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Europe

IO4 - Teacher education and (Re-)Qualification in the Context of Teacher Migration. An Interview Study on Experiences and Expectations in four European Programmes for (Recently) Immigrated and Refugee Teachers

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1. Introduction

The following introduced study evolved in conjunction with the construction of a digital library on the topic of "Professionalisation of teachers from the perspective of flight and immigration", which is one of the six intellectual outputs that the R /EQUAL consortium is developing and making available online (<https://blog.hf.uni-koeln.de/immigrated-and-refugee-teachers-requal/digital-library/>). In addition to scientifically developed inputs, the collection of intellectual outputs provides various tools¹ that are available to other institutions when setting up similar programmes. The digital library offers informative reading for various groups of people who deal with questions of support for teachers who want to return to work after their flight or migration. In addition to text groups on the professionalisation of teachers, the present study represents a further contribution, on the knowledge about the preparation of the professional integration of teachers in Europe. The study was conducted by the members of the R/EQUAL project.

Project framework

The international R/EQUAL programme was launched in 2018, is financed by the EU and runs until March 2021. As a partner, the consortium comprises four university teams from Sweden, Germany and Austria. At the Universities of Cologne, Vienna and Stockholm as well as the Pedagogical University of Weingarten, inputs, measures and instruments are jointly developed, that can be used by initiatives which want to provide similar R/EQUAL programmes. R/EQUAL thus expands the knowledge space to include situations and requirements for post-qualification training modules for recently immigrated/ refugee teachers and tools to work with people in these offers and to support the entry into employment in the school area of the country of residence (see <https://blog.hf.uni-koeln.de/immigrated-and-refugee-teachers-requal/>).

"The Fast-Track for Recently Arrived Teachers and Preschool Teachers" and the program "The Bridging Program: Supplementary Education for Migrant Teachers and Pre-school Teachers" at Stockholm University consists of supplementary education of 6 months and up to a maximum of 2.5 years at the university. The Fast-track is an introductory labor market training (course) that can be included as a part of The Bridging program. The Bridging Program is individually designed. Content and length of study vary depending on the student's previous education and experience. After completing the Bridging Programme, students can apply for positions as qualified teachers.

¹ E.g. Method Toolbox: <https://blog.hf.uni-koeln.de/immigrated-and-refugee-teachers-requal/toolbox-2/>

The Vienna programme “Educational basics for teachers with a refugee background” offers two semesters full-day university-like studies in educational sciences (without enrollment)² and an optional language course³. They do not yet qualify for the teaching profession, but do enable them to take on tasks as assistant teachers. For this, the participants have to apply directly to the schools.

At the Cologne location, the “Programme for Refugee Teachers” (2018-2020) and the follow-up programme “LehrkräftePLUS Köln” (2020-2022) offer full-time professional (re-)qualification, which includes vocational German courses, educational and didactic seminars, accompanied internship. The application for the “ILF Cologne - International Teachers Support” programme of the Cologne District Government and the Mercator Institute for Language Promotion and German as a Second Language as well as the activity as a substitute teacher or as a teacher for native language classes are possible connections. In addition, the possibilities for admission to a teaching degree and for side entry are examined.

At the second German location, in Weingarten, in the programme “Integration of Refugee Teachers in Teacher Education - IGEL”, the participants attend a preliminary educational science course and then, as lateral entrants, join a higher semester of the regular teacher training course and to complete the missing parts of the study. They can then attend the preparatory service or a recognition course and then apply for a position as a fully qualified teacher.

Overall, all of the (re-)qualification programmes described represent bridging opportunities that set themselves apart from traditional training courses. They focus on educational studies and practical classroom observations and reflections. In many cases participants receive state social contributions during the course phases⁴. Entering into the standard course in the IGEL programme (Weingarten location) means these are no longer available for the participants, as they achieve student status. As enrolled students, the participants can then apply for benefits under the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG). The participants in the IGEL programme as well as in the other programmes live in Germany for an average of three to five years before they start the (re-)qualification programme. It is not uncommon for them to come into contact with the education system from this perspective through their families with children of school or kindergarten age. Only a few had a teaching profession (part-time job as a teacher or similar) before participating in the bridging programme.

The interview study, which was carried out in spring 2020 at the four university partner locations Stockholm, Vienna, Cologne and Weingarten, was headed by the following research question: *How do the people currently participating in the (re-)qualification perceive the process of the desired professional (re-)entry.*

² While comparable courses/programmes (e.g. in Germany) include language learning in the course itself, the C1 course in the Vienna model runs in parallel and in coordination and cooperation with the Language Center of the University of Vienna (C1.1 and C1.2 - language course and examination are therefore not anchored in the curriculum).

³ At the university, the last course for the time being came to an end at the end of 2020.

⁴ New programme ULV in Sweden: study grants+loan

From the perspective of professionalism and professionalisation, the following are of interest:

- what ideas and hopes participants bring with them by teaching in the country of residence
- how to compare the job and training in the country of origin and residence
- which support does the respective (re-)qualification programme provide.

Concurrently, several lecturers of the programmes were asked about their perception of the competencies and transfer proceedings as well as the outcome of the support programmes. These results are also presented here and together with the participants' perspectives final discussed.

2. Methodology

Initially, group discussions were planned to be conducted at the course locations in combination with regular meetings with the groups involved. Due to the unanticipated outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic and its ensuing containment measures, the majority of the data collection had to be accomplished online leading to rescheduling of dates and new group constellations. Participant surveys exclusively include group interviews, surveys of the lecturers include both group and individual interviews, primarily due to difficulties keeping appointments with a designated group.

Group interviews with the participants

The composition of the participants in the group interviews was based on voluntary participation by the respective members. Consequently, the sample is therefore not composed entirely coherently, but it does meet some of the theoretical criteria: sex, gender, a variety of different courses, teachers from different types of schools, all partner locations, different countries of origin. However, due to the flight events in 2015, the group of Syrian teachers dominated with around 50%. In total 8 migrated teachers in Weingarten, 7 in Vienna, 10 in Stockholm and 10 in Cologne were interviewed in group interviews (n = 35).

Since the R/EQUAL project follows a participatory approach (Unger 2014⁵), the guidelines, the interviewing and the evaluation were also designed according to this principle, which means that a few former participants in the programmes, such as academic staff working at universities and researchers at each university, proposed and discussed interview questions, conducted interviews, created transcriptions and participated in evaluation groups.

⁵ See also the Evaluation Report (I05) on experiences with the participatory approach (<https://blog.hf.uni-koeln.de/immigrated-and-refugee-teachers-requal/evaluation/>)

To develop the guideline, an initial proposal was enhanced and revised in two supplementary loops. Ultimately, the resulting guideline was slightly adapted in language to the conditions and manner of contact with the partners. For example, the interview team in Vienna, due to a more discursive contact that is common there due to joint research activities with participants, used the “Du”, formulated questions slightly differently and switched between languages or spoke in English. The team from Weingarten addressed the respondents in „Du“ and stayed exclusively in German, the Cologne team was interviewed once in German-Arabic and once with German-Turkish translation assistance and again in „Sie“. In the Swedish team, questions were asked in more formal Swedish and the word “you” or their names were used.

In the evaluation, there were no significant deviations in the respondents' response behavior that would make this different approach appear problematic. On the other hand, the fact that in some group interviews the second language was spoken exclusively, could have led to a dominant use of technical vocabulary, which was also created by the topics of the courses.

The guideline included the following key questions:

1. How did you envision your (re-)entry into school as a teacher in *country of residence*?⁶
2. How and where did you find out about (re-)starting your career as a teacher in *country of residence*?
3. How would someone from your countries describe a good teacher?
4. What are the differences between teacher training in your countries and *country of residence* and what are the respective advantages and disadvantages?
5. How did you imagine teaching and school life in *country of residence*?
6. If you compare the tasks of teachers in your countries with those in *country of residence*, what would you find?
7. What are the most important qualifications that you have to be able to work as a teacher in *country of residence*?
8. What qualifications do you have that teachers from *country of residence* usually do not have, and where could you use them in *country of residence* and which ones do you still need?
9. In what ways did / does the programme / study / preliminary course offer you the qualifications you need? What else would you have wished for, what would not have been necessary?

⁶ Example of question versions regarding the partner programme IGEL at Weingarten: “Before you were in IGEL, how did you imagine that you could be a teacher again in Germany. How did you imagine getting started? ”(A.); “How did you imagine that? [...] that it will be easier to become a teacher in Germany and why? Or that it is more difficult or did you already know exactly how it will be in Germany? ”(B); “How did you imagine to get into the teaching job in a school again in Austria?” (E); “So now we can even think back a little to when you came to Sweden and thought about that you would restart your work as teachers. Which opportunities did you think were there to be able to work as a teacher when you first came to Sweden? ” (G); “Which opportunities did you think there were to work as a teacher when you came here?” (H)

10. How was your motivation to work as a teacher influenced by participation in the programme / study / preliminary course?⁷
11. Did the teachers show interest in your background and experiences as a teacher, and if so, in what ways?
12. (only at selected locations) In what ways did the internship enable you to experience your role as a teacher?

