

Question in Project:

PIAAC-Longitudinal (PIAAC-L) 2016 - Acquisition of Competencies (English Version)

Question Topic:

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

Construct:

Topic of further training

General Information:

Note: This item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording. The translation does not correspond exactly to the wording in the English PIAAC source questionnaire.

Question Text:

What was the main topic of this training?

[Um welches Thema ging es bei dieser Weiterbildung hauptsächlich?]

Instruction:

INT: If the answer to question 10 is 'Yes'. *[INT: Wenn in Frage 10 mit "Ja" geantwortet wurde.]*

INT: Present list 6. *[INT: Liste 6 vorlegen.]*

Answer Categories:

- 1 Foreign languages *[Fremdsprachen]*
- 2 Sport or relaxation *[Sport oder Entspannung]*
- 3 Health prevention or promotion *[Gesundheitsvorsorge oder -förderung]*
- 4 Creativity, music or craft *[Kreativität, Musik oder Handwerk]*
- 5 Computer or software use, information technology *[Computer- oder Softwarenutzung, Informationstechnik]*
- 6 Personality or communication *[Persönlichkeit oder Kommunikation]*
- 7 Project management or leadership skills *[Projektmanagement oder Führungskompetenzen]*

- 8 Finance, commercial or business management knowledge [*Finanzen, kaufmännisches oder betriebswirtschaftliches Wissen*]
- 9 Politics, society or culture [*Politik, Gesellschaft oder Kultur*]
- 10 Medicine [*Medizin*]
- 11 Natural sciences, natural history or environment [*Naturwissenschaften, Naturkunde oder Umwelt*]
- 12 Psychology or pedagogy [*Psychologie oder Pädagogik*]
- 13 Legal issues [*Rechtsthemen*]
- 14 Technology [*Technik*]
- 15 Safety (e.g. first aid, traffic) [*Sicherheit (z.B. Erste Hilfe, Verkehr)*]
- 16 Integration courses [*Integrationskurse*]
- 17 Basic education (e.g. reading, arithmetic) [*Grundbildung (z.B. Lesen, Rechnen)*]
- 18 Profession-specific knowledge [*Berufsspezifisches Wissen*]
- 19 Other issues, namely: [*Sonstige Themen, und zwar:*]

Cognitive Techniques:

General Probing, Specific Probing, Comprehension Probing

Findings for Question:

Out of a total of 18 respondents, only five (TP 05, 06, 07, 10, 16) took part in a general further training course in 2014. Test person 05 has taken part in further training in the area of "personality or communication". Test person 16 is classified in the "foreign languages" branch, although she finds it difficult to pinpoint one category: *"Foreign languages in any case. Creativity and music perhaps still. Politics, society and culture. ...because it was also about the stars falling off the stage."* The respondents 06 and 10 each completed two further training courses. TP 10 gives courses in "foreign languages" and "other topics" (beekeeping), but is irritated by the assignment of the beekeeping seminar: *"I'm not quite sure now, maybe with 11 'natural sciences' or 4 'creativity'? Nope. Maybe with 'other'? Natural science is perhaps a bit too high for beekeepers."* TP 06 states at first only "Sport or Relaxation". When presenting the list, however, the test person remarks: *"It occurs to me that I have further educated myself in another area. 15 'Safety and first aid.'"* A test person (TP 07) cannot commit himself at all and justifies this as follows:

- TP 07: *"Well, if I apply this very general definition, I can already say that I find it very difficult to make a list. Because a year is long. I usually do a lot."*
- CI: *"You haven't thought about one specific training course, but several?"*
- TP 07: *"Right. Everything I did, in principle. I could say 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18. So this is one of those questions with multiple answers."*
- CI: *"It was all about the subject."*

■TP 07: *"I can't name a subject right now."*

In order to check the completeness of the list of topics, the test persons were asked to name any miss-ing areas of the given list No. 6. In this context TP 10 judged the list to be too short and suggested to add the category "hobbies". All other test persons consider the list of topics to be complete and respond accordingly to the question about the number of topics that have been specified that the length of the list is just right.

A further shorter list was subsequently presented to the respondents:

- 1 Basic education (e.g. reading, arithmetic) [*Grundbildung (z.B. Lesen, Rechnen)*]
- 2 Profession-specific knowledge [*Berufsspezifisches Wissen*]
- 3 Personality and communication [*Persönlichkeit oder Kommunikation*]
- 4 Computer or software use, information technology [*Computer, Technik oder Informationstechnik*]
- 5 Finance or law [*Finanzen oder Recht*]
- 6 Health [*Gesundheit*]
- 7 Personal areas of interest [*Persönliche Interessensgebiete*]
- 8 Other, that is: [*Sonstiges, und zwar:*]

