

Innovative Delivery of Debating and «Fair Arguing» Skills
in Adult Education Settings

CONTROVERSE

EXPERIENCE BOX “Fair disputes“

Textbook

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Project

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Preface

This is one of the products of our CONTROVERSE project, conducted from 1.1.2022 - 30.8.2023. The background to this is the following observation: Professionals in adult education, regardless of whether they work in general or vocational further education, increasingly find themselves in situations where polarised positions on political, social or personal events or topics trigger massive disruptions and negatively influence group dynamics to such an extent that a return to the actual learning topic becomes almost impossible. Discussing, debating or arguing in the original sense seems to have become very difficult in this area. From this we conclude that many participants do not have the willingness and competence to enter into an interaction with space for different opinions, perspectives and convictions.

Against this background, we have thought about the preparation of a concept of political basic skills to deal with controversies by practical approaches. With the action patterns of debating and fair disputes, we want to make it possible in adult education practice to gain experience of verbal or non-verbal exchange with opinions and positions other than one's own. We hope that adult education can contribute to a change in the awareness of the participants towards more acceptance of being different, the acceptance and, if necessary, the acceptance of other opinions or even - ideally - to reach a kind of consensus or constructive agreement - as a contribution to a functioning society.

Our conception of political basic skills to deal with controversies through debating and arguing fairly is reflected in products that are written for adult education practitioners. Basically, they are intended to serve for the professionalisation of adult education as a concept of activity-integrated and lifeworld-oriented political basic skills.

CONTROVERSE experience box "fair disputes", consisting of a textbook and a toolbox.

The textbook is the conceptual introduction to the idea of CONTROVERSE, which is presented in a well-founded way and made concrete via didactic-methodological considerations. The question of what challenges arise for adult education and what institutional and programmatic support is desirable also plays a role.

The toolbox presents 18 didactic-methodical units that are oriented towards the world of life and offer concrete suggestions for implementation. On the one hand, these are tools that take up typically controversial topics (e.g. corona vaccination or life models), and, on the other hand, tools in which educators can find methodological examples of 'real' (conflict) situations that (frequently) occur in everyday education (e.g. brainstorming of arguments or paradoxical intervention).

CONTROVERSE Showcases "fair disputes", consisting of illustrated case studies from practice.

In three countries (Germany, Austria, Norway), examples of methodical work from educational work have been created on the basis of pilots of the experience box, which provide insights into real implementations in the form of images, film and sound. Through their media presentation, the showcases aim to illustrate the handling of controversies by vivid examples and invite people to adapt them.

We would be pleased if the results of our project could help you deal with controversies in your everyday adult education and give you ideas on how to develop a culture of conflict that allows controversy to be understood as dialogue.

The CONTROVERSE project steering group

Rosemarie Klein, Helmut Kronika, Gerhard Reutter, Peri-Ilka Tinçman

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Preface.....	3
Introduction	5
1. What do we talk about? Explanation of terms.....	9
1.1 Controversy as a normality in democratic societies.....	9
1.2 What does debating and «fair» dispute mean?	9
1.3 What do we mean by debate culture?	10
1.4 Consequences for adult education	10
2 What about the culture of debate in European countries?	11
2.1 For example Austria.....	11
2.2 For example Norway	12
2.3 For example Germany	12
2.4 Consequences for adult education	14
2.5 Causes of increasing societal tensions.....	14
2.6 Consequences for adult education	17
3 Dealing with controversies – a topic of political basic skills training	19
3.1 Why do we need fair dispute education?.....	19
3.2 Political (basic skills) education: Thinking in difference - a philosophical and ethical excursus	20
3.3 Consequences for adult education.....	22
4. Teaching and learning to deal with controversies – instructional and methodical approaches for training and coaching	24
4.1 Adressing controversies as a topic of political basic skills training	24
4.2 Guiding educational principles for dealing with controversies	26
4.3 Objectives in dealing with controversies and tasks of the adult educators.....	27
4.4 Dispute culture and dispute topics in adult education practice - observations, assessments, limits.....	28
4.5 Approaches to dealing with controversial issues	29
4.6 Success factors in promoting debating and disputing skills.....	30
4 Concluding remarks	33
5 Sources and Links.....	36

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Introduction

Statements of the CONTROVERSE project partnership

"Dealing with controversies means dealing with positions of others in an unprejudiced way."

"Fair dispute is possible when you are not focused on being right."

"Debating is a good way of creating understanding and solution on a factual level."



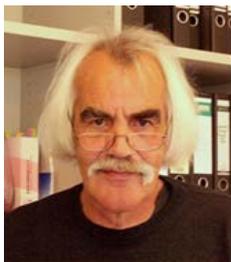
"Different opinions are normal and enriching in our life together."

"With a good culture of debate, the exchange of opinions is fair and objective.
- and the participants remain in dialogue."

"Dealing with controversies means being aware of one's own opinion and confronting the opinion of the opponent on a factual level."

" Fair dispute works when, for example, "rules of the game" are used to control a discussion",

"Debating is a good way to broaden your horizons by active listening."



„Dealing with controversies means to also deal with people whose ideas and opinions seem absurd to us."

"Fair dispute requires the willingness to question one's own positions."



"Debating is difficult when the participants have very different ideas about the rules of the game of debate."

*Disputes are not a problem for a democracy, on the contrary.
It becomes dangerous when rules and decency are forgotten.
(Detlef Esslinger, SZ, 14.11.2020)*

Controversies as a topic of political basic skills

Controversial issues and their expression in debates and disputes are constitutive of democratic societies; in this respect, controversies are an unavoidable part of everyday life. For some years now, controversies seem to be getting bigger and more frequent, which at least media coverages suggest. Whether this is a fact or whether the perception of conflicts has changed must remain open. We lack empirical evidence for an actual increase. The abundance of topics that arouse strong emotions and lead to contradictory opinions in the private, school and professional environment seems to be on the increase; at any rate, the handling of contradictions is becoming more aggressive and conflictual.

The starting point of our CONTROVERSE project, in the context of which this textbook finds itself, is based on the following assumption: in an increasingly complex world, it is a key democratic competence to consciously deal with other opinions and perspectives and to accept diversity.

«Learning to engage in dialogue with others and respect people who hold values different from one's own is central to the democratic process and essential for protecting and strengthening democracy and promoting a culture of human rights.» (Crick 1998)

The situation of professionals in adult education - be it in general, vocational or in-company continuing education practice - is characterised by situations where polarised positions on political, social or personal topics and events trigger massive disturbances and conflicts. Be it topics like Corona, refugees, Islam, it often seems that discussing, debating or disputing in the original sense is impossible for many participants. The competence and willingness to enter into interaction in which different opinions, perspectives and convictions have a space and are expressed in language is not sufficiently present with many participants in courses and educational measures.

With the development of this textbook for self-study, the CONTROVERSE project wants to contribute to supporting professionals in adult education, especially those working in adult education practice, with theoretical-conceptual ideas to address and handle situations in which they observe black-and-white thinking and entrenched pigeonholing among participants in a way that is appropriate to the situation and effective for learning.

We regard resolution of controversies through debating and fair disputes as a central aspect of life-world-related political basic skills and want to anchor the topic in the fields of adult education as a transversal topic.

Target group of the textbook

The textbook is aimed at adult educators who work in diverse fields of adult education: Lecturers, teachers, social educators, counsellors and coaches. It has been developed especially for pedagogues

who work in the fields of basic education, general, vocational and in-company adult education and further education with so-called low-skilled participants who are often far removed from formal educational offers and who want to use the key competence of debating and fair disputes as an element of political basic skills and as a transversal topic of their educational work.

Approaches and aims of the textbook

The textbook is intended to stimulate and encourage adult educators to facilitate experiences of linguistic or non-linguistic exchange with opinions and positions other than their own. With offers that are experience-oriented and geared to the life-worlds of the participants, there is a chance to achieve more acceptance of being different, of putting up with and, if necessary, letting other opinions stand, or even - ideally - a kind of consensus or constructive agreement.

To this end, the textbook provides expert knowledge from various disciplines that deal with the topic and help to understand the challenges of dealing with controversies fundamentally and in the new social complexities. This will also involve reflecting on one's own attitudes and perspectives. Our textbook is intended to serve for self-reflection and to support handling controversies in everyday adult education.

Fair debate and dispute can be learned

We basically assume that debating and disputing fairly can be learned and developed. Dealing with controversies requires authentic occasions in the course or activity and interactive learning activities. It needs lifeworld-oriented fields of experience and it needs the possibilities in a daily course routine to work on these experiences.

This challenges adult educators not to refuse to deal with controversies because they are perceived as too challenging and risky, but rather tackle them in a concrete way. Those who already pursue political basic skills as a transversal theme in other fields will enter another thematic field with offers for dealing with other views or opinions, which is an important foundation of democracy, the fragility of which has become obvious. Dealing with the foreign and the other is one of the essential, if not sufficient, prerequisites of democratic societies. Adult education is called upon to make a major contribution at conceptual, structural and didactic-methodological levels.

Structure of the textbook

The first chapter is mainly concerned with the explanation of terms; already from this, first consequences for the practice of adult education can be derived.

Since adult education is a partial reality of social conditions, in the second chapter we move to the question of how the culture of debate is characterized in European countries and use the examples of Austria, Norway and Germany to make existing differences transparent. We embed the question of debate culture in an analysis of the causes of obviously increasing social tensions.

Chapter 3 provides a theory-based bridge to the topic of 'dealing with controversies' as a subject of (basic) political education. With the question of the 'why' of educational offers for the development

of fair disputes, it becomes clear that complex social questions and problems do not allow for simple answers, but need 'thinking in difference'. Thinking in terms of difference is made concrete by using the example of various authors we refer to and, from our project perspective, becomes a central goal of (basic) political education.

