 (4) ↑	86%	83%
Be attentive (PQ)	5.05 (10)	4.76 (18)	83%	86%
Be empathic (PQ)	5.03 (11)	5.15 (3)	91%	87%
Be stress-resistant (PPD)	5.00 (12) ↑	4.85 (15) ↑	89%	84%
Subject Competence (α= .76)	5.00 (13)	4.74 (20)		
- Have specialist knowledge in their own area of teaching (SR)			89%	94%
- Apply the specialist didactics in their own area of teaching (SR)			missing	missing
Personal Professional Development (α= .95)	5.00 (14) ↑	4.87 (13) ↑		
- Orientate themselves to the needs of participants (PPD)			97%	93%
- Make use of their own life experience within the learning environment (PPD)			92%	96%
- Recognize their own learning needs (PPD)			94%	95%
- Set their own learning goals (PPD)			89%	90%
- Be curious (PPD)			78%	82%

- Be creative (PPD)			75%	87%
- Be flexible (PPD)			92%	93%
- Reflect their own professional role (PPD)			97%	97%
-Evaluate their own practice (PPD)			94%	97%
- Be self-assured (PPD)			68%	79%
- Be committed to their own professional development (PPD)			89%	95%
- Cope with criticism (PPD)			89%	93%
- See different perspectives (PPD)			86%	96%
Encourage learners to take over responsibility for their future learning processes (AP)	5.00 (15) ↑	4.86 (14) ↑	94%	96%
Supporting Learning (α= .86)	4.98 (16) ↑	4.90 (9) ↑		
- Support informal learning (DM)			89%	89%
- Stimulate the active role of learners (DM)			100%	99%
- Have a broad repertoire of methods at their disposal (DM)			92%	94%
- Make use of the participants' life experience in the teaching activities (DM)			100%	96%
Update their domain knowledge and skills autonomously (DM)	4.97 (17) ↑	4.60 ↑	missing	missing
Encouraging collaborative learning among learners (DM)	4.96 (18) ↑	4.88 (11)	100%	97%
Analyze learning barriers of the learner (MA)	4.95 (19) ↑	4.67 ↑	91%	90%
Be authentic (PQ)	4.92 (20)	4.98 (4) ↑	92%	86%
Design the structure of their teaching offer (in terms of content and time)(PM)	4.89 (21)	4.74 (20)	85%	94%
Understand the various interests in the context of adult's learning (CE)	4.86 (22) ↑	4.76 (18)	94%	98%
Provide support to the individual learner (DM)	4.86 (23)	4.73 ↑	97%	93%
Apply old and new media (including the use of technology) (DM)	4.84 (24) ↑	4.61 ↑	89%	92%
Learning Process Analysis (α= .90)	4.82 (25) ↑	4.59		
- Monitor the learning process (MA)			97%	95%
- Evaluate the learning outcomes (MA)			94%	96%
- Diagnose the learners' learning capacity (DM)			missing	missing
- Assess the entry-level of learners (AP)			94%	93%

- Evaluate the outcome of learning processes (DM)			missing	missing
- Monitor the learning processes of learners (DM)			missing	missing
Analyze typical barriers that may be faced by adults returning to learning (AP)	4.78 (26) ↑	4.48 ↑	94%	95%
(Net)work together with a variety of stakeholders (CE)	4.76 (27) ↑	4.83 (16) ↑	80%	86%
Act considering democratic values (IB)	4.72 (28)	4.25	missing	missing
Proceed in a structured way (DM)	4.69 (29)	4.51	89%	86%
Know about the societal relevance of their areas of expertise (CE)	4.62 (30) ↑	4.50 ↑	92%	93%
Diagnose the learning attitude of the learner (MA)	4.58 (31) ↑	4.60 ↑	missing	missing
Apply adults learning theory in teaching (DM)	4.56 (32)	4.32	92%	92%
Diagnose the learning capacities of the learner (MA)	4.55 (33) ↑	4.31 ↑	missing	missing
Coping with the context (α= .83)	4.55 (34) ↑	4.37 ↑		
- See their own specialist domain (the subject that is taught) in the wider societal context (CE)			100%	97%
- Recognize the role of public policy for their own specialist domain (CE)			missing	missing
- Recognize the role of institutional policy (e.g. of companies) for their own specialist domain (CE)			missing	missing
Promoting Own Teaching Offers (α= .80)	4.47 (35) ↑	4.31 ↑		
- Conceptualize their teaching offers in terms of learner achievement (PM)			97%	91%
- Think along commercial lines (PM)			missing	missing
- Promote their own teaching/learning facilitation offers on the market (PM)			31%	60%
- Be thoroughly familiar with organizational characteristics of educational institutions/enterprises they work for (PM)			missing	missing
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of the delivery of teaching offers (PM)			79%	85%
Have knowledge in neighboring disciplines of their own area of expertise (SR)	4.43 (36) ↑	4.19 ↑	83%	84%
Use suitable body language (IB)	4.42 (37)	4.41	missing	missing
Adult Education Information Providing (α= .82)	4.42 (38) ↑	3.96 ↑		

