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FÜR ERZIEHUNGSWISSENSCHAFT



Prof. Dr. Anke Grotlüschen, Dr. Klaus Buddeberg

PIAAC and the „South“ – why regional comparison matters

PIAAC and the „South“ – why regional comparison matters

1. Surveys of Lifelong Learning as Contributors to Neoliberal Processes of „Southering“
2. Contributing to the Common Good? (Mary Hamilton 2018): Why comparison is a question of perspectives
3. Local Surveys and local custody over the Questionnaire – the LEO example. Competences do not only serve markets, but democracies (critical thinking).
4. Conclusion: Building local scientific capacity & strategies matters



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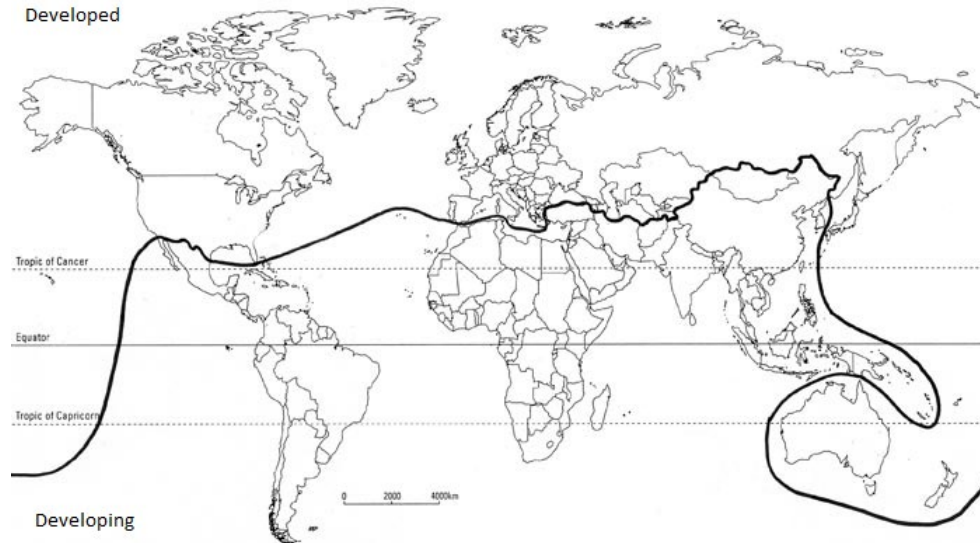
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1. Surveys of Lifelong Learning as Contributors to Neoliberal Processes of „Southering“

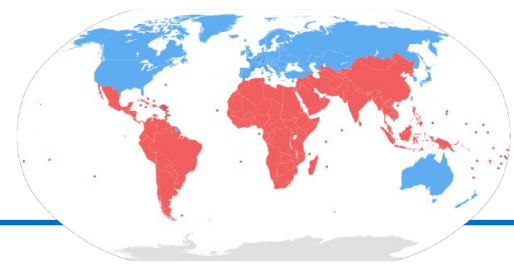
South as a State of Mind

First World (western), Second World (eastern), Third World
After the fall of the Iron Curtain (1990ies): North and South



South is not geographical:
The discussion follows the
Brandt Report (1980) and is
known as *Brandt Line*
(30 degree N latitude)





Map:
„North-south divide“
Wikipedia website

South as a State of Mind – discriminating practice

- ‘The South is the effect of a set of relationships between power, knowledge, and space. Modern coloniality invented a geography and a chronology: the South as primitive and past; the North as progress and future.’ (Preciado 2017, p. 1)
- ‘The South derives from a racial and sexual system of social classification, a binary epistemology that opposes **up** and **down**, the **mind** and the **body**, the **head** and the **feet**, **rationality** and **emotion**, **theory** and **practice**. The South is not an existing, given place, but a gendered, sexualized, and racialized myth’ (ibid.)