The fourth chapter is an attempt to make conceptual didactic-methodological deductions for teaching and learning how to deal with controversies. From the perspective of basic political education, goals and principles guiding action are presented, information is given on occasions for fair disputes and on triggers for conflicts, and a few factors for success and limits to action are put up for discussion.

The final chapter deals with two aspects: The challenges to adult education practice and those working in it have increased in recent years for various reasons, and the tasks have become more diverse. Our topic, the integration and situational consideration of different opinions in the groups and the promotion of dealing with this diversity of opinions also contribute to the contemporary development of demands on adult education practice. The identification of challenges also makes it clear that not only adult education practitioners are asked to take up and consider the issue, but also the management of educational institutions and the umbrella organisations responsible for professionalisation and quality development, as well as academia.

Chapter 6 concludes with further links and references.

Personal note from the project partnership

The textbook is also the result of controversial debates among the project partners. In the process of writing, we had to critically question some 'established subjective truths' - and our understanding of tolerance. This was important – as we learned - because: "If we cultivate a residual uncertainty about our truth, we can counteract the danger of a fundamentalist attitude in which we devalue those of other faiths as unbelievers." (Chmielewski, 2021, 17f)

1. What do we talk about? Explanation of terms

1.1 Controversy as a normality in democratic societies

Controversy is a characteristic of democratic societies, and controversial issues and their discussion are an expression of free opinion-forming. Engaging in dialogue with other people and respecting the fact that they hold different values from one's own, have different views on political and social developments and events, and take a positive stance accordingly, is central to the democratic process and at the same time essential for the protection and strengthening of democracy (cf. Crick 1998).

As project partners, we understand a **controversy** as a heated debate about a factual issue on which there are opposing opinions and points of view. Debate and dispute (see below) are inherent in controversies and at the same time the means of expressing different opinions and points of view. Controversies are an example of the fact that democracy as a form of life is conditional.

Controversy: lat. contra opposed; versus directed. A controversy is a prolonged dispute, disagreement or debate. (Wikipedia)

1.2 What does debating and «fair» dispute mean?

In our culture, **debating**, unlike disputing, does not have a pejorative, degrading and negative connotation. It is rather regarded as an honourable matter, as the German Duden dictionary of foreign words (box on the right) shows.

The fact that debate can also develop explosive power is made clear in the dictionary of origin: de-battere is described as to dispute or lively discuss. De-battere indicates a possibly aggressive undertone in the debate, thus placing it in the vicinity of dispute.

In concrete terms, debating means taking a stand on a matter, stating reasons, presenting criticism - but also listening.

Disputes do not have a good reputation in our harmony-seeking society. We learn this from early age onwards, but what we have learned does not prevent either children or adults from disputing anyway.

«Disputes enable us to get to know ourselves and others better, to put our wishes, feelings and interests into words. We dispute because conflicts are inevitable in life. We dispute with a guilty conscience, with moderate success, and with savage injuries to body and soul. In order to dispute constructively without hurting ourselves and others, we have to learn rules and methods.» (Jalka 2001, 1)

The quote talks about constructive disputes, which is aimed at the behavioural level. When we use the term 'dispute fairly', we want to emphasise the importance of the attitude level (see Wikipedia).

The term **fairness** comes from the English word 'fair' and is often translated as "justice, decency", "equality" or even "peacefulness" (cf. Demora-tiewerkstatt). It stands for an attitude that enables just and decent behaviour. Just and decent behaviour arising from this attitude contributes to the balance of social relations. (cf. Encyclopaedia of Psychology)

*Fairness means decent behaviour and a just and honest attitude towards other people.
(Wikipedia)*

1.3 What do we mean by debate culture?

In functioning democracies, very different elements of experience and opinions come together. Debate culture means that diversity of opinion and experience is desired, that people express themselves freely, are listened to and feel that they are being heard; debate culture is also characterised by an encounter at eye level, i.e. the opinions and experiences of each individual are of interest and are taken seriously.

Debate culture:

- ◇ Diversity of opinion and experience is welcome.
- ◇ Everyone can express themselves freely
- ◇ Everyone listens
- ◇ Encounter at eye level

The culture of debate is not simply a given, but the result of a cultivation in dealing with controversial issues that is based on consensus and rules. Consensus exists, for example, with regard to the fact that diversity of opinion and experience is fundamentally desired, that everyone can express themselves freely and that all participants meet at eye level. Based on this attitude, rules of conversation apply, such as listening to each other and letting people finish what they have to say. Debate culture also implies taking into account emotionality that results from personal experience or interest in a topic. Culture of debate therefore depends on the way in which debate and fair dispute are actually cultivated and institutionalised.

1.4 Consequences for adult education

From these explanations of the understanding of terms, first starting points can be derived on how to develop a culture of debate in adult education programmes:

ALLOWING CONTROVERSY MEANS TAKING UP ISSUES IN EVERYDAY ADULT EDUCATION THAT EVOKE STRONG FEELINGS AND ON WHICH THERE ARE CONFLICTING OPINIONS.

WE SEE DEBATE AND DISPUTE AS CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS OF DEALING WITH CONTROVERSY, AND CONTROVERSY AS A NATURAL PART OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN ADULT EDUCATION.

FAIR DISPUTES CAN AIM TO REACH A CONSENSUS IN THE RESOLUTION OF DIFFERENT POSITIONS.

HOWEVER, THE OUTCOME OF FAIR DISPUTES CAN ALSO BE TO LEAVE CONTRADICTIONARY POSITIONS UNRESOLVED.

FAIR DISPUTES ARE BASED ON RULES OF FAIRNESS AND ON EQUAL CONDITIONS FOR THE PEOPLE INVOLVED.

A CULTURE OF DEBATE NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED, NURTURED AND INSTITUTIONALISED BECAUSE IT CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

THE IDEA OF NOT SHYING AWAY FROM CONTROVERSY AND ITS RESOLUTION IS INHERENT IN ALL THESE ASPECTS. IT SHALL BE INCLUDED AS PART OF ADULT EDUCATION AND ADULT EDUCATION PRACTICE.

2 What about the culture of debate in European countries?

There may be much dispute about how well controversy is handled in European societies and what the goals are - but a certain erosion of debate culture has been a persistent theme in European countries for some years. Was it different in the past? What are the backgrounds?

In this chapter you will find exemplary insights into the countries of Austria, Norway and Germany, a knowledge contribution on the causes of social tensions and reflections on what may have changed in recent years. In this chapter we also try to draw conclusions for adult education.

2.1 For example Austria

An erosion of the culture of debate has been repeatedly mentioned in Austrian media, as well as in political or social organisations for several years. Several levels of decay of a debating or argumentative culture can be observed: in politics itself as well as in society due to the increasing polarisation on topics such as migration, religious views and conspiracy theories. Young people in particular often seem "speechless" and have no or insufficient means of dealing with controversial opinions or resolving conflicts.

The most prevalent topics - apart from the Corona pandemic and its effects - are religion and politics; in all of them, extremist views can increasingly be observed. It seems that the Corona crisis is a trigger for an even faster decline in inhibitions, not only in digital media. Hate speech and agitation have tremendously increased in social media as well as forums of e.g. daily newspapers, but are also increasingly taking place in the "real" world, whereby controversial topics are often linked - for example the Corona crisis - with migration.

It is noticeable that a culture of debate as a component of a democratic society does not precisely exist where those concerned refer to democracy and fundamental rights and hold the opinion that these no longer exist. (Right-wingers, Corona deniers).

The fact that this topic is currently gaining importance in society is shown, for example, by the new initiative LasstUnsReden (Let's Talk), launched by the Austrian Medical Association (ÖAK), the Austrian Health Insurance Fund (ÖGK), the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) and the Austrian Red Cross (ÖRK) as founding partners.

The theme here is that people hardly talk to each other any more, and when they do, it is usually with people who share the same opinion. Thus, they are more and more becoming distant from each other.

The initiative is based on the assumption that a genuine exchange of opinions is necessary for the country and democracy to prosper, and that people need to get talking again. The aim of "Du + Ich = Österreich" («You + Me = Austria») is to bring all people in Austria back to the same table.

The organisations want to show that different opinions and points of view are normal and to be respected, and that all sides have a place in this country. The initiative is aimed at individuals, e.g. with tips on how to talk, and at companies as cooperation partners.: <https://www.lasstunsreden.at/>

2.2 For example Norway

Also in Norway, the subject is highly topical. In recent years, a controversial debate has been sparked around the areas of freedom of expression, polarisation, stigmatisation and a lack of debate culture. This is based on a multi-layered problem:

1. the perception that different opinions can no longer be expressed in a discussion because of fear of stigmatisation, which has arisen from increasing lagerism.
2. where does freedom of expression end and discrimination begin? Especially on social networks, racist, homophobic and sexist discrimination is often expressed in disguise of freedom of expression.
3. in social media, strong opinion trends are represented with fake profiles. They reflect a false reality, and especially young people are not used to this kind of rhetorics.

On a political level, the Norwegian government under Erna Solberg as Minister of State, published a government strategy in 2016 entitled "Regjeringens strategi mot hatefulle ytringer 2016-2020" to counteract hate messages and the abuse of freedom of expression.

The main topics of controversial public debate in Norway are homosexuality, refugees, Palestine-Israel and Corona. In and due to the Corona pandemic, these debates have been held online in the last two years, mainly in writing on social media. It is much easier to dispute with someone in writing than face to face. In any case, it is easier to stigmatise and polarise, as online the audience can always get involved and cheer for one side or the other. Before Corona, and now in Norway again post Corona, the literary houses, libraries and other event organisers are coming back, taking these debates back to plenums, where they are moderated and where the tone is more restrained. Nevertheless, the angry audience remains and expresses itself not in the audience, but afterwards in the networks.

