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THE FUTURES OF ADULT EDUCATOR(S): AGENCY, IDENTITY AND ETHOS

Edited by:
Anja Heikkinen
Larissa Jõgi
Wolfgang Jütte
Georgios K. Zarifis

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THE FUTURES OF ADULT EDUCATOR(S): AGENCY, IDENTITY AND ETHOS

Joint Conference Proceedings

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Volume editors:

Anja Heikkinen (University of Tampere, Finland)

Larissa Jõgi (Tallinn University, Estonia)

Wolfgang Jütte (University of Bielefeld, Germany)

Georgios K. Zarifis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece)

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Preface



As editors of this volume we would like to express our gratitude to all the colleagues who participated in our scientific event. The decision for this joint meeting in 2011 was taken after long deliberation among both networks' representatives. Although ESREA|ReNA|AdET's initial proposal was for the second network meeting to be held in Vienna, that was not made possible, and besides the fact that Vienna still remains a good option for organising a network meeting in the future, it was Prof. Larissa Jõgi's proposal at a VET & Culture Network meeting in Tampere a year before that made it possible to decide on a joint event in Tallinn.

Tallinn the beautiful capital of the Baltic state of Estonia, and Cultural Capital of Europe in 2011, made the perfect place for members of both networks to meet and exchange research experiences and discuss issues of common interest.

The theme of this joint meeting reflected the scope of both networks. This year's meeting focused on the future (or the futures) of adult educators in respect to issues of developing their identities and professional status, issues of networking and/or unionizing and collaborating among different "types" of adult educators and related staff in adult education in general, and issues of power and authority in the adult-educator interaction.

A limited number of papers were presented on the following themes:

- Perceptions of adult educators: by adults-students, policy makers and in public.
- Theoretical, political and practical discourses on adult educators: the future of adult education as an academic field.
- Context and environment of adult education and different "types" of adult educators.
- Ownership of the adult educators' profession and professional borders: is there a professional future for adult educators?
- Learning, becoming, being and growing as professional adult educator, including issues of ageing and gender.

The event had no flavor of a conventional conference. The organizers' decision was that because traditional conferences leave little time for real discussions and no time to participate in all the sessions, the joint event must be held differently as to create a learning space for all participants. Our hardworking and creative organizers called this space "**Learning Café**". The learning café is about sharing and discussing questions that matter to all by encouraging interactive learning and networking in an informal and engaging environment.

Along a number of inspired surprises –like the initial “life drama” which functioned as the most successful way to build group dynamics among participants, and the “bell orchestra” that highlighted the finale– all the session in this event adopted a ‘presentation and discussion pattern’ where the presenters on the one hand were the hosts of a “café” in which they shared their thoughts with their café guests. The guests on the other hand had time to discuss the most important issues raised by the host of the café in a relaxed and stimulating environment. Each flow session had 3 to 4 cafes and guests could visit all of them in one session. Café hosts had 10-15 minutes for presentation and the same amount of time for discussion with their guests. After that new guests could visit a café to hear the host’s thoughts and be involved in a new discussion, already stimulated by another debate in a café they visited before. This event proved that the idea of the learning café is the simplest, most effective, and flexible format for hosting group dialogue. Specifics of context, numbers, purpose, location, and other circumstances were all factored into our event’s unique invitation, design, and question choice, comprising a basic model with four components: setting, welcome and introduction, small group rounds, and harvest.



We sincerely hope that this volume expresses the positive spirit of all participants without missing any of the scientific gravity of the event.

We look forward to our next meeting!

The volume editors

Creating a space for learning - reflections

Marin Gross¹ & Larissa Jõgi²

Tallinn University,
Estonia

Reflections and reflection practice is a process which enables us to understand better and in more structural way our professional practice and experience. Also it helps us to learn much about ourselves and others. In our reflection of the seminar „The Futures of Adult Educator(s): agency, identity, ethos“ we are based on reflective cycle by Gibbs (1988).



We've all been to numerous conferences and seminars which have been inspiring or less exciting. Conferences tend to be organised following academic standards where someone gives a keynote speech and others listen or countless parallel sessions where participants run around. Interaction and discussion is encouraged in conferences but there might be no time for it except short coffee breaks.

Having all that in mind we decided to have a different network seminar. An event where people feel sense of belonging, excitement towards the questions posed and atmosphere for sharing thoughts and ideas.

Creating the seminar started with collecting opinion papers. We asked people to draft their ideas, questions, thoughts and feelings on the topic of the seminar in a more relaxed form. Instead of research papers we asked for opinion papers. Research papers often contain no ideas, feelings, questions and follows a rather rigid academic style. Opinion papers are more than presentation of a research it can be used as a tool to inspire, call for discussion and collaboration.

Opinion papers were important basis during all sessions allowing to share ideas, feelings and thoughts in a professional setting but also calling for real life networking.

¹ marin@tlu.ee

² larissa.jogi@tlu.ee

The seminar itself was organised around the idea of creating a learning space, for which we planned flow sessions. We used a method called *Learning Café* thus the café is a place where presenter will become a host of a "café" and share his/her thoughts with café guests. As a guest of a café there is time to discuss the most important issues raised by the host of the café in a relaxed and stimulating environment.

Each flow session had 3 to 4 cafés and guests can visit all of them in one session. As a presenter-host everyone got to share their ideas with all conference participants. Café host had 10-15 minutes for presenting and the same amount of time for discussion with guests after which new guests arrive to the café. The host may take notes from the discussion for later on conclusions.

Learning café is a simple, effective, and flexible format for hosting large group dialogue. Learning Café can be modified to meet a wide variety of needs. Specifics of context, numbers, purpose, location, and other circumstances are factored into each event's unique invitation, design, and question choice, but the following five components comprise the basic model:

- 1) **Setting:** Create a "special" environment, most often modelled after a café, i.e. small round tables covered with a checkered tablecloth, butcher block paper, colored pens.
- 2) **Welcome and Introduction:** The host begins with a warm welcome and an introduction to the Learning Café process, setting the context and putting participants at ease.
- 3) **Small Group Rounds:** The process begins with the first of three or more 15- minute rounds of conversation for the small group seated around a table. At the end of the 15- minutes, each member of the group moves to a different new table. The host will stay at the table to welcome the next group and briefly fills them in on what happened in the previous round.
- 4) **Harvest:** After the small groups individuals are invited to share insights or other results from their conversations with the rest of the large group.

Seminar round-up session was organised as an open space. Open Space Technology (Owen 2008) is one way to enable all kinds of people, in any kind of organization, to create inspired meetings and events. Over the last 20+ years, it has also become clear that opening space, as an intentional leadership practice, can create inspired organizations, where ordinary people work together to create extraordinary results with regularity.

In Open Space meetings, events and organizations, participants create and manage their own agenda of parallel working sessions around a central theme of strategic importance, such as: What is the strategy, group, organization or community that all stakeholders can support and work together to create?

With groups of 5 to 2000+ people -- working in one-day workshops, three-day conferences, or the regular weekly staff meeting -- the common result is a powerful, effective connecting and strengthening of what's already happening in the organization: planning and action, learning and doing, passion and responsibility, participation and performance.

Open Space works best when the work to be done is complex, the people and ideas involved are diverse, the passion for resolution (and potential for conflict) are high, and the time to get it done was yesterday. It's been called passion bounded by responsibility, the energy of a good coffee break, intentional self-organization, spirit at work, chaos and creativity,

evolution in organization, and a simple, powerful way to get people and organizations moving -- when and where it's needed most.

And, while Open Space is known for its apparent lack of structure and welcoming of surprises, it turns out that the Open Space meeting or organization is actually very structured -- but that structure is so perfectly fit to the people and the work at hand, that it goes unnoticed in its proper role of supporting (not blocking) best work. In fact, the stories and workplans woven in Open Space are generally more complex, more robust, more durable -- and can move a great deal faster than expert- or management-driven designs.

Open Space Ground Rules:

Whoever comes is the right people.

It is not how many people come, or even who comes that counts, rather it is the quality of interaction and conversation that makes the difference.

Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened.

Real learning and real progress only take place when we leave our original agendas and convention bound expectations behind.

Whenever it starts is the right time.

Creativity and spirit are both essential and neither pay much attention to the clock.

When it is over, it is over.

If the useful discussion has been conducted, it is time to move on. Killing time only causes us to rehash what we have done to the point that it gets undone.

The Law of Two Feet.

If in the course of the discussion, you find yourself in a place in which you are neither learning nor contributing, use your two feet and find a more productive spot.

What we learned?

- 1) Core idea of our approach was to trust participants in creating new and prompt ideas, knowledge and develop further current research by cooperative means of networking and openly communicating with one another.
- 2) Self-organizing discussions create a space where trust and awareness of each other and our professional interests are in focus.
- 3) *Learning Café* and *Open Space Technology* as learning spaces are inspiring, motivating and influential ways of organizing a seminar.

Our learning experience can teach us a lot, but do we really learn from these lessons?

If we learn, do we share our experiences with others? If lessons are shared, do most of us apply and use them? We believe as adult educators and university teachers that this experience was a positive model for applying it in our cooperation and everyday teaching and research practice.

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1**KOSKINEN, Helena³**
University of Lapland,
Finland***Reflective learning in blended process:
becoming an adult educator*****Introduction**

Developing the teachers' pedagogical studies (60 credits; Government Decree on University Degrees 794/2004) at The University of Lapland in Finland has been based on the students'⁴ evaluation and feedback over the course of several years. According to evaluations, interdisciplinarity is a remarkable challenge to construction of identity of adult educator. In consequence, it has been found that there are needs to strengthen the development process of identity, to find ways to increase student's awareness of their prior learning outcomes in the context of teaching, learning and studying. To support this process, there has been developed and taken in use the new step-by-step mode.

The theoretical background of a new model is discussed in this article. Teachers' pedagogical studies, under discussion focusing on adult and vocational education, are designed based on blended and cumulative learning principles. As well the main findings of the study to explore students' experiences closely after they have used the new mode are opened in this article. We asked, did the students achieve their aims and did the web-based step-by-step mode help students to understand and strengthen reflection on professional development and identity of adult educator and to integrate pedagogical know-how with prior studies?

The data was collected by questionnaire at the end of trainings (2008-2010). To form and deliver questionnaires, the Webropol survey software online solution was used. Questionnaire consisted of a section of semi-structured questions and a section of open questions. Questionnaire was to assess studying and learning experiences, as well as the role of the new mode in reflective practice. The students reflected on their current expertise also in diaries. All the texts were analyzed applying content analysis. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000.) There were 62 students taking part in research. The training is not long and the process has to be kept intensive and fluent.

Being or becoming

When starting the pedagogical studies, many of the students already have teaching experiences. However, they are some who haven't thought teacher training actual or significant during previous studies. Afterwards, as part-time or supply teachers, they found the work interesting and challenging. In other words, they managed to work as a teacher

³ helena.koskinen@ulapland.fi

⁴ Students come from faculties of the University of Lapland: education, law, art and design and social sciences. Some students have already finished master degree.

based on their individual experiences of prior schooling and studying. (Goodson 2001; Kansanen et al. 2000.)

Be(come)ing a teacher is a continuing process that provides one with ability to work as an expert in education. Pedagogical know-how should be developed as an integrated part of each student's personal, interdisciplinary expertise. Being aware of consideration of prior learning and experiences, we teacher educators likely talk about *development to become a teacher* (those who do not have teaching experiences) and about *development as a teacher* (those who already have teaching experiences during many years) to give a signal of respecting all students equally and to point out that teacher identity is an ongoing process. An adult learner taking up pedagogical studies may already have an identity in some other profession, such as nursing or engineering, according to his/her former education and work experiences. A change from being a nurse to a teacher of nursing and health care involves questions of the reconstruction of professional identity.

The development of identity is seen an on-going, dynamic process, following individual routes and lasting lifelong. It requires the aspiring adult educator to engage and to take responsibility for his/her own development (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). It is a slow process, a process of progressive problem solving, rethinking and redefining and being awarded with the elements of a professional identity (Bogler & Somech, 2004; Postareff, 2007). An adult educator needs theoretical and practical knowledge and the capacity to adapt his/her expertise to different situations both individually and collectively, and the capability to justify his/her actions. Also the focus is on learning in practice and on emphasising experiential learning as Kolb's (1984) well-known learning model emphasises the role of reflective thinking and the conceptualization of personal experiences.

Bogler (2004) talks about empowered teachers, teachers who are particularly willing to solve problems and eager to improve the students' motivation and learning strategies. In adult education this is at the center, especially when students want to study a new profession or they do not know what to study and how to cope with life. For the empowered teacher, teacherhood, i.e., teacher identity is personal experience of and awareness regarding his/her own profession describing as well the way he/she feels about facilitating learning.

While rethinking the content and format of teachers' pedagogical studies, the focus turned to how to intensify students' reflection upon development of identity as adult educator and to increase flexibility of studies. Pedagogical studies offer one way to widen one's expertise into the field of education; for those who are interested in becoming an adult educator or who want to work as an expert in different sectors where pedagogical know-how is demanded or beneficial.

Principles of cumulative and blended learning (Graham, 2006; Macdonald, 2006; Stubbs, Martin & Endlar, 2006) are taken into practice in the studies (Koskinen, 2011). The development of awareness of reflective practice and pedagogical thinking are connected to definitions of learning in collaboration and in critical partnership. (Burn, Hagger, Mutton, &

Everton, 2003; Kansanen, 2000; Parsons & Stephenson, 2005.) Reflective practice, it is understanding based on metacognitions being awarded and able to monitor the development of his/her learning and to put its application into practice (Gusky, 2000; Parsons & Stephenson, 2005).

How to blend

Pedagogical studies are designed to be an integrated unity of on-campus contact periods, off-campus eLearning and learning by doing, i.e., mentored practice in field schools. Defined pedagogical aims for the development of the new mode were to strengthen and support: reflection of the learning process; integration of know-how and experiences, also conceptualization; construction and assessment of interdisciplinary expertise - education as a part of it and defining of the student's subjective educational theory.

Reflection was and is continuously supported by assignments done individually and collectively. Supported on-line sharing and gathering (synchronous or asynchronous) makes collaborative work possible and maintains activity on a high level, reducing the need for frequent face-to-face contact. E-Learning space (Optima Discendum), is used to maximize collegial reflection. This is especially meaningful when students come from a wide geographical area and many of them are part-time students. In this context, the diary is seen as an assessment document showing what you know, how do you understand the problems as well optional solutions and what kind of ability you have. (Van der Schaaf, Stokking & Verloop, 2008.) The learning outcomes are addressed according to The European qualifications framework. (The European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, 2008.)