Preciado, P. B. (2017). Let your South walk, listen and decide. *documenta 14 Public Papers*(2), 1.

Chile

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Adult skills (Survey of Adult Skills, PIAAC, 2015)

- The mean proficiency score of 16-65 year-olds in literacy is significantly below the average of the OECD countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). In numeracy, the mean proficiency score is significantly below the average.
- The young adult population (25-34 year-olds) scores at 235 in literacy, compared to 277 on average in the OECD countries participating in the Survey. In numeracy, they score at 222 (272 in average). In both domains, younger adults score higher than their older counterparts (55-65 year-olds).
- One-fourth of the adult population (16-65 year-olds) report no prior experience with computers or lack very basic computer skills. In contrast, 14.6% of the adult population score at the highest levels in problem solving in technology-rich environments.
- In Chile, 53.4% of the adults score at the lowest levels in literacy and 61.9% score low in numeracy.
- In Chile, tertiary-educated adults perform better than their less-educated peers, but their scores in literacy and numeracy are well below the OECD average.
- Gender gaps in favour of men, are among the widest observed across OECD countries.

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Peru

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Adult skills (Survey of Adult Skills, PIAAC, 2018)

- Adults in Peru show extremely low levels of proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments compared with adults in the other countries and economies participating in the survey. More than half of Peruvian adults opted out of the problem solving assessment or could not undertake it because they failed to meet the basic ICT requirements.
- Compared with most other participating countries and economies, the low proficiency in information processing skills is associated with high variability in scores. This is reflected in very large and above average differences in proficiency by educational attainment and parental background. Youth, those with a tertiary degree or those with at least one tertiary-educated parent score significantly higher than their counterparts.

[| Survey of Adult Skills \(PIAAC\)](#) | [Skills Matter: Additional Results from the Survey of Adult Skills \(2019\)](#) | [Country Note](#) |

PROFILE VIEW

[Highlights](#)[Data table](#)[Charts by topic](#)[Generate PDF](#)

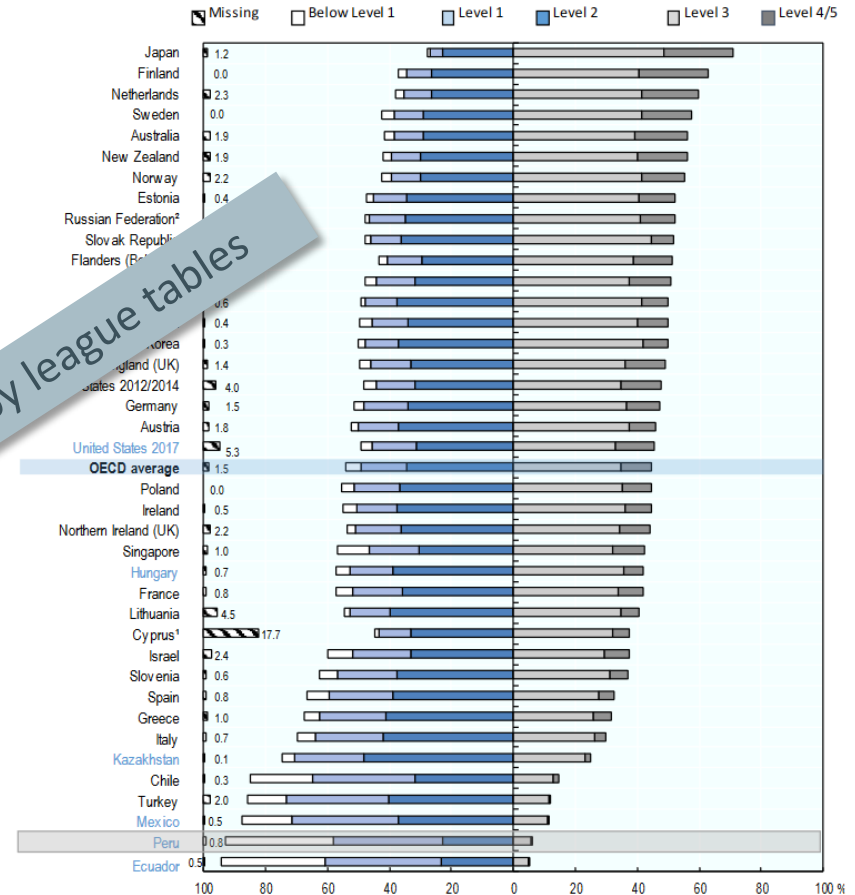
Surveys of Lifelong Learning as Contributors to Neoliberal Processes of „Southering“