The interviews were conducted in March/April 2020 and lasted between 90 and 120 minutes (including the introduction). The transcriptions were written according to the transcription rules specified for the R/EQUAL project and translated into English or German. They are based on basic transcription rules (see Mayring 2002; Flick 2009). This was followed by an international online research workshop in which a total of 26 employees and participants and alumni from all four partner programmes took part. In cross-programme working groups, passages from the transcripts that had been sent in advance were discussed. This served, among other things, to understand the statements before the coding. In addition, students were included in the evaluation as part of their qualification work or in the role of student assistants⁸.

The sampling includes the following groups at the partner programmes:

Location	Medium	Interviewer	Countries of origin of the participants
University of Education Weingarten	online	scientific associate, M.A. student	Syria, Iran, Kosovo, Slovakia, Turkey n = 9
University of Vienna	online	scientific associate, M.A. student, alumni	Syria, Turkey, Iran n = 7
Stockholm University	online	scientific associate, lecturers, alumni	Syria, Mongolia, China, Brazil, Iraq, Eritrea, n = 10
University of Cologne	online	scientific associate, lecturer	Syria, Turkey n = 10

Table 1: Sample of the group interviews with participants

Group interviews with the lecturers

A majority of the lecturers' perspectives were obtained in group interviews. The key questions for the lecturers are less extensive, as they cover a smaller range of experiences primarily from the courses and informal discussions with participants. This guideline also contained questions related

⁷ Examples of question versions: "Has IGEL changed something in your motivation to want to become a teacher again? So was your motivation influenced to want to be a teacher again in Germany?" (A); "How was your motivation to work as a teacher influenced by IGEL?" (B); "How did IGEL influence your motivation to become a teacher again?" (C); "How has your motivation to work a teacher been influenced by participation in the certificate course?" (E); "How has your motivation to work as a teacher been influenced by the participation in the program?" (F)

⁸ The student group discussed the coding guidelines they had developed along a subset of the transcriptions with the lecturer in two joint analysis sessions; in the course of this also the scope of categories. The codings were then checked again to ensure that they matched the final manual.

to the internship experience that were not asked at all locations, as there are (re-)qualification programmes that do not include an internship (e.g. Weingarten). The conversations were conducted online by project staff with the lecturers in the national language. The transcriptions were made in German or translated from Swedish into English. Students with their qualification work and student assistants were included in the evaluation (see above). As with the participant interviews, the questions were not asked in the same wording and in exactly the same order in order to give the interview a more natural conversational character.

The final guideline includes the following questions:

1. What can a (re-)qualifying programme like ours do, what may not and what alternatives would there be for refugee / migrant teachers to join country (anonymised) as teaching staff?
2. Where do you notice a high level of approval from the participants in the teaching topics and teaching arrangements of the programme / study / course, where is learning progress, where disinterest, resistance etc. and what do you attribute this to?
3. How could the participants inside (even more) in the planning and/or execution of the (re-)qualification programmes be involved?
4. (Only partially asked): Has the experience of teaching with refugee / migrant teachers stimulated you to think about your previous teaching ideas and if so, in what way?
5. (only at selected locations) What do you notice, how well the participants can be active in the internship school, how well they get along, how well they feel, etc.?

The sampling of the lecturers comprises more women than men and tends to be unbalanced, as some of the respondents work more closely in the (re-)qualification programme and thus have a deeper insight than others with less experience of teaching. The length of the interviews varies from 20 to 100 minutes.

The sampling includes the following people at the partner locations:

Location	Medium	Interviewer	Lecturers
University of Education Weingarten	online	scientific associate	5 lecturers from the subjects of education and psychology
University of Vienna	online	alumni, programme director	5 lecturers from the education science
Stockholm University	online	scientific associate, lecturers	8 lecturers from the subjects of Education, Language didactics and Special needs education
University of Cologne	online	scientific associate, lecturers	4 lecturers from the subjects of education and German studies (Germanistik)

Table 2: Sample of the group interviews with the lecturers

3. Results of the group interviews with the participants

Participants' perceptions about the obstacles for (re-)entering into the teaching profession

Initially, the interview deals with the first impressions of the participants at the beginning of the programme in the respective country to which they immigrated. First, the teachers explain how they envisioned (re-)entering the profession in the country of residence. The interviewees' report of, among other things, expectations and hopes they had. The possibility of lateral entry into the course meant that the path to (re-)qualification was initially assessed to be shorter than what has now been experienced.

"When I've heard of the shortened degree. I thought that it would be a bit faster [...] that I could become a normal teacher" (B, 600-602).

For another participant, the new start was also associated with the wish to gain a lot of practical experience, especially at the beginning of the program:

"Can I first sit in with another teacher for a bit and then work together so that I learn more and more" (A, 52-55).

Some teachers have assumed that entry is possible as soon as they have mastered the local language:

"I thought that if I can improve my German, I can work as a teacher here in Germany" (J, 81f.) (more: B, 90; F, 55&61).

However, this goal is linked to the hurdle of first acquiring the second language that a teacher reports on:

"I studied Swedish every day twelve hours, every day, struggle and struggle and struggle" (G, 246f.) (more: B, 78-80; B, 101f.; D, 68; F, 74; I, 28ff.).

Contrary to some expectations, however, it was not only the language that was perceived as a hurdle, but also the 'other' educational system. In the ideas of the participants, this was often classified very differently from what they then actually experienced.

"And then I have challenges to start my new group [...] but in land b there isn't the same [as] here in Sweden, a special school for them" (G, 99ff.).

"Not just the language, but also the knowledge of pedagogy [...] and what was a little different" (C, 517ff.).

In particular, the selection of several subjects in the systems that make at least a two-subject course (sometimes a three-course course) compulsory seems to lead to troubles and disappointment again and again, as reported by a teacher:

“The education system in Germany is a bit more complicated. This also includes [...] the two subjects that a teacher must have. So abroad you are only allowed to work with one area” (B, 44ff.) (more: B, 51f.; B, 98ff.; D, 66f.; J, 62f.).

In this context, some participants also criticised the lack of recognition of the training acquired in their country of origin:

“I have to do almost the whole university [...] something again from math and do educational science completely and then also a new subject” (A, 134-137) (more: C, 62-64).

At the very beginning, some assumed that they would not even be able to start teaching in the new country. Then concerns were expressed about having poor job prospects because they did not yet understand the system and fears that they would not be able to properly connect with their students. Two teachers report:

“Before that I watched the YouTube video, how is the system going in Germany. It's actually too difficult” (A, 77ff.) (more: C, 55; D, 40-43).

„How should I respond to these students who I have like no idea about how they think? The background and all the tradition an everything. How should I try to get closer to them, to create a relationship with my students? ” (H, 366ff.).

Sources of information on the (re-)qualification programmes

In order to understand the path to the bridging program, the interviewees were asked how they became aware of the (re-)qualification programme and how they found out about the possibilities of working in the country of residence. For many respondents, social contacts played an important role, providing information, making recommendations and providing support.

“I had so many German friends and they always told me how I can qualify here in Germany” (A, 109f.).

“I usually play badminton on Sundays and there I met a Chinese girl who studied at the Foreign Teachers' Further Education. She recommended the Foreign Teachers' Further Education project, and there I learned even more and sent all materials, so [I] got accepted” (H, 100-103).

At several locations, participants found out about job opportunities as a teacher in their German course, but according to their own statements they received no helpful information (I, 179ff.). Other teachers, on the other hand, sought advice from authorities and recognition bodies:

“I have sent my documents to the Presidium Office [...]. And then they informed me that I couldn't possibly work here as a teacher without participating in a project like x (anonymised)” (C, 78-80) (more: H 94-979).

⁹ As a rule, the conditions mentioned here, formulated by the regional council, refer to the content and scope of study and school practice parts still to be performed, without referring to specific projects that support this path.

The job centers also offered support, although clearer information is desired here too. In addition, the adult education centers, meeting places and information meetings, even a lawyer were named as informants. However, many participants have also independently informed themselves via the (social) media:

“I heard about the project in a Facebook group” (E, 57).

Some respondents found the programmes through an internet search, sometimes directly through websites, sometimes through free research in search engines, whereby it was reported that it was not that easy to find the right pages.

“The page is not easy to find, but when [...] someone finds this link, it's very easy” (I; 275f.), found (H, 82ff.; H, 122f.).

A few participants said that they heard about the programmes through brochures and other print media.

“I saw in this Teacher Association magazine which they sent home. [...] I saw this in a little corner [...] Foreign Teachers' Further Education” (H, 117-120).

Some of the immigrant/refugee teachers feel left alone in their job search after their arrival in Germany, Austria or Sweden and miss clear information about the opportunities they have to work as a teacher again. In summary, there seems to be three ways in which the participants in the countries of arrival found out about the programmes: informal contacts on social networks, through employees of the public employment services or other support institutions, and last but not least - in addition to the websites - through print media, such as brochures.

The comparison of the teaching profession in the country of origin and the country of residence

In the further course of the interview, differences and similarities between the teaching profession in the country of origin and the country of residence in Germany, Austria or Sweden are examined. For this purpose, the participants were first asked what makes 'good' teachers stand out in their countries of origin. The general tenor is different, sometimes a high level of content knowledge is named, sometimes a lot of pedagogical and didactic knowledge. On the one hand, some teachers plead for the good support of the students, which can be understood as both professional and educational:

“In (country a)¹⁰ I think [...] it's about how much interest a teacher has in his students. And how does he deal with them [...], how much does he support?” (B, 524-527).