Theoretical lectures and participating in didactical workshops are in program during face to face contacts. There is in use metaphor of the steps taken along the learning pathway which invites teacher educators to join students in shared learning. Shared understanding, (i.e., peer dialogue) makes professional development explicit. (Chappell & Johnston, 2003; Kynäslähti et al. 2008, 13-20.)

All students face the same tasks following his/her personal study plan. The process goes on starting with analytical reflection, going through assessing reflection and finishing with critical reflection and generating a view of the future. (Gusky, 2000; Levander, 2002.) Partners in this process are peer students, mentor teachers and students/pupils who are met during teaching practice as well as all educators involved in studies. All experiences, including any attendant emotions and all received feedback are to be discussed thoroughly. (Levander, 2002.)

The first step is to assess prior experiences and learning (APEL, 2005), current personal strengths and weaknesses and to concentrate to find out the theme of personal orientation by which a student could target his/her personal aims and development along the studies. Based on this, students define their personal aims and expectations on the studies. All this is to support analytical reflection.

To support the assessing reflection, there are two tasks to work out. The second step is to reflect the teaching process collectively based on experiences in teaching practice, i.e., collaborative learning in peer-to-peer reflection. The third step requires the student to evaluate his/her personal pedagogical know-how. There are different elements concerning pedagogy and teacher identity to evaluate and everybody can add his/her own element in comparison to personal know-how, feelings and experiences, all integrated with the theories. The fourth and fifth steps are to engage in critical reflection; to evaluate (step 4) learning processes, to make learning visible; to assess the training in whole (step 5).

Binding and bridging

When analyzing the self-evaluation texts in diaries, it was possible to group development in two: firstly by better understanding of theories and practices in general and integrating theories in teaching practices and secondly, by better personal trust and belief in one's ability to be a teacher. As individual learning outcomes concerning better understanding of theories and practices came out, that the understanding on the pedagogical approaches to the subject field of science was more open after studies, and the assessment and recognition of prior learning and expertise was advanced.

My pedagogical know-how has advanced enormously during these teacher's pedagogical studies. A whole new section is added to my subject expertise... Situation-specific ability to act and confidence have developed alongside substance know-how. ... I estimate that perceiving myself as a teacher has come true very well. This is influenced not only by the reflective nature of the pedagogical studies but also by my professional identity which has strengthened through my current working experiences.

Trust and belief and also ethics integrated in teacher's work were learned through the experiences caused by increasing criticism in reflection. Pedagogical thinking and creativity were advanced.

From the studies, I have gained a lot of information on how to develop my pedagogical thinking and my own actions. These studies gave for my work an important pedagogic knowledge base, which I commit myself to developing and improving as much as I can. Acquiring an inquiry-oriented approach towards work, an inquisitive and open attitude towards learning and developing metacognitive skills gave me reason for self-reflection as a learner during the studies, as well as when acting as a teacher. It is also helpful to notice that self-criticism towards the methods I previously used has increased.

Also the ability to empower learners, i.e., students/pupils and his/herself was found stronger and the capacity to change one's view was based on the development of reflective thinking.

In teaching situations, I know how to interpret my actions.... I know how to change my teaching methods when needed, as well as interpret mine and the students' behavior. Now I am aware of the concept of teacherhood and I know how to consider my actions on a meta level.

Understanding the cumulative process of learning has turned out as a question of being able to accept a new blended way to study. The cumulative nature of the studies may present problems, such as some students finding it difficult to accept that not all assignments and materials are available to be seen at once or not free to browse. They have to wait until getting to a certain point in the studies to be allowed to work on the next object. When the design logic and the visualization of eLearning space are realized, a gate opens towards understanding the studies as a cumulative unity, which seems to motivate learners.

Nearly four-fifths of students (79.3%) saw the eLearning environment as adequate for learning. Two-thirds of students (66.7%) saw that face-to-face periods, eLearning work and individual work were in balance. The rest wanted either more eLearning or more face-to-face contacts. One-half of the students (57.7%) assessed that their expectations and aims for studies had been fulfilled well, and the rest (42.3%) saw the results as excellent. Half of the students (50 %) assessed that the studies had strengthened the development of their teacher identity and expertise significantly, and almost the rest (46.2 %) said that they were able to see effects but the process was still ongoing. Some (3.8%) pointed out that their former expertise has been confirmed greatly.

All students said that the step-by-step tasks either significantly (33.3%) or greatly (66.7%) helped and supported reflection upon teacher identity. The diary was found to be useful by half of the students (58.3%). A third of the students thought that the diary could have been replaced by some other, separate tasks.

Reflection and documentation was found to be binding and bridging. Having an understanding of the integration of theories and practices on the field of individual specialism related to the theories and practices of education was found to be binding. The reflection did bridge the development of the teacher identity into the future and lifelong learning.

Discussion

To advance the quality of the teachers' pedagogical studies the further development work of the step-by-step thinking has been seen as relevant. The findings of the study strengthen the idea that a flexible, explicit method is useful to give support to the self-evaluation and reflection of identity of adult educator. Progressive reflection widens and deepens understanding of individual development. The students found peer-to-peer mentoring extremely helpful. The step-by-step process helped students to realise the whole instead of single elements and made visible how teacher identity is constructed: what are the needed

elements and how to wrap it up. Blended learning is a journey with many encounters. Sometimes we have to break the ice and go on step by step, sometimes it goes in flow.

When it comes to designing curriculum for the sort of trainings discussed here, a special challenge is interdisciplinarity. Students see interdisciplinary expertise as a blend of knowledge and skills of the fields of subject sciences and education. For the further development of the curriculum for teachers' pedagogical training as continuing studies, the focus needs to be on flexibility. Assignments of reflection and the rest of practical work have to be designed and instructed so that it becomes more and more possible to apply them with various individual and occasional specific needs. The fulfilling of learners' subjective goals and expectations will serve to enhance motivation and feed reflections. Sharing know-how in interaction gives a possibility to explain and justify one's own point of view explicitly and to learn from critical reflection. The findings indicate that a reflective thinking based on mentored teaching practice turned out to be a most effective process in the construction and understanding identity of adult educator. After training the expressions were more defined and conceptualised. It is a sign of development to change from being an observer to an involved actor.

Analyze of evaluation texts proves, that it is not possible to construct teacher identity simply on experiences. Reflection is the way to become conscious of the progress. The findings prove that reflective thinking and conceptualization of personal experiences play a main role in students' self-evaluations. The study findings increase and deepen the program designers' understanding of the challenges for designing short-term teacher training for adult students who already have a developed professional identity based on prior education and working experiences.

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The status and training needs of adult educators in Hungary

Introduction

Today there is no need to argue in favour of the necessity and significance of training adults. A significant period of learning takes place in adulthood, on the one hand because it is obvious that new generations cannot be taught everything they will need throughout their lives and, on the other hand, because knowledge becomes obsolete, so it is necessary to continuously renew and develop individual competences for personal well-being and socio-economic development. All over Europe more and more individuals participate in adult training programmes, which are integral parts of policies for economic development, and the group of adult educators is permanently growing.

Employment situation of adult educators

Various conditions must be satisfied in order to make adult training efficient. In order to achieve adequate goals, it is fundamentally important to carefully plan the curricula and to elaborate training materials in appropriate quality, while the methodological principles of adult training is also taken into account. Essentially important success factors are professional organisation and administration as well as appropriate learning environment. The professional work of educators however is much more significant than all the other aspects mentioned above. The quality of educator activities plays an essential role in the learning efficiency of training participants therefore the most important measure during the course of training processes are the professional, methodological, human skills and aptitude of adult educators.

Adult educators are part of the key actors in adult training processes however it is not easy to provide a definition for the concept of an adult educator. No such definitions are provided in professional documents, and it is difficult to describe whom we may regard as adult educators. In Hungary, we are at the beginning of the development of a profession, which, for the time being has not gained independence either in a professional or in a legal sense. Based on experience, we can distinguish two major groups of adult educators: one of these is teachers, who participate in various forms of adult training as trainers in their free time. The other group is comprised of recognised professionals in their own fields (lawyers, economists, cosmeticians, professionals in the tourist industry, shop managers, etc.), who participate in adult training processes by way of their professional experience and practice. The employment status of adult educators also needs clarification. Adult educators participate in adult training courses while they pursue their main professional activities, so

⁵ feva@jgypk.u-szeged.hu

there are hardly any full-time adult educators. Adult educators are mostly employed on the basis of contracts of agency, or more often temporary contract for work. These contracts are usually concluded for a training course, a training module, or for part of a curriculum. Full-time employment in this field cannot be applied really since the greatest advantages of adult training compared to regular school training are flexibility and quick reaction to individual, corporate and labour market needs. The questions to what extent these ever-changing needs may be monitored and satisfied. Due to the "issues" mentioned above, we cannot really provide an exact number of adult educators, who actively participate in the training and development of adults, who join several hundreds of thousands of formal and informal training courses in Hungary today.

The quality requirements of adult training have become stricter since 2001, when the act on adult education and training was adopted. At the same time however there are no legal regulations on the educational and professional qualifications of educators participating in adult training, on the professional experience of persons as trainers/adult educators. The act on adult education and training does not stipulate mandatory andragogical or adult educator qualifications, adequate methodological skills or adult training experience.

Roles and competences of adult educators

Due to the effects of social, economic and technological changes, and EU declarations on common educational policy, changes in product structure and related changes in profession structure, there have been significant changes in the function, content, forms, venues, instruments and methods of adult education and training during the past few decades. Stress has been shifted from education to learning, and the learning adult is now in the focal point of adult education and training. This has caused fundamental changes also in the role of adult educators. Adult educators have become much more of facilitators in the learning process, and much less of individual intermediaries and transferring media of knowledge. Instead of acting as an individual communicator of knowledge, adult educators now have the task of coaching trainees in the course of independent knowledge acquisition and in overcoming obstacles in the learning process, which may be due to family-related, cultural, organisational, technological problems, or problems related to adaptation to the learning environment. Adult educators must be capable of providing assistance also in these areas. Providing motivation, social care, psycho-social support and the development of learning skills are becoming more and more important. This short list also indicates the complex nature of the profession of adult educators however also the fact that this profession cannot really be defined. Adult educators must perform several roles especially during training courses organised for the complex development of adults in disadvantaged situations. Another issue is what to teach as adult educators in a changed training structure. Should we teach the trainees what they really need for their well-being in society and in the labour market, or should we teach them what we, educators think the trainees need, or perhaps we teach them the knowledge we possess? Not only what we teach is important, but also

how we teach it. This means that the knowledge adult educators possess must be distinguished from their capability of transferring this knowledge. In order for the efforts exerted by adult educators to be credible, in order for their actions to be accepted and adopted by the adult trainees and their environment, it is not enough for the educators to acquire professional principles and to follow these principles as an obligation; it is much rather necessary for these educators to integrate all these in their personalities. Personal and professional roles cannot be separated; this especially applies to educators, who wish to exert lasting influence on people.

According to roles described above, adult educators must possess a set of complex competences, which enables them to perform the tasks also described above. Among all the professional competences the most important components for educators are deep and updated knowledge and the ability to transfer professional culture and ethics. Among andragogical competences an indispensable asset for the educators is the understanding and knowledge of the techniques for the development of learning capabilities and competences as well as knowledge about the features of learning in adulthood. The educators must also know and be capable of using the methodologies that are effective in adult training, and they must survey the knowledge of the training participants prior to the training courses. They are also required to foster and enhance the self-assessment and self-confidence of the training participants. The fact that the accreditation requirements of adult training institutions are becoming more stringent, the changes in the expectations of the training market and the growing client requirements make it an ever so essential expectation for the educators that they - besides professional knowledge – must also possess solid methodological skills and capabilities in adult training, which is of utmost importance for them to convey the training material with the most suitable and efficient methodology adapted for the composition of the adult trainees. Appropriate application of methodologies and procedures suitable for adult training fundamentally influences the success of training adults to learn.

Apart from professional skills and andragogical competences, which are fundamental conditions for training adults, the most important social competences of adult educators are communication skills. It is not the effort to strive for perfection and to develop more and more skills in the process of the training interaction with their trainees that makes the work of adult educators efficient, but rather their professionalism based on communication and interactive competences (Sz. Molnár, 2009). Among personal competences flexibility and adaptation capabilities must be highlighted, which help the adult educators to change their roles flexibly and rapidly to follow the changes in the requirements of their stakeholders and to act in compliance with the challenges posed on them by the rapidly changing environment.

Since a set of roles that changes on a daily basis is a dominant feature of the role of adult educators, it is an impossible undertaking to provide a general definition for the

competences of adult educators; the different roles of adult educators together with the related tasks and the competences necessary for these tasks are in permanent change.

Table I. An inventory of adult educator competences

Professional	Andragogical	Social	Methodological	Personal
C o m p e t e n c e s				
Professionalism (deep, updated knowledge in professional areas)	General andragogical knowledge	Capabilities for establishing and maintaining relations	Capabilities for fostering performance assessment and trainee self assessment	Dedication, commitment
Delivering presentations, conducting practical and training courses	Exploring and analysing trainee needs	Capabilities for convincing trainees	Creativity, abundance of ideas	Cultured appearance and behaviour
Ensuring appropriate ratio of theory and practice	Awareness of features of learning in adulthood, understanding the psychology of adults	Capabilities for empathy	Self-reflection and critical thinking	Responsibility
Conveying professional culture and ethics	Knowledge of competences, knowledge and application of techniques for competence development, knowledge of features of competence-based training	Readiness to provide assistance	Capabilities for gathering and processing information	Adaptation capabilities
Strengthening professional dedication	Knowledge about curriculum planning	Motivation skills	Capabilities for development, self-development, self-training, striving for professionalism	Enthusiasm
Fostering professional self-development	Techniques for the development of learning capabilities	Effective communication skills	Planning	Reliability
Knowledge of methodologies concerning adult training and learning in adulthood	Knowledge and application of atypical forms of learning	Skills for conflict management	Organisation	Independence
Knowledge of info-communication techniques (ICT) and their application for the efficiency of the learning-training process	Surveying and taking into consideration the knowledge of training participants prior to training courses	Skills for co-operation	Creating learning environment adapted to trainee needs	Flexibility
Skilful use of technical instruments in the training process	Creating partnership with training participants		Capabilities for self-assessment of the efficiency of the training process	Openness
Knowledge and effective application of methodologies for trainee performance assessment	Setting clear and realistic goals			Sense of humour
	Fostering self-knowledge and enhancing self-confidence of training participants			
	Theoretical and practical knowledge of measuring the level of knowledge and competences			
	Techniques for providing adult training services			

There is no sharp borderline that separates the competences necessary for the performance of the work of adult educators and ordinary teachers. Both professions require professional knowledge in order for these professionals to initiate, manage, regulate and foster the activities of students regarding thinking and acting. Adult educators work in the context of human relationships, convey knowledge in during the course of training, develop competences, set examples, inspire thinking, make the trainees act, etc. They can achieve their goals through verbal, non-verbal and meta-communication activities (Csoma, 2003). The differences between the competences of adult educators and ordinary teachers are mainly in the quality of competences, first of all in how these educators solve conflicts, how they communicate with their students, and how they relate to their clients. In the context of adult training the relationship of superiority and subordination, which is common in the context of ordinary education, is, in ideal cases, replaced by partnership, where the educators work together with adult trainees, whom they regard as equals in different situations: they recognise and incorporate in the training process the previous experience of the trainees. There is two-way communication and exchange of experience between the educators and the trainees.