Now the test persons should make an assessment based on the comparison of both lists. They were therefore asked which list would have made it easier for them to answer the question. Three out of five test persons (TP 05, 06, 07) prefer the longer topic and thus the original list. They justify their answer by saying that the list is more detailed or more complete: *"List 6 is more detailed and list 8 still lacks topics such as medicine"* (TP 06). In addition, the spontaneous comment of test person 06 shows another advantage of the more detailed topic selection: *"If I had received list 8, it would not have occurred to me that I had taken a safety course. That would have gone under. Therefore, tendency list 6. Definitely."* So by defaulting multiple categories, the respondents' recall is enhanced. The remaining two test persons (TP 10, 16) decide on the shorter list. While TP 10 sees the advantage in the coarser categories *"Because less is specific. It is broader and one can more easily assign oneself under one point"*, TP 16 prefers the short list because of the lower reading effort: *"I prefer the short [list]. Because it is easier. You do not have to read so much. It is actually relatively much that is addressed. Politics is missing here, of course."*

Although the arguments of the respondents indicate a clear preference for one of the two lists, they were asked to list possible advantages of the other list. It turns out that the scarcity of the second list is on the one hand positively evaluated with regard to the less time required and on the other hand is less deterrent than the long list:

- *"She doesn't scare off [because she's shorter]. You always tend to be lazy." (TP 06)*
- *"Saving time." (TP 07)*

The advantage of the longer list, on the other hand, is seen in the level of detail and the naming of specific topics: *"I find it interesting that there are integration courses on it, and something like music, creativity and handicrafts are not quite so common here [list 8]. [...] I would not have thought of it on my own"* (TP 10). Analogous to the statement of TP 06, the comment of TP 10 further clarifies that the detailed topic specification has a positive influence on the memory performance.

In addition, the test persons were also asked for the shorter list if they were missing any areas. TP 10 and 07 cannot complete the list, because in their opinion the general categories cover every aspect or categories of the longer list were combined:

- *"It's sort of short for List 6. It's a collection of categories. Since nothing is missing from List 6, nothing is missing from List 8." (TP 07)*
- TP 10: *"I had a hard time with List 6 because beekeeping is not a science."*
- CI: *"Where would you have placed yourself on List 8 [short list]?"*
- TP 10: *"I would have just taken personal interests."*

The other test persons feel that the list is incomplete. While TP 05 adds foreign languages, TP 06 mentions that safety courses are not considered. TP 16 expands the selection to include politics and society and psychology, but at the same time puts the additions into perspective: *"Politics, society, but it says 'personal areas of interest', so that's where you can classify it. Yes, Psychology is actually missing. Although that's partly cleared up with 'Personality'."*

In the long list (list 6) the aspect "personality or communication" was included. In order to find out what the test persons understand by "personality" in this context, they were asked to explain the term and give examples. The statements show that personality as a further training topic is connected with the development of personal competencies, whereby TP 16 defines the term very generally and does not refer to concrete further training possibilities: *"The ability to communicate, personal preferences, introverted or extroverted, different preferences one has, technical understanding or rather emotional, energetic personality or a dreamer, sporty or not sporty, musical or not musical."* TP 07 and 10 include primarily vocational further training, in particular for the training of leadership skills:

- *"Social behavior. Or, more specifically for the profession, leadership skills. Basic personality traits, assertiveness, willpower." (TP 07)*
- *"The first thing I thought about was communication and the same things you do at management seminars, like body language and how do I talk to someone to package something positively. I didn't think about personality until you asked me." (TP 10)*

From the statement of TP 10 it can further be deduced that the interpretation of the course topic "personality or communication" goes back more to the second term, whereby the emphasis on professional seminars of the leadership elite also seems plausible. Personality whereas connects TP 10 with coping with personal problems: *"I would rather classify personality under psychology. That people with a very extreme personality try to cope better with it in one direction or another."* Test persons 05 and 06 also relate the term to aspects of self-management and dealing with personal weaknesses:

- *"How can I deal with problems in my life more easily, how can I learn how to cope with stress and time management or rhetoric seminars, how can I talk better or communicate my topics?"* (TP 05)
- *"Maybe that if you are aggressive, you take part in an anti-aggression course, which changes your personality. Maybe someone is trying to calm down."* (TP 06)

Overall, respondents were more comfortable with the original more detailed list than with the shorter topic selection when answering the question. This is due in particular to the fact that the more specific default both allows a more precise classification and supports the cognitive memory performance.

Recommendations:

First of all, there is no preceding question about how many training courses the respondents have attended in 2014. Question 11 is based on the assumption that this is only one further training course, this assumption may be incorrect, e.g. three test persons (TP 06, 07, 10) have attended at least two courses. If you only want to refer to a general continuing education event, we recommend to ask the additional question 10.3 in advance and then to refer to it only in question 11.

10.3 What was the most important general further education in 2014 for you? [*Was war die für Sie wichtigste allgemeine Weiterbildung in 2014?*]

(open answer)

If question 11 is not only about one (most important or last) general further training, 10.3 can be omitted and multiple answers can be allowed instead for question 11.

Answer options: No changes recommended.