Some teachers from another country b also state that it plays an important role to respond flexibly to the needs of children, to be good role models and to treat them lovingly. Mutual respect and

¹⁰ With the aim of anonymizing the participants, the information on the countries of origin was removed.

common (dialogical) communication should be the basis so that the children feel safe in the classroom. One teacher assumes that the security in the classroom leads to 'equality' between the students and thus to better results. Orientation towards the output of professional performance/assessments is addressed repeatedly.

"If children or students were safe in the classroom that they come... then we will have good results. [...] this relationship, that is about respect and equal treatment sometimes [...] so that all the children or all the students should have the same conditions, almost" (G, 368-373).

"A good teacher is [...] when the students have high notes or high points" (E, 168f.) (more: A, 285; F, 222f.).

Some other participants from country b paint the picture somewhat differently. You describe that only in Germany the relationship between teachers and students is in the foreground, in country b it is more the subject-specific knowledge. One participant sees competent staff above all in teachers who "really live their subject" (D, 200) and are motivated to approach the lessons, which is confirmed by the statement of one teacher:

"Teacher with a passion, a teacher that loves his carrier or his profession as a teacher" (F, 205f.).

"A teacher who is able to deliver the content area of the subject perfectly" (E, 140f.) (more: B, 511ff.).

In some reports, the teacher has a leading role, but, according to one participant, teachers do not have to be strict if they are to manage the class well.

"If a teacher has well prepared a lesson, she does not need to be strict because the children all work together, use many methods" (D, 254-257).

The respondents also name characteristics that characterise a good teacher. In the classroom she should always keep a balance between seriousness, humor and friendliness (A, 331-334; C, 118; D, 275f.). According to the participant of country d, the teacher-student relationship can develop positively:

"[if] the teacher explains quite well, is funny [...], is not so serious, is not so strenuous" (A, 323ff.).

One respondent from country b prioritises differently:

"Honesty in our country of origin is very important for the teachers, is more important [...] than being friendly to the teachers" (I, 375ff.).

Punctuality and the associated discipline, self-confidence, patience, helpfulness, empathy and communication skills are named as further personality traits of a good teacher. Regarding the very different statements, it becomes clear that the image of a good teacher presented by the participants differs in the countries of origin and is not unanimous even in the large group of participants of country b. The spectrum ranges from a humorous character of lessons to lessons that are run in a more respectful way and stress content learning.

Insights in differences and similarities of the teacher training in different countries

When asked about the differences in training in the countries of origin and residence, the participants primarily mentioned the structure of the training system and the requirements in terms of content and time.

“for primary school there [in Austria] is another system for [...] high school is another system [...] In my countries [...] all is together in one university” (F, 235ff.).

“It takes seven years to be a teacher here in Germany. There was four with us” (I, 540f.).

A versatile professional engagement – regardless of the type of school – is noted by individual participants, but a certain specification is also reported, e.g. from country c.

“And here you are educated in stages. There is elementary, middle, junior high and high school. [...] Then you go to that education and choose a focus” (H, 250-253).

“there is a special university for teacher training, it is four years bachelor degree [...] they can continue to a master degree” (F, 237f.).

As already mentioned, the choice of at least two subjects in the course for teaching at the secondary level is a specific feature for teachers in Germany. In country b or country d, for example, the teachers describe it is common to choose one subject and obtain a specialist degree.

Other participating teachers name the extensive educational science components as specific in the countries of residence, as well as that more teaching, according to one teacher from country e, is delivered in more interactive seminars and that there is a difference between the theoretical and practical component in the training.

“In my studies [...] less theoretical, more practical” (D, 198f., more: I, 514).

In the statements on modes of transition from training to professional practice in school, differences can also be seen, for example the direct, state-organised transition from university studies to a position as a teacher. One teacher from country d, however, also criticises the state control of the recruitment process for teachers.

“You get a job directly from the state because almost 90% of our schools belong to the state. [...] those who have passed, get a permanent position, if not passed, can also work as a teacher, but for example as an assistant teacher or whatever the school needs” (A, 199-204).

“In my country everything is affected by politics and our politics says that the most important thing is religion and because of that a lot of people are selected by the government or by the authorities nowadays especially because they want to indoctrinate” (F, 241ff.).

Overall, the comparison that the participants were asked to make shows that there are differences in the duration and structure of teacher training programs. In addition, teachers in some countries are trained in a closer connection between theory and practice than in others. Furthermore, differences in the didactic design of teacher training courses at universities become apparent. In addition, different approaches to the public school systems are reported. There is occasional criticism that recruitment also follows state interests and is correspondingly selective.

Evaluation of the differences in training and transition

The evaluation of the differences in training and the transition shows, among other things, that in the structural area of training, in particular advantages in the country of origin are usually identified. This is because it seems easier to access because of the shorter study periods and the non-existent language barrier. It is also because choosing just one subject, as is common in most countries, has a better effect on specialist knowledge and the results of the course. In addition to teaching in English, which is offered in the country of origin another participating teacher advocates flexible handling of the teaching degree in country e:

“This is like a bachelor’s degree which I received. So, I could teach at all stages [...]. I taught elementary school, middle school, junior high school [...]. So, I have worked in almost all those different levels” (H, 562-565).

However, a teacher from another country also expresses the chance a broader and more qualified education can have:

“The teacher doesn't just study one subject, but two subjects and that's great for the teachers” (I, 561f.).

One participant rates the handling of internships in her country of origin more positively because of the diverse insights, others because the knowledge is applied immediately and is more sticky.

“Every week you visit another new school [...] you see a lot of different teachers [...] you get a lot of teaching methods [...]. In (anonymised) [...] most of the internship you did it in one school or two schools” (E, 327ff.).

Others, however, also criticise the pressure that arises during studies in the country of origin with school in the morning and university studies in the afternoon.

Positive aspects in the respective countries of residence are perceived on the background of the content, the structure and the theoretical and practical component within the training. Three participants from the countries f, g and h praised the high proportion of educational and didactic knowledge transfer at the Swedish university. They report that this primarily enables them to learn a better sense of communication and thus establish stronger relationships with students and thus understand their role as teachers in the country of residence. The educational input at the universities is also viewed positively by some participants.

“The methods that they use here in Germany are a bit more and better and helpful for [...] the teachers and students too” (I, 499f., more: I, 516f.; I, 606f.) (E, 223f.; F, 320f.).

And accordingly, critical is judged if too little methodology is offered in the teaching. An teacher from country d teacher demands:

“Here, there should be more connection between teaching training courses and practice [...] should be interactive, not just we learn some theories and then we go to a school and just apply these” (F, 349ff.).

Although a teacher from country b appreciates the accommodating universities in the country of residence in exam situations, it is also repeatedly criticised that theory, practice and learning the new language no longer leave time for other things.

“When writing the exam, we had a little more time to complete the tasks [...]. And more time means less pressure and it helps us to be more creative” (C, 231ff.).

In summary, internships and the broad practical experience associated with it are seen as an advantage of teacher training in some of the countries of origin. Only a few of the participants perceive two-subject courses as an advantage to get a position as a teacher. The burden to study and the need of follow-up studies at university in the country of residence is clearly noticeable, even if those locations are benevolent.

Working as a teacher in Germany, Austria and Sweden

With regard to the intended exercise of the teaching profession in the country of residence, the participants were asked to state their individual ideas about school and teaching. Some imagined the teaching profession in the country of residence to be very similar to what they already knew from their teaching experience in their country of origin, apart from linguistic and cultural differences. Some had ideas that were more related to fears that it could be very difficult and complex. One participant, on the other hand, initially had negative images of school, teaching and staff in her head.

“All schools here not good [...] all teachers are not good here” (G, 681).

Others, on the other hand, had the high expectation that all teachers in the country of residence would only be 'good' teachers and that it was a 'good' school system. Some teachers had the expectation that there would be more discipline and teacher authority in German classrooms and thus the image of frontal teaching,

„The teacher has more rights, or so to speak power, to control the class” (I, 702ff.) (more: I, 657f; 673; 677f.; 685f.).

Others expected cooperative teaching.

A teacher from country b assumed that there were many rooms, good materials and enough space in German schools. Another one of variable learning situations and methodical offers.

“For example Math-Class or English-Class” (D, 600ff.) and „interactive boards” (D, 605).

An English teacher at the university experienced that the students have good English skills, but in comparison seems to be disappointed with language skills by pupils of secondary level:

“When I actually come here, I actually see the students at the universities. Then I saw that they speak English quite well. Then I thought that all of the students [...] speak English very well” (J, 665ff.).

In summary, the participants had quite positive expectations with regard to the schools, the equipment and the style of teaching. They also expected more teacher-centered lessons according to some statements. This expectation was not fulfilled.

Participants' perceptions of tasks and responsibilities for teachers in the country of residence

Due to the fact that most of the participants were able to build up some practical experience in their respective countries of residence in the context of observations and internships (for the structure of the R/EQUAL partner programmes, see IO1), they were asked to compare tasks of teachers in the country of origin and country of residence.

A participant reports from the same curriculum in country b as in Germany. Similar tasks are also the supervision of the breaks and yard or the morning circle, games, competitions, plays and parents' evenings to organise and carry out. In some cases, larger differences exist with regard to the teachers' responsibilities in the country of residence. A teacher from country i describes the difference in dealing with conflicts not in class.

"The students leave the classroom, then my job is done. It doesn't matter if Peter fought with Anna. That doesn't affect my responsibility" (H, 432-435).