- Constant benchmarking against OECD average
- New R3 countries highlighted in blue (first round of „southering“), define the „new early birds, southering is discrimination by league tables“

OECD. (2019). Skills Matter. Additional Results from the Survey of Adult Skills. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1f029d8f-en>

Figure 1. Literacy proficiency among adults

Percentage of adults scoring at each proficiency level in literacy





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2. Contributing to the Common Good? (Mary Hamilton 2018): Why comparison is a question of perspectives

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“The explicit aim of PIAAC is to intervene in national policies with a global, future-oriented vision (OECD 2013, Hamilton 2018) – equity, prosperity and engagement with a global, future-oriented vision (OECD 2013, Hamilton 2018)” (Hamilton, 2018, p. 168)

PIAAC Literacy: Singapore well below OECD average among the bottom countries

“So, what did the OECD and the media do with these results? (...)

- “Firstly, the OECD countries highlight the age differences in achievements, making important assumptions about the quality of education in these countries”
- “The success of Singapore in the PIAAC is foregrounded in Andreas Schleicher's commentaries (...) and although it is at the top of the league table of nations, it is held up as a positive role model”
- “The Green Paper does not make any positive points for example that educational levels of young Greeks overall is increasing – unusually – women were higher performing than men”

Hamilton, M. (2018). Contributing to the common good? Media Coverage of the International Large-scale Assessment of Adult Skills (PIAAC) in Four National Contexts. *Studies in the Education of Adults*

Reder, S. (2011). Some Thoughts on IALS Measurement Validity, Program Impact, and Logic Models for Policy Development. Fall Institute 2011. Retrieved from. The Centre for Literacy. <http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/node/1597#cda>

Local Surveys and local custody over the Questionnaire – the LEO example. Competences do not only serve markets, but democracies (critical thinking).

If you want to use data for evidence based policy, then make sure you have the custody over the (background) questionnaire

Else you depend on

- what OECD delivers
- their interpretation of reforms (more flexibility, less trade unions...)

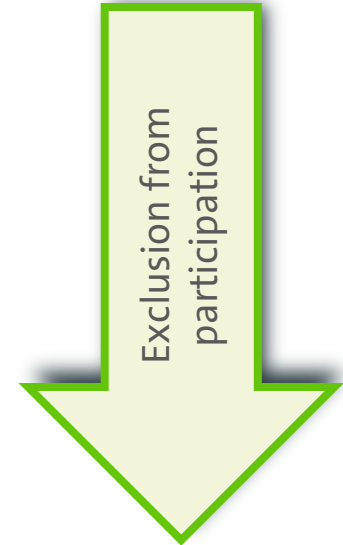
PIAAC has dozens of workplace outcome variables (employment, wages) but only one single variable on political stability (political efficacy).



3. Local Surveys and local custody over the Questionnaire – the LEO example. Competences do not only serve markets, but democracies (critical thinking).