I compared the different interpretations of competences expressed by authors quoted above, and compiled the job analysis of professional adult educators with the DACUM method. Based on the result of this analysis, I elaborated a possible inventory of adult educator competences. I divided the competences according to the system of competences generally accepted in Europe, which is a system of competences comprised of features such as professional, methodological, social and personal competences, supplemented by andragogical competences. Only the competences, which are – in my opinion – are of high importance for the performance of the work of adult educators are listed; they are competences, which are necessary for successful educators activities at a level higher than average.

After taking a look at the list of competences in Table I. it is easy to understand that I am committed to providing regular advanced professional training courses for adult educators, and that the components for the content of the regime of training/advanced training courses for adult educators may be outlined. The competences listed above are not static; it is not satisfactory for adult educators to acquire the latest professional, methodological, communication and information technology knowledge during one set of training courses. It is necessary to permanently develop the knowledge acquired during training courses and to integrate it in the daily work of adult educators.

Training adult educators in Hungary

In Hungary there seems to be an adequate supply of professionals for the area of adult training as an independent, special discipline in the wake of the introduction of bachelor and master university degree in andragogy. During andragogy BA university degree not adult educators but professionals working in adult training are trained. As a result of the launch of

basic courses in andragogical studies, during which – depending on professional orientation – basically professionals to manage and operate adult training processes and institutions are trained thus providing adequate supplies of such professionals for the diverse set of institutions in the field of adult education. Other sources for the establishment of a basic group of professionals are the andragogy university master. In the possession of their qualifications these newly trained professionals will be able to develop the conditions for adult education and training in a diverse manner. They will also be capable of performing educational, training and institutional as well as instrument and methodology development, furthermore they will be able to support physical and virtual access to learning opportunities.

However the issue of training adult educators is still not clear despite the fact that this issue is also contained in the strategy of the Hungarian Government on life-long learning. According to this document “It is of crucial importance to permanently develop also the professional trainers in adult training as well as ad hoc trainers. Today adult training has developed to be an extraordinarily diverse (e-learning, training disadvantaged groups, alternative learning techniques, etc) and complex professional field in global educational industry, where Hungary – in spite of all its efforts – has to cover a wide gap” (Strategy for life-long learning, 2005). In order to find remedy for this problem, in September 2009 a new university MA course was introduced as a second subject to provide qualifications and a degree in Teacher of Andragogy with the aim to provide theoretical and practical training for students to enable them to acquire the theory and practice of adult training, to make them receptive of innovation as teachers, who then – via self development as part of their training and by providing assistance in the area of life-long learning – can actively participate in any area of public education, vocational training and adult education and training.

Summary

One of the most important objectives in the Lifelong Learning Working Programme of the European Union is to enhance the quality and efficiency of educational and training systems within the European Union.

Since there is no legally mandatory training and advanced training system for professionals performing training activities in the sector of adult training in Hungary, at present it depends only on the individual ambitions and moral standing of educators to what extent they undertake responsibility for communicating renewed knowledge to their trainees, and to what extent they are capable of identifying themselves with the renewed educator roles. It would be necessary to gradually incorporate the requirement of holding a degree in andragogy and adult training in the job requirements of adult educators. One can suppose that this may be only achieved by the power of law, in other words, if this condition is made legally mandatory.

Only if a comprehensive public advanced training system is established and operated can the idea and practice of life-long learning be implemented in general practice in the area of adult educators and the necessity of adult educator roles and competences from this new paradigm be accepted and recognised in this area. Training and advanced training courses for adult educators should not focus on the enhancement of special knowledge, but much more on the acquisition of knowledge and skills in areas such as methodology, communication, management and innovation as well as techniques related to animation and mediation (Kraiciné, 2006). Higher educational institutions could organise and launch special, two-semester advanced training courses for adult educators. Obviously, it is not a diploma or a certificate that makes a person a good adult educator. If however one takes a look at the competences listed above, one can understand the necessity of regular training and advanced training courses for adult educators in order to make the work of our adult educators more effective so that they can comply with their ever-changing roles they fulfil in knowledge-based society.

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PITURA, Joanna⁶
University of Warsaw,
Poland

Adult educator development and burnout: self-management of generic competences in problem prevention

Introduction

Teachers are recognized to be crucial in achieving the goals concerning the lifelong learning process for future growth, competitiveness and social cohesion in the European Union. Accordingly, a need for better coordination of teacher education, systematic skills updating and adequate in-service development have been pointed out in various European documents. Furthermore, actions to maintain experienced teachers in the profession have been called for, rather than allowing of an early retirement or change of profession (sf. *Teachers' Professional Development. Europe in International Comparison*, 2010).

At the same time, throughout the world research indicates that teachers have been faced with increasing occupational challenges (e.g., Sęk, 2000; Maslach *at al.*, 2001; Grzegorzewska, 2006; Schaufeli *at al.*, 2008; Tucholska, 2009). As a result, many of them report high levels of work stress.

There has been a lot of research into the issue which aimed at systematizing and analyzing the area. In 1978 Kyriacou and Sutcliffe defined **teachers' stress** as:

'a response of negative affect (such as anger or depression) by a teacher usually accompanied by potentially pathogenic physiological and biochemical changes (such as increased heart rate or release of adrenocorticotropic hormones into the bloodstream) resulting from aspects of the teacher's job and mediated by the perception that the demands made upon the teacher constitute a threat to his self-esteem or well being and by coping mechanisms activated to reduce the perceived threat (as cited in Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995: 50)'.

Further research into teachers' stress undertaken by Borg, Riding and Falzon on primary school teachers in Malta and Gozo identified the following dimensions of teacher stress:

1. Workload - lesson preparation, checking assignments, general amount of work, responsibility for pupils, insufficient rest periods;
2. Professional Recognition Needs - few promotion and professional development opportunities, inadequate salary, inadequate recognition for teaching competences;
3. Pupil Misbehaviour - class discipline problems, impolite behaviour, lack of interest in learning, managing additional pupils;
4. Time/Resource Difficulties – inadequate equipment and facilities, poorly constructed syllabi, insufficient time for individual tuition, large class sizes;

⁶ j.pitura@uw.edu.pl

5. Poor Colleague Relationships – pressures from authorities and parents, attitudes of other parents (Boyle et al., 1995: 63).

In Poland, the study conducted by Sęk in the 1990s among primary and secondary school teachers brought similar findings, the most stressful being: insufficient salary (disproportionate to effort and work), low social prestige / status of the teaching profession, students' behaviour and their features of character, overloaded syllabi and their constant modifications, excessive and contradictory supervisors' demands, constant threat of being evaluated, inadequate working conditions (Sęk, 2000: 152).

A more recent survey on teachers' stress by Grzegorzewska (2006) found the following to be most stressful among primary, secondary and special school teachers in Poland: ambiguity of teacher's role, apprehension concerning the professional future, a feeling of insufficient competences, lack of recognition and appropriate qualifications (Grzegorzewska, 2006: 167).

Although there has been much research work investigating occupational stress in teachers working with children and adolescents, research concerning the sources of stress in modern adult educators is – to my current knowledge – non-existent. Therefore, in order to fully understand the nature of their work, it is vital to conduct appropriate research on this professional group.

Those who are unable to successfully cope with stress over a long period of time are likely to develop symptoms of **occupational burnout**. Maslach, Schaufeli and Laiter define burnout as '*a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job* (2001: 339)', and identify three key dimensions:

- exhaustion – where one feels emotionally and physically tired;
- cynicism (or depersonalization) – where one isolates / distances themselves from various aspects of the job;
- reduced efficacy (or accomplishment) - involves a feeling of incompetence and a reduced sense of achievement (Maslach et al., 2001: 399).

In search of the sources, Maslach et al. (2001) identify the following to have impact on the individual's burnout: workload and time pressure, role conflict (conflicting demands have to be met) and role ambiguity (there is a lack of information to do the job well), lack of social support, lack of feedback, little participation in decision making, lack of autonomy (Maslach et al., 2001: 407).

Such a negative state has significant outcomes, related both to the individual and the job. With time the following may appear:

- outcomes related to work performance: job withdrawal (e.g. absenteeism, intention to leave the job and turnover), lower effectiveness at work, decreased job satisfaction, reduced commitment to the job / organization, negative impact on colleagues (e.g. by creating conflicts);
- outcomes related to health: headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension, hypertension, colds or flu, sleep problems;

- mental dysfunction: anxiety, depression, lowered self-esteem (cf. Maslach et al., 2001; Maslach & Leiter, 2009).

In the later phases of research, i.e. with the advent of so-called 'positive psychology', the opposite of burnout - **job engagement** – drew researchers' attention. It is defined as '*an energetic state of involvement with personally fulfilling activities that enhance one's sense of professional efficacy* (Maslach & Leiter, 2009: 498)' and burnout is now considered to be '*an erosion of a positive psychological state* (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2008: 204)'. Thus, people's relationship with work may be placed somewhere on the Burnout-Engagement continuum, with the following dimensions: exhaustion – energy, cynicism – involvement, inefficacy - efficacy (Maslach & Leiter, 2009: 498). Furthermore, it is claimed that in order to combat burnout, interventions building job engagement are recommended to be undertaken, rather than the ones aiming at reducing burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

To conclude, much is already known about the nature of occupational stress and burnout, though, as stated earlier, the research focusing on adult educators is still required. As its consequences, e.g. psychosomatic symptoms, teacher / educator drop-out, teaching quality deterioration seem to be some of major issues in the teaching profession nowadays, the question persists: What can be done in order to prevent occupational burnout? The answer has been raised by many researchers to date, but the emergence of new findings (i.e., in the scope of research on adult educators' competences and goal progress theories) may shed new light on the problem. Consequently, I argue that preventing adult educators' burnout, or rather building their engagement, seems viable by means of implementing **self-management goal-oriented** programmes of **generic competences** development in educators' professional growth.

Goal setting in professional growth

I strongly believe that engaging educators in setting professional goals may build engagement and, in consequence, enhance their wellbeing.

Let us begin by explaining the concept of **psychological well-being**. In today's psychology, influenced by 'positive psychology', it is proposed that mentally healthy people are not the ones who are realistic in their judgments about themselves and the reality but the ones who are characterized by unrealistically positive self-regard, an illusion of high personal control, and unrealistic optimism concerning the future. This has impact on other aspects of mental health - such people are caring in relations with other people, they are more productive and creative at work, and can manage stress efficiently (sf. Taylor & Brown, 1988; Gollwitzer & Bayer, 1999: 414).

How is it possible to obtain this state of wellbeing? Research into the matter reveals that engagement in the goal progress brings positive affect, which in turn influences an individual's subjective perceptions of wellbeing (Pomaki, Karoly, & Maes, 2009). The explanation of this phenomenon may be offered by analyzing the **model of action phases**

in pursuing a goal (Gollwitzer & Bayer, 1999; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). It is claimed that in order to achieve a goal, four stages are to be met:

1. the predecisional phase – a person evaluates the wishes paying attention to how desirable or feasible they are; then chooses the wishes/desires and turns them into goals;
2. the (postdecisional) preactional phase – a person starts goal-oriented activities, by deciding on when, where and how to achieve them;
3. the actional phase – the actual goal pursuit,
4. the postactional phase – the person evaluates the results by comparing them to the initial intentions (Gollwitzer & Bayer 1999: 404).

The model also assumes that each stage is accompanied by a different - deliberative or implemental - mindset:

the predecisional phase	deliberative mindset
the (postdecisional) preactional phase	implemental mindset
the actional phase	implemental mindset
the postactional phase	deliberative mindset

The **deliberative mindset** is characterized by being open to available information and by being realistic and accurate in analyzing the information. Once the **implemental mindset** is established, it is blocked to other available information (i.e., it is geared towards the set goal), there is an increase in unrealistic optimism, it increases peoples' positive illusions of control and enhances their self-perceptions (Gollwitzer & Bayer, 1999: 413). It seems that it is the implemental mindset that is indispensable in building engagement.

Thus, pursuing the goals, which should be '*very ambitious, absorbing, difficult to achieve... but achievable*' (Sędek, 2001: 246; author's translation)', may play a significant role in fostering adult educators' psychological wellbeing.

Generic competences development

Since they seem to be vital, what sort of professional goals may be pursued that can facilitate building engagement in educators?

Research findings concerning the intervention strategies for coping with burnout (such as relaxation, training in interpersonal and social skills, assertiveness training, etc) are mixed and report some cases of reduction in exhaustion and few in cynicism and inefficacy (Malsach *et al.*, 2001). For that reason I am of the opinion that the set of generic competences proposed in the final report '*Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals, Contribution to the Development of a Reference Framework of Key Competences for Adult Learning Professionals*' (Research voor Beleid, 2010) may have the potential in preventing or alleviating burnout symptoms. The set addresses the area of competences, whose lack or possession may have a predictive value of burnout development.

Let me analyze the first competence and the sources of stress which may be alleviated by means of competence development.