- Refer learners to information on current and future learning opportunities (AP)			missing	missing
- Provide information about further training opportunities in relation to own specialist area (AP)			77%	88%
- Refer learner to information about different external support structures (e.g. grants, childcare)(AP)			44%	67%
Be humorous (PQ)	4.07 (39)	4.24	missing	missing
Be extroverted (PQ)	3.58 (40)	3.54	missing	missing
Be altruistic (PQ)	3.53 (41)	3.49	missing	missing

The characteristics of the figures in the table above are described here in advance to the next presentation of the outcomes of the qualitative analyses. These characteristics are the following:

1. the explorative factor analyses indicate that the main domains (see table 4) used in the questionnaires are not so self-evident as expected because many items within main domains have not been recognized by the respondents (explorative factor analyses across all the countries) as ´belonging´ together with respect to these domains;

2. however, at the same time these factor analyses show that the participants do recognize the following groups of items as independent factors : group management and communication, to motivate and inspire, efficient (content) teaching, (basic) subject competence, personal professional development, supporting learning, learning process analyses, coping with the context, promoting own teaching offers and finally adult learner information provision (the factors and items have a blue background);

3. according to Hager and Gonczi (1996) a profession - like adult learning facilitator – can be described by 20 to 30 key occupational tasks, table 5 in this respect contains 42 subjects (the bleu ones are considered as one subject);

4. the descriptions of the items represent mainly occupational tasks, however, sometimes competencies or attributes of competencies, like knowledge, skills, and attitude or even stronger personal qualities than attitude (e.g. be empathic, be authentic) are issued;

5. the Delphi research group decided to take as a start the arbitrary first 25 subjects to consider them as very indicative for the competent adult learning facilitator.

3.2.2 Dutch qualitative outcomes of both the waves

In the first wave we asked the respondents in open questions to remark on the domains and items that were structured and chosen by the Delphi research group. This led to adding a large number of new items within the nine domains we maintained in the second wave. The new items didn´t have to be mentioned by respondents from each and every country; it was enough if the researcher from one or some counties was convinced that this subject was challenged by

the respondents in their qualitative outcomes. In the next table these subject are presented by domain and the overall percentage yes and no are compared to the Dutch percentage yes and no. It is also presented with a ´*´ in the first column of the table whether the according item was stressed by the Dutch respondents in the qualitative outcomes convincingly (at least 5 Dutch respondents named the item). The other items came out of the qualitative analyses of other countries.

Table 6. Added items from the qualitative analyses questioned in the second wave

Item	Overall (N=202) 2nd wave	NL (N=36) 2nd wave
Be passionate	67.2%	58.8%
Be able to process complex information	91.3%	88.6%
Be creative	87.9%	88.6%
Be self-confident	84.7%	82.9%
Promote, reflect and act according to democratic principles within the learning context (give priority to democratic principles in all activities	78.8%	61.8%
Act in an intercultural or multicultural environment	88.2%	68.6%
Negotiate	68.4%	34.3%
Communicate with regard to high social and linguistic skills	76.6%	72.2%
Act persuasively	57.9%	42.4%
* Listen actively	95.4%	91.7%
Be available/accessible to learners	92.3%	86.1%
Engage in collaborative practice with peers (observation of practice, engagement in communities of practice, sharing of good practice)	91.0%	85.7%
Lead a working team/an organization	55.6%	26.5%
Use social media to support marketing – the use of social media to call attention to oneself AND/OR to promote the learning offer	70.2%	31.4%
Develop and compile dossiers and portfolios	59.1%	47.1%
Recognise and build upon learners' prior learning	89.2%	91.4%
Develop and implement quality assurance measures	78.0%	37.1%
Transfer subject knowledge to industry partners (i.e. the economic sector)	56.9%	25.7%