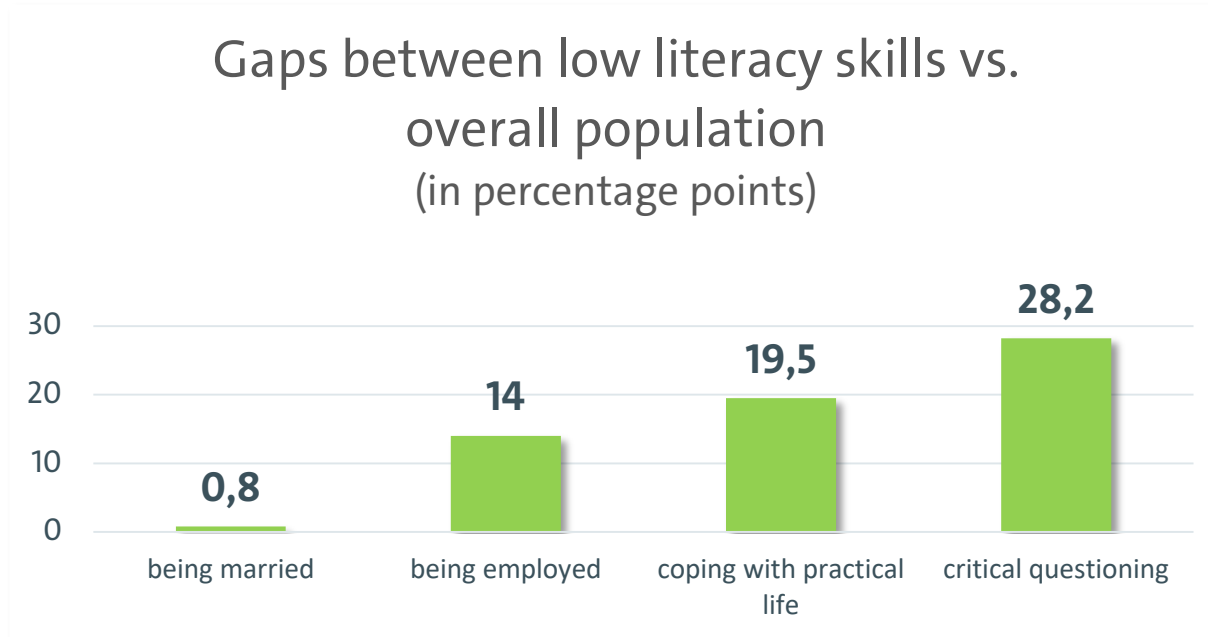
LEO 2018: Literacy, practices, competences

- **Literacy Assessment:** Reading and writing test
- **(Literacy) practices:** digital, health related, financial, political
 - self-reported, not tested (how often do you...?) (Practice Engagement Theory: Reder, 1994)
 - Reading, writing
 - Not text based practices (face to face, video, audio)
- **Basic competences:** digital, health related, financial, political
 - self-reported, not tested
 - functional-pragmatic („I can do this“)
 - critically-scrutinizing („I can judge this“)



Reder, S. (1994). Practice-Engagement Theory: A Sociocultural Approach to Literacy Across Languages and Cultures. In B. M. Ferdman, R.-M. Weber & A. G. Ramirez (Eds.), SUNY series, literacy, culture, and learning. Literacy across languages and cultures (S. 33–70). State University of New York Press.

Grotlüschen, A., Buddeberg, K., Dutz, G., Heilmann, L. M. & Stammer, C. (2019). Practices and Competencies - Evidence from an Adult Literacy Survey in Germany. In M. Schemmann (Ed.), International Yearbook of Adult Education (S. 17–34). wbv.