Norwegian media are dealing with this issue more and more. This is a few examples: "Det er trist å se at vi i et demokratisk åpent samfunn som Norge har personer som vil eie debatten, definere og monopolisere den med stigmatisering og stemping av samfunnsdebattanter med andre oppfatninger enn det de selv har." (It is sad to see that in a democratically open society like Norway we have people who want to dominate, define and monopolise debate by stigmatising and labelling social debaters with different views than they have themselves)". <https://www.nettavisen.no/nyheter/ingen-eier-en-debatt-og-har-rett-til-a-stigmatisere-andre/s/12-95-3423871779>;
<https://www.indre.no/stigmatisering-av-meningsmotstander/o/5-25-234205>

2.3 For example Germany

Since 2015, when hundreds of thousands of refugees came to Germany, there has been increasing talk in the media, in political pronouncements and in socio-psychological and sociological studies, of an erosion of the culture of dispute in Germany. It remains an open question whether there was really more or a qualitatively better culture of debate in Germany before 2015. It is possible that the impression of a decline in the culture of dispute is primarily due to the internet and social media, which are not the cause of disputes and controversies, but they do "*promote behaviour that is specific to digital*

communication: disagreement. A great deal that used to be private is now public - and immediately so." (SZ Ostern 2022) In Germany, about 30 million people use Facebook, more than 27 million are on Instagram, 1.4 million use Twitter on a daily basis. This means that a permanent net-public agitation and excitement is programmed, which gives the impression of a division of society. In our opinion, however, there is no such thing as a division of society in Germany; it is rather a kind of falling apart into milieus or bubbles within milieus.

There are different opinions on whether the culture of debate was different or better. Michael Friedmann, who states that what we call dispute today is rather *"a number of monologues. But dispute is a dialogue, and a dialogue presupposes that one listens and that one is able to talk about arguments, about facts."* (.....) He assumes that about 20% of the population (lateral thinkers, Pegida supporters, conspiracy theorists) are only concerned with themselves and not with dispute as dialogue. He also sees the reasons for an insufficiently developed culture of debate in the history of the Germans, who, if they are over 60 years old today, grew up in a phase in which the social *"cloak of silence"* was spread and everything that had happened in terms of crimes by Germans before 1945 was made a taboo subject; many of the responsible actors were able to continue acting *"democratically"* without interruption. This may also be a reason for the emergence of a consensus society that did not take offence and which the majority of Germans were quite proud of. As early as 1950, Hannah Arendt wrote of the Germans' escape from reality: *"The most striking and also most frightening aspect of the German escape from reality, however, is in the attitude of dealing with facts as if they were mere opinions"*. (Arendt, ...) Gerald Hüther, head of the Institute of the German Economy, sees a cause in the federal political developments of the last two decades. *"The culture of dispute in Germany has been put to sleep. The price is high: a fragmentation of society, because constructive debate is no longer even attempted."* (IdW Information Service, 13.9.2021) In any case, it seems to be time developing a culture of dispute that includes a desire to actually form opinions.

The topic of dispute culture or dealing with conflicts only plays a marginal role in adult education in Germany. It is primarily a topic that is given high priority in political youth education and in secondary schools. Numerous projects, which often focus on racism, anti-Semitism or discrimination, deal with questions of an appropriate culture of conflict. However, they are usually project-based and not permanent.

In political basic skills discussion and courses, the culture of debate has increasingly become an issue in recent years. In 2017, the Berlin State Agency for Civic Education (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung) placed political basic skills *"as a means of imparting competences for cultural and social participation"* (2017,4) on the education policy agenda because it observed that people in disadvantaged situation, in particular, often do not see themselves as part of society. *"Therefore, they do not feel invited to participate in shaping this society."* (2017,4) The Landeszentrale is optimistic in its efforts, as *"practical experience in basic education courses shows... that course participants are definitely interested in political and social issues having a connection to their immediate living environment and everyday experience."* (2017,7)

2.4 Consequences for adult education

From the country examples, the following can be derived: Adult education as part of social reality and a place where people with different attitudes and perspectives come together can be a field of opportunity, where participants can express their attitudes and perspectives - in fair dispute and debate.

- ADULT EDUCATION MAY BE AN AREA...
- THAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO EXPERIENCE THAT THE EXHILARATION OF CONTROVERSIAL POSITIONS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN DESTRUCTIVE CONFRONTATION, BUT CAN BROADEN ONE'S OWN HORIZON,
- WHICH CONVEYS THAT DIFFERENT, OFTEN OPPOSING OPINIONS REFLECT SOCIAL REALITY AND ARE NORMAL,
- WHICH OFFERS FREE SPACES IN WHICH SILENCE CAN BE OVERCOME OUT OF FEAR OF STIGMATISATION OR DISCRIMINATION,
- THAT TEACHES RULES OF THE GAME AND PRACTICES HOW TO HAVE FAIR DISPUTES.

2.5 Causes of increasing societal tensions

The erosion of a social culture of debate has - as our examples show - been observed for some years, especially in Europe and the USA. It has progressed even further in the USA. Since the end of the Second World War, the USA have been the forerunner of developments that could also be observed in Europe with a time lag. The erosion is a symptom of increasing social division, the effects of which are perceived on a broader scale than in the past because so-called social media act as accelerators of division and, through the construction of their algorithms, do not promote but hinder a culture of debate, as they only draw attention to contributions that share or reinforce the political attitude of the user of so-called social media. Recent studies from the USA (cf. SZ of 12.1.22) show that supporters of the Democrats and the Republicans paint "a grotesquely distorted picture of the opposing side as amoral demons". According to this, "*US Americans hated the other camp more than they valued their own*" (ibid.). Once it is no longer about a political debate or a common effort for social solutions, but about the struggle of good against evil, actual "debate" is no longer possible.

„Fear“ as a key term for racism

Fear seems to be a key concept that also explains various forms of racism as a frequent cause of conflict or controversy. Racism belongs to group-related misanthropy and "*includes all forms of behaviour towards ethnic, social and cultural minorities that have arisen out of resentment and tend to result in violence*". (Benz 2019, 19)

Racism, with its variants of xenophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, anti-gayism and homophobia, criticism of Islam or cultural racism (cf. Benz 2019, 7) seems to be a permanent phenomenon in human history, it seems to be an anthropological constant. Archaic formation of clans in early human history already followed a principle of demarcation: us against the others. The Other did not appear as a friend or helper, but as a threat, as a competitor for food, land and other resources. The greater the threat,

the harder the struggle, the greater the fear, the more important the protective function of one's own group. Seen in this light, one could also say *"that the root of the emergence of racism was not an expression of superiority of a group or ethnicity, but existential fear and insecurity."* (Abdel-Samad, 2021, 17) Racists are usually not even aware of this root; to them, superiority of their group or ethnicity cannot be questioned.

Fear as a new companion in life?

Even though we, in Central Europe, largely live in prosperity where struggle for food, land or other resources has become superfluous, anxiety seems to be increasing rather than decreasing: *"10-14% of the population suffer from an anxiety disorder requiring treatment"* (German Society for Social Psychiatry) The decade between 2010 and 2020 was economically prosperous, and, on superficial observation, there were few reasons for the development of anxiety. In fact, there was an 83% increase in anxiety disorders requiring treatment during this period. In 2020, 49.9% of all days of absence due to mental illness were accounted for by anxiety and related disorders.

A major cause of this development seems to be many people's fear of the future. *"You can't... convince anyone that their fears are unfounded."* (Bude, 2015,12) And they do not seem to be entirely unfounded. The promise of advancement in the social integration mode, valid for decades, has tipped over into the threat of exclusion. *"It has not only become difficult to get into the coveted social class. Especially those in the lower middle class slip out of it more easily - in the typical working age one in five."* (SZ 2.12.21)

The fact that the social divide is much more pronounced in the USA than in Europe also has to do with the fact that social descent has become much more frequent in recent decades. In 1969, 70% of thirty-year-olds had *"cleared the hurdle to adulthood: They had completed their education, had their own home and financial independence, were married and had children. Today, only 15% have passed all these social milestones."* (Hurrelmann, Albrecht, 2014, 29) These developments seem to frighten more and more people. *"Free people should not be afraid of fear because it can cost them their self-determination. Those who are driven by fear avoid the unpleasant, deny the real and miss the possible. Fear makes people dependent on seducers, handlers and players."* (Bude, 2015, 15)

Fears depend on the image of society

Fears can be found in all political camps and social classes. What is deciding is what image of society people concerned would have. Here, massive differences can indeed be found between those who, on the one hand, welcome the social development towards more pluralisation and individualisation. *"In fact, the population has been becoming more freedom-conscious and cosmopolitan for decades. There are more and more people in Germany who accept and appreciate diversity."* (Schellenberg, 2020, 12) But there is, on the other hand, a small but loud minority who blame the causes of their fears on people, ethnic groups, religions, races who are different from themselves. They do not strive for an open society but want to understand society as a community that defines itself *"above all through demarcation (from other communities).... Belonging and integration in community takes place through one or more characteristics such as descent, religion or world view, which are absolute and cannot be questioned. In society, however, integration primarily takes place through formal law."* Thinking in terms of community seems backward-looking and assumes, completely ahistorically, that in the past society was rather community, which never corresponded to reality. Even though the group of those in need of community is small, their activities show wide impact. With the so-called social media, they dispose of extensive channels to attract attention. And, not least, the pandemic has shown that their agitation has something of a social trickle-down effect. *"Constant dripping wears away the stone"*, in other words: an insecure middle of society is strengthened in its insecurity; a constant and continuous repetition of hate and agitation tirades does have a certain effect.