The first competence 'A1 Competence in systematic reflection on their own practice, learning and personal development: being a fully autonomous lifelong learner' covers the following stressors with the knowledge, skills and attitudes as below:

Table I. Stressors vs. A1 Competence in systematic reflection on their own practice, learning and personal development

Stressors	Knowledge, skills, attitudes
apprehension concerning the professional future →	has knowledge of the possibilities for further development of his/her own professional practice;
feeling of insufficient competences →	is interested in his/her own professional development;
professional recognition needs →	is able to be self-reflective;
workload, time difficulties →	is able to organize work and time;

Similarly, the remaining generic competences may be matched with other stressors:

Table II. Stressors vs. A2 – A7 Competences

Stressors	Generic competence
students' misbehaviour; poor colleague relationships; excessive and contradictory supervisors' demands; role conflict; constant threat of being evaluated; lack of social support; lack of feedback;	A2 Competence in communicating and collaborating with adult learners, colleagues and stakeholders: being a communicator and team player
apprehension concerning the professional future; little participation in decision making; role ambiguity; lack of social support; lack of feedback;	A3 Competence in being aware of, and taking responsibility for the institutional setting in which adult learning takes place at all levels (institute, sector, the wider profession and society): being responsible for the further development of adult learning
professional recognition needs; feeling of insufficient competences;	A4 Competence in making use of their own expertise and the available learning resources: being an expert in a field of study/practice
professional recognition needs; feeling of insufficient competences;	A5 Competence in making use of different learning methods, styles and techniques including new media and awareness of new possibilities, including e-skills and ability to assess them critically: being able to deploy different learning methods, styles and techniques in working with adults
student's misbehavior (i.e. their lack of motivation to learn)	A6 Competence in empowering the adult learners to learn and support themselves in their development into, or as, fully autonomous lifelong learners: being a motivator
student's misbehaviour (i.e. conflicts) a feeling of insufficient competencies;	A7 Competence in dealing with group dynamics and heterogeneity in the background, learning needs, motivation and prior experience of adult learners: being able to deal with heterogeneity and diversity in groups

All in all, the set of key generic competences recommended in the final report seems to provide adult educators with the competences which may assist in preventing and combating the above-mentioned stressors. In addition, it presents a wide range of valuable goals in planning an adult educator's professional development, which can cater for various needs. For that reason it worthwhile to consider those competences not only as mere outcomes of the training and development programmes but also as the outcomes of educators' goal pursuit. It is likely that involvement in this process may have the potential in building engagement and problem prevention. However, before such programmes are developed, as observed earlier, precise identification of stress sources in adult educators is essential.

Professional development self-management

Although the value of being engaged in professional goal pursuit is significant, adult educators may be uncertain as to who is responsible for their development and which method(s) to apply. For a number of reasons it appears that adult educators themselves are responsible for their professional development and they may advance their careers by applying self-management strategies.

Firstly, due to the current economic and social circumstances, organizations do not tend to commit themselves to stable cooperation. Many educators are freelancers or work on temporary or short-term contracts, where organizations (schools) are reluctant to employ in permanent positions (ALPINE, 2008, pp. 104-105), in Poland the teachers of English to adults are a case in point. Even though employees are welcome to expand their knowledge and improve their skills, the organizations are seldom willing to invest in this process. That is why being proactive in designing one's own developmental path and following it seems to be crucial in educators' professional growth nowadays.

The other reason why educators themselves should take an increased responsibility for their development is that it is all too important to entrust anybody with such an important role of managing one's own competences (Oleksyn, 2010). Besides, there are various stages in a teacher's lifelong career and for this reason different methods for training outcomes should be applied at specific stages (Komorowska, 2011). An incompetent person in charge of educators' development in an organization may unwittingly, though seriously, hinder one's developmental process.

Accordingly, educators should be advised to reflect on their career progress and pursue their professional objectives based on their own needs, experience and decisions.

One may argue that adult educators function within organizations (schools) and they cannot be analyzed outside this context. It is worthwhile to notice, however, that we have known about the significance of the job – person fit and we have heard appeals for organizational interventions (e.g., Maslach et al., 2001; Grzegorzewska, 2006) for some time now. Despite this little appears to be happening in order to help educators at the

organizational level. So is it reasonable to continue waiting for such interventions to appear?

Conclusion

All things considered, the problem of occupational stress and burnout among adult educators clearly poses a threat to their work performance. For that reason I call for a concerted effort in developing the tools and programmes for the adult educators' generic competencies self-management as well as selection and examination of goal-oriented strategies to be employed individually by adult educators. I strongly believe that such tools and programmes may help prevent occupational burnout by building engagement, enhance educators' wellbeing and professional satisfaction and, as a result, significantly improve their work performance.

As it was stated '*Without goals, and plans to reach them, you are like a ship that has set sail with no destination* (Fitzhugh Dodson, psychologist, specialist in education)'. So let us allow adult educators to know where they are going so that they can be happier at work.

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WEIL, Markus⁷

University of Applied Sciences
Northwestern Switzerland,
Switzerland

Adult educators – a threatened species in our education systems

Introduction

I will approach the role of adult educators by looking at the target field of adult education and its definitions of formal, non-formal and informal learning.

I contrast definitions of adult education used in political statistic documents. These definitions demonstrate a shifting position of adult education, which I interpret as marginalisation and fading. Firstly I will unwrap the re-definitions of the adult education environment and consequences for adult educators. After that a perspective from the action fields of adult educators offers an alternative to a top-down view led by statistical definitions.

Re-definitions of the environment “adult education” and consequences for adult educators

The shift (1) from education to learning, (2) from a fourth pillar to a rest category of the education system, and (3) the contradictions of these shifts have consequences for the visibility and status of adult educators. With different connotations the re-definitions are present in central political statistic documents in Switzerland and Germany – but also in an English-speaking or even international context they might be a threat for the species of adult educators globally.

(1) Shift from education to learning

In the English- and in the German-speaking context we could follow a likewise shift of the concepts used for defining adult education. While in both language sets the shift from teaching to learning has evoked as the new paradigm (Berendt, 2009), also the connotations have been changing. Adult education has been more and more subsumed within further education from the 1970s onwards (e.g. for Britain: Fieldhouse 2000, for Germany: Deutscher Bildungsrat, 1970) and increasingly defined in the sense of informal learning (Titmus, 1994). From this perspective adult educators are considerably “further educators” and their defined task is not education but facilitating learning. Additionally “further education” in the German-speaking context has been (partly) merged with the concept of lifelong learning. Even if both terms have a very different history, they are often used synonymously (Kraus, 2001). The shifting terminology did not only have a direct impact on the wording but also a long-term impact on the meaning: For some while in the

⁷ markus.weil@fhnw.ch

German-speaking context the combination “adult/further education” was used (e.g. Tippelt, 1994) but the component “adult” finally disappeared.

First threat: The shift from education to learning changed the name of the environment for adult educators. Adult education developed towards a direction of further education and lifelong learning.

(2) Shift towards a “rest category”

A second set of definitions can also illustrate a re-interpretation of adult education in terms of wording and a long-term meaning. We are looking now at formal, non-formal and informal further education and how this distinction frames the field for adult educators.

For the German-speaking context a Swiss document might symbolise one of the strongest re-interpretations: Regarding to an educational statistic SLFS (Swiss Labour Force Survey) by the Federal Statistical Office *formal* further education does not exist by definition, because it is recognized within other parts of the education system (primary, secondary or tertiary education). Consequently further education can be only *non-formal* or *informal*. Informal further education by this definition is following a learning aim, but does not happen in a teaching-learning situation (e.g. copying a colleagues’ action in a working context). So further educators are not active within informal education – or only in post-hoc recognition of informal learning. Their remaining territory seems to be *non-formal* and by definition *outside of the institutionalised education system* (BfS, 2010). This top-down interpretation is a threat for adult educators, because it narrows their role within further education to a rest category “outside the system” – and even within this field the business interpretation of further education is dominant (copying colleagues at work, reading a handbook) and the liberal, personal and cultural facets (e.g. music, arts, democratic issues) have not really a standing (Dominicé, 2005).

From an international context I consult the CVTS (Continuing Vocational Training Survey). The first survey was conducted in 1994 within twelve EU-countries. Two more studies followed in 2000/2001 and 2006 in more than 25 countries. The survey aimed to differentiate forms of further education mentioned by employees and enterprises including supply-demand-strategies and concepts of further education. This survey is clearly located in a vocational context, still the role of formal and informal education can be interpreted as such: In the first publication of CVTS the authors distinguished further education in a *narrow* and in a *wide* sense. *Wide forms* were for example close to the direct working environment such as reading specialist literature at the work place. Since 2003 these definitions have been re-phrased as *further education initiated by the company* (narrow sense) and *other forms* (wide sense). The definitions behind these terms stayed the same but they show the marginalization of some “other” forms of adult education (Grünwald & Moraal, 1996; Grünwald, Moraal & Schönfeld, 2003).

Both examples show that fields, where adult educators have been active, became a rest-category of the education system. Adult education within the new territory is often neither leading to any supported qualification nor to any recognition.

Second threat: The definitions like „outside the education system“ or „other learning“ threatens the species of educators who have their professional field or workplace in that area.

(3) *Contradicting shifts*

The two described threats are all but clearly defined. Like in the natural environment of threatened species on the red list it is not a mono-causal solution to be found – often it is even difficult to identify the responsible sources for the peril. Likewise the shifts within the interpretations of adult education are complex and even contradicting as the following examples indicate.

For the SLFS in the Swiss context from 1996 to today further education was defined as intended learning, but only the newer publications explicitly narrow this understanding to educational activities, that take place within an institutionalised context but do *not* lead to recognized diploma (qualifications) (BFS, 2007, 2010). Another example from the German-speaking context is the German BSW (Berichtssystem Weiterbildung - Report System Further Education) by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the internationally compatible follow-up as the Adult Education Survey (AES). These longitudinal statistics use a frequent telephone survey asking the German population about their further education activities. This was done in the BSW every third year since 1979. From the 1970s the report already used the term further education, which was interpreted as a forth pillar of the education system (quartary education) politically supported by a central national report (Deutscher Bildungsrat, 1970). Since the 2000s this dimension was broadened by adding informal further education as a separate chapter with gained weight. To these so-called “soft forms” of further education in 2003 “learning with new media” was added 2006 (BMBF 2003, 2006). Since 2007 the definitions were modified according to the Adult Education Survey in order to ensure international comparability (BMBF 2011). This changed the meaning of the German term further education with its history in adult education according to the international definition of adult education. In the publication it is even mentioned that the congruency of the used terms is to be discussed (ibid.).

An international definition within an English-speaking context comes also from CEDEFOP. The definition seems to have no problems in defining *formal* education as happening within an organized, structured context and explicitly being labelled as learning and in most cases leading to a (legally) accepted certificate (CEDEFOP 2008). *Non-formal* learning shall be planned action, that is not being labelled as learning but intended by the learner (ibid.). In contrast *informal* learning is not organized an intended regarding learning aims, learning time and learning facilitation. The main distinction within this definition is therefore, whether or not the learning has been intended. Adult educators from this point of view would be responsible mostly for formal learning. Because it seems to be a precondition for an educator to be active only when learning is intended and also labelled as learning.

Table I: Adult Education definitions in different documents. Bold: area where adult educators could be located (source: own elaboration; CEDEFOP 2008; BFS 2010; BMBF 2006, 2011; Grünewald, Moraal & Schönfeld, 2003).

Formality	Formal	Non-Formal	Informal
Defined by			
CEDEFOP	Organized, structured context and explicitly being labelled as learning	Planned action, that is not being labelled as learning but intended	Not organized and intended regarding learning aims, learning time and learning facilitation
Until 2006 BMBF	Programs, courses and events		"Further forms" of workplace learning and leisure time self-directed learning
Since 2007 AES	Programs	Courses and events	Self-directed learning
SLFS	Not part of adult (further) education	Taught, but outside the institutional education system	Following a learning aim explicitly, but taking place outside a teaching-learning-relationship
CVTS (focus on education and training by enterprises)	-	Organized by the employer (e.g. seminars, courses, ...)	"Other learning" (e.g. job-rotation, learning on the job ...)

All definitions in comparison make visible the contradicting shapes of adult education and the precarious situation of the adult educator species being neither fish nor fowl.

Third threat: The shifts of adult education definitions are contradicting and not clearly traceable which makes it difficult to argue for the species of adult educators.

Preliminary interpretation

In conclusion the definitions show where are the predators of the adult educator species and that this profession might be marginalized and re-defined. We could identify three threats:

(1) The shift from education to learning changed the name of the environment for adult educators. Adult education developed towards a direction of further education and lifelong learning.

(2) The definitions like „outside the education system“ or „other learning“ threatens the species of educators who have their professional field or workplace in that area.

(3) The shifts of adult education definitions are contradicting and not clearly traceable which makes it difficult to argue for the species of adult educators.

Keeping in mind that the surveys have not been chosen in order to be representative for a whole education system, but they are still central documents that can steer politics, funding and recognition of adult education. The surveys also come from a different methodological context – the Swiss Survey SLFS is a labour force study, while the German Report System BFS and AES are household surveys – so a different population has been asked about adult education. In the Swiss survey further education is only one small part with a few questions among other labour related questions. For CVTS enterprises have been the target group of

the survey and therefore gave an employers' perspective, while the CEDEFOP definitions are part of political not of statistical documents. The results and the definitions of the different studies are of course influenced by these contexts. For me the question comes to mind: What has been so bad about the old fashioned and vanished term of "adult education"?

Is it worth protecting the species of adult educators?

That we cannot find the one and only definition for adult education – even within the objective and representative data of national and international statistic surveys – does not mean that adult education is not definable. But the contexts and the approaches of this data are so important for the interpretation that we must insist not to take the given numbers as innocent. Also it seems to be very interesting to question the given definitions and their impact on the territory of adult educators. The resulting classifications – e.g. of formal and informal learning – are not compatible with others – e.g. levels of education, number of qualifications or international classifications. One possible way forward could be the other way around by asking: What are adult educators professionally doing? They may train, teach, facilitate, coach, guide, ... adults. It might not be very much in fashion to define adult education not as lifelong learning primarily but that the educational relation towards "adults" plays the major role and has clear distinctions towards the education of children or youth. Adult educators from this point of view are active in secondary schools, at universities or universities of applied sciences, in parts of the apprenticeship system, in all enterprises, in higher vocational education, migrant programs, recognition schemes for prior learning, and so on. I argue that there is much shared between adult educators in all these sectors. Statistics on further or adult education might give a misleading impression of a rest category within our education systems. But on the other hand adult educators are the majority with very important responsibilities in all parts of the education system.