Apparently, participants understand that in the countries of residence a teacher's responsibility extended outside the classroom. Although having to take an interest in pupils' individual problems was new for refugee teachers.

Two teachers observe that teachers in the countries of residence have much more organisational tasks to carry out with different projects, which in other countries are taken over by the secretariat or simply fall under the table.

"There is a lot which I do here, that in (country i) a secretary would do for me. There we focus on teaching the subject and see that the students have gotten everything they need to know" (H, 428ff.).

"The teacher is not only responsible only to teach in the classes no there are other duties for example the office duty in the breaktime with students, there are many projects, they do projects here" (E, 271ff.).

It is reported that in some countries of origin there is no class teacher role. Each teacher acts independently during lessons, the school management takes care of organisational matters.

A teacher from country h reports that in her country of origin stronger performing students get more support, from the teachers on site, which she now experiences in a significantly different way in the country of residence. According to a teacher taught in country c, in Germany, unlike in their country of origin, the focus is on the students, which some deduce from the fact that collective forms of work lead to exchange and less talking by the teacher. This gives a teacher from another country the impression that the lessons are not of such high quality.

“The pupils actually at this age, 14 years or 15 years, they are not yet ready to do this, to do self-directed learning [...]. It's about the teachers, they don't do their tasks exactly” (C, 382-386).

A teacher from country d notes that there is hardly any frontal teaching in Germany, whereas different methods and media are more in focus. The fact that teachers like to sit at their table during lessons in Germany and not write anything on the blackboard initially seemed surprising. For some participants, this leads to the impression that teachers in Germany do not work as much as in their countries of origin and that they make less effort. On the other hand, a teacher from another is surprised that not only content knowledge, but also pedagogic education is part of everyday school life in German schools.

Differences are also mentioned with regard to the preparation of the lesson. Most teachers speak of a higher workload in schools in Sweden, Germany and Austria. One teacher also refers to the different way of dealing with working time.

“Inside the school [...] teachers have [...] no time for [...] preparing [...] they must prepare the lessons in the house [...] in Österreich but in (country b) they make the lessons in the school” (E, 327ff.).

Another teacher estimates that the lessons will be better where the greater amount of work involved in creating papers and worksheets is because teaching is not exclusively from a state-defined canon of books. In this context, some interviewees noticed that teachers in the countries of residence enjoy more freedom, for example in deciding on topics that they feel are important and how they implement them in the classroom.

Nevertheless, from the point of view of some participants, teachers are subject to some bureaucratic controls in their country of origin (example: keeping a class notebook, which is checked every week by the rectorate, or visiting the school inspectorate).

“Once every six months or once a year a visit comes and looks. This is from the Ministry of Education” (D, 681f.).

A teacher from country c, on the other hand, experiences it differently.

“The teachers here have less assignments, duties than in my home country [...] from the government [...] we are supposed to fill different forms” (F, 416ff.).

The contact with teachers at school is also perceived differently, as this is much easier in country b than in Germany, for example, where the norms in dealing with colleagues are experienced as complicated. Some also miss the respect that is less shown to teachers in the country of residence.

“Then you come here to Sweden, then you don't see the high status as teachers. You don't become as respected [...] From the students' side, from the parents' side above all” (H, 359-362).

To summarise, on the one hand several participants have the impression that the tasks of a teacher in the countries of residence are more extensive, but on the other hand the teachers are controlled to a greater degree. Considering student-centered teaching, some participants' have the impression that the teacher does not teach enough and that this perspective on teaching results in less respect for the teacher. Finally, differences about working hours at school are noticed.

Participants' prior qualifications

Against the background that the (re-)qualification programmes are based on the fact that the participants have already practiced as fully qualified teachers in the country of origin, the question was asked which important competences they believe they have to be able to teach in the country of residence to be able to work successfully.

On the one hand, there are certificates from the university and evidence of a correspondingly sound education. On the other hand, professional skills and organisational knowledge play a major role, according to the respondents. Personal character traits, such as dealing well with children, flexibility, teamwork, resilience, patience, productivity, reliability and eloquence are also brought along as significant qualifications by the participants.

Furthermore, some of the participants have years of professional experience as teachers and the associated established routines:

„Through my experience in (country j) with the subject English, I learned a lot of similar skills or acquired them through my boss, my (English speaking country) boss I learned a lot“ (C, 530ff.).

A teacher from country c hopes to be able to make a contribution to the German school system through such experiences and to open it up interculturally.

In order to get to the bottom of the competencies in more detail, the participants were also asked to talk about the qualifications they have but which teachers in the countries of residence, in their opinion, usually do not have.

Two teachers from country h and country k assume that they have particularly good qualifications in mathematics. In their countries of origin, it is particularly important to be able to handle large numbers well. They do not see this knowledge in the teachers in the country of residence They see the new job in the country of residence as an opportunity to introduce a different approach to math classes. A teacher from country b refers to (foreign) language lessons with similar technical requirements:

“We are experts in grammar and the others noticed that we are very good at teaching grammar. [...] And I told my colleague that it would be better if you could explain this and that more. [...]“ (I, 1192-1195).

Several participants are of the opinion that the frequent frontal teaching in their former schools enables them to better explain facts and thus delve deeper into the topic. With a great deal of experience in explaining facts, it is easy for a teacher from country c to come up with many practical solutions to a complex problem. On the other hand, she usually sees the explanations given by German teachers as very confusing. A teacher from country l sees himself as having greater diagnostic skills because she has often done this in the country of origin.

A 'plus' is also mentioned as being able to teach only with the textbook, and one teacher talks about great experience in e-learning and two others with the organisation of dance performances. Organising a publication with the students is also an experience that a teacher mentions as a special skill.

Last but not least, the migrant / refugee teachers assume that they can be a role model for those children who have also recently immigrated. They state that they can convey understanding and hope because they can empathise with the different backgrounds and situations of these students.

“That we are from another country, that we have a feeling how the children with this background feel” (B, 293f.).

In addition, they can explain the rules of conduct and school rules applicable in the country of residence to these children in their first language and thus reflect on commonalities and differences together. The participants agree that this opens up many new perspectives within everyday school life (B, 277-282; D, 831f.; E, 487f.; F, 310ff.; H, 743ff.; J, 924ff.; 979ff.).

In addition, they claim, the teachers have a good way of dealing with children and convey with humor and joy. One teacher also speaks of a stronger personality. She tells of times of war in which the children had neither materials nor clothes or food. Nevertheless, everyone went on and tried hard. Despite these important competencies, they also see qualifications which they have not yet mastered and which they also need to train for optimal use in schools – and this is first of all the language:

“The language is the main thing. The most difficult obstacle for us” (J, 958f.).

Reference is made to the correctness and accuracy of the (educational) language and correspondence. A teacher knows that they also have to develop an understanding of the cultural rituals that are pursued in school; another relates this to school culture as a whole. Organisational tasks are also set in this context. In the countries of origin, as already mentioned above, they have mostly taken over the school management or the secretariat. Because of this, some teachers see great problems in assuming the usual class teacher role.

“Because the class teacher has many, many tasks and so I can estimate that a class teacher has no private time at all or very little” (A, 482ff.).

In order to do justice to this task, some assume that they have sufficient organisational skills (E, 510f.), quick-wittedness (E, 487), patience (A, 589) as well as good cooperation with colleagues and parents (G, 616). Within the lesson, the teachers primarily see the competent use of different media (computers, projectors and other digital technologies) as a necessary qualification. Knowledge of how to obtain materials from the Internet is also necessary, one teacher says. She notes again that German educators often use worksheets from the Internet and download them for their lessons. The teacher emphasises that knowledge of the legal framework is required for this approach.

Overall, the participants' prior qualifications include competence to a more specific content knowledge and of teaching in situations in which only a few resources and media are available. They also have good pedagogical contacts and intercultural experience, which they can use in particular for working with children with a migration background. According to the participants, they need to expand their linguistic competence in German or Swedish and in some cases media competence, but also an understanding of the respective 'new' school system and the specific school-cultural way of working and, last but not least, the second subject.

Feedback on the (re-)qualification programmes

In order to analyse the programmes for (re-)qualification in Germany, Austria or Sweden in more detail, the participants were asked which content was useful or less helpful for their (re-)qualification. They were also asked to comment on any other topics they would have wished for.

The programmes are rated as meaningful by several teachers to the extent that they provide adequate support in developing language skills.

„Regarding the German course - was very good. The methods and the teachers were great. We gained a lot of knowledge of German during this time and we learned a lot in the German language“ (I, 1415ff.).

In addition, this enables teachers to better understand the school system of the country of residence, to record the teacher's duties and the legal dimensions, or to receive training on aspects such as work with parents and evaluations.

„Without this we will not be able to know the systems here in schools and will not have this background about many information“ (F, 263ff.).

The programmes also convey valuable didactic and pedagogical content such as conflict management, communication skills, intercultural pedagogy as well as different methods and concepts that are common in schools. One teacher tells of the enriching topic of reading and writing of children promotion in a seminar.

„This reading and writing learning and reading and writing development, [...] it was really important for us since it was about how students are going to learn“ (H, 900-903).

In the seminars and lectures of the programmes, the participants also learned a lot about reading and writing scientific texts, as is practiced in the countries of residence, and learned related technical terms, as two teachers from country b stated.