Conspiracy narratives

Colloquially, the term conspiracy theory has become established, but it is not a *«system of scientifically founded statements to explain certain facts or phenomena»* (Duden Fremdwörterbuch). That is why it is more accurate to speak of conspiracy narratives.

Conspiracy narratives are understood as an *«attempt to explain an event, a course of events, or a state of affairs through the purposeful clandestine activity of a group of persons.»* (Skudlarek 2021, 83f) They are racist in their construction because they need inferior enemies who are assumed to have evil characteristics or intentions (cf. Benz 2021, 8f).

For some years now, the American Jew, billionaire and patron of the arts, Soros, has been the victim of a conspiracy myth. He is even declared by the Hungarian head of government, Orban, to be a central figure responsible for all kinds of evils in the world. What is interesting here is that, in conspiracy narratives, Jews are *«the only victims of racism who are given both low and high status by the racists. Jews are stereotyped by racists in the same way as other minorities - as lying, thieving, dirty, vile, smelly - but also as wealthy, privileged, powerful, secret rulers of the world. In some way, Jews are both sub-humans and secretly the masters of humanity.»* (Baddiel 2021, 28) Anti-Semitic undertones can also be found in the conspiracy myth of 'Lügenpresse' (Lying Press), which suggests that important press products are controlled by third parties and are not committed to the truth. Lügenpresse appears as a term as early as the beginning of the 19th century after the abolition of press censorship. *«In Catholic and conservative publications, the Jewish lying press and the Jewish press are also referred to pejoratively.»* (Benz 2019, 129)

Making conspiracy narratives the subject of controversial debates is enormously difficult in practice, because conspiracy narrators often move within closed world views and are no longer accessible to arguments at all. *"Lies often appear much more plausible and attractive to the mind than reality."* (Arendt 2019, 11) Unfortunately, this does not only apply to conspiracy narrators.

Was everything better in the past? A reflection

The changes in the way controversies are carried out, as can be observed throughout Europe, have a possible cause in a concept of tolerance that we have misunderstood. Our society has become more tolerant in its self-image. Homosexuality is still a cause for discrimination in Germany today, but at least legal equality of same-sex couples has been achieved - society has become visibly more diverse. But to see the reasons for this in increased tolerance somehow falls short. It is a tolerance that does not work. *«It preserves resentment, the feeling that the other person is only allowed to be different from you because you have to accept it. And not because people are just different and that's a good thing.»* (Kram, 2018, 37) It is not an expression of tolerance if I simply let stand assessments that I find abstruse. We observe in ourselves how we react with incomprehension to certain social tendencies and assume that it is not worth talking to representatives of certain tendencies. *«Many people associate 'tolerance' with an illusion of harmony, freedom and respect. In fact, the Latin verb 'tolerare' means no more than 'to endure' or 'to bear'. So there is no trace of idyll, because one can only 'endure' something that one does not particularly appreciate: pain, for example, or stress - or even abstruse statements and points of view. Tolerance is difficult, as it always refers to something that one rejects.»* (Heitmann n.d.)

Practising tolerance means getting involved in debates in which we are confronted with views that seem abstruse, because freedom of speech and opinion are the cornerstones of tolerance. Camp thinking, currently paralysing a culture of debate, is not historically new. What may be new, however, is that the camps hardly make any attempt to talk to each other and are content to exist in their respective bubbles. This is true for the right as well as the left, for liberals as well as conservatives. Suffering from the so-called bias blind spot is not bound to political camps, *«i.e. the conviction that the others are all on the wrong track of cognitive distortions, but that oneself is walking on the path of well-founded evidence.»* (SZ 28.5.22)

2.6 Consequences for adult education

INTEGRATION PERFORMANCE OF ADULT EDUCATION FACES NEW CHALLENGES

From the above, the question of the integrative capacity of adult education is almost inevitable. The integration performance of the adult education system, like the one of the education system in general, is not only shown in individual learning success, but it is much more *«about recognising different ways of thinking, acting and living, social exchange and enabling different social contacts»*. (Hillmert, 2022, 15)

Providing this integration service is becoming increasingly challenging and difficult to realise in the practice of adult education. Especially in offers of vocational further education, with its limited freedom of participation, an increase in controversies with conflictual settlements in learning groups can be observed, which have increased due to the Corona pandemic, but did not originate there. Racism has long been a cause of conflict. «*Racism with its variants of xenophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, anti-gypsyism and homophobia, 'Islam criticism' or cultural racism is present everywhere.*» (Benz, 2019, 7)

ADULT EDUCATION IS AN IMPORTANT PLACE WHERE PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL DISCOURSE BECOMES POSSIBLE FOR EVERY TARGET GROUP.

For the practice of adult education, there are also opportunities, because it is one of the few places where people of different backgrounds, classes and political views meet and where possession of social or cultural capital does not determine possibility of participation. The more socially relevant institutions lose their importance and effectiveness, as can for instance be observed in churches or trade unions, the more CET is called upon to compensate for this loss of importance and to become even more a place for social discourse.

ADULT EDUCATORS ARE RELEVANT ACTORS FOR MODERATION AND DE-ESCALATION

ADULT EDUCATORS ARE IN DEMAND AS ROLE MODELS; THEY CAN PROMOTE RESPECT AS AN ATTITUDE.

In the practice of training and coaching with heterogeneous groups, adult educators face two important tasks: Moderation of debates around controversial topics, and de-escalation in case of emerging conflict situations. This requires trainers and coaches to be able to distinguish themselves and to remain on a factual or meta-level due to their professionalism. For this, they need necessary personal and professional competences, as well as suitable methods and instruments in daily training and coaching.

We must be aware that young people in particular often "lack the words" to represent their opinions objectively in discussions and have little or no experience in dealing with dissenting opinions. Negative role models come into effect, as increasing deterioration of a debate culture in social media and in the personal environment affects this target group.

In adult education, we are thus repeatedly confronted with stereotypes, prejudices and also discrimination of individuals or entire groups. This complicates our daily work by working on the avoidance or resolution of disturbances caused by different positioning, values or beliefs in heterogeneous groups instead of on learning content. Experience has shown that, for this reason, trainers and coaches often avoid certain topics that are considered polarising or do not give them any space in order not to burden (possibly already difficult) group dynamics.

However, there is opportunity to work on changing these realities; the goal is to make young people realise that different views and points of view are normal and to be respected in a functioning democratic society where there is room for a wide range of opinions. It is part of this learning process to develop an awareness that opposing opinions and views do not necessarily have to be adopted, but that respect must be shown to those who hold them.

3 Dealing with controversies – a topic of political basic skills training

3.1 Why do we need fair dispute education?

Our answer: The occasions for dispute are often so complex that their dimension cannot be understood by looking at the controversy from only one perspective.

There are topics and events which, due to historical, social and political (fermenting) processes, do not allow for simple answers to ambiguous questions. Rather, the very formulation of a question often seems so comprehensive that the answer should, accordingly, be multi-perspective. Due to social (unequal) power relations shaped by racism, colonialism, patriarchy, classism and the oppression of marginalised groups, negotiating specific issues can be like dancing on a powder keg. Often people associate issues with «*individual concern, hurt, complex, often intergenerational trauma*» (Hartmann 2021), which can mean that even the formulation of a specific issue can result in a conflictual confrontation that leaves everyone involved angry, dissatisfied, dismayed or ashamed.

In order to illustrate what a one-dimensional presentation of a topic can cause, the incidents of the New Year's Eve in Cologne in 2015/16 shall be discussed at this point.

What happened?

On New Year's Eve 2015/16, there were sexual assaults on women by mainly North African migrants in the inner city area of Cologne near the main station/dome. On the occasion of this event, widespread media and public outrage arose, «*which haunted the German discourse in almost all social strata after the incidents became known*» (Dietze 2016, p. 6). In the discursive course of that night, a universal accusation of sexualised violence was articulated against male refugees - in a way that linked racism with sexism and made sexualised violence and ethnicity/race inseparable. Sexism was externalised from the 'own' culture and attributed to the 'other', in this case the young man who had fled, as if there were no sexism in the 'German' majority society (see Dietze 2016, 2018 on ethno-sexism and sexual exceptionalism). It was striking that neither alleged perpetrators had their say in the discourse, nor those affected by sexism.

Based on this event, the question can be asked what an appropriate way of dealing with the incidents in Cologne could have looked like that does not pit different groups affected by marginalisation against each other. How could sexualised violence perpetrated by perpetrators who are read as migrants have been discussed without creating sexual racism? Or asked the other way round: How can a discourse focused on sexualised violence that produces racist narratives be rejected without relativising the experiences of violence of those affected?

These questions are therefore relevant for the topic of controversies, as they highlight the problem: The one-sided view of the incidents in Cologne led to a (re)production of sexist racism (cf. Dietze 2017, 2018) with a highly complex set of facts that ultimately leads to the marginalisation of male refugees, in that this group of people was assumed per se to perpetrate sexualised violence, and the invisibilisation of the experiences of violence of those affected by the New Year's Eve, whose suffering was used to instrumentalise an anti-migration policy. In the context of Cologne, it was not possible to

adequately articulate the different experiences of racism and sexism (at the different starting points of the debate). On the contrary, the two mechanisms of oppression were played off against each other and juxtaposed in a kind of victim competition.