It makes sense to design formal learning as well as learning environments that inspire informal learning and to reflect about it. But if a course is certified by a certain provider or a state, if a professional journal is read during work or in a course – that should not be the primary source for defining adult education and with that the field for adult educators. And if it is important because of accountancy and measurability, then it should be clearly stated, that this definition is only used as a kludge for the educational system. The intention of the definition – as the examples show – have to be taken into account before interpreting the numbers or even linking them to funding, recognition and valuation.

Conclusion

The look into the statistical and political documents does not provide us with neutral or innocent data. The numbers been created within a context that is important for the interpretation of the results. When these contexts are neglected the adult educators become a threatened species within an everlasting re-shaping of adult education. The

professional field for adult educators crosses different levels of the educational and economic systems. Nevertheless adult education can be quickly labelled as being non-formal only. And within that interpretation of adult education adult educators might be marginalised and threatened. Taking the context of the surveys into account they all approach the field of adult education from *one* point of view. The surveys deal with difficulties of differentiating initial and further education, formality of education, and vocational and general education and even mention that fact. When interpreting the numbers these remarks often remain unread. But this should not lead to wiping a threatened species away. Maybe adult educators can insist on the role of the old fashioned definitions of adult education in order to mark a crucial territory for the professional action and also to give a counter-perspective on statistical interpretations by claiming that the phenomenon is too complex to operate with top-down definitions only. But we do not yet know: like on the red list – sometimes a threatened species recovers, sometime it dies out.

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Changing demands of society and the validity of the training programme for adult educators in Japan: limitations on its present curriculum after the 2011 great eastern Japan earthquake and future possibilities

Introduction

How we perceive the meaning of education is profoundly determined by the time, space and environment by which we are surrounded in our daily lives. In most industrial countries, although mass-consumption is taken for granted, the limits and fragility of society relying on imports of tons of material can easily be exposed when the system is collapsed by a stronger than expected power.

Geologically, Japan lies on the Circum-Pacific earthquake zone, which is one of the world's most seismologically active areas, and it experiences frequent earthquakes and other natural disasters. Despite technological advances, natural disasters cannot be totally predictable, and they have sometimes brought about catastrophes for this country throughout its history. Therefore, Japan is well prepared for disaster prevention, investing a large amount of research funds into disaster prediction. When it comes to seismological discussions, the nation has been taking a leading role in the world. Even among ordinary citizens, the awareness of disaster prevention is very high, for example, they tend to ensure every piece of furniture in the house is earthquake-resistant.

However, the scale of the earthquake which happened on 11th of March, 2011 and the following *tsunami* were greater than most experts had expected, and their massive influences have put enormous pressure and stress on this country since then. A wide range of north-eastern coastal areas were affected, where 15,845 people died and 3380 remain missing as of 20th January 2012. Moreover, the event directly hit the daily lives of those who live in the eastern part of Japan and many suffered from unstable supplies of electricity, gas, mineral water, food and daily goods, especially for the first three months. What is worse, the 2011 earthquake directly affected the nuclear power plant building No.1 in Fukushima that had been operated by the Tokyo Electric Power Company, leaving people to face the danger of radiation for a long period of time. All these uncontrollable events have drastically changed the way people see the world and have made them think of alternatives to existing society whilst starting to question what they previously took for granted. Interestingly, these phenomena can be seen not only in general politics and economy, but also in the field of education. Focussing upon what has happened to the field of 'social education' in this

⁸ nsuzuki817@gmail.com

country since March 2011, this paper explores the validity and future possibilities of the training programme for 'adult educators' in Japan.

General outline of becoming an adult educator in Japan

Before discussing newly required roles for 'adult educator' in this society, the current system has to be clarified. Since the enactment of the Social Education Law in 1949, there has been a qualification called a 'coordinator for social education' in Japan, which is almost equivalent to 'adult educator' in Europe, though it is targeted not only at adults, but also at people of all ages, and its scope covers all types of educational activities other than those offered in formal school education. It is authorized by the central government but its recruitment arrangements and work contents differ depending on the local government. The 'Japanese adult educator' is supposed to work under the Board of Education in each of the local government, but in some cases, they are assigned to work at local community centres and/or lifelong learning centres. This 'Japanese adult educator' takes various roles in society, the main ones being: to offer professional assistance and advice to individuals and relevant bodies that are directly involved in this field, to plan and coordinate projects for different types of learning at various levels, to create a network among various institutions, organisations and individuals in local communities which promote lifelong learning, and to train fresh 'adult educators' and related workers.

There are two main ways to become a 'Japanese adult educator': One is to take particular courses or specialize in this field at university, which requires at least 62 credits (one credit requires 12 hours of study), and the other is to take a training programme for 'adult educators' after having been employed for a certain number of years as a local public servant or a local school teacher. The latter training programme is very intensive, and practical in content, taking 30-40 days during the summer time and requiring 9 credits. A large number of Japanese 'adult educators' take the latter route, and therefore their knowledge and expertise tends to be insufficient to cover the variety of needs found in society.

At present, this intensive training programme comprises 4 main courses: 'Introduction to lifelong learning' (2 credits), 'Planning for social education' (2 credits), 'Practical training for social education' (2 credits), and 'Miscellaneous requirements for social education' (3 credits). 'Introduction to lifelong learning' includes lifelong learning, political and theoretical discourse of lifelong learning, central and local governmental administration of social education, the role of 'adult educators', the meanings of guidance for learning, methods and contents of social education, features of learners, various forms of education and different types of learning, the state of lifelong learning in other countries, and so forth. 'Planning for social education' offers more detailed methodologies and information on practical aspects, including how to conduct a survey, how to gain in-depth understanding of young and adult learners, methods of data collection and analysis, planning programmes, promotion of social education, evaluation of educational programmes and projects,

management of community education centres, interaction between social education and local society, and so forth. The contents of 'Practical training for social education' differ depending on the institution which organises this programme, but in many cases it includes 1-3 day visits to local community education centres, libraries and/or museums. 'Miscellaneous requirements for social education' covers a wide variety of subjects and slightly differs depending on the context of local needs, but in most cases it includes: ageing, globalization, informatisation, family education, issues of young people, gender issues, environmental issues, issues of under-represented persons, education for those who require it, audio visual education, the use of ICT, volunteering activities, sports, health issues, the state of on-the-job training by companies, social welfare, extra-curricular school activities, and so forth. Although this training programme looks comprehensive at first glance, it misses out on a number of important aspects of the work of the 'Japanese adult educator' which educators would need to know about once they took up professional employment.

The influence of the 2011 earthquake on adult education in Japan

The impact of the 2011 Great Eastern Japan Earthquake on the whole society has been enormous. It can be seen not only in perceivable physical damage but also in the mental health of those whose daily lives were totally uprooted, as well as those whose daily lives were partly affected but who still live with the fear of many things, e.g. the effects of radiation on human health. The event has clearly shown the folly of the prolonged post-war policy that put the economy ahead of all else, whilst causing the society to reconsider fundamental matters such as the existential value of life, wealth and happiness. One clear drive that has been appearing is 'the mistrust of civilisation' (Hara, 2011). What has been considered essential to create our society is now showing its vulnerability, and the massive event in 2011 questions the transient nature of those who had long been satisfied with the efficiency and convenience of our daily lives. Also, because of this event, the public had to realise that their convenient urban life in big cities such as Tokyo had been supported by the supply of electricity produced by nuclear power plants built in rural coastal areas such as Fukushima. On the other hand, the public also noticed that local governments that had agreed to build nuclear power plants in their towns had been receiving large sums in special subsidies from the central government so that the local people would benefit, which had not been widely publicised until this time.

When it comes to 'adult education', a number of new challenges for 'adult educators' have been reported (Incorporated Association of the Boards for Social Education, 2011) and their influences can be summarised as follows.

Firstly, the 2011 earthquake and tsunami have seriously affected the buildings of many institutions and organisations providing opportunities for lifelong learning (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology/MEXT, 2011). According to MEXT (2011), the numbers of related buildings that collapsed and/or were flooded were as follows:

kominkan (Japanese style of community learning centres 711; lifelong learning centres 114; museums 221; youth centres 28; libraries 195; other educational centres 14; sports centres 1,227; culturally related centres 257; others 16. In fact, the actual numbers could be higher than these, as some buildings in the most affected areas have not been counted as yet. It took time to clean and return everything to normal but balance has been restored little by little, thanks to much external support. Meanwhile, a number of the same and/or similar institutions and organisations in other parts of Japan started to do locum work. For example, all exhibits and showpieces in museums and galleries located in affected areas were transferred to other organisations of the same type.

Secondly, many buildings intended for lifelong learning in neighbouring areas were temporarily used as evacuation centres, accounting for 15.6% of the total number of such centres. It is convenient to use these lifelong learning centres as evacuation centres, since in most cases a kitchen, hall and several small rooms are available. It was the first time many of these centres had been used for this purpose, which entailed new challenges and use of creativity for their appropriate operation. The most difficult but essential task was how to ease the residents' stress, how to revitalise the evacuees, and how to develop autonomy/self-government. It is 'adult educators' who should take leadership in this.

Thirdly, centres used for lifelong learning in neighbourhood areas also had to become hubs for exchanging the latest information on the influence of the disasters, available social services, availability of temporary housing, job-hunting and many miscellaneous concerns of the evacuees, e.g. children's education etc.

Fourthly, there has been an increasing demand for creating learning spaces for disaster prevention, and above all, the demand for study of the impacts of radiation on the human body rose sharply. Therefore, as a hub for disaster prevention in local communities, some lifelong learning centres have started to offer short-term courses on disaster prevention, including radiation issues.

Fifthly, it is reported that the estimated number of children who lost either one or both of their parents exceeds 1800 (Science Council of Japan et al., 2011), and there is an urgent need to attend to their emotional and spiritual requirements, not to mention provide appropriate financial aid. This can be achieved by networking different stakeholders, such as 'adult educators', children's consultation centres, hospitals, non-profit organisations and local people around them. Therefore, how to develop viable and cross-sectorial relationships is becoming important.

Sixthly, since March 2011, a voluntary-operated website called 'Save MLAK' has been launched to share the latest information on the damage situation in each of the organisations providing lifelong learning opportunities in the affected areas, such as museums, galleries, libraries, and lifelong learning centres etc.

Taking all these new phenomena into account, Japanese 'adult educators' have had to cope with many challenges and take new and unexpected roles.

The experience of one adult educator in Fukushima and his required roles in an Evacuation Centre

After the earthquake, a great number of people were forced to evacuate. The figure exceeded 450,000 people at the peak time in March 2011. Many spacious public buildings near affected areas were used as 'evacuation centres' and the following example shows what was required of an 'adult educator' during the emergency.

The 'Big Pallet Fukushima/BPF' is a conventional building with a total floor area of 50,000m², which was used as one of the largest evacuation centres from March to August, 2011 (Editorial Committee for Publishing Memories of the Big Pallet Fukushima, 2011). It was once simultaneously used by more than 2500 evacuees who used to live in *Tomioka* Town and *Kawauchi* Village in the coastal areas of Fukushima, but the number of evacuees decreased gradually as they moved to provisional housing offered by the central government.

A male adult educator 'X' aged 51, working for the Division of Lifelong Learning in the Fukushima prefectural government, was suddenly assigned to work for BPF from 11th of April, 2011. The reason for this assignment was that BPF was almost unmanageable by then in many respects. For example, although the BPF building itself had been partly damaged and distorted by the earthquake, and its ceilings had collapsed, it had to accept evacuees as a quick stopgap measure because there were no larger buildings in nearby areas. All of the evacuees looked dispirited, as most of them had been forced to move from one evacuation centre to another repeatedly in cold weather with lots of snow, and had not received appropriate medical treatment. When 'X' arrived at BPF, he could hardly believe that those who were lying anemically on the floor were people who had led ordinary lives until one month ago. Since some of the more spacious areas were not available due to the damage caused by the earthquake, some of the evacuees were lying on narrow aisles, stairs and even in front of the toilets. They lay on a cold concrete floor with 2-3 thin blankets provided, separated from each other by partitions made from cardboard boxes. Elderly people just sat or lay on the floor and most youngsters were using their mobiles or playing on game machines, and they only got together to form a queue at meal times. Moreover, just before 'X' was assigned to the centre, there was an outbreak of norovirus and acute infectious gastroenteritis. In order to solve these problems, 'X' was expected to make use of his long experience, expertise and his extensive contacts as an 'adult educator'. Witnessing this horrific sight, 'X' was convinced that there was an urgent need to avoid group infection and vowed that nobody would be left to die. He also realised that all the staff who had been dispatched from neighbouring towns and villages were exhausted since they had not taken any rest. Moreover, in spite of frequent aftershocks that were still happening in those days, no hazard map had been prepared for those evacuated to BPF.

'X' started by making a list of all evacuees, obtaining all their details, through personal interviews in cooperation with other staff. At the same time, he considered the best way to avoid future disasters and made a hazard map for BPF. Additionally, in order to prevent

group infection by all kinds of viruses, those who were infected were moved to 'a health-observation room', and from a hygiene standpoint, a new rule was created to ban making a living space where there was poor sanitation, such as near toilets, sinks and dark places. After all these first emergency measures had been taken, 'X' was able to protect the lives of all the evacuees.

The next step was how to develop autonomy/self-government among all the evacuees. In this regard, 'X' consulted with an expert 'Y' who had experienced another heavy earthquake in the past in *Niigata*, and who was visiting BPF. What 'X' hoped was that through operating the evacuation centre a new autonomy would be created among the people so that their relationships would continue after they moved to provisional housing. At that time, 'Y' suggested two things: one was to provide evacuees with the opportunity to enjoy a 'footbath' where they could bathe their feet in a small individual washbowl; the other was to make a 'salon' within the evacuation centres. The former also included a hand-massage offered by volunteers while the evacuees enjoyed the 'footbath'. The real intention behind this was to offer attentive hearing by volunteers, whilst easing the accumulated stress of the evacuees. These approaches were used at the time of previous disasters and proved to be effective in enabling the inner feelings of the evacuees to be understood. Just after each session, without anyone noticing, the volunteers tried to write down on a small card what each of the evacuees had said. All these cards were collected and consolidated by 'X' so that he could come up with new ideas to continuously support evacuees. Reading through hundreds of cards, 'X' came to understand how seriously people were affected not only by the earthquake, *tsunami*, radiation and harmful rumours about Fukushima that were spreading around the world, but also by the sudden loss of their livelihoods, their families, relatives, friends, ranching animals, jobs, workplaces, houses, cars, favourite small items with memories and their loving hometown. Eventually, he realised that the worrying situation people were facing was an issue of human rights, and what they had been suddenly deprived of was 'living evidence' of their past lives. 'X' was convinced that people in Fukushima would have to speak out about this, not just lament their tragedies. The latter suggestion by 'Y', to make a salon, was gradually introduced in various ways. Many new demand-driven places were created within BPF in response to the needs of the evacuees. These places included a women's changing room, a few cafés where people could talk with others while enjoying free coffee (set up with the assistance of a man who used to run a coffee shop before), a volunteering centre where people could help each other, and a mini-FM radio station that was operated by local government staff, volunteers and evacuees. A new volunteer group to pull up the weeds around BPF was also created by 250 evacuees. 'X' realised that once people were provided with a place where they could make use of their abilities, they gradually took whatever roles they could and were revitalised. The role of 'adult educator' here was therefore to carefully observe this process and measure the whole picture systematically and organisationally to improve the situation and to come up with new ideas, using a creative mind, in response to the various needs of individuals.