Adopt/adjust to different groups/levels/cultures (equality and diversity) within their professional practice and through effective differentiation	89.5%	86.1%
Assist learners to record their own process	84.8%	80.0%
Assist learners to provide evidence of their own practice	81.6%	77.1%
Apply knowledge of suitable methods and techniques	90.8%	86.1%
* Coach learners	87.6%	83.3%
Engage in mentoring and coaching with colleagues in order to support professional development	81.0%	63.9%
* Apply general didactical skills	88.7%	83.3%
Be a self-reflective learner	92.9%	94.4%
Be engaged	88.7%	88.9%
Be in a constant exchange with researcher (in the field of adult and continuing education)	70.5%	35.3%
Be in a constant exchange with other teachers/trainers	82.0%	70.6%
Be able to transfer theory into practical experience and skills using different types of teaching devices	95.4%	94.1%

The Dutch qualitative analyses of the first wave indicated that the respondents (at least five or more of them) missed or named the following qualities of competent adult learning professionals:

- counselling or coaching skills (n=14);
- attitude/character of the ACE learning facilitator (n=8);
- listening skills (n=8);
- general didactical skills (n=10);
- being experienced (in life, work and adult education) (n=5).

Three of these qualities were as items added to the second wave. The attitude / character of the ACE learning facilitator and being experienced (in life et. ct.) were left out.

The results of the second wave concerning the ´new´ items (table 6), are considered separately from the first wave because they are based on qualitative input and moreover we only have these percentages and not the irrelevant up to indispensible scores (1 - 6) of the first wave accordingly. Comparison of the items in table 5 shows us that it is reasonable to add new items to the 25 we already (see discussion below table 5) have only if they have considerable percentages overall as well as in the Dutch second wave sample. Therefore, it is decided that only the items are added if at least one of percentages is above 90 and the other percentage is close to 90. This means that in the Dutch case seven items or subjects are taken.

3.2.3 The (Dutch) outcomes summarized: domains, tasks and competencies

In the following table 7 all the items that were valuable to the respondents overall as well as to the Dutch respondents are summarized. Valuable in this respect means that these items were high rated in the first wave and confirmed in the second, or these items came out of the qualitative analyses of the first wave (the combined overall qualitative outcomes!) and were confirmed in the second wave. In a Delphi study it is of course inevitable to use some sort of arbitrary cut-off score with respect to numbers or percentages. In the case of our Delphi study these arbitrary cut-offs have been based on the following ideas: 1. about thirty key task in the professional profile is the maximum (Hager & Gonczi, 1996), 2. high rated items in the first wave have to be confirmed in the second wave and 3. qualitative items have to show very high percentages in the second wave. This brings us to the items in the following summarizing overview of valuable combined and single items.

Table 7. Overview of items (right column) the respondents agreed on to be valuable to the competent adult learning facilitator. The left column shows the interpreted meaning of combinations of items that were indicated as independent factors in the explorative factor analyses of the first wave.

Group Management and Communication	- Communicate clearly (IB) - Manage group dynamics (IB) - Handle conflicts (IB)
Stimulating learning	- Motivate (IB) - Inspire (IB)
Efficient Teaching	- Tailor teaching offers for the needs of specific target groups (PM) - Plan teaching offers according with the resources available (time, space, equipment, etc.)(PM)
Subject Competence	- Have specialist knowledge in their own area of teaching (SR) - Apply the specialist didactics in their own area of teaching (SR)
Personal Professional Development	- Orientate themselves to the needs of participants (PPD) - Make use of their own life experience within the learning environment (PPD) - Recognize their own learning needs (PPD) - Set their own learning goals (PPD) - Be curious (PPD) - Be creative (PPD) - Be flexible (PPD) - Reflect their own professional role (PPD) -Evaluate their own practice (PPD) - Be self-assured (PPD) - Be committed to their own professional development (PPD) - Cope with criticism (PPD) - See different perspectives (PPD)