Contexts like the one described above evoke a dilemma (cf. Foitzik 2017). The reason is that everything can never be adequately articulated at once and there will always be voices that do not feel adequately taken into account. However, therein can also be potential for solving the problem: By acknowledging that there are no clear answers to ambiguous questions, a certain space for controversy is created, which offers the possibility for reflection and consideration, to look at an event from different perspectives - to see one's own opinion as an object in discourses and not as the object that is the starting and arrival point of a debate.

The importance of prejudices

In this context, prejudices can also play a productive role: We need to be aware of our prejudices and stereotypes in order to be able to deal with them. *«Racists are always the others... We are to some extent blind to what we ourselves contribute to resentment and exclusion every day.»* (Abdel-Samad, 2021, 34). However, if one's own internalised prejudices, which express themselves in sexism, racism, homophobia etc., are recognised, a confrontation and reduction of prejudices can take place. Having and developing prejudices should not be considered 'bad' per se. Rather, the development of prejudices is a reaction to the experienced environment and is necessary in order to participate in everyday social interactions and to be able to evaluate them. They *«fulfil the function of psychologically warding off uncertainty and threat. They serve to make the world manageable, to reduce complexity»*. (Freisenhahn, 2014,1) Prejudices and stereotypes thus have a life-saving function and at the same time a life-difficulting one, because they narrow our view and force us into mental pigeonholes. How we deal with them determines whether or not they make life more difficult for us or others.

3.2 Political (basic skills) education: Thinking in difference - a philosophical and ethical excursus

Philosophy and ethics in particular are the domains in which the question of how people and societies want to and should live is discussed most intensively. One of the central elements is how to deal with dispute. What ways are there to make dispute fruitful as a dialogue?

Hark and Villas (2017) have worked out how plural perspectives can be made fruitful, namely by *thinking in terms of difference*. Thinking in difference describes a certain attitude that can be carefully adopted and tested in discourses and integrates differences as a positive element in one's own worldview. Hark and Villa make use of other thinkers and, in our opinion, have come up with interesting ideas that inspire adult education.

Acknowledging difference as an occasion for learning from each other

One idea is that the discussion and recognition of differences can be one of the most important and powerful tools in the struggle for a better world for all (cf. Lordes 1986).

This is about seeing differences of people and opinions not as opposites to other people and opinions, but as differences. Differences in human conflicts can be understood and used as an occasion for learning (from each other). The integration of refugees, for example, can only lead to participation in society if conflicts are allowed. Conflicts or differences can be seen as something positive if they mean that people with migration experiences have arrived in a society that thrives on the participation of as many people as possible and brings everyone to the table (cf. El-Mafaani 2018).

Disputes in an immigration society are therefore rather an indicator of the growing together of diverse societies.

Plurality is not questionable

Another thought comes from the Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt, who is also concerned with thinking in differences: Plurality is a central prerequisite for thinking in difference. In her considerations, plurality is both an unquestionable fact and therefore a political demand (cf. Arendt 1994, 1998).

Acknowledging plurality at the political level as well as between individuals means making different points of view audible; it means considering the individual as irreplaceable, continuously conducting and enabling conversations, and holding up as a common constant - despite existing differences - the «*interest of a common world*» (Hark & Villa 2017, p. 123).

At first glance, such an approach may seem somewhat naïve because it ignores the unequal distribution of power and assumes the «*interest of a common world*» as a collective desire.

Vulnerability as an archetype of human relationships

A third and highly exciting thought - also for adult education practice - comes from Judith Butler. She focuses on «*vulnerability*». She considers vulnerability to be one of the most primal forms of human or social relationships. Each and every one of us has had the experience of violation in the course of his or her life. However, it must be taken into account that not everyone is equally vulnerable and that «*precarity is differential*» (Hark & Villa 2017, p. 122), and that our potential for vulnerability is also related to how differences are compounded within us.

Against this background, Butler develops an ethics that assumes that we humans are dependent on each other in a society. People cannot escape each other because they are exposed to each other. We can therefore only construct a world that makes a good life possible together in agreement with others (cf. Butler 2006). A prerequisite for this is that we recognise that we ourselves, but also others, are vulnerable.

Meeting other people in social interactions - which includes above all arguments, discussions and (conflictual) discourses - with the awareness of potentially hurting them and being hurt ourselves creates a space of mindfulness, care and mutual recognition. Likewise, taking everyone's vulnerability into account creates a level at which all discourse participants can ultimately meet when vulnerability is recognised as a common reference and starting point.

Thinking with the world instead of thinking about it

These reflections on thinking in difference can result in an attitude that enables thinking «*with the world instead of about it*» (Hark & Villa 2017, p. 124). Thinking with the world can only work if we acknowledge the other, even if he or she holds positions that we cannot comprehend. This sounds relatively simple, but in reality it is a major hurdle that many of us have trouble overcoming. It is inherent in human beings that they think their own worldview is the right one. Most of us are not even aware of how much hurtful power there is in discourse behaviour when only one's own position is seen as correct and justified.

It is important to note that this power to violate is linked to the social positioning of individuals and marginalised groups are potentially more vulnerable. Therefore, the aim is to hold discourses with everyone, to create a stage for every perspective and to hold negotiations at large tables where everyone can take a seat. In this way, one's own opinion becomes one opinion among many and important voices, aspects, perspectives and interpretations of a matter are not lost. The multi-perspective presentation of conflicts, phenomena, events etc. is the only way out of the dilemmas of mutual injury and the hardening of (opposing) positions.

This is essentially connected to the demand to include more perspectives in social discourse and to develop an (own inner, as well as political) attitude that recognises one's own opinion as an object in discourse and from this standpoint is open to other voices. «*Working out differentiation in conversation is the greatest challenge of the present for the preservation, defence and deepening of plural democracies*» (Hark & Villa 2017, p. 125).

3.3 Consequences for adult education

ADULT EDUCATION CANNOT SOLVE THE MARGINALISATION OF GROUPS CREATED BY SOCIAL POWER RELATIONS IN AN EDUCATIONAL WAY, ITS POSSIBILITIES ARE LIMITED.

There will be topics that lead to conflict because of individual concern or traumatic experiences, because they generate emotions. Adult education can also offer a space for this, but we must be aware that its possibilities are limited because it is a helping and not a healing profession; however, it should use its possibilities!

ADULT EDUCATORS CAN DO A LOT, HOWEVER:

- DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTS OF ONE-SIDED VIEWS OF COMPLEX ISSUES AND ENCOURAGE A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE.

Especially group settings in adult education offer a space for exchange in which guided discussions, exercises and "experimentation" can be used to develop alternative strategies for dealing with opinions other than one's own. Fear and vulnerability, common reasons for "speechlessness" in debates or confrontations, can be reduced in this protected setting and the importance of thinking in terms of differences and alternatives can be experienced.

- ADDRESS THE FUNCTION OF PREJUDICE

An important step towards a culture of fair dispute is the recognition of prejudice and discrimination and the mechanisms behind them. As adult educators, we experience time and again in practice that young people are not aware of their prejudices, nor of the fact that they themselves may discriminate against others. This can lead to them knowing these terms and rejecting them in theory, but without making a connection to their own reality or becoming aware of their own behaviour.

It is therefore a good approach in training and coaching to use appropriate group or individual exercises to make the origin of prejudices and beliefs visible, to reflect on them and to develop an understanding of how others may feel in certain situations, i.e. to broaden the perspective in the direction of acceptance and appreciation of plurality.

- EXPERIENCE A LEARNING CULTURE THAT IS CHARACTERISED BY ATTENTIVENESS, ATTENTION AND MUTUAL RECOGNITION.

- USE DIFFERENCES IN PERSPECTIVES AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.

- PROMOTE "THINKING IN DIFFERENCES".

"For me, fair dispute means that in my group training topics such as gender mainstreaming and diversity management are openly discussed and, in the spirit of a democratic and pluralistic society, no controversies arise. On the one hand, I think it is important to establish rules ("official" and "unofficial") that are accepted by the group in order to be able to prevent conflicts - if necessary - as soon as they arise. In terms of political basic skills, however, it is desirable to also have debates in which different opinions are represented and to strengthen my participants' awareness of our democratic values and thus convey to them that they too are part of this society. In my experience, this requires suitable methods and tools that are adapted to the respective target group and at the same time give us the confidence to be able to steer debates as moderators and thus have the situation under control" (trainer at BEST).

"My approach to the topic is to make people aware that if we encounter resistance from our participants in training and coaching on certain topics, we can respect and appreciate it, because there is always a personal state of mind (e.g. uncertainty, ignorance, previous injuries, fear) behind it. It is my task to "assert myself" in order to ensure a positive group climate and at the same time to achieve a learning effect for my participants." Constructive assertion has proven itself here: it is based on fundamental appreciation, inclusion of all and willingness to talk even about controversial topics and includes:

- ◇ *Being able to deal with conflict - being prepared to face conflicts.*
- ◇ *Being able to reach a consensus - being willing to reach an agreement.*
- ◇ *To be able to dissent - to be willing to live with contradiction.*
- ◇ *To promote motivation through initiative, creativity and know-how.*
- ◇ *To agree on rules and provide for orientation.*

I consider the ability of adult educators to dispute in a fair way and to pass this on to students as an important contribution to the promotion of political basic skills and a culture of dispute among our target group, i.e. low-skilled and disadvantaged young adults. It is also about showing them alternatives and promoting awareness of diversity. (Coach at BEST)

4. Teaching and learning to deal with controversies – instructional and methodical approaches for training and coaching

In this chapter, we want to give some thoughts and suggestions on how to promote and develop the management of controversies in debates and fair disputes.