The internship at schools is once again mentioned as being particularly useful in order to be able to establish a relationship with the students and to gain more knowledge about everyday school life in Germany, Austria or Sweden. A teacher describes the (re-)qualification programmes as a “bridge” (A, 708) between theory in the university and the actual teaching profession in school.

Despite these helpful aspects of the programmes, there are also contents and methods that are perceived as not being absolutely necessary. One teacher reports on a seminar on translanguaging, another on the school history. Another teacher comments on this:

„I think that they are not important but when I work in the school maybe I will find or understand why we had the theories“ (E, 550f.).

The stress caused by high reading obligations and long teaching days is also critically discussed again. One teacher even reported that the motivation to pursue the profession was lost.

“I was disappointed because I heard that there is no opportunity to teach in schools unless we have the seconds subject and this leads me to frustration and my motivation was gone“ (F, 563ff.).

A language course was offered as part of the continuing education programme at Stockholm University for the first six months. The teachers say that they have achieved a lot in this time. However, they were not given any credit points for this, which they very much regret.

Following up on the criticism of the programmes, the participants, at the request of the interviewers, also expressed suggestions and wishes as to the extent to which the (re-)qualification could be improved. Some call for the practical part to be increased in order to be able to establish better contact with the schools. A teacher can easily imagine that a six-month practical phase is built in as part of the programme and that a new general topic from everyday school life is focused every week along with the theory. The possibility of extending the programme is also sometimes mentioned. One teacher said that if she were the leader of the course, she would offer more language support. Another teacher would enable more individual support, especially at school visits, also in order to understand the correct communication with the students („Kindersprache“ J, 235). Another suggestion is to specifically address the rules of conduct in the new school system. One teacher proposes a writing workshop to accompany the scientific writing of term papers, other teachers also point to the stronger teaching of technical language within the subject didactics. In addition, the wish is expressed not to be treated like ordinary students:

“We shouldn’t be treated like students who started learning at university and they are young, they have no or less responsibility, fewer than we do so most of us are married, have children, have responsibilities, have other things to do” (F, 546-549).

With the proposals, however, appreciative moments were once again expressed. By participating in the individual programmes, some were also motivated to work as teachers in Germany, Austria or Sweden and became confident that it could succeed. This is how two teachers put it:

“Project worked like a B vitamin for me” (A, 803ff.).

“And we feel part of this [...] structure of Germany, the education system. Now. Before it was a dream” (J, 1235ff.).

The support of the programme participants also received positive feedback that they have repeatedly received support from the people.

“Really, we can't do anything without you” (D, 992f.).

As some say, the programmes have also had an impact on their self-perception. Some teachers feel more self-confidence and self-confidence because they have been strengthened in their knowledge through a lot of practical experience and thus feel more secure in their surroundings. Despite these positive statements, there are also individual participants who are frustrated with the course of the (programme. Two teachers report that they are afraid of the future because they do not know for sure whether they will eventually be employed as teachers.

In summary, the (re-)qualification programmes were mainly perceived in positive terms for one thing because they allow insight into the systems and the development of additional competencies, and for the other, because lecturers were encouraged and opened to include the experiences they have brought with them. Some teachers see an opportunity to re-enter the teacher profession while

others are discouraged by the high requirements and length of (re-)qualification in the programmes and the fact that a subsequent teaching position cannot be guaranteed. The proposals for possible changes to the programme address more the topics of internships and stronger links between theory and practice, but also with different levels of willingness to invest more teaching time overall. Curricular changes to topics and the recognition of ECTS are suggested. In addition, it is stated that participants want to be more consistently addressed as teachers and not as students.

Lecturers' interest in the participants and their circumstances

At the end of the interview, the interviewers ask to what extent the lecturers of the (re-)qualification programmes show or have shown interest in the (professional) biographies and needs of the participants. Many respondents stated that they were highly valued by most, if not all, programme participants or lecturers who were treating them with respect, recognising their individual abilities and asking about their experiences. A teacher from country b noticed this, among other things, because a lecturer did not present her as a student, but as a teacher with a lot of experience. Thanks to the appreciation, the relationship between participants and teachers has become closer, says a teacher from country c. It also played a role in the fact that several lecturers (or their parents) also have experienced migration and so usually (can) have a greater understanding of individual difficulties. One participant feels that the lecturers' consideration of the many different languages and cultures within a course is very appreciative. One teacher perceived the lecturers' appreciation primarily because the participants were able to discuss within the group again and again, stimulated by questions such as:

“Why do you think so? How are they thinking? How could it work otherwise?” (B, 727-731).

Overall, the participants appreciated their contact with the lecturers. As already trained and experienced teachers in their country of origin they could share reflective experiences that are explicitly addressed in the courses.

Participants' impressions from the internship in schools

In those (re-)qualification programmes in which internships are integrated, questions were asked about the experiences that the teachers had during the internship. Since this is not part of the programme in Weingarten, the participants here instead reported on practical experience from a project in which they could be integrated via the (re-)qualification program; They assisted in schools and supported individual students, they were hired and paid as student assistants.

The Cologne group of participants reported positively that the internship gave them many methods and linguistic resources to deal adequately with the students in specific situations (I, 1741ff.). A feeling for the classes and how to lead them, even individual teaching experience could be gained.

“Yes, for me too I have some strategies to control the class, to control it properly, without causing problems with the students. Like the notes, like the other things, the right strategy. I also [...] collected a lot of information about how to deal with the students, about how to deal with them

properly. And I also saw a moment on the school system in the vocational college [...]“ (I, 1767 ff.).

„Without an internship, we can't just go in and teach“ (I, 1745).

One hears from the Weingarten Group that the participants get to know the school and teaching system better because of the collaboration with their colleagues on site and see the internship as a useful source of earning money as an assistant in a project¹¹ as well as an opportunity to gain experience in how to speak German and teach German as a second language in school.

“[...] that helps if, for example, one can gain experience while earning money and then to a second one, for example how can one teach the German language as a second language“ (C, 842ff.).

Since this is about working with individual students, they don't feel like regular teachers, but more like assistants. The experience to teach as a regular teacher is missing.

In addition, there are also situations in which the teachers during the internship received good support from their mentors and the school management, who encouraged them to work in the new country and learned more about routines and methods of classroom management.

Due to the very different offers of the individual (re-)qualification programmes, the internship experience can only be summarised insofar as most participants positively appreciate the fact that they grow into the respective school practice in the country of residence and have contact with other teachers, who in turn provide educational and training opportunities. In addition, some participants report that they are overwhelmed or complain about not getting employed as a fully recognised teacher.

¹¹ Weichenstellung: <https://grundschulzentrum.ph-weingarten.de/kooperationen-projekte/weichenstellung/>

4. Synoptical representation of results from group interview conducted with participants

The interviews with the participants of the four (re-)qualification programmes aimed to find out with which ideas about the profession of teaching and the re-entry into the profession the teachers in the programmes start, how they assess the competence they bring with them for a new school system and in which areas they would like to further their education.

Teachers who take part in the programmes assess high skill in the language of the country of residence to be a decisive obstacle in order to be able to practice their profession. For some participants, other difficulties only become a reality when they - in various different ways - hear about the respective (re-)qualification programmes and their plan to get back to teaching becomes more distinct. As it turns out participants can get important information about the programmes in several ways. Internet research, social contacts, Social-Media and contact persons working in supporting institutions, non-governmental and governmental alike, all play an important role here. Additionally, reading material, online or in print, leads to the programmes.

Only with starting the (re-)qualification programmes many realise it is not just the language that makes it difficult to get started, but also the lack of formal requirements. All of which need to be certified, for example the two-subject degree required in some countries of residence (Germany, Austria) or for some teacher certifications such as upper secondary school teachers (for example) (Sweden). Furthermore, some realise by working with pedagogical and didactic topics before and during the (re-)qualification programmes, that this new school system differs from the one practiced in their country of origin and is therefore unfamiliar to them.

Based on individual self-perception regarding sufficient competencies as a teacher, participants assess the level of support the programmes offer them personally very differently. It seems to depend very much on the individual person whether or not they consider the offer as something that enriches and supports the transition to a new school system, or whether elements of the offer tend to be perceived as unreasonable or unsettling. All teachers involved with the group interviews share the experience of the difficulty learning a second language on a university level. Answers suggest that this is sometimes less agreed upon, but especially unfamiliar contents that are closely focused on school practice are perceived as enriching.

Considering information provided by some participants that their studies were not as comprehensive in their home country, sometimes are more scientifically oriented and / or of higher practical utility, more systematic-historical topics, the necessity of which is questioned by participants, seem

to be classified as especially irrelevant. At the same time, all forms of internships and actual involvement in school practices are highly valued, because it promises to provide a customary understanding of the new school system. Most participants become increasingly familiar with and confident to participate in these practices.

Some of the participants criticised the quality of university teaching where they themselves have worked more in-depth on the relevant topics in their country of origin. This applies to specialised knowledge as well as to pedagogical and didactic knowledge, at least in some regard.

While participants generally are very grateful to experience extensive care and personal support, some deplore the fact that they are addressed as students rather than teachers. Participants have a strong desire for recognition of their completed academic training and work experience gathered in the respective countries of origin, despite currently being in the process of (re-)qualification. Programme contributors can meet this desire through an appreciative and quasi collegially relationship on the one hand and by incorporating experience participants acquired over the course of their careers in the teaching process on the other.