Note: two columns on the right consist of groups of variables, gaps represent average gaps

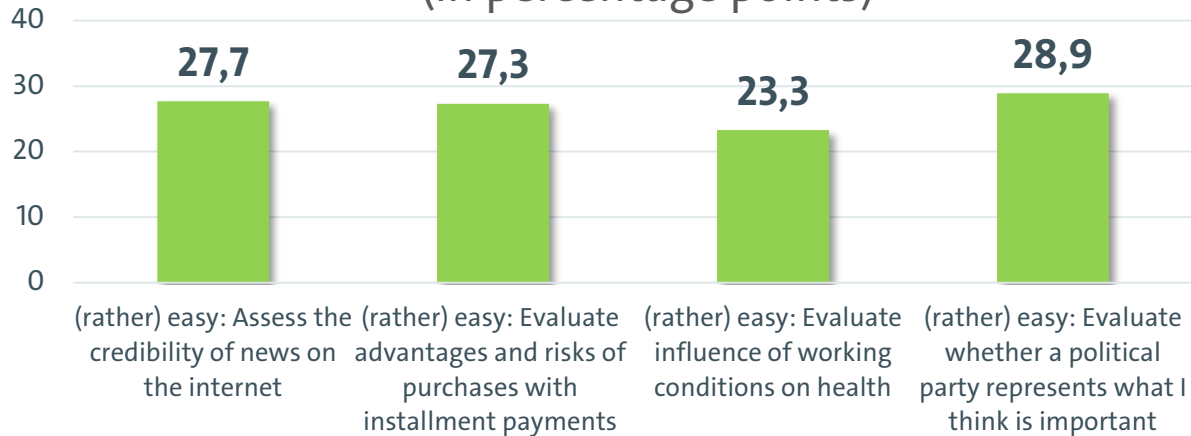
Critical-scrutinizing competences

Being competent means that an action **can be judged**. (“I can judge it.”)

Examples:

- **Digital:** assess the credibility of news on the internet
- **Financial:** Evaluate advantages and risks of purchases with installment payments
- **Health:** Evaluate influence of working conditions on health
- **Political:** Evaluate whether a political party represents what I think is important

Critical scrutinizing competences: Gaps between low literacy skills vs. overall population (in percentage points)



Share of adults describing tasks as (rather) easy (in percent)

	Low literate Adults	Higher literate adults	Gap (% points)
HEALTH			
Evaluate influence of housing conditions on health	62.3	87.0	24.7
Evaluate influence of working conditions on health	65.6	88.9	23.3
FINANCIAL			
Evaluate advantages and risks of online banking	39.6	70.7	31.1
Evaluate advantages and risks of purchases with installment payments	49.3	76.6	27.3
POLITICAL			
Evaluate if to participate in a signature campaign	36.9	74.5	37.6
Evaluate if to participate in a demonstration	30.5	59.4	28.9
Evaluate whether a political party represents what I think is important	38.8	67.7	28.9
DIGITAL			
Judge the credibility of news on the Internet	52.1	79.8	27.7
Distinguish whether a text on the Internet is information or advertising	45.2	75.1	29.9
Evaluate why free online services are interested in user data	34.5	57.5	23.0

Cited from: Grotlüschen, A. (2021). Verletzbarkeit und Literalität im 21. Jahrhundert. In A. Grotlüschen (Hrsg.), Zeitschrift für Pädagogik: Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung von Erwachsenen (S. 16–35). Beltz Juventa. <https://doi.org/10.3262/ZPB2101016>



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4. Conclusion: Building local scientific capacity & strategies matters

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- OECD and UNESCO are drivers for global comparison (SDG 4)
- This leads to a monopoly of assessment tools and definitions (Grotlüschen and Buddeberg, 2021)
- Pushing Round 3 to the low end of the league table („south“)
- Reporting findings against OECD averages.
- Global comparison is overrated (Hamilton, 2018)
- Better: Use regional comparison
- Even better: Start own PIAAC extensions, background questions
- Even better: Do your own survey, define your aims (critical thinking)

Grotlüschen, A. & Buddeberg, K. (2021). Surveys of Lifelong Learning as Contributors to Neoliberal Processes of “Southering”. In K. Evans, et al. (Hrsg.), Springer International Handbooks of Education. Third International Handbook of Lifelong Learning (S. 1–24). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-67930-9_53-1

(outline revisited) PIAAC and the „South“ – why regional comparison matters

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Thank you for your attention

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