4.1 Addressing controversies as a topic of political basic skills training

Even though our previous explanations have shown that a culture of dispute and debate is not very pronounced in the European countries, so that the development of skills in dealing with controversies is actually a task of political education for everyone, we concentrate on political basic skills (called basic education in Austria) and thus on groups of people whose often disadvantaged living conditions mean that they do not feel called upon or invited to participate as active citizens. These target groups - often low-skilled, uneducated and unaccustomed to learning - should be reached by political basic skills in order to develop basic competences for social participation.

The specific **goals of political basic skills** are to promote political participation and the human right to participate. For the target group, it is about showing them the scope for action and co-determination, how they can participate socially and politically. The Berlin State Agency for Civic Education (2017) has underpinned this goal with learning objectives, which we have briefly outlined here in the box for the conceptual embedding of our topic.

As explained in the preceding chapters, the resolution of controversies is increasingly important and a field for democratic learning and the acquisition of competences and attitudes (cf. Handbuch für politische Bildung in der Grundbildung (o.J.) and Berliner Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2017). It is a well-known fact that the target groups for political basic skills are not easy to win over for such courses, which is why experts in basic education, especially in Austria and Germany, have successfully set out to find ways to address and win over the target group for political basic skills.

An important aspect for our topic of carrying out controversies must be emphasised:

Any form of indoctrination is prohibited, i.e. any open agitation and propaganda, forms of overpowering or suppression of political, social, scientific controversies are to be avoided.

o **Overwhelming** means «*contents and forms of pedagogical action which, through conditioning, intimidation, persuasion, emotionalisation, distortion and shortening of facts, etc., impair the free development of the personality and the acquisition of independent judgement*». (Berliner Landeszentrale für politische Bildung 2017, 8)

o **Avoiding misappropriation** means considering the contents of political, social and scientific controversies, which are brought up by participants from the perspective of their realities, as not worthy of attention and ignoring them, or considering them as sensitive and making them taboo.

Learning objectives of political basic skills

- o To develop a sense of belonging to society and/or the local community.
- o To understand politics as a matter for the community, i.e. to understand that and where one's own everyday life has points of contact with social issues.
- o Political empowerment as an invitation to participate and help shape the future.
- o Experiencing and trying out opportunities for participation as a practice in adult education.
- o Advocacy, i.e. enabling participants to identify their interests and advocate for them.
- o Developing and formulating commitment as an encouragement for participants to develop a sense of community, to identify common interests, to show solidarity.
- o Forming opinions, i.e. facilitating experiences of being asked for one's own opinion, developing one's own positions, questioning them and representing them in front of others.
- o Dealing democratically with other opinions as an attitude and competence to endure opposing opinions, to weigh up different positions, to let different opinions stand and to be able to accept them (2017, 8).

4.2 Guiding educational principles for dealing with controversies

With the guiding educational principles, we provide elements of orientation for pedagogical-professional action in the teaching/learning offers for settling controversies through debating and fair disputes, which are also suitable for checking everyday pedagogical action.

o **Real-life orientation** means dealing with topics, events, problems and questions that have a direct connection to the lifeworld and everyday experiences of the participants and where private everyday life or adult education everyday life of the participants touches on political or social issues. Experience from political basic skills training shows that the target group we want to reach is definitely open *«to political and social issues if the connection to their own life world is clear to them. They are also willing to talk about social issues if they feel that knowledge they have gained from their own lives is sufficient for them to have a say in the matter.»* (Berliner Landeszentrale 2017, 7)

o **Situational orientation** refers to taking up authentic situations in everyday adult education where controversies (conflictual) pop up and become visible. Taking up authentic (conflict) situations that arise in the everyday educational life of a group of participants and using them as an occasion to debate and dispute fairly has a lot of potential to promote the resolution of controversial situations through debating and disputing fairly. Basic political skills become a real experience, because it becomes tangible that *«politics is not only party politics and national processes, but is a 'matter of the community' and ultimately affects and largely structures all our lives.... Strengthening interest in issues of the general public and reducing shyness about big issues and their complexity can strengthen both self-confidence and a sense of belonging.»* (Wittmann 2010, 7)

o **Interest orientation** means that adult educators are prepared to base the resolution of controversies on the interests and needs of the participants. Not the subject matter, but its significance for the participants is the pivotal point of didactic planning. The adult educator does not introduce controversies in debates and disputes as learning material in the curriculum, topics are not brought to the participants, but are introduced by them or derived from critical situations.

o **Competence orientation** enables participants to actually open up to topics that they experience as significant. This is possible when they experience that their experiential knowledge, their positions and attitudes, their forms of presentation are respected. It is about the experience for learners to participate in the development of a theme and to push it forward. Ultimately, it is about an attitude on the part of the pedagogical staff to regard the participants as mature political subjects who are accompanied and supported in their participation in the adult education situation.

o **Orientation towards exemplary learning:** In the teaching/learning process, examples are taken up that are linked to the everyday experiences of the learners. Practice has shown that even complex, social learning material can be didacticised using individual concrete examples from the learners' social environment. *«The experiences are to be developed simultaneously from a historical and socio-economic point of view in order to enable the recognition of structural connections between individual life history, immediate interests, wishes, hopes and historical events.»* (Negt/Brock 2010, 106)

o In our context, **participation orientation** means giving a voice to the silent. Especially people in precarious life situations are not used to being heard or asked. The result is a tendency towards speechlessness. These participants assume or have often experienced that they are unable to convey their positions rhetorically in a debate or dispute in such a way that they can stand up to a rhetorically skilled opponent. In a dispute, they may become too tense to be able to engage in controversial debates. It is known from communication psychology that inner tensions consume the mental energy that would have to be expended to engage in or settle controversies. As a result, these people tend to close themselves off inwardly and refuse to engage. Giving the silent and insecure opportunities to position themselves in dispute and giving them a voice is a central concern of the principle of participation orientation, but at the same time it is one of the challenges of adult education that has not yet been satisfactorily overcome.

4.3 Objectives in dealing with controversies and tasks of the adult educators

The guiding question for dealing with controversies is:

How can adult educators in different measures of adult education - with low-skilled, educationally disadvantaged participants in often disadvantaged life situations - succeed in making experience of verbal or non-verbal exchange with opinions and positions other than their own?

The following learning objectives for the participants and tasks for the pedagogical staff are derived from this guiding question.

The participants should

- get ideas and impulses for the development and/or change of awareness, attitudes and positions on complex social contexts;
- learn to think in terms of difference (cf. chapter 3) and to understand differences as positive enrichment;
- develop readiness and competence for interaction with those who think differently. This presupposes being aware of one's own pigeonhole thinking and wanting to break it down;
- making an effort to express one's own opinion precisely and to be able to justify it, without the certainty of knowing the truth alone, i.e. also being open to dissenting positions;
- learn strategies and procedures of debating;
- learn and experience the principles of fair dispute.

The task of the adult educators is to

- ◇ RAISE: To take up controversial issues that affect the everyday life of the participants proactively or reactively as an occasion for the development of competences in dealing with controversies.
- ◇ MODERATE: To moderate discussions and provide impetus for (further) development of awareness, attitudes and attitudes.

- ◇ DEESCALISE: Calming emerging conflicts and escalations in controversies, e.g. by offering structures appropriate to the situation, such as demanding discussion rules, enforcing breaks and time-outs.
- ◇ PROVIDE FOR MEANS: Give participants concrete tools for fair disputes and debates.

4.4 Dispute culture and dispute topics in adult education practice - observations, assessments, limits

In our project, we interviewed educationalists in vocational and general further education in Norway and Austria and asked for their perspectives on controversies and how they are dealt with. In the process, a wealth of commonalities emerged in the assessment of the current culture of dispute and conflict.

Creeping increase in conflicts: In both interview groups it is noted that the increase of conflicts between participants and between participants and educators has increased gradually in recent years. A trainer from Austria makes it clear that several levels of the decline of a culture of debate and argument can be observed: In politics itself, in society through the increasing polarisation of topics such as migration, religious views and conspiracy theories. Adult education as part of society also reflects this trend.

The causes for this development are highly complex and feed on different strands. The American sociologist Richard Sennett pointed out years ago that Western societies are on a path *«from, in a sense, externally-led to internally-led relationships. It is no longer generally valid forms of public interaction, but feelings that are increasingly guiding actions»*. (quoted in Flasspöhler 2021, 43).

Feelings are guiding actions: the erosion of publicly valid norms and values with simultaneous emphasis on the autonomy of the individual and his or her right to identity puts the focus on what separates and not on what we have in common. One might also see this as a merit of adult education, which places itself at the centre with its emancipatory claim to the subject and declares autonomy to be a central human right.

On the other hand, this tendency to let feelings guide actions leads to a hypersensitive society. *«Hypersensitivity means that one suffers more and more, although one has less reason to do so.»* (Odo Marquard, quoted in Flasspöhler 2021, 127) The increase in psychologically conspicuous anxiety disorders mentioned in chapter 2.5 points into this direction. Anxiety as a guiding emotion does not need a concrete dispute or cause for conflict; anxiety finds conflicts on its own. This is currently evident in Germany in the scene of demonstrators against the pandemic regulations. After the requirements have almost completely been dropped, the protests do not stop. The pandemic is only replaced, the protesters now focus on the 'Greens as warmongers'.

Addressing fears in adult education practice? This also addresses one of the biggest challenges in the didactic methodology of adult education practice. If fears guide action and a resolution of a conflict does not pacify the situation and the individual, but a new fear replaces the former, a solution will only

be found if the fears are made a topic. Thus, adult education as a helping but not healing profession comes close to a therapeutic field. When addressing fears, it is therefore important to ensure that the boundaries to the therapeutic field are not crossed.