Concluding remarks

Since March 2011, when the massive earthquake hit Japan and its tremendous influences were felt widely, all aspects of society have begun to be reconsidered, and the nation has started to readdress the meaning of life, whilst seeking harmonious coexistence with nature, with more careful attention to disaster prevention and to new harmless methods of producing energy. In these circumstances, new roles have been required for Japanese 'adult educators'. In the context of this trend, the following elements can be added to improve the current training programme for 'adult educators' in this country.

Firstly, a lesson of this unexpected disaster is that there should be a more efficient system for risk communication during emergencies by networking different stakeholders, as soon as they are assigned. This could save the lives of many people, while avoiding unsanitary situations. Secondly, how to develop autonomy among people in a new community during an emergency should be more seriously investigated, as such autonomy cannot be successfully imposed by others; it can only be achieved by the self-motivation of those who are mostly affected. This could also lead to discussions on how, during an emergency, to develop effective human relationships among people who have different backgrounds, how to reduce the accumulated stress of evacuees, and how to revitalise them. Thirdly, future 'adult educators' will need to have more flexibility and creativity so that they can meet various changing needs in different contexts. Fourthly, a more viable intergenerational communication system should be developed so that evacuees of different ages who do not know each other can cooperate effectively during an emergency. It will be an arduous task to meet all of these sudden challenges, but it seems that this should be the mission of a country which is fated to live with frequent natural disasters.

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The relations of the actors in research, practice and policy in Finnish adult education: what research means for actors of vocational education?

Introduction

This paper has a background in Finnish research and development project AITURI ("Structural innovations for research collaboration in adult education"). The project started with the notion that the worlds of the actors in different fields of adult education have been differentiating and the communication between them has become remote and sporadic. The outcome of the project was that increasing of the cooperation is ostensibly easy, but the differences between cultural practices and discourses provide a challenge to regular and long-term cooperation. (Heikkinen & Teräsahde, 2011.) The need to increase research collaboration between the university and different actor groups of adult education seems to have become more topical theme in Finland today though it has been discussed about the lack of connections and collaboration for long. Before being able to find solutions to improve the collaboration between actors in adult education, there is a need for deeper knowledge and understanding about the historically developed relations of the actors and interpretations of them done by each actor. In this article I will focus on the data collected in AITURI-project from the perspective of the action fields of adult education and the relations between the actors.¹¹

The theoretical background of my research consists of three approaches. Firstly, Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Fenwick & Edwards, 2010; Latour, 2005) has a double role in my research. According to one of its developers, Bruno Latour (2005; 1999), it is a method for the description of rhizomatic connections rather than a theoretical framework. It serves, however, also as theory by providing concepts like action, actor and group, which Latour (2005) considers *infratext*, being deliberately not defined strictly. Also complexity theory fits my research design since it seeks for historical influences, sources and causes for change in the dynamic and complex interaction constituted in a specific environment (Mason 2008). The networked action is thirdly looked through Foucauldian lenses - with a critical view on education policy, social structures and power relations and by recognizing the realities constructed in discourses. The writings of Michel Foucault provide also concepts like practice, which can be applied in my research to guideline the historization of relations between actors. (Alhainen, 2007; Foucault, 1966; Kusch, 1991.)

¹⁰ sini.terasahde@uta.fi

¹¹ This paper relates to my PhD research, where I am studying 1) action fields and relations between actors in adult education and 2) research collaboration in adult education.

The data collected during the AITURI project consists of key person interviews, questionnaires and recordings and products from the discussion sessions which were organized by the project among different actor groups. Furthermore, it includes materials produced by different actors, like policy documents, action plans and strategy papers, and other current and historical publications about the transitions in adult education and in relations between the actors. The first round of the analysis on the written data was done through qualitative content analysis. The second round of the analysis concentrates on discourses.

This paper is based on a presentation "What is the significance of the adult education research to the actors?" in "The Futures of Adult Educator(s): Agency, Identity and Ethos" seminar. I had to proceed with my analysis of the question with different actors group by group, and I chose actors in vocational education and training (VET) to scrutinize first. Two main sources for investigating the question from the point of view of VET actors are two two-hour key person interviews and one discussion session held in a VET research conference in Finland, where the people were either VET researchers or professionals, but mainly professionals who also do research. One key person interviewed was a CEO in a national development organization of vocational adult education and the other one is a professional working in an adult and vocational education institute and being also a national coordinator in European Vocational Training Association (EVTA). Based on key person interviews, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the conceptions of all VET professionals, but as the interviewees are in the authoritative position, they represent the hegemonic discourse that is shaping the understanding of VET professionals and is gradually changing the paradigms of vocational education (Heikkinen, 1995; Heikkinen, Kuusisto, Nuotio, Korpinen, Vesala & Tiilikkala, 1996; Kuusisto, 2004; Tiilikkala, 2004).

The value of the research for practitioners

Nowadays *adult education* in Finland as practice and as a field of study includes vocational adult education and training (other fields of adult education practice are typically general adult education, commercial/private education and training, HRD, and higher education for adults) (The Finnish National Board of Education, 2010; Heikkinen & Teräsahde, 2011; Tuomisto, 1999). However, few VET professionals have a degree or studies in *adult education*. In Finland, VET professionals have various professional backgrounds. VET teachers are the biggest group of VET professionals, yet the qualification and quality requirements of VET teachers have remained in the margin of educational policy and teacher training. (Raivola, Heikkinen, Kauppi, Nuotio, Oulasvirta, Rinne, Kamppi & Silvennoinen, 2006.) VET teachers have to complete pedagogical studies (Raivola et al., 2006; Volmari, Helakorpi, & Fridmodt, 2009) but adult education as a discipline and a field of study isn't normally emphasized in these studies or in the basic studies of education (Heikkinen, 1997; Act on Vocational Teacher Training 357/2003). The danger of superficiality resides in the multidisciplinary of the science base of vocational teacher training

regardless of the sincere aim of providing holistic knowledge (Rousi, 1993). The next two interview examples reveal the general ideas of the importance of adult education studies to the VET practitioners:

A8/73, 74 [...] Of course those who have a permanent job have the obligatory pedagogical studies, so that is it. But usually those are quite poor many times. They are done beside the job swiping with one hand like this. [...] And then again, either adult, like pedagogy, adult education science, is not emphasized there in any way.

H10/95: There are abilities [to follow adult education research] but the interest [to do that] is not terribly positive.

The latter example shows that the interest of VET professionals to utilize adult education research is not high although their formal abilities to do that are at the adequate level. Later on I will come back to the experienced need for and attitudes towards adult education research, which may explain the lack of interest. However, there is recognition of an intrinsic value of academic research among VET professionals, even if it said here ironically, as if research would automatically add the workload of the practitioners:

H10/105: [...] The research per se would be like valuable, there's nothing in it. The greater the knowledge the greater the pain.

On the other hand, research seems to be something external for the VET practice. The interviewees assume that the need for research is not usually understood among practitioners.

A8/178: [...] it is hundred for sure that the education organizations won't be paying to be researched. They don't see the need.

H10/130: Well there are no needs unless somebody come and show them. Can't we do this, wouldn't this be important, could we do like this?

In the latter example, the interviewee suggests *that researchers must show* the need for research and market and advertise it to the practitioners. Researchers should be, according to one interviewee, like "soap sellers" creating their own market by revealing the unidentified needs. The idea is based on classical business and marketing theories: the company responds to customer demands, which are created by marketing and advertising, by means of defining, developing and delivering the value of a product to customers (Webster, 2002). The customer must be first convinced that she or he needs the product or service, which is for sale. This kind of thinking reveals that VET professionals have adopted

the idea of working under the rules of economics selling their educational products. Therefore they expect researchers to do the same.

However, in the AITURI project it was found that the interest of an individual researcher lies far away from research needs in the practice. Under neo-liberal influence, she/he needs to concentrate on fulfilling the productivity targets set by the university and measured for example by published international articles (see also Larsson 2010). It seems that this leads researchers gradually to alienate from the practice despite the fact that universities in their rhetoric, at least in Tampere, emphasize their social responsibility and influence as their primary goal. (Heikkinen & Teräsahde 2011.)

Academic thinking and research would also be useful in VET practice and administration in order to understand the rapidly changing society and world and to analyze the change requirements to VET practice. From a researchers' point of view the next example is interesting, because the interviewee suggests, that research should *promote* the change, instead of questioning or criticizing it:

H10/92: This working life and the change in life are so fast. Everybody should work forty years and manage. And then the education and learning should happen with new modern tools and in new learning environments and yet in contact to work. So with my logic, the kind of research that takes this development into account and serves the change would be reasonable. It could, for example, help to analyze the good and bad sides of the change or could help to advance the speeding up of learning or making the learning more pleasant or. So what I kind of seek for is that it would pay off to look how the world changes. And hopefully research will focus on the issues that rise from the social reality.

An indicator of the actual value of research is that some polytechnics, according to one interviewee, are proud of the research done by their staff, but usually the dissertations and books remain just decorations and are put in the bookshelf. They are not utilized in the polytechnic's practices. Thus research seems to have some status value but less use value for practitioners. This notion gets support from the next interview example:

H10/95: [...] the development happens many times through different kinds of projects that are genuinely developmental; so research we may not meet first; so there is so little time for research and delving into it and it is so little demand for that.

The interviewee suggests that projects and evaluations are considered more useful than research because projects are intended to develop but in research the development aim is often secondary. Besides, projects are less time-consuming. Development is the word of a day so it affords to pay for products and services that serve development aims quickly. The development trend keeps the demand for projects high.

Also the evaluations done by the Finnish Education and Higher Education Evaluation Councils are taken to be valuable for VET professionals, because “they have at least caused some discussion”. It seems that research is assumed to raise any discussion more seldom. Academic research seems to have strong competitors in the knowledge production (see Usher 2010) and development markets in the field of vocational education and training. On the other hand, it also seems that research does not even compete with projects and evaluations in the same market: their interests and aims of knowledge production are so different.

Separation and attitudinal blocks

It was striking how much the separation between adult education research and VET practices was emphasized by interviewees. It seems that adult education research does not fit into the practical orientation of VET professionals. On the other hand it was pointed out that research results are presented in a form that is too abstract for the practitioners.

A8/45: [...] I think that they [professionals] don't care a bit [about adult education research and studies], those who do the everyday work. That is like, they don't see the need. [...] many times people emphasize how practical-oriented they are and how practical their work is. And they necessarily can't see the importance of research.

H10/127: [...] And this is the dimension that let's say restricts the things: so that the research connection in any form would reach the everyday work, it [research] should have something like, it should be made more easy to understand and to follow and more simple or something.

The form in which research is represented is not the only problem - there is something more profound in the sluggish relations between research and practice in the field of adult and vocational education. The general attitude towards academic research among VET professionals varies from really negative to plain positive as the following examples show:

H10/108: [...] And here again the units are highly different, there can be such an education provider who sees the great value in collaboration with a higher education institute and would also like to have people on board opening the scientific perspective, not just politicians. But there are also such persons, who probably think that the world of the university is like, this scientific world of adult education, it's like its own world, that won't touch the everyday reality much.

A8/70: But the attitude for example in the field of vocational adult education, the attitude of staff; it is peculiar that, although they all, thus most of them, have an academic degree, they still kind of, because they have orientated themselves towards a field that is very close to practice; well there is the attitudes very often like “look, I am such a manual worker don't you

dare to use foreign [/international] words to me." It is peculiar, how so many attitude blocks of this kind have developed.

One reason for separation and attitude blocks is the language, which differs between researcher and practitioner groups and challenges communication and collaboration (Heikkinen & Teräsahde, 2011). Still, it is distracting, what the interviewee in the previous example told about orientations and attitudes growing apart, despite the high, science-based educational background in both camps. The educational pathway seems still to be important in shaping the attitudes. A tentative interpretation for this is suggested in conclusion.

Practitioner research

VET professionals have a strong belief that research cannot be done properly without personal experience from the practice. This means that among VET professionals, even if a person is a researcher rather than practitioner, work experience is more appreciated than diplomas.

H10/62, 63: [...] If you haven't actually worked somewhere, it's terribly difficult, like, to find relevant research topics. Whether they [topics] are providing general knowledge or vocational, coincidence probably plays quite a big role [in finding them]. [...] So after you have worked or you are in the job, well then it [a relevant research topic] starts to take shape.

According to interviewees, there are a few "top debaters" among VET practitioners, who have a personal devotion in research taking actively part in research discussions. They are respected, because they are able to move from one world to another and speak both languages. It also became clear in the discussion session of the VET research conference that those who have done VET research do not see research and practice far away from each other, but rather consider research "to rise from the practice". In order to break the attitude blocks and to develop research, which the target group would find relevant, more VET professionals should be provided with the opportunity to do research. In universities, where the most of the research is still done, the inclusion of VET practitioners in research in larger extent requires flexible practices. One interviewee pointed this out:

H10/109: [...] It's like one thing, that if adult education research society wants, well, that in adult education work, people in practice, will do adult education research or science, then the university world needs to be able to change their own practices more flexible; that means modules, that means some studies, that means compensation [= recognition of prior learning], that means flexibility.