Supporting Learning	- Support informal learning (DM) - Stimulate the active role of learners (DM) - Have a broad repertoire of methods at their disposal (DM) - Make use of the participants' life experience in the teaching activities (DM)
Learning Process Analysis	- Monitor the learning process (MA) - Evaluate the learning outcomes (MA) - Diagnose the learners' learning capacity (DM) - Assess the entry-level of learners (AP) - Evaluate the outcome of learning processes (DM) - Monitor the learning processes of learners (DM)
´First wave single items´	- Be open minded (PQ) - Create a safe learning atmosphere (not intimidating)(DM) - Update their domain specific knowledge and skills continuously (SR) - Assess the needs of the learner (MA) - Enable learners to apply what they have learned (SR) - Be emotionally stable (PQ) - Be attentive (PQ) - Be empathic (PQ) - Be stress-resistant (PPD) - Encourage learners to take over responsibility for their future learning processes (AP) - Update their domain knowledge and skills autonomously (DM) - Encouraging collaborative learning among learners (DM) - Analyze learning barriers of the learner (MA) - Be authentic (PQ) - Design the structure of their teaching offer (in terms of content and time)(PM) - Understand the various interests in the context of adult's learning (CE) - Provide support to the individual learner (DM) - Apply old and new media (including the use of technology) (DM)
´Second wave single new items´	- Be able to process complex information - Listen actively - Be available/accessible to learners - Engage in collaborative practice with peers (observation of practice, engagement in communities of practice, sharing of good practice) - Recognise and build upon learners' prior learning - Apply knowledge of suitable methods and techniques - Be a self-reflective learner

	- Be able to transfer theory into practical experience and skills using different types of teaching devices

It is important to emphasize that this table holds for the overall outcomes as well as the Dutch outcomes. Of course there was also the possibility to look for typical trends in the Dutch data that were not like the overall outcomes. Beforehand we will describe so of such differences, we want to argue that the overall outcomes of the Delphi study shows considerably more concordance or similarity between the participating countries than disagreement. In particular the Dutch outcomes are highly similar to the overall outcomes. This is of course also partly due to the amount of Dutch participants (20% and 18% of the total number of participants of the 1st respectively 2nd wave). In a recently held national workshop concerning the concept of this report (June 2011) the participants representing the three groups of Dutch adult learning professionals stress that they recognize the (trans)national content of this table, but nevertheless they believe that it is better to start a constructive Dutch development process to work out further the meaning of these domains, tasks and competencies nationally. Also for this reason in the ending part of these results paragraphs some ´typical´ differences between the Dutch outcomes and the overall outcomes are presented.

There are some differences between the overall outcomes and the outcomes of the Dutch samples that may be worth mentioning:

1. The Dutch participants in de Delphi study showed compared to the overall scores mean lower scores for 36 of the 41 subjects in table 5. The mean difference for all items together was -.16 (this is not a significant difference). This is also not of much importance because when we look at the position of the items in the list of all items these lower Dutch scores have more or less the same position. And finally, we didn´t use absolute scores as cut-off but a fixed number of items following Hager & Gonczi (1996).
Only, two of the five items that were higher for the Dutch participants compared to the overall means, namely ´Be emphatic´ and ´Be authentic´, survived in the final table, but they showed no significant difference with the overall means. Also the mean Dutch percentages of the second wave are mostly a little lower than the overall percentages, however, this is not of any importance for the final table too.

2. There were two valued subject (competencies) from the Dutch qualitative first wave outcomes that didn't came through in the second wave. It concerned ´the attitude/character of the ACE learning facilitator´ and ´being experienced (in life, work and adult education)´. The first one is connected with the person of the adult learning facilitator. This seems not to be a problem as such because this issue is already well represented in some of the other subjects (domains, tasks and competencies) of the preceding table 7. The same holds for the other subjects of being experienced.

3. Finally, there were three other issues important according to the Dutch respondents (see the qualitative outcomes): counselling and/or coaching skills, listening skills and general didactical skills. All three issues didn´t reach the final table 7 as such; only ´listen actively´ was considered that important that it belongs to the overview of items the respondents agreed on to be valuable to the competent adult learning facilitator (table 7 again). The other two issues were also mentioned in the national workshop concerning the concept of this report; the participants of this workshop stressed that coaching and counseling was not an issue at all in our

instruments and in addition that ´general didactical skills´ to some extent were lacking in the final outcomes.