Even though a majority of participants let themselves be encouraged by the programmes to overcome all challenges on this path to a new career, even despite a high amount of effort and insecure professional prospects, few experience high levels of stress. This is due to a high demand of effort or practical requirements that consequently lead some participants to feel overwhelmed or discouraged. The fact that none of the programmes is designed to secure an actual teaching position directly, but only acts as a necessary transition programme to get closer to employment as a teacher in the country of residence, is a source of anxiety for all participants.

Some of the participants had a mainly positive image of school and lessons in Germany, expecting schools to be technologically well equipped as well as in regard to teaching resources. Accompanying students to successful learning results by a more teacher-driven teaching method was also expected to be more frequent. Some now see these expectations corrected by reality. While acknowledging elements of student orientation and more open forms of teaching as valuable, they are also deemed not to be entirely positive. Therefore, it is seen as a problem, if professional support for students does not seem sufficient and the impression arises that students learn less effectively. Some also have the impression that with more student-oriented forms of learning teachers in the country of residence aren't as involved as imagined. Others stated that teachers in the country of residence would have to deal with a large number of tasks for which schools in the countries of origin have secretariats or school administrations responsible. Others were amazed that teachers do not prepare lessons on site as part of their working hours.¹²

¹² However, the group interviews do not reveal whether those participants who were in Germany or Austria participating in the programmes are aware that the calculation of working hours as a teacher includes a preparatory part of the work at home.

Additionally, encouraged to compare systems, tasks and qualifications utilised by teachers, participants revealed what they feel to be positive about the school system and the teaching profession of their country of origin. While on the one hand the requirement of a degree in two subjects is seen as exertion if not unreasonable, they very much appreciate having to master only one subject before being a working teacher in their country of origin directly after graduation from university. The fact that in some countries you can join different types of school in a flexible manner is very positively highlighted. While didactic-methodical know-how in the local countries is seen as more comprehensive and therefore considered to be a new educational perspective¹³, participants perceive their ability to appreciatively work with students positively, an ability which some do not always see with teachers in the country of residence. Some assume because of their own understanding of having a migratory background being better able to support pupils with a similar experience. A few also feel that teaching professionals in the country of residence could benefit from their technical and didactic skills.

Although the (re-)qualification programmes are overall valued for the opportunity they provide for a renewed professional practice and the gain in professional knowledge, explicit requests reveal suggestions of improvement and revision connection to previous suggestions: closer practical connection of theoretical impulses with the possibility of experimentation in school practice, preferably with extensive contact and comprehensive support of local teachers

5. Group interviews with the lecturers involved in the (re-)qualification programmes

The group of lecturers who were interviewed at the four locations consists of people who either come from the field of further education or lecturers from universities who hold teaching lessons there on a voluntary basis or as part of their deputation. Some of the lecturers are also co-creators of the respective programmes. Due to scheduling reasons individual interviews were also given. In line of an overall participatory approach on which the project was based a majority of interviews was conducted with the contribution of former participants, i.e. alumni who also otherwise work in the project. The Weingarten partner was the only one where an employee conducted the interviews alone, since there are no alumni involved yet because of the brevity the programme was put in effect. It can therefore be assumed that persons asking questions and those giving answers are familiar with each other from previous teaching context, what may have resulted in a more selective response behavior.

¹³ In some of the countries of origin, the only training available for the teaching profession are specialist studies without educational science components

As with the participant interviews, questions were not in the same wording and placed in exactly the same order in order to give the interview a conversational character.

The fundamental question of how necessary a (re-)qualifying programmes like the one at hand generally is for refugee teachers in Germany was only discussed at the Cologne location. Teachers on said location feel this is necessary insofar as the participants need to be prepared for expectations confronted with in school every day. This necessity is derived from participants reporting about how big the differences are to their country of origin and that both teacher education and teaching are differently structured.

"Then it became clear that both the training and the teaching, [...] is completely different in the countries of origin and the participants have told me repeatedly so often after the practical phases about how big the difference is here in Germany. So I think this programme absolutely makes sense for them to be prepared accordingly [...] for what they are in here at school in Germany on a daily basis" (K, B, Z. 138 ff.).

Teachers are under the impression that it is not so much professional knowledge participants are missing, but above all educational orientation and practical know-how of how to behave in school.

"In my current experience, it's not so much the professional knowledge, meaning, what mathematicians and so on can do in their respective field, but rather the pedagogical, like (anonymised) also said the formal, um, yes the formal knowledge, including this implicit knowledge: how to behave? How do you communicate with each other? And all of these things. So I would consider that to be important" (K, A, Z. 207 ff.).

When it comes to the topic of inclusion and heterogeneity in a class, teachers have the impression that this is a new topic for the participants. A lecturer states that the participants have a strong tendency towards teacher-centered teaching. Other lecturers observed this as well.

"Also that there is so much discussion in class here in Germany, that is, that it is not at all about imparting knowledge per se, i.e. conveying facts, but that we only ever have discussions, that was also very surprising for many" (K, B, Z. 298 ff.).

Benefits of the programmes

Lecturers from all locations were also asked what (re-)qualifying programmes can do, what it may not and what alternatives there would be for refugees / migrants to teach in the country of residence.

From the lecturer's point of view, participants primarily are provided with an initial professional orientation. Participants get to know school proceedings first hand, get an insight on where there are differences to their respective country of origin and realise whether that is an area in which they want to work again. Furthermore, they also find out which path to take in order to get back to work and what employment opportunities the field of pedagogy offers.

"The university can make its contribution by doing with it, with what it can do, goes in by pushing it a bit and pushing it forward and is a kind of door opener, ehm, for what has to come then." (Cologne, A, Z. 482 ff.)

With regard to the language, teachers say that you can help and support participants in using academic language (Swedish / German) for them to complete the programmes successfully. A high linguistic ability in the educational sector and a confident use of scientific language of the country of residence is a prerequisite for working as a teacher again.

„In other words, should support them in their academic Swedish in order to complete their education better.“ (Sweden, I.11, Z. 68ff.)

The programmes also allow participants to hope for a subsequent employment with an occupation they have already practiced in the past. This not only provides a fulfilling participation in society but also a deepened identification with their new home. Since most universities offering (re-)qualification courses need to implement specifically designed studies, a first insight into the way university classes are being run is given.

Furthermore, insight into the requirements of the practice is made possible and one's own teaching can be tried out and taken up again.

“The atonement to the German school system, the special focuses that exist there get to know the entire system but also the requirements for teaching and teaching quality“ (Weingarten, B4, lines 172-174).

In other respects, the programmes offer opportunities to lecturers to recognise competencies and show appreciation towards participants. Also, a collective comparison of different systems from which the teachers originate is named among the opportunities the programmes offer. It should be noted that participants learn a lot from each other during discussions. Finally, lecturers emphasise the aforementioned transition function.

“Get a good start to your studies in such a small group because you get qualified“(B4, lines 187-188).

According to lecturers, it can be summarised that the (re-)qualification programmes on the one hand enables a development of a deeper understanding of the school systems; on the other hand, participants are confronted with the practical requirements and learn to assess them. The programmes also invest in increasing language skills and lay a foundation for further steps in the higher education system, in which the participants then complete missing studies. They also offer the opportunity of resuming the occupation as a teacher and to learn from networking with the other participants.

Limitations of the programmes

At the same time lecturers mention that (re-)qualifying programmes are no guarantee that participants get direct access to carry out this profession and that respective programmes do not formally offer an equivalent qualification as a teacher training course at a university.

“What it cannot provide is direct access, the guarantee that will really lead to working in a school afterwards, so that the participants really can do their job right away [...]“ (K, B, Z. 414 ff.).

“We do not offer advanced training, but rather we consider it to be basic training and that I find problematic“ (W, I. 3, Z. 89ff.).

A lecturer expresses concern that participants should be given a certain level of security. Another lecturer sees it as problematic that the programme does not offer advanced training, but rather is seen as basic training as a whole. Furthermore, because of the lack of time, it is not possible to adequately advance language skills, others express.

"That you really have to invest time to crack the language barrier first and you also know that the course as we have had it so far is simply not enough that's why I currently think that it can't do that [...]" (W, B1, Z.65-70).

Even with those programmes that go on longer than a year, one lecturer estimated that participants are not yet confident enough in the new language, are even sometimes afraid of saying something incorrect and simply do not possess the vocabulary to adequately help pupils with developing their own skill accordingly. Also, the language entry level for compensation of deficits in another language on a university degree standard is not always achieved. Given the language barriers a lecturer suggested that the refugee teachers should attend more classes than the regular student.

Furthermore, lecturers perceive that this is a very heterogeneous group of participants and they cannot mentor everyone equally.

"[The preparatory course] is not enough in my opinion to provide participants with support who can then also respond to the heterogeneous group a little bit uh yes [...] it works to a certain extent, but it is in my mind just not uh mature enough"(W, B3, lines 125-129).

One lecturer mentions the possibility of integrating participants in preparatory classes as complementary teachers, another that there are actually no alternatives to the existing programmes. The official approval of parts of the first degree achieved in the country of origin (as in the (re-)qualification programme in Weingarten) is suggested by a lecturer from another team.

In summary, from the lecturer's point of view, the two weaknesses of the programmes are that participation in these programmes alone is not enough, the language level required for teaching in the country of residence is necessary to achieve fully. Programmes are simply not deemed to be long enough to overcome this deficit. Moreover, they do not provide any guarantee of subsequently working as a teacher but only have a supportive effect in this regard. Lecturers are also confronted with the difficulty of working with a very heterogeneous group.