Conclusions

Feelings, attitudes, valuations and demands related to research among VET professionals seem to be mixed. The causes for separation and attitude blocks between research and practice in vocational adult education may have an origin in the expansive growth of upper secondary vocational education in the 1950s and 1960s and again in the 1980s and in the polytechnics reform in tertiary education in the 1990s (Pekkala, Intonen & Järviö, 2005). Also the administrative unification happened in 1991 when The National Boards of general and vocational education merged into one National Board of Education (Heikkinen, Korkiakangas, Kuusisto, Nuotio, Tiilikkala, 1999). They may be indicators of questioning the idea of the mixture of academic and vocational skills, which education should provide. The competition for recognition and resources may have caused confrontation between general and vocational upper secondary schools and between universities and polytechnics. Even if vocational education has gained equal recognition and respect, according to student enrolments and resources compared with general education, the struggle still goes on at mental level causing tensions in relations between vocational and general education and between academic research and VET practice. Also students have to make their individual schooling and career choices between practical or academic line, which requires taking a stand explaining others why to choose one instead of the other. This choice is, for the sake of constancy, a building block for future attitude formation. It is also known that in all age groups the attitudes towards education and lifelong learning are the more optimistic the more educated a person is (Olkinuora, Rinne, Mäkinen, Järvinen, Jauhiainen 2008). Probably the same attitudes extend towards research and theory.

Based on my study, the relationship between academic research and vocational practice seems to have ambivalent features. Practitioners in vocational education have interpreted - perhaps justly - that academic research, which is high in the traditional educational hierarchy, is not interested in vocational practice. Consequently practitioners have had to minimize their needs for research for example in developmental work. Instead they use projects and evaluation, also in order to show their independence. Feeling neglected one does not want to show needing the other - in this case, for example, the need for research, which would support the professionalism of VET teachers and other VET practitioners.

According to the interviews, VET professionals were quite sure of one thing: a researcher needs to have practical experience to do valid research. This forces crossing the borders of research and practice worlds from both sides. Rachel Pilkington (2009) found that even if the practitioner-researcher is seen more and more valuable, practitioner-researchers being in the cross-roads of research and practice, there are lots of challenges in utilizing such research, because research and practice are conceived as separate worlds. Likewise, she found that attitudes towards research and theory may be surprisingly negative in the work places of practitioner-researchers, which can be seen in the poor support for them to engage in research. Academic communities may disregard practitioners as well, treating them as novices, without noticing that the utilization of practitioners' knowledge would increase networking across the fields of research and practice and thus the social capital of

the academic community. Rousi (1993, 46) states: "One must get rid of compartmentalized thinking, according to which some people are researchers, some other people possess practical skills, and yet different ones are teachers. The deepest challenge of vocational teacher education university can be found in the idea that the same person must be able to work, do research and teach."

My research shows that, at least in Finland, all kinds of mediating tools, practices and open-minded people are needed to break the barriers and to improve relations between the fields of research and practice. The question remains, however, whose responsibility it is to start to create bridges and develop new practices for collaboration. First and foremost, the willingness to collaborate must begin with recognition of the significance and value of the knowledge and experience of people in both fields.

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SAVA, Simona¹²

*West University of Timisoara,
Romanian Institute for Adult Education,
Romania*

CRAȘOVAN, Mariana¹³

*West University of Timisoara,
Romania*

SILIMAN, Andreea¹⁴

*Romanian Institute for Adult Education,
Romania*

The impact of the validation process on the professional development of adult educators

Background

The professionalization of adult learning staff

European policy documents like “Memorandum on Lifelong Learning” (2000), Communication from EC “It is never late to learn” (2006), and Action Plan on Adult Learning “It is always a good time to learn” urged Member States (MS) to establish initial and continuing professional development measures to qualify people working in adult education as precondition for the quality of adult learning provision.

Several studies were conducted at European level with the aim of diagnosing the professional status, roles, responsibilities, career pathways, competences of adult learning professionals (ALPs) – Q-act (2007), ALPINE (2008), Eurotrainer (2008), Key competences for adult learning professionals (2010) and European MS took position towards this topic. They started to establish or to improve their systems for initial and continuing professional development (CPD), or pieces of them, either by defining their professional status on the labor market, or by providing different professional paths, or enlarging the formal ones etc. Few European countries: Switzerland, Estonia, Austria, UK have established and structured training systems, with certain career steps, which give the trainers the possibility to obtain a formal qualification, but they do not allow cross-national qualifications comparability and recognition.

In recent years, Romania has made significant steps towards the professionalization of adult learning staff, launching different legislative acts aiming to differentiate and to contribute towards creating a distinctive professional status of adult educators on the labor market. For instance, if in 1999 (Government Ordinance 299/1999) it was stipulated that the adult educators should prove, starting from 2010, certified skills for dealing with adults in a didactic way, the Law of education 1/2011 (Art. 357) mentions distinctly different

¹² ssava@socio.uvt.ro

¹³ mali.crasovan@gmail.com

¹⁴ andreea.siliman@irea.uvt.ro

occupations for the adult educators (trainer, counsellor, mentor, mediator, facilitator of LLL, tutor support staff, evaluator of competencies etc.), pointing out that a separate government decision, as well as methodological norms, will focus on the status and professionalization routes for the adult educators. In August 2011 in the Romanian register of occupations introduced the following distinct occupations for the “specialists in training and development of personnel”: the trainer, trainer of trainers, organizer/designer/consultant of training, specialist on evaluating, recruiting and professional development, evaluator of competencies, manager of training, administrator of training. It is to be noticed not only steps towards a better defined professional status of adult educators, but also elements of different levels into career.

In spite of these welcomed intensive developments in the last five years, still the “pieces” are to be put together in this occupational field, a very heterogeneous and diverse one, in order to enhance their professional status, by designing a coherent system of identification and acting. Thus, aspects like entry requirements for different levels into career, regulations, occupational standards or competence profiles, employment conditions, workplace environment or tasks and roles, previous educational background and qualification, differentiated and articulated career paths, and steps, professional associations to defend their interests, etc. are to be set.

Validation of competences as professionalization path

The ALPINE study (2008) shows that almost 90% of the (teaching) staff working in adult education is entering into the field, on part-time basis, having large professional experience acquired in other professional settings. They are performing in adult education since years, without having documented the competences of dealing with adults in a professional way. They were largely called adult educators, or adult learning staff, but nowadays they are called adult learning professionals. Even the change of the sintagms shows the paradigm shift towards professionalization.

For such practitioners, with large professional experience acquired in non-formal or informal way, on the job, the validation path towards professionalization seems to be the most suitable one, allowing them to document, to prove and make visible the full range of knowledge, skills, competences and experiences they have, and, thus, to get certified their professional competencies.

The validation of competences of adult learning staff was stated formally in 2002 by Train of Trainers Network (TTnet) initiated by CEDEFOP when the representatives of Member States discussed on it as a possible pathway for the professionalization of adult educators. There followed a series of initiatives at European level focused on defining and developing concrete methodologies and instruments for identifying, assessing and recognizing adult educators’ competences.

The *European inventory on validating non-formal and informal learning* (2007, 2008) mapped the national validation policies and best practices, and, based on them, in 2009 CEDEFOP

published the *European guidelines on the validation of non-formal and informal learning*. These initiatives are support tools for the development of validation practices in accordance with the common European principles on identifying and validating non-formal and informal learning adopted by the European Council in 2004, designed to strengthen the comparability and transparency of validation approaches and methods Europe wide. Despite the initiatives and arguments previously presented, the inventories show the rather low status of such professionalization path on the labor market, being important, therefore, to deepen the understanding of such approach, and to look for ways of increasing its quality and credibility.

The Romanian system for the validation of competences

The validation approach for certifying a “competent” adult educator is one of the three professional paths (beside the professional training system and higher education), being officially set up nationally in 2004. Since then, occupational standards, assessment centers, validation methodologies were set up and monitored by the National Adult Training Board (NATB) (nowadays the National Authority for Qualification – ANC).

IREA is, since 2008, one of the sixteen authorized assessment centers for trainer/ training the trainer occupation. The Romanian Institute for Adult Education (IREA – www.irea.uvt.ro) has developed its expertise and instruments in research projects, and continues to improve the quality of this certification path by further research and development*.

The complexity of the assessment process determines sometimes the candidates to choose the training path, generally better accepted on the labour market, as our research shows (Lupou, R., Nuissl, E., Sava, S. 2010). Investigating providers of both certification paths (the training path and the validation path), the results stress that the trainers tend to prefer the training path because the validation path is less known and employers have less trust in a non-traditional qualification. The trainers tend to go for the validation path only if involves investing less effort.

Methodology

1. **Validation of Informal, Non-Formal, Psycho- Pedagogical Competencies of Adult Educators** (VINEPAC), Project No. RO/06/C/F/TH-84201 – within it the Validpack instrument was created, consisting in a set of instruments for the validation of adult educators’ competences.
2. **Capitalizing on Validpack: going Europe wide** (CAPIVAL), Project No. 511883-2010-LLP-RO-KA4-KA4MP – that aims to extend the use of Validpack instrument at European level and to adapt this instrument at different countries needs.
3. **Counseling Returning Migrants and Unemployed** (Back to Work), Project No. 2010-1-RO1-LEO05-07460 – that aims to develop the validation and recognition of competences practice as part of the counseling services by creating a counseling instrument for helping counselors to assist the clients and orient them toward the validation process.

As such attitude towards the validation of competencies approach was identified, the team of researchers was interested to deepen the understanding of the validation process, and of its' impact in the further professional development of the ones undertaking it. The research ran between August-September 2011 and aimed to reveal the perspective of adult educators' towards the validation of competences process.

The research question that guided the study was: *"What is the impact of the evaluation of competences process on the further professional development of those who passed through this process?"*

The "impact" was measured by items like:

- are the "clients" able to reflect forward on their newly acquired competences or on their missing competences, being aware on the need of acquiring them? Do they undertake further actions in this respect?
- do the "clients, in their daily activity with adult learners, put in practice the steps or methods that they have experienced by undertaking the validation of competences process?
- from the beneficiary point of view, how the validation process can be improved, in order to support, with a large extent, their professional development?

The quality of the validation process was a premise of the process as such, as it could be controlled, all the assessments being done by the same person, at high standards.

A questionnaire with 14 questions - open questions and structured ones, using the Lickert scale, was sent to all subjects. The respondents, aged between 28 and 62 years, come from different sectors of adult education, both public and private (from police, till foreign languages or students, etc.), having work experience in the field varying from 5 to 25 years. The main activities undertaken by them are: course design 24.39%, teaching/ learning activities 19.51%, course evaluation 19.51%, development of courses and training materials 9.57%, mentoring 9.75%, counseling 9.75% and debates moderator 7.52%.

Data analysis

In Romania, the legislation stipulates that, starting with January 2010, the adult educators should hold a formal certificate of being competent to deal with adult students. Thus, in the years before the 2010 it was an increasing interest for getting such certification. Since 2008, since IREA was set as evaluation center for the occupation "Trainer/ trainer of trainers", the adult educators applying for getting such certification had quite little time for undertaking activities for continuing professional development (CPD) after getting the respective formal certification. Nevertheless, the research aimed to find out if the adult educators have done concrete steps later on in this respect, or they were interested only in getting a formal certificate, but not to follow the findings and recommendations of the evaluation process. Out of the 14 subjects answering, 4 got the certificate in 2008, 1 in 2009, 7 in 2010, 2 in 2011. Thus, at the question (Q) Q4, "Why you have chosen to pass through a process of evaluation of competencies", even most of them mentioned the legislative requirement (8 subjects),

some mentioned personal interests (“to find out what competencies do I really have” – 3 answers), or just the decision to be prepared for further career steps. Just 3 subjects said that have chosen this way due to the advantage of being cheaper or shorter.

But none of them said that it is an easier way of getting a certification, the answers being confirmed by the large disagreement with such alternative statements at the Q5. The Q5 tried to identify, based on the reflection on the validation process they have followed, their level of dis-/agreement (1 very small extent, 4 very large extent) with predefined statements:

a. The validation of competences process is an easy way to obtain a certificate.	2,5
b. The validation of competences process offered me the opportunity to discover my new competences.	3,21
c. The validation of competences process is a good opportunity of continuing professional development.	3,5
d. The assessed competences are in accordance with adult educator occupation and with my activity.	3,85
e. The validation of competences process involves a lot of bureaucracy.	1,71
f. The evaluation and validation is a complex process that outlines the previous experience of those evaluated.	3,42
g. I find useful the validation of competences process as alternative professional development, not only from formal point of view, but mainly as formative one.	3,71
h. Certifying adult educators competences by undertaking the validation of competences process is easier then attending a training course.	2,71

The mean value obtained for the statements, show that the subjects tend to disagree with the negative connotations of the validation process (a, e, h), ranking very highly its formative impact (g), or the accordance between core competencies / units of competence set out in the occupational standards and the competences required by the adult educator’s specific profile that the adult educators meet in the various organizations where they operate. The validation process is not perceived merely as an easy way of obtaining a certificate, but as a complex process that emphasizes and values the experience of the person assessed (f), all of respondents valuing with 3 or 4 (agree with large extent) the complexity of such process. Following the reflection exercise, the Q6 also use predefined statements, trying to emphasize the formative strengths of the validation process:

a. Encouraged you in your activity.	3,35
b. Outlined the competences that you possess as trainer.	3,57
c. Helped you in recognising the competences that adult learners have.	3,50
d. Helped you to identify aspects that need improvement.	3,50
e. Helped you to discover new competences.	3,35
f. Helped you to reflect on your didactical behaviour in direct interaction with adult learners.	3,64
g. It facilitated the updated of your competences.	3,35

It can be noticed, from the values, the high level of agreement with the statements highlighting that the validation of competences process facilitated the self-reflection

capacity, both on own didactical behavior (all of them valuing 3 or 4 the statement f), and on strengths and weakness of the existing competencies, identifying even new ones (all have valued with 3 or 4 the statements b, d, e, except the same 1 person).

This also correlates with the fact that at Q5(b) 13 out of the 14 answers valued with 3 and 4 (agreed with a large extent) the statement regarding helping discovering new competencies. At Q5(g) the all answers agreed with large extent (value 3 and 4) with the formative aspect of the validation process. Another positive aspect is the transferring of know how in recognizing their own learners' competences and evaluation.

As evaluators, we can affirm that validation of competences process is a good opportunity for reflecting and assisting in the selection process of life and career pathways until that moment, an opportunity to discover and be aware of new competences that can be capitalized in different work or life situations.