4. Conclusions and discussion

4.1 Conclusions

In the conclusion paragraphs the outcomes will presented in three perspectives. Firstly, the perspective of a catalogue of core competencies describing the behavior of competent adult learning facilitators. Secondly, the catalogue gives input to a sort of National Framework of knowledge, skills and behavior important to be qualified in. This leads to a developed concept of a preliminary National Qualification Framework for adult learning facilitators congruent with the recently (May 2011) reported recommendations of the Dutch Advisory Commission NLQF – EQF. This commission wrote an *Introduction of the Dutch National Qualification Framework NLQF in national and European perspective* (2011). Thirdly, some conclusions are made with respect to the forthcoming development of a EQF for adult learning facilitators based on the national reports of the others participating countries in this study (CH, DE, IT, NL, PL, SE, RO, UK).

4.1.1 The outcomes: a catalogue of key competences?

The Qualified to Teach project team aimed their activities to determine the key competencies needed today and in the future (coming 5 years) by teachers, trainers, coaches and counselors to facilitate adult learning processes in a competent manner. They did this by conducting a two wave Delphi study in eight European countries. On the basis of analyses of the final outcomes of the Dutch sample in comparison to the outcomes of all countries together a sort of a national Dutch empirically derived catalogue of key ´competencies´ (see the discussion with respect to this concept in paragraph 2.2) came available in table 7. This catalogue may be considered reasonably reliable as well as valid because of the high consensus nationally on the one hand and transnational at the other hand. Moreover in the national Dutch workshop the participants at least recognized the importance of the catalogue, however, they also questioned the completeness of it as a whole as well as the elaboration of some of the groups of items or single competencies. The catalogue in table 7 also holds for both sectors vocational and non-vocational education because the participants of the study represented both to a considerable extent. The question is whether this ´open´ empirical catalogue also represents equally valid and reliable the outcomes of the other countries because there may be differences between them. This issue will be focused on in the transnational report of the outcomes of each and every country as reported in all the national reports.

4.1.2 The outcomes with respect to a National Qualifications Framework

In this paragraph we transcend the outcomes of the Delphi study to develop some perspective on a National Qualification Framework for teachers and trainers in formal and non-formal adult education (the last one includes

training and development in organizations), and/or Lifelong Learning. Fortunately, the Dutch Advisory Commission NLQF – EQF just in time to us published a first clear and convincing version of an *Introduction of the Dutch National Qualification Framework NLQF in national and European perspective* (2011). This general national framework developed by the commission will be described here shortly and thereafter will be used to frame to some extent the catalogue given in table 7.

In the next table 8 an overview is given of the basics of the national Dutch framework as formulated in the Appendix of their report. In this example level 6 of the NLQF will be described because we believe that adult learning facilitators start at this level.

Table 8 The sixth level of the NLQF as proposed by the Dutch Advisory Commission NLQF – EQF (2011, Appendix IV, p. 6).

NLQF (contents to qualify)	Level 6
Context	An unknown, changing life and work context, also internationally
Knowledge	In possession of advanced specialized knowledge and critical insight in theories and principles of a profession, knowledge domain and broad science discipline. In possession of broad, integrated knowledge and understanding of the size, the most important domains and borders of a profession, knowledge domain and broad science discipline. In possession of knowledge and understanding of some important actual subjects and specialties related to the profession, knowledge domain and broad science discipline.
Applying knowledge	Reproduces and analyses the knowledge and applies it, also in other context, in a way that this shows a professional and scientific approach in vocation and domain of knowledge. Applies complex specialized skills on the outcomes of research. Is able with supervision to finish on the basis of methodological knowledge an applied research. Adduces argumentations and deepens them. Evaluates and combines knowledge and insights form a specific domain in a critical manner. Signals the limitations of existing knowledge in the practice of the profession and in the knowledge domain and undertakes action. Analyses complex vocational and scientific tasks and executes them.
Problem-solving abilities	Recognizes and analyses complex problems in the vocational practice and in the knowledge domain and solves them tactically, strategically and creatively by identifying and using information and data.
Learning and development skills	Develops by self-reflection and self-assessment of own (learning) results.
Information-processing	Gathers and analyses in a responsible , critical broad way, deepened and detailed vocation related or scientific information on a limited range of basic theories, principles and concepts of and

skills	related to a vocation or knowledge domain, as well as limited information on some important actual subjects and specialisms related to the vocation and knowledge domain and presents this information.
Communication skills	Communicates goal-directed on the basis of the context relevant and the vocational practice valid conventions with fellows, specialists and non-specialists, leaders and clients.
Responsibility and independency	Works together with fellows, specialists and non-specialists, leaders and clients. Takes responsibility for the results of the own work and learning and the results of the work of others. Takes shared responsibility with respect to the management of processes and the professional development of persons and groups. Gathers and interprets relevant information and data with the purpose to form an opinion that is also based on the consideration of social-societal, vocational, scientific and ethical aspects.