Lecturers' perceptions of participants' approval and rejection of requirements

Lecturers were also asked where they perceive widespread approval with the teaching topics and teaching arrangements, where learning progress and where disinterest and what they attribute it to. Some lecturers report great approval and interest from the participants in the teaching-learning methods. Especially in teaching-learning methods of which they have already heard of, but did not see them properly executed in school practice.

"Of course, there is great interest in the [...] learning methods that participants have heard of, or already learned about, but not properly practiced. And they want them again, so to speak, re-learn" (K, E, Z. 656 ff.).

All participants, lecturers observe, are very interested in practical events and topics that reflect practice in the country of residence.

"Everything that, ehm, eh, the closer it was to practice, so to speak, the more interesting it became actually [...]" (K, D, Z. 713 ff.).

"All events that are very practical, that actually reflect a practice like we have is where they saw parallels to what they teach. Where they saw differences, I had at least a warning in what I taught that they were really able to participate successfully" (Weingarten, B1, Z.319-322).

Especially during internships at school, the participants are very interested and involved. This was followed by productive discussions in subsequent sessions. Topics that are more in line with teacher training are therefore also a great encouragement for the participants. Even with topics that the participants are already versed in and can build on previous knowledge, they are very interested in and enjoy discussing these. Some lecturers also observe the greater learning progress here

"Based on my previous experience in your country (I: exactly), I went to something validated in Germany, were able to speak about a theory and disambiguation of terminology and they were already very open " (W, B4, Z.427-429).

Some lecturers report that participants gladly show learning arrangements in which they are active, write, talk, discuss, present something and can take on a kind of teacher role, even enriched with instructive school videos.

Academic topics that are of great interest include inclusion, theories / conceptions of teaching or the coupling of teaching practice and language acquisition. Last but not least, the topic of how to get 'right' with the students in the country of residence is of interest, also what teachers are allowed to do and what not.

"What rights, or, eh, social relationships in school was, there was a big interest [...] always these little questions in this situation: What should I do? Or which rights do I have? What tasks" (K, E, line 787 ff.).

From group sessions lecturers report of having good experiences with the methods built on work together as a team. In one instance it is stated that it is of advantage when in a group one person already speaks the national language well enough to support others, notwithstanding that in some groups several languages can be used during discussions.¹⁴

Some lecturers report disinterest with theoretical, abstract and scientific topics by participants, whereby the assumption is made that this is also caused by the language barrier. Another lecturer points out that content that is deemed less useful for practice is met with less interest.

"In general, if there is something relevant to practice or something to be examined, then they are all fully involved and if it becomes theoretical then it is just (I: yes) not so [...] [added], they then

¹⁴In Swedish parts of the program, the concept of multilingual teaching is used (<https://blog.hf.uni-koeln.de/immigrated-and-refugee-teachers-requal/manual/>).

of course have the problem to understand the language, process it and then express it linguistically (W, B2, Z.516-521).

In addition, some lecturers say that the participants are less interested when written tasks need to be fulfilled, be those protocols, literature analysis or simply answer questions in writing. A lecturer reports that some of the participants feel unsure about standards of a scientific process and how to use them, and the defence could come from the fact that the teachers are concerned about not meeting the requirements. Depending on the subject studied, some lecturers have also experienced unwillingness and insecurity towards editing English-language texts. One report of a teacher who apparently went into opposition because she, formerly rewarded to be the “best teacher”, fell into self-doubt due to difficulties within mastering the programme.

The impression of varying degrees of interest in the content of the programmes, more active participation or opposition emerging from lecturers' observations is evident through two poles: Everything that represents practical, teaching methodical knowledge and something on dealing with students, discussions based on one's own experience, is approached with joy by the participants. Those tasks that have a stronger reference to theoretical models on subjects that cannot be used directly in practice, are less likely to work. In addition, there are the language barriers, but also low expectations and experiences of success are seen as reasons for disinterest or rejection.

Options for expanding the participatory elements within the programmes

How the participants could be integrated (even more) in planning and / or implementation of the (re-)qualification program, lecturers were also asked. A lecturer suggests that the participants should be more involved in the decision of finding a school to practice teaching, so far, the schools themselves have chosen the people. Another describes greater involvement in this regard rather sceptically:

"How can you get them involved? This process is highly complicated, even now highly complicated. [...] So that schools apply in this ... for the first programme as a school of practice and the participants can then choose, um, I think it will not work. So I think ... I think the tendency is now more like that schools choose participants" (K, A, Z. 865 ff.).

Most of the lecturers feel it is important that the participants are integrated through an evaluation in the course of and subsequent to programme parts in the planning and implementation processes. As a result, you, as lecturer, receive feedback on your teaching as well as feedback for how to devise the entire (programme. Expectations and interests of the participants can also be evaluated here and are a significant factor to consider in further courses.

"We have a small mid-course evaluation [...] And then all seminar teachers should, since there are different ones, should have like 20 minutes where you ask, quite simply, “How is it going? What is it we can ... Is there something we can do now, when the course is like it is, like, so they can get that part?” (S, Z.671ff.)

"Such an expectation, um, to make an expectation query: What do you expect from this seminar? We collected that and tried to take into account what interests the participants have" (K, B, Z. 916 ff.).

Another benefit, according to some of the lecturers, is the opportunity to give feedback, which in turn has a positive effect on the relationship between participants and lectures as well on the atmosphere within the course. A lecturer has set up a "suggestion box" especially for purpose, through which participants can anonymously submit questions and suggestions. Another lecturer makes the suggestion to partner up new participants with former participants. Overall, participants are more reserved when speaking about possibilities for participation. It is largely about the specific design and content of the teaching, the structure of the programmes and also concerns the search for practice opportunities. The overarching structure however is not addressed. Participation, however, is additionally related to networking with alumni.

Impulses from the project experience for the lecturers' own teaching

Regarding the question of whether teaching refugee / migrant teachers has encouraged them to think about teaching ideas of their own, a lecturer reports being amazed at the perspectives that unfolded in various ways. The respondent indicates that it is an occasion to think fundamentally about what is societal or currently of importance in terms of school policy and what is in need of change.

"To take the certificate course as an occasion to even start to think about what is going on in terms of society, school politics and so on and so forth, um that is the main necessity" (I. 3, lines 206ff.).

Some have changed their ideas about how to teach in general and what to clarify at the beginning of each class, even before engaging any subject matter. Furthermore, working with the teaching groups confirmed that lecturers should pursue individualised teaching and learning more closely with the other students, at the same time, some experience this as a challenge.

"Perhaps I had the idea of teaching [...] that we would work more in terms of content and could exchange ideas because I have changed my mind, I mean that I say this here and now [...] you have to start much further down the line with refugees. So teachers have to overcome much more mundane, umm aspects in advance, I'll tell you before you can start in terms of content [...]" (W, B, Z.257).

One lecturer describes the cooperation with the participants as part of one's own profession and professional development. Others report joy and fun in teaching. One of the challenges of involving everyone, especially considering linguistic obstacles.

"I've always been someone who worked very interactively in the seminars, something that now was a challenge to say what was already in a dialogue with my students as much as possible [...] to break down so much that I could grab them all and that for me was really a big challenge" (W, B1, Z.774-780).

In dealing with language barriers other lecturers also gained new experiences. One lecturer reports on using images as bridges of understanding in teaching. Also, it was stated that different, more

precise and detailed explanations of the tasks are required than usually. In this context it was mentioned that participants asked for more transparency regarding pursued goals. Furthermore, a growing sensitivity for language in general and for own linguistic patterns can be identified.

"The subject of language partly but more precisely the sensitivity for language, terms that you may use unconsciously, a higher level reflection is necessary to make sure that everyone has the same understanding, uhm, meaning that you take much smaller steps in using certain terms. Something I have noticed with the large seminar groups" (W, B4, Z.899-904).

Some lecturers also mention the potential of the refugee / migrant teachers based on their work experience and what they have learned in life. They report that they do not share the experience of those who attribute a lack of education to refugees.

"This is a point that we rate extremely high in all questions of professionalisation, that it is being said, this person, this personal, this person competence that they are bringing with them is something that is essential" (W I. 3, lines 63ff.).

"We would like them [...] to work in this job again because we right now have a shortage and because we also see a need here, um, this part of the programme I also like very much, to say we have many children with migration background in the schools and to show them here, um, that you are not alone, you may not even be such a huge, so huge, minority that sounds like that is totally wrong uh you're not a minority now, but there are many of you who are like that and there are also many of you who can act as role models and the teachers are gaining a foothold in this society" (B2, 103-111).

In summary, lecturers speak of new experiences and insights by dealing with refugee/migrant teachers even including a more nuanced view of society in general. Teaching the participants leads them to differentiating and language-sensitive work, which some also consider for other university teaching. Awareness of one's own language use and positive experiences with the teaching group leads to a critical look at the partially unreflected image of refugees / migrants in society, because potentials that the future teachers utilise with their skills and experience within school systems in the countries of residence are experienced first hand.