New conflict topics and triggers in everyday activities: The outbreak of the Corona pandemic has increased conflicts in adult education groups, but is not the cause of the development. The pedagogues interviewed listed a whole range of issues that have conflict potential and make work in adult education more difficult.

The Norwegian interviewees mention Corona, the headscarf debate as proof of the alleged oppression of women in Islam, homosexuality, the exploitation of the welfare state and the Islamisation of Norway, but also everyday issues such as the development of electricity prices.

Besides Corona, the Austrian interview partners mainly mention discrimination based on origin, gender and sexual orientation, religious and political issues, gender roles and increasingly also climate protection. The topics of gender mainstreaming and diversity management, which are obligatory in some educational measures as personality-building elements of offers, are also conflict triggers.

In current affairs, Putin's war against Ukraine is also becoming a topic or cause for polarisation in the resolution of controversies and thus a cause and topic for adult educators.

4.5 Approaches to dealing with controversial issues

These conflict triggers can unexpectedly lead to disputes in learning groups, which can be a striking challenge for adult educators, as they are often emotional and very dynamic. With the appropriate "methodological tools", however, it is possible to react appropriately to controversies that pop up in a given situation and to deal with the situation adequately. However, there is also a whole range of conflict triggers that can be tackled preventively by adult educators. Topics that are closely connected to the social everyday life of the learners and whose conflict potential is known can be prepared by the pedagogical staff in advance in such a way that emerging conflicts can be dealt with using the appropriate didactic-methodical instruments.

Basically, we can distinguish between approaches that initiate the resolution of controversies and can be used to promote competences for debating and fair disputes: **A thematic-proactive approach and a situational-reactive approach.** Suggestions for both approaches can be found in our toolbox.

Proactively addressing a controversial topic from the life-world: Adult educators take up typical social, political and economic topics in which controversies are inherent and which require the exchange of positions and perspectives. These are topics that are played out in public media and discourses and that also touch the social everyday life of the education participants. Such topics can be suggested by the adult educators or come as a desired topic from the group.

They are prepared didactically and methodically by the adult educator. This includes, for example, impulses for different positions on the chosen topic, which are examined by the participants, on which

they position themselves and which they develop further themselves. Alternatively, the adult educator presents discussion questions for working on the topic, on which the participants themselves can formulate their views and positions. Another variant that has proven itself in practice is to have prominent representatives of a topic speak as an impulse for the discussion (via a talk show excerpt or newspaper article).

Typical topics are e.g. Corona vaccination, arms supply to Ukraine, exclusion, climate protection, anti-Semitism, life models.

Situational-reactive taking up of conflicts related to everyday educational life: This is the more challenging approach, in which controversial situations that arise concretely in everyday educational life are taken up and dealt with via a double intention: to avoid an escalation of conflict or to deal with frozen or speechless polarisation in learning groups.

In such situations, depending on the level of escalation, the adult educator must first pacify the situation depending on the emotional involvement of the "opponents", lead to a factually structured debate and dispute according to the rules of conversation; it has also proven useful to interrupt the situation, which may be emotionally charged (e.g. by taking a short break) and then agree on a timely date with the participants to work on the topic together in a structured way.

In any case, it helps to have methodological tools for such real situations that have proven to be able to react and deal appropriately with 'real' (conflict) situations (e.g. dealing with different religious attitudes) that (frequently) occur in everyday education. Strategies and methods of conflict management can be helpful here. Our subject of dealing with conflicts is about situations in which debating would be or would have been useful for understanding, i.e. where there was or is an urgent need for action on the part of the educators. These situations/cases are then dealt with methodically.

Well-proven and tested methods are e.g. pro-contra debate, brainstorming of arguments, Fish Boal, pa-radox intervention, psychodrama.

4.6 Success factors in promoting debating and disputing skills

In adult education practice it has been shown that fair disputes can work if ...

- ... rules for dealing with controversies are in place and are accepted and «lived» by all; examples of this are a fairness contract but also debating and dispute rules that are visualised in the group room;
- ... despite all the differences, not only the things that divide people are worked out, but also the things that they have in common in terms of views, attitudes and opinions; ritualising this view is one of the facilitation tasks of the adult educators;
- ... the participants know that disputes can go hand in hand with (not necessarily intended) injuries and the participants are offered support in dealing with injuries appropriately - this applies both to those who see themselves attacked and as victims as well as to those who

actively dispute with their positions and, if necessary, emotionally express them; this is also an important task of the adult educators in guiding the process of dealing with controversies;

- ... the learners can experience that emotions are part of the process of dealing with controversies, that they are normal and unavoidable. At the same time, they learn how collective rules of conflict resolution do not have to lead to the end of the interaction.

Successful promotion of competences to deal with controversies in debates and fair disputes also includes:

Offer excursions on learning democracy: When working with refugees as participants from other cultures and non-democratic societies, it is advisable to include courses on learning democracy, e.g. in the form of training on understanding democracy. These people have often been betrayed, lied to and threatened by authorities such as governments and offices. In order to enable the acquisition of debating and argumentation skills, the need for democracy education may have to be met. "This means that the adult educators... address the democratic processes of the new home country and follow the goal of reducing fear (of punishment) and creating trust in the rule of law and in democracy. Ideally, this minimises conflict situations in the classroom/course, as existential fears can be weakened. (12 NOR May 2022)

Dealing with discomfort and resistance from participants: In practice, it can be observed time and again that participants react with discomfort or resistance to the discussion of controversial topics, especially if they are conflictual and directly affected. To deal with such situations, here are a few hints from a handbook on dealing professionally with resistance in adult education (Ehrensperger o.J.). Suggestions for dealing with resistance can be found in theories of adult education, organisational development and counselling. The author points out that it is not enough to look at the causes of resistance solely in terms of the participant. The educational institution, the degree of learning imposition as well as the demands and personality traits of the adult educators are possible triggers of resistance, but also the learning history and learning culture of the resistant participant.

What is interesting within our context, in our opinion, is the perspective of organisational development, which considers and postulates resistance as a completely normal companion of (learning) change:

1. there is no change without resistance
2. resistance always contains a 'coded message'
3. disregarding resistance leads to blockages
4. go with the resistance, not against it

Counselling theories argue in a similar direction and recommend working with resistance. Guiding principles for action are:

- Promote autonomy instead of conformism
- Sensitise participants to the perception of others and of themselves
- Addressing tensions among participants

- A high degree of willingness to reflect on the part of adult educators

The author of the handout points out that the design of the initial phase of a training measure must be carefully planned and that a contract must be agreed with the participants that emphasises the shared responsibility for successful learning. In case of resistance, there should be no blame, but the phenomena of resistance should be described. If adult educators have understood that they do not have to take everything personally and at the same time they know that they (can) trigger resistance through their role and person, a lot has already been gained. (cf. Ehrensberger)

Actively involve participants showing low German language skills: Debating and fair disputes are patterns of action that require competence in the use of the German language. The educational practitioners we interviewed suggested and tested giving the participants who are less proficient in German central terms to help them in the situations in which controversies are dealt with didactically. These certainly include terms such as 'controversy', 'fair dispute', debate, but also terms that make the subject/theme of the respective controversy comprehensible. Three variations have come to our attention:

- Write down terms in class so that the participants can search for a translation themselves using their smartphones.
- Provide a glossary in German so that the participants can familiarise themselves with the terms in advance, if necessary.
- A glossary with translations into the respective mother tongue.

Raising awareness of intercultural communication:

Adult educators often find themselves in a multicultural environment in their courses and teaching scenarios. Where many cultures meet and different communication is practised, this is called intercultural communication.

Intercultural communication is broadly defined as the communicative exchange between people belonging to different national communities. Specifically, intercultural communication can also be described as communication between different social classes (...).

In the practice of adult education, heterogeneous groups often clash with different cultures, which may involve potential for conflict. This is intensified in the target group of young disadvantaged adults by the need to position oneself within the group and by the different cultural imprints.

In order to deal with controversies and to avert conflicts as far as possible or to face them appropriately, it is necessary from adult education experience to be aware that intercultural communication is not a one-way street, i.e. it only starts from one side. Rather, it should be practised and demanded by all participants.

Especially in the heterogeneous groups described above, learners and adult educators are equally confronted with different culturally shaped expectations, behaviours and learning styles. If these are only perceived through one's own "cultural glasses", there is a lack of understanding and willingness to deal with the meaning and decoding of cultural codes. As a result, interlocutors can feel put off and withdraw; an open exchange of opinions is ended before it has actually begun, and misunderstandings arise on both sides. Typical examples are the way of greeting, the volume of communication, the choice

³² The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. (Projektnr.: 2021-1-DE02-KA2220-ADU-000027056)

of words, the willingness to actively listen to other opinions and to respect them, to remain on the emotional level instead of the factual level in arguments, different body language.

The awareness of adult educators to recognise their own patterns as not universally valid, and the necessary empathy and intercultural competence in dealing with participants with different conversational cultures, makes it possible to avoid these "traps". Intercultural communication in working with heterogeneous groups promotes understanding of how people from different countries and cultures communicate and perceive the world around them. This is especially important in situations where we have to deal with stereotypes, prejudices or discrimination of individuals or groups in this context.

Even when defining or communicating group rules, it is helpful to be aware of different cultural influences and ways of behaving in order to ensure that these rules and their meaning are correctly understood and followed by all group members (e.g. punctuality, respectful treatment of each other) - and, if necessary, to demand them in such a way that any conflicts that may arise or have arisen are de-escalated or do not result in any (new) conflicts.

In terms of improving the ability to engage in dialogue, raising awareness of interculturality and the corresponding communication of the participants is also an opportunity to convey principles of civic competences by applying and practising them in practice, i.e. in the group setting - not only by the trainers or coaches, but by all group members.