This sixth level of the proposed NLQF is in several aspects different from the seven competencies of the BIO law (see paragraph 2.6) as well as our catalogue (see table 7). These aspects are worth mentioning because we need to understand how to come to such a framework.

The BIO law considers seven competencies, e.g. interpersonal competence, pedagogical competence, subject-oriented and didactical competence, organisational competence, competence in cooperation with colleagues, competence in cooperating with the context of the organization, competence in reflection and development, which are very broad and have a generalized character. The contents (categories) to qualify in of the proposed NLQF together transcend the competency concept with the categories of knowledge (the first category after context) , skills (the five categories next) and responsibility and independency (the last content category to be qualified in)(see table 8). In this way the broad and diffuse competence concept is left out. This is a sort of innovation that is very promising because, the in addition to knowledge and skills third aspect of competence ´attitude´ or ´wanting to be a competent professional´ (Bron & Jarvis, 2008), is replaced by the responsibility and independency category. In this way knowing, doing and being (taking responsibility) are considered to work out to competent behaviour.

Another aspect of the proposed NLQF that is worth mentioning is that the ´skills´ are differentiated in general skills, like communication and information-processing skills, and more specific ones, like applying knowledge, and problem-solving abilities. And finally, learning and development skills (to development oneself as a professional) complete the skills categories.

Beforehand discussing this Delphi study and the following outcomes and conclusions an attempt is undertaken using the catalogue of table 7 to fill in a preliminary NLQF for the adult learning facilitator (at level 6) as defined in this study.

Table 9 The sixth level of the NLQF (Advisory Commission NLQF – EQF, 2011, Appendix IV, p. 6) for the Adult Learning Facilitator.

NLQF Adult Learning Facilitator	Level 6
Context	An unknown, changing life and work context, also internationally
Knowledge	- Have specialist knowledge in their own area of teaching (SR) - Update their domain specific knowledge and skills continuously (SR)
Applying knowledge	- Apply the specialist didactics in their own area of teaching (SR) - Manage group dynamics (IB) - Handle conflicts (IB) - Tailor teaching offers for the needs of specific target groups (PM) - Plan teaching offers according with the resources available (time, space, equipment, etc.)(PM) - Have a broad repertoire of methods at their disposal (DM) - Make use of the participants' life experience in the teaching activities (DM) - Enable learners to apply what they have learned (SR) - Design the structure of their teaching offer (in terms of content and time)(PM) - Apply old and new media (including the use of technology) (DM) - Apply knowledge of suitable methods and techniques - Be able to transfer theory into practical experience and skills using different types of teaching devices
Problem-solving abilities	- Understand the various interests in the context of adult's learning (CE) - Assess the needs of the learner (MA) - Analyze learning barriers of the learner (MA) - Be able to process complex information - Recognise and build upon learners' prior learning
Learning and development skills	- Orientate themselves to the needs of participants (PPD) - Make use of their own life experience within the learning environment (PPD) - Recognize their own learning needs (PPD) - Set their own learning goals (PPD) - Be curious (PPD) - Be creative (PPD) - Be flexible (PPD) - Reflect their own professional role (PPD) -Evaluate their own practice (PPD) - Be self-assured (PPD) - Be committed to their own professional development (PPD)

	- Cope with criticism (PPD) - See different perspectives (PPD) - Engage in collaborative practice with peers (observation of practice, engagement in communities of practice, sharing of good practice) - Be a self-reflective learner
Information-processing skills	- Monitor the learning process (MA) - Evaluate the learning outcomes (MA) - Diagnose the learners' learning capacity (DM) - Assess the entry-level of learners (AP) - Evaluate the outcome of learning processes (DM) - Monitor the learning processes of learners (DM)
Communication skills	- Communicate clearly (in groups)(IB) - Motivate (IB) - Inspire (IB) - Support informal learning (DM) - Stimulate the active role of learners (DM) - Provide support to the individual learner (DM) - Create a safe learning atmosphere (not intimidating)(DM) - Encourage learners to take over responsibility for their future learning processes (AP) - Encouraging collaborative learning among learners (DM) - Listen actively - Be available/accessible to learners
Responsibility and independency	- Update their domain knowledge and skills autonomously (DM)

