

Institutional characteristics of guidance in adult education. A conversation analytic study combined with ethnographic data

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The study focuses on guidance in adult education as a type of institutional talk (1, 2). Multiple data sources (17 recordings of interactions, institutional-self descriptions, interviews with consultants and ethnographic observations) were collected through a comparative case study of two institutions to examine how the organizational contexts influence the guidance (3, 4).

On the one hand, the institutions define the subjects of the guidance service and the selection of consultants is based on their content knowledge. In addition, the providers pursue institutional goals with their guidance. Therefore, the consultants use institutional membership-categories to organize the talks. On the other hand the guidance-seekers have their own counselling concerns and goals, which the consultants have to deal with. It is also noted that the location of the guidance (one institution is located in the public employment office) influences how the participants interact. The research results show that guidance in adult education is situated in a dialectic relation between the institutional context, the expectations of guidance-seekers and the professional self-conception of consultants. Based on these findings a typology of guidance in adult education was developed (guidance by experts and guidance by specialists). The developed model of guidance distinguishes between components, which are process-oriented and which are not. The components also depend on the institutional contexts and on the type of guidance (5).

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Dr. Tim Stanik works at the Department of Adult Education/Further Education at the University of Tübingen. His research interests are guidance in adult education, literacy and the professionalization in adult education. In a recent study he explores how teachers in adult/further education plan and justify their instructions.