4 Concluding remarks

Tasks and challenges for adult educators

In practice, it is often too much of a challenge to take up controversial points of view in the teaching/learning process and make them the subject of discussion. Particularly in degree-related measures/programmes, where teaching technical contents often needs to take place in a tight time frame, there often does not seem to be enough time for engaging in controversies and their processing through debating and fair disputes.

One consequence, which is of course fatal for the goals of adult education, is the emergence of taboo topics. *«If we have only Arab participants in a group who come from different Arab countries, we do not talk about the war in the Middle East, as this can lead to tensions between the learners in the group. Homosexuality is also excluded, because this has led to insults and aggression between learners and teachers in the past, even to expulsion.»* (I1/NOR) Taboo tendencies can also be observed among learners who no longer express their opinions for fear of stigmatisation. In the Austrian context observed, rules of interaction are set at the beginning of the course and negotiated with the learners in addition to the official house rules. It is stated in heterogeneous groups that Corona, politics and religious views should be taboo subjects. This tabooing seems to be necessary especially in vocational training programmes that are related to the final degree, because a culture of debate needs time to be practised, which is not available due to given content requirements.

Tabooing of topics that might lead to conflicts is, of course, not a solution in the longer run, as they continue to exist below the threshold and influence the climate of the learning group. Conflict research has shown that taboo conflicts develop their own dynamics and tend to grow rather than diminish. Time does not heal here, but makes things worse.

Establishing a culture of conflict in a further education institution is a task for all staff

In many institutions of further education, dealing with conflicts in an appropriate way or dealing with disputes adequately is seen exclusively as a task of the educational practitioners. This overlooks the fact that supervisors and managers also have a great responsibility for establishing a culture of debate and argument. If this is attributed exclusively to the pedagogical staff, the handling of conflicts and disputes in an institution will be very different, because each pedagogical staff member defines his/her rules and free spaces differently. Learners will be confused, as expected behaviour in case of conflict is defined differently by adult educators.

In educational practice, it has proven to be sensible and correct when an educational institution has structures that are binding for all actors. Common house rules, rules of conversation or fairness agreements have proven their value not only at schools but also in continuing education. They are a necessary but not sufficient prerequisite for approaches to a culture of conflict. Further training programmes for pedagogical staff should also react to the fact that conflicts are increasingly a topic and problem in the practice of further education. Offers for intercultural training or so-called resilience training are part of this.

The responsibility of the meso level can also be seen, for example, in the fact that team rounds of educational practitioners are an integral part of the organisation, or that regular jour fixes take place that address conflicts and disputes. In educational practice, it is often overlooked that an appropriate way of dealing with disputes also requires spaces for reflection for the educational practitioners. If they are left alone in cases of conflict, they will make conflict topics taboo for their own protection and develop avoidance behaviour, which only supposedly relieves them because the causes of conflict are not addressed.

Authenticity and empathy as basic pedagogical attitudes are not always compatible

Karl Rogers outlined the pedagogical personality, which is characterised by three features: it has a positive attitude towards its clients and behaves empathically and authentically. He did not explain that empathy and authenticity can be in tension with each other, but in cases of dispute this becomes a fundamental challenge for pedagogical practitioners. Empathy, which has a central place in many curricula on dispute culture, has a thoroughly ambivalent side:

«Withdrawal instead of confrontation, sensitivity instead of harshness, understanding instead of demarcation: what could be objected to such empathic sympathy? A closer look, however, reveals the danger of a regular loss of perspective. The attentive and empathetic observer required here no longer has any view of things of his own, because he is absorbed in that of the other» (Floßpöhler 2021, 160).

If adult educators want to be empathetic in a dispute, e.g. when a learner makes anti-Semitic statements, he/she can only do so at the price of self-denial and with the risk of being despised by learners because of his/her spinelessness. If he/she behaves authentically and represents his/her political position offensively, he/she refuses an offer to talk. In practice, this dilemma leads, as Austrian interviewees reported, to trainers no longer behaving objectively on certain topics, but feeling personally affected or attacked and reacting accordingly, e.g. getting involved in discussions and personally defending positions. It is an open question how trainers as game leaders deal with situations where they are challenged or feel challenged in dealing with their own emotions on controversial topics.

Especially in learning groups with a high proportion of learners of Arab origin, it is often a challenge, which takes time to process, to differentiate positions critical of Israel from anti-Semitic attitudes. Nevertheless, it is true that it must be clearly formulated in the applicable regulations of an educational institution that there is no place and no right to exist for anti-Semitic tones in this institution.

Adult education science needs to show responsibility

Those who expect to gain knowledge in adult education science on the topic of 'dealing with controversies' or even the obvious topic of 'conflicts in adult learning groups' will be rather disappointed. Although there is - especially in Austria - suitable teaching material with concrete suggestions for the design of corresponding offers on the topic of conflicts, a scientific reappraisal of the topic of conflicts in adult education is still largely lacking or has disappeared. *«If you look for the term 'conflict' in current dictionaries or handbooks of adult education, you look for it in vain. It should be grammatically located between 'competence' and 'constructivism', but it is not there.»* (Hufer 2015, 29) For Hufer, this is due to the paradigmatic shift from an emancipatory idea of education to a functionalist concept of competence (cf. op. cit., 31). In view of the trends in social development, there is no alternative to making conflicts the subject of basic political skills and adult education again (to recall Mrs Angela Merkel).

Establishing a culture of conflict takes a long time

Structural prerequisites mentioned above, i.e. those facilitating an educational institution's path towards a culture of dispute, are helpful, but they do not guarantee for the actual success of establishing a culture of dispute. Each new learning group presents new challenges when it comes to enforcing the rules that apply in the institution. Especially in CVET, where the principle of voluntary participation is often restricted and many learners participate under pressure from the job centre or employment service (AMS in Austria), the pressure to participate felt by the learners is often a frequent point of conflict. They tend to be defensive learners who do not expect much from learning, but rather learn in order to avoid unpleasant sanctions by the job centre. The attempt to enable them to learn in a way that is experienced as a gain and to transform them into expansive learners in the pedagogical process is highly demanding and places great demands on the pedagogical staff.

Resolution of controversies, conflicts and disputes that arise in the learning group as a result of different views make this process more difficult and often lead to the fact that educators no longer see

any possibility of continuing on the path to a culture of conflict. Only through mutual support and the assistance of the leadership can such resignation be counteracted. A culture of conflict needs a lot of stamina, and one or the other actor may run out of steam in the meantime and need help from a third party to stay on and «breathe».

5 Sources and Links

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https://www.vlbtx.de/MediaFiles/cover/978376/395/9783763956555_leseprobe_02.pdf
- Erwachsenenbildung.at stellt ein Handbuch für politische Bildung in der Basisbildung mit Anregungen und Übungen für Erwachsenenbilder*innen zur Verfügung, in dem eine Vielzahl von Themen behandelt werden (einige davon führen erfahrungsgemäß häufig zu Kontroversen im Trainingsalltag): <https://erwachsenenbildung.at/basisbildung-pdfs/in-bewegung-handbuch-politische-bildung.pdf>
- Das Demokratiezentrum Wien, eine unabhängige wissenschaftliche Einrichtung mit Aufgaben in der Demokratieforschung und der Demokratiebildung, unter anderem für Lehrende und Lernende. Die Bildungsangebote richten sich sowohl an Schüler*innen als auch Erwachsene, z.B. im Rahmen eines Moocs:

Demooc – Demokratiepoltische Bildung für Erwachsene, ein kostenfreier Onlinekurs, der sich an Multiplikator*innen in der Erwachsenenbildung und Interessierte wendet. Er stellt Materialien und Methoden zur Verfügung, die in Kursen zur Politischen Bildung verwendet werden können. Der DeMOOC soll Politische Bildung in der Erwachsenenbildung stärken, besonders im Rahmen des Kursangebots von Volkshochschulen. Es geht darum, ein besseres Verständnis von Demokratie, Politik und Gesellschaft auf verschiedenen Ebenen entwickeln zu können, um so den eigenen Zugang zur Politik zu stärken und aktiv Anteil am politischen System teilnehmen zu können.
<https://www.demokratiezentrum.org/bildung/angebote/moocs/demooc-demokratiepolitische-bildung-fuer-erwachsene/>
- Zentrum Polis – Politik lernen in der Schule des Wiener Forums für Demokratie und Menschenrechte und des Bundesministeriums für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung. Das Angebot richtet sich hauptsächlich an Lehrkräfte an Schulen, z.B. „keine Panik“, eine Serie von Unterrichtsmaterialien und Lern-Videos für den Unterricht von zu Hause aus. Unter anderem wird auch die aktuelle Situation rund um das Coronavirus thematisiert. <https://www.politik-lernen.at/keinepanik>, sowie als Download die Broschüre „Politische Bildung konkret – Beispiele für kompetenzorientierten Unterricht“:
<https://erwachsenenbildung.at/basisbildung-pdfs/in-bewegung-handbuch-politische-bildung.pdf>
- Die Österreichische Gesellschaft für Politische Basisbildung (ÖGPB) bietet eine Datenbank mit Methoden und Übungen, in erster Linie für Personen, die im Bereich der Basisbildung tätig sind,

aber auch Wissenschaftler*innen, politische Bildner*innen und Interessierte können nützliche Links und Informationen auf diesen Seiten finden. Dort findet sich unter den Methoden ein Argumentationstraining inkl. der Übung „Parolen Paroli bieten.“
<https://www.politischebildung.at/pbb/2017/09/29/argumentationstraining/>

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