Using the sixth level of the NLQF we were able to frame most of the items of the catalogue of competencies from the Delphi study. One group of items that were of importance to our participants in the Delphi study could not be framed, namely items concerning personal qualities of the adult learning facilitator, like be open minded (PQ)(this items got the highest score of all items in the first wave of the study), be emotionally stable (PQ), be attentive (PQ), be empathic (PQ), be stress-resistant (PPD) and be authentic (PQ). The categories of knowledge, and responsibility and independency of the NLQF are filled with only two items and one item respectively. Based on the Delphi study outcomes and the catalogue (table 7) it does not make sense to fill in the seventh level of the NLQF accordingly.

4.2 Discussion

In this study the focus was on the qualities and qualification of adult learning professionals in the Netherlands. With the methodology of a Delphi study we tried to get insight in the 'qualities' of competent adult learning facilitators in the Netherlands as well as seven other European countries. This report gives an overview of the Dutch literature and

discourse on the subject, the outcomes of the Delphi study, and the conclusions of the study in the perspective of a catalogue of 'competencies' and a preliminary NLQF.

In this short discussion we will transcend the Delphi study outcomes and try to foresee the meaning and future use of the outcomes. However, before we can do this, two main limitations of the study should be mentioned to be sure that this study is used well and not being too big for one´s boots (or too pretentious).

4.2.1   Limitations of the study

The use of the Delphi method in this study explored expert opinions concerning present and future core competencies of competent adult learning process facilitators in Adult and Continuing Education (Lifelong Learning). The Qf2Teach project team decided, nevertheless, with the content of first wave instrument not to explore too broadly the opinions of experts but to structure the instrument to a large extent (the nine work domains; see table 3 in paragraph 3.1.2 the right column). Moreover, they decided to focus on the qualities of adult learning facilitators regulating the primary learning process of adults as a teacher, trainer, coach or counsellor. These two decisions were of course of influence on the outcomes of the study. These decisions were taken because of the idea that the eight countries participating in this project should try to work together on the issue in a divergent manner and focus stronger on commonalities instead of on differentiations between them. Of course, this leads to outcomes that may be described as ´less is more´ in the sense that the outcomes described at least seems to have meaning to the participants of each and every country and the field of work behind them.

Another limitation of the study concerned the total numbers of participants and the presentation of different expert groups in the total numbers. The preliminary intention was to reach a total number of 50 with dominating the expert group of the learning facilitators (teachers, trainers etc.) and with small groups of policy makers, managers and researchers in addition. The Dutch samples (first and second wave) reached the total numbers of around 40 with almost 10% of managers and policy makers together respectively researchers. Within the group of learning facilitators the coaching and counselling experts were underrepresented. So, we should take this into account by limiting the outcomes to teachers and trainers which were well represented in both wave samples.

4.2.2   The meaning and future use of the study

The ´less is more´ idea, mentioned in the preceding paragraph already, was also emphasized in the national workshop concerning the concept of this report (June 2011). The participants representing the three groups of Dutch adult learning professionals recognized the scanty (trans)national content of the catalogue. So, they thought that the catalogue needs further elaboration. But, nevertheless they believed that it is good start for a constructive Dutch development process to work out further in a catalogue of 'competencies', maybe also into a sort of NLQF (as we did on the sixth level in table 9 for a start). In the last respect, in the national workshop, there were some doubts about the necessity of qualification or a NLQF for teachers and trainers of adults. If so, the workshop participants agreed that adult learning

facilitators and their representatives from the three groups of Dutch adult learning facilitators (formal and non-formal education and training and development in organizations) should come together to work and elaborate on a catalogue respectively a NLQF.

The publication of this report should be considered as a start of the Dutch dissemination and exploration of the Qf2Teach project. There is in addition to this national perspective also a transnational perspective of the outcomes of the Delphi study in the eight participating countries. This perspective will be elaborated on in the transnational workshop held in September 2011 in Germany and the following transnational report of the Qf2Teach project team.

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