As regarding the respondents' point of view on the *impact* of the validation of competences process on their professional development (Q7), 95% of them claimed its direct influence, pointing out, beside the formal certification acquired, mainly aspects like: increasing self-esteem, clarifying aspects regarding the training process, guided structuring etc.

Findings of other aspects of the impact, with respect on concrete activities undertaken after the end of the validation process point out:

- in terms of being able to identify needs for further development (Q8): 7.14% are unable to identify these needs, the rest of the adult educators say that they can do this
- in terms of main activities undertaken to improve the issues identified as requiring improvement (Q9), all of them reported further activities. The range of activities varied, from the self-training activities, readings, changing of teaching practices, to involvement in various projects, peer-learning, and improving teaching materials, attending masters or other trainings, workshops (even abroad) or conferences. It could be observed that the range of measures implemented by adult educators is varying between general activities and concrete activities that envisage micro-educational aspects.

Such findings strengthen our belief that the validation process was not an ending point in the continuing professional development process, in spite of getting the formal certification.

The respondents have largely a positive evaluation on the experience of getting evaluated and validated their competencies (Q11), considering that:

- reflection and awareness of their competences was an enriching opportunity, allowing also increased self-esteem, by recalling positive experiences
- it was an opportunity to identify training and development needs (24.4%), to be aware of further possibilities for exploiting its potential, or for CPD
- assisted in making a portfolio in a professional way
- evaluation was not perceived as an stressful factor, the atmosphere, support and guidance, as well as the clear specification of requirements, together with the objectivism, professionalism and seriousness of the evaluator being highlighted

- the identification and validation of competences is a competency that each adult educator should possess (mainly the identification part) - 71.43% of them – see Q10 as overall conclusion.

As negative aspects (Q12) the huge amount of the documents required for the file and the rather long period of time allocated for assessment were mentioned, but a lot of them said they could not identify negative aspects.

The investigation aimed also to identify, in a larger perspective, what it can be done to improve the quality of such alternative path towards formalization (Q13). The suggestions of the beneficiary refer to: eliminating excessive bureaucracy (40%), eliminating written test as assessment method (30%), observing more practical activities with adults (15%), a better promotion of these ways of certifying competences through the diversification of informing methods for potential beneficiaries (10%) and offering a prior course support for the written test (5%).

As ending conclusion, the Q14 checked the respondents' opinion regarding our previous findings regarding the lower credibility on the labor market of certificate of competencies acquired via the validation process, in comparison with the training certificate (Lupou, R., Nuissl, E., Sava, S., 2010). All of them disagreed with it, considering that an adult educator with a large experience should better go for the validation path. Only poor information about this path might sustain such situation.

Conclusions

The research was a pilot one, mainly an explorative one, with most of the questions with open answers. Nevertheless, the findings are eloquent in highlighting the positive impact on the professional development of adult educators, both as a career step, but also as further activities undertaken, or as self-reflection opportunity.

The ones passing through the validation of competences process consider it a positive experience, a formative and enriching one, enhancing the self-esteem in the same time.

The fact that all adult educators once, getting this formal certification, have continued to undertake CPD activities, even if formally, at national level, there aren't specific requirements regarding the adult educators' continuing professional development, is a clear prove that the validation path is not a shortcut, but a career step.

The beneficiary of such process consider it as being valuable and complex, revealing and valorizing the previous experience and competences acquired in different learning contexts, but also supporting to enhance the didactic behavior, by stimulating the self-reflection on its impact. Such experience was reporting of making easier the transfer of evaluation and reflection methods in the didactic setting, being a first step to differentiate and individualize the learning process in direct relation to the adult learners.

The adult educators involved in research sample don't perform 100% training activities with adult learners, these activities are additional job tasks. Especially commendable is that they

want to engage in complementary activities that facilitate and sustain their professional development, but also human relationship.

The quality of such process was highlighted by the respondents, considering it a useful revising exercise for those having experience to reflect upon. Further on, we intend to extend this research at national level. If in the pilot phase we had under control the quality of the process, at national level we will try to identify the quality of services offered in other assessment centers, and the aim will be the improvement of the Romanian system for the validation of competences and the increasing of its quality and credibility.

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The identity of adult educators in the context of the Open University as perceived by themselves and their students: a case study

Introduction

The research presented in this paper is an attempt to unveil and throw light into the identity of adult educators in the context of the Open University (OU), as this perceived by the adult educators themselves and their adult students. It is part of a three years research project exploring adult distance teaching and learning processes through the experiences and perceptions of the participants in two Open University contexts: the Open University of Cyprus (OUC) and the Hellenic Open University (HOU). In the adult education literature as well as in the conference title the importance of exploring the adult educators' identity is widely postulated. Nevertheless, it is an unexplored or very little explored area of adult education, while there is no research focusing on the case of the Open University tutors-counselors in a Greek speaking context. In particular, we know little about the multiple processes that come about through different and discursive practices that comprise identities, according to Solomon (2005). It is through this intersection that the adult educator-tutor counselor identity is discursively produced in the context of the Open University. This identity, following Solomon's (2005) paradigm, is not enduring, but is connected to current social contexts, processes, roles, personal traits and characteristics, etc. It is the above assumption that we take for granted in the research presented to explore the extent to which the identity of the adult educator in the context under exploration is influenced by the current social and educational context, the processes, emotions evoked, roles, personal traits, characteristics, past experience in teaching and learning, needs, motives and expectations of the distance learning courses at the OU.

For this, a case-study approach and a qualitative research paradigm were harnessed. In particular, in the context of the OU, in which both of us are actively involved as tutors, adult educators and adult learners from two different programmes - an undergraduate programme in Greek Civilization and a postgraduate programme in Education studies - were invited to participate. The tools employed for the collection of the data include in-depth, audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews carried out over a two-month period. Examples from the agenda included questions related to the multiple factors and processes

¹⁵ maria.gravani@ouc.ac.cy

¹⁶ gzarifis@auth.gr

that influenced identities such as: the social and educational context of the programme, the feelings and emotions triggered, the 'conceptual inputs' that participants bring into the courses, their education, training, role, competences, competencies and challenges faced. The data analysis was completed in the spirit of hermeneutics and involved the deployment of constant comparative method, whereby categories and their properties emerged from a sententious analysis of the data.

The analysis showed that trying to unveil the identify of adult educators in the context under exploration is a complex process since the former is concerned with the individual and social binary, and the relationship between the two, and is produced through discursive practices and processes that are neither quite complete nor ever unified. The paper raises issues regarding future attempts to explore the identity of adult educators in other contexts.

In what follows the paper unfolds under two parts; the theoretical part, in which the context of the study is given; and the empirical part in which the methodological considerations of the study, data analysis, presentation, and concluding remarks are presented.

Theoretical Part

Notes on the Context

Two cases: the OUC and the HOU are the focus of this study. Before describing the two settings, in which the research took place, background information on the Cypriot and Greek educational context is imparted.

In Cyprus, the Ministry of Education and Culture has the overall responsibility of educational policy. In the country there is huge demand for Higher Education (HE) as 75% of the students who complete the Upper Secondary Education seek placements in universities. However, due to a limited supply places, 55% of Cypriot students study abroad. Three public universities are operating in the Island along with four Private Institutions of Tertiary Education (of a profit or non-profit character), and twenty one Private Institutions of Higher Non-University Education (Gravani, et al. 2012). According to the latest commission staff working document about the progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training (European Commission, 2009) and adult participation in lifelong learning, Cyprus is the EU Member State with the highest share of population with HE attainment. However, the Adult participation rate in lifelong learning is not higher than EU average and EU Benchmarks. In 2000 it was 7.9%, while in 2008 the percentage has been increased to 8.5 %. Lifelong Learning has become an imperative in the Report for Educational Reform of 2004, the comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy of 2007 and the National Development Plan 2007-2013, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus. As already has been mentioned, there is a renewed governmental focus on HE and, in particular, on the role and contribution of the OUC to national development, so that the country can become a national and international centre of education. The OUC was established in 2003 and operated in 2006. It offers postgraduate and undergraduate programmes, training and

vocational programmes through the 'open and distance learning' method. It operates on the premise to assist citizens to participate in lifelong learning, study on their own pace, and obtain higher education qualifications; it offers short term and further education programmes. Today it counts more than 150 tutors, 20 members of academic staff, about 2000 students, who study at 11 different programmes, while a few more programmes soon to be on board (Gravani, et al. 2012).

As far as Greece is concerned, the Ministry of Education and Lifelong Learning is responsible for Educational policy, while the educational system is highly centralized. Public HE in Greece is divided into Universities (AEI - 22) and Technological Education Institutes (TEI-16). There are also five Private Educational Institutions- Colleges. Additionally, students are admitted to the HOU, which was established in 1992 and operated since 1999. The HOU has four faculties: Humanities, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Applied Arts, as well as the Learning Material and Educational Methodology Laboratory. It counts around 18.000 undergraduate and 12.000 postgraduate students, and around 4.500 (undergraduates), 9000 (postgraduates) graduates; moreover, 1600 tutors and 35 academic research staff. Around 186 programmes are offered by the HOU (Gravani, et al. 2012).

According to the latest commission staff working document about the progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training (European Commission, 2009) and adult participation in lifelong learning, Greece has a very low performance in comparison both to the European average and to the EU benchmarks. In 2000 it was 2.6%, while in 2008 the percentage has been slightly increased to 2.9%. The report names the HOU among the institutions in Greece that offer more and better learning opportunities to adults, including the so-called "non-traditional" learners and to those most vulnerable and severely affected by inequalities and economic swings. In terms of development and implementation of Lifelong Learning (LLL) strategies in Greece, there have been two basic legislative acts for the establishment of a Lifelong Learning (LLL) network: the Law 3369/2005 on the 'Systematisation of Lifelong Learning' and the Law 3879/2010 on the 'Further Development of Lifelong Learning' (Gravani, et al. 2012).

As mentioned above, the OUC and the HOU consist of the two broad case studies in which the research presented focuses. In particular, in these settings adult educators and learners who participated in two programmes - the undergraduate programme in Greek Civilization and the postgraduate programme in Education Studies - were interviewed. The selection of the research sites in the two universities was done for the following reasons: both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes explored are underlined by identical aims, and to some extent the programmes at the OUC have been developed on the basis on the programmes firstly put in place at the HOU. However, the programmes run in two different universities; the older (HOU) operated since 1999, and the newer (OUC) being in life since 2006. Moreover the universities are placed in two countries with different socio-economic and cultural background. The above allow instant comparisons between the experiences and perceptions of the participants regarding adult educators' profile (Gravani, et al., 2010).

Additionally, the two researchers are familiar with both contexts. This allowed us ease of access, the ability to surmount rapport and the gaining of confidence. In particular, in the context of the OUC educators and learners who joined in the following units of the undergraduate programme in Greek Civilization and the postgraduate programme in Education Studies were interviewed: "Ancient Greek and Byzantine Literature (ELP21)", "Modern Literature 19th-20th Century (ELP28)", "Educational Research (ELP51)", "Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (EPA64)". In the HOU educators and learners of the following thematic units were interviewed: "Literature I: Ancient Greek and Byzantine Philology (ELP21)", "Literature II: Modern Greek Philology (ELP30)", "Educational Research (EKP51)", "Adult Education (EKP64)".

Empirical Part

Methodological considerations

As mentioned above, the study is exploratory and attempts to unwrap and illuminate the identity of adult educators in the context of the OU, as this perceived by the adult educators themselves and their adult students. In doing so, the research harnesses a case-study approach within a qualitative paradigm. It focuses on how individuals understand, perceive and interpret a phenomenon and seeks a deeper interpretation of that. Two broad case studies were chosen, the HOU and the OUC. In these, decisions were made with regards to the choice of the participants and "whom to talk to". For the study 16 adult learners (Open University students - 8 from each of the two universities), and 8 adult educators (Open University tutors - 4 from each of the two universities) were chosen. In particular, we made sure that 2 students were selected (an experienced student with 3-4 years of experience in the university, and an inexperienced student) from each of the four thematic units explored in the two contexts. Similarly, one university tutor was selected from each of the four thematic units investigated in the OUC and the HOU. The adult learners ranged in age from 25 to 55 and varied in their adult life stages. There were 10 women and 6 men with varying employment status. The educators, 5 women and 3 men varied in their profile (from permanent members of academic staff in other universities to primary school teachers) and in their experience in teaching in the open-university context from 1 to 10 years.

The tools employed for the collection of the data include in-depth, audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews carried out over a two-month period (April- May 2011). As Punch (1998) argues, interviews constitute a very good way of accessing people's perceptions, experiences, definitions of situations and constructions of reality. The researchers designed carefully the interview process. They were well trained and guarded against their own biases by recording detailed field notes, which include reflections on their own subjectivity, the purpose being to ensure validity of the responses. Particularly, the semi-structured approach was chosen due to its advantage to retain its main objective of eliciting equivalent information from a number of informants, thus allowing a comparative analysis of responses between different groups of subjects to be made, while it also provides a more

flexible style that can be suited to the personality and circumstances of the persons being interviewed, and permit the researcher to probe and expand the informants' responses (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989). Interview schedules were prepared for Open-University educators and learners. Examples from the agenda included questions related to the multiple factors and processes that may influence identities such as: the social and educational context of the programme, the feelings and emotions triggered, the 'conceptual inputs' educators bring into the courses, their education, training, prior experience, personality, role, characteristics, competences, competencies, challenges faced.

Participants were interviewed separately in a setting and at a time that was convenient and comfortable for them. Each interview lasted between forty five minutes to one hour. Prior the interview the researchers had early contacts with the respondents, explaining to them the aims, nature, utility and contribution of the research in order to establish rapport, trust and the respect of the respondents. For the purposes of clarity adult learners and educators in the study are referred as learner 1, learner 2, etc. (through to learner 16) and tutor 1, tutor 2, etc. (through to tutor 8).

The data analysis involved the deployment of the constant comparative method, whereby categories and their properties emerged from a detailed sententious analysis of the data. Analysis went through: data reduction (selecting, simplifying, transforming data), data display; and thematic interpretation. Data were then indexed and various themes were identified. Themes which emerged along with the relevant quotes were then contextualised by placing them in correspondence to the literature. The final accounts were illustrated by using the most telling pieces of data, which evoked the original words of the participants.

Data analysis & presentation

From the analysis, among others, the following major factors emerged as influencing the identity of adult educators in the context of the OU: their *education, training, prior teaching experience, personality, context*, etc.

Education