Participants' perceptions of the internship

At the locations the participants held their internships as part of the programmes, lecturers were asked how these situations work and how participants manage. One learns from them that the feedback of participants is very heterogeneous about their teaching experience. Some refugee / migrant teachers were sometimes allowed to spend several hours teaching themselves and were very satisfied, while others were able to experience the lessons, but had no opportunity to talk to the mentor. Sometimes, as far as understood, insufficient supervision was taking place.

"Feedback from: Eh, I was allowed to teach myself for five hours. Up to: Nobody cared about me, um, me um, / just sat in the back and after that there was somehow no consultation [...] about the lesson I was observing. So really, I got very heterogeneous feedback." (K, B, Z. 1072 ff.).

The lecturers also report that the participants generally appreciate being on site at the school to gain insights and to collaborate. Contact with the colleagues, so the observation by a lecturer, turns

out to be very heterogeneous and a noteworthy result depends a lot on the contact impulses from the teacher.

"Very different. [...] that also depends a bit on the nature of the participants, maybe on how they might approach the, uh, colleagues at school. [...] Participants, who I have now found to be very open, eh, so I had the impression that those, um, had fewer problems than those who might be a little more withdrawn. [...] I think you sometimes really have to demand things" (K, D, Z. 1080 ff.).

Meaning conflicts are more likely to arise when supervisors and observers do not work together, communicate with the participants and view them not as equal teachers but as students. The fit between education and type of school also plays a role here.

One lecturer emphasises that compared to what comes after the program, the internship is the smaller, while later university studies represent the greater challenge.

Since the participants do not do an internship in Weingarten, the teachers speak of hoped-for opportunities. The internship offers the chance to experience inclusion in practice as well as everyday school life, 'learning by doing' becomes possible. Through greater personal contact between them and teachers they hope for a bigger gain in knowledge and experience.

When asked how much time is spent at the school and how it should be filled, a majority points out that everyone should really be able to teach. Practical phases are seen as fundamentally important.

Lecturers call internship opportunities very important for a positive experience as a teacher to be and at the same time it is reported that it depends a great deal on the contact between the on-site teachers and the participants of how the internship will ultimately turn out. It can be a hindrance if the internship is completed at a type of school which does not support the goal of (re-)qualification. The language remains a challenge here too, although not as much due to the previous experience the teachers bring with them. There it is a less difficult transition performance than later complementary studies. Each internship should definitely include active participation, according to the lecturers.

6. Results of the group interviews with the lecturers overall

From the reported view on the (re-)qualification programmes and their opportunities and limits, it emerges that preceding learning arrangements refugees or migrated teachers attend are important in order to even make their way into the respective school system. The lecturers notice that their teaching is welcomed where, above all, participants are recognised in their role as teachers who have already practiced teaching and are able to build on their previous knowledge with the help of interactive methods and practical routines. Lecturers experience less interest or sometimes resistance, where participants see themselves questioned or where they have to deal with topics that

are not directly related to the practice of teaching. They experience less interest and motivation in the teachers when it comes to the typical written tasks and dealing with abstract reflections and theoretical models. Wherever practical phases within the programmes are provided, the lecturers recognise positive feedback from the participants on the one hand, for example when they can try out themselves in the classroom or get support from the supervising mentors. In no way is close supervision always a given though. The lecturers see this depending on how the participants do meet the teachers at the school and how clearly they ask for support. Overall, the practical phases are seen as very important, if they really are given the opportunity to teach. In addition, lecturers deem the challenge associated with learning a new language in transition programmes as being less difficult than completing later parts of the course in the university.

Lecturers also speak of a personal gain in experience for their professional practice and their personal perspectives on the social situation through their teaching in the (re-)qualification programmes. Some are motivated by their teachings, to deal more straightforwardly with language and performance differences in other teaching commitments to make their performance more diverse. But also, as a member of society they feel their perspectives on refugees to be enhanced by this experience, especially because of the explicitly mentioned high level of competence each and every one brings to the table in their own unique way.

7. Summary and Discussion

The (re-)qualification programmes to which this study is connected have been developed to support teachers who migrated or fled to Sweden, Austria and Germany to pursue additional studies in order to get employment as a teacher. Although some aspects that the R/EQUAL partner programmes differ in concerning structure and content, they are comparable in their academic orientation. Universities are running programmes that serve as bridging function in the school system. This means that the (re-)qualification programmes teach knowledge about the requirements for teachers in the respective school systems and help to raise the competencies required to get a teaching job.

The participants in the (re-)qualification programmes regard themselves as experienced teachers who already have a wide range of skills. Therefore, they are disappointed that their preliminary teacher education and practice is not fully accepted and that they need to do additional university studies in order to be allowed to work as a certified teacher. However, they are willing to improve their competences and most of the teachers appreciate the offered programmes in many parts as enriching, helpful and personally supportive. In addition to improving their language proficiency, they are interested in questions concerning teaching methods, the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the student and classroom management. They appreciate all opportunities to gain practical teaching experience and social relationships with teachers and pupils.

The lecturers address the participants as teachers. They believe that they can support the migrated or refugee teachers in their process of re-entering the teacher profession. However, some are well aware that language skills required and competencies needed for university studies in the countries still pose several challenges for those who want to work as certified teachers in school. Some lecturers perceive that the cooperation with migrant or refugee teachers contributed to their reflections about new aspects in their teaching or social integration as well as structural conditions in society.

In this summary, it is important to **not disregard the heterogeneity of the participants in the (re-)qualification programmes. The immigrated or refugee teachers grade the programmes quite differently against the background of their former teacher training and professional experience, their living conditions, their personality and different experiences with different partners in the programmes and schools.**

In the following, examples of tensions and challenges are described:

- The participants are academically trained teachers with usually several years of teaching experience. After migration, they are confronted with the fact that the formal recognition of their education and professional activity is not sufficient to be allowed to work as a teacher again. The lecturers of the (re)qualification programmes are well aware of the participants' professional background and in their classes they address them mostly as experts. There is a discrepancy between requirements in the school system in the country of residence and the participants previous academic training and teaching experience. Some of the participants perceive that their skills are questioned when further education and competence development are requested. Those participants who perceived that they are questioned as professional teacher handled this in different ways: expressing themselves critically, acknowledge the requirements. Some are burdened by this situation.
- In general, participants would like to have the opportunity to be more involved in learning through practical work. To participate in the daily work in school would gain experience in a new teaching role in a new school environment. As a consequence of this suggestion, the (re-)qualification would have more of the character of in-service training.
- Some participants initially assumed that their teacher training was sufficient and that they would be able to work as a certified teacher in the country of residence as soon as they had learned the respective language. The programmes reveal to them some new school system related requirements that go beyond the acquisition of the new language and call for additional (e.g. pedagogical-didactic) training. The desire to enter the profession as soon as possible, among other things because many participants have family responsibilities and have to provide for an income, is very understandable and leads to the concern to be able to complete a compact (re)qualification. The fact that some report professional challenges and, in part, new tasks as a result of the internships shows that there is a tension between rapid (re)qualification on the one hand and the wish for comprehensive support on the other.

- While the interview study reveals many unfulfilled expectations for a quick and successful professional re-entry, it also reveals a great deal of positive feedback, particularly regarding internship opportunities. The practical experiences in schools are considered very helpful, even if they bring challenges. The refugee/migrant teachers see the good contact with the students as particularly important. Feedback on the design of lessons in a comparison of several countries shows that – as expected – there is no uniform picture. In principle, respectful teaching with a strong subject focus is seen as positive by many interviewees. Concerning the role of the teacher, the respective advantages of teacher-centered as well as student-centered, cooperative teaching are discussed. In the case of cooperative teaching methods with parts of self-direction, as observed during the internships or discussed in seminars, some of the interview partners see the risk of lower learning successes for the students and have questions regarding the role of the teacher.
- It seems that especially in the area of didactics, in addition to the theoretical examination, more work should be done with in-depth practical insights and reflections. Since this takes a lot of time, but programmes for (recently) immigrated and refugee teachers also have to teach other important content, programs find themselves in a field of tension.
- The special interest in accompanied practical experience and practical subject didactic knowledge as compared to didactic and educational theory knowledge occupies many lecturers. The focus of reflection on their own teaching is to find ways to make the relevance of these topics more apparent in the teaching of the programmes. The (re-)qualification programmes offer academic studies in a similar way as they are common for teaching-related university studies in the countries of residence. At the same time, the lecturers experience that the language level for some of the participants newly learning the language is still too high in some topics and didactical support needs to be given. The lecturers move in a field of tension between scientific-academic and adult-educational demands, which they try to balance through appreciation and individual support as well as through smaller feedback loops. Participation possibilities of the participants in the design of the courses refer in particular to the teaching design and the setting of priorities in the existing overall content structure of the respective teacher training. As a general suggestion of the participants to the programme coordinators, it appears that the share of practical training and supervision is particularly attractive and could be expanded.

With the four very differently designed (re)qualification programs, bridges were built for a larger number of refugee or immigrant teachers to begin the challenging path to permanent employment as fully recognised teachers in the respective school system. It is clear that much of the content of the programs meets the needs of the participants. However, it is also apparent that there is a wish for even greater practical experience, which requires continuous coordination and communication processes in the programmes. Overall, it can be concluded that almost all participants have gained

knowledge, reflection and ideas for their respective professional practice and experience a supportive and appreciative cooperation of people who are united by their common interest in questions of how to 'do' school successfully.

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9. List of Tables

Table 1: Sample of the group interviews with participants

Table 2: Sample of the group interviews with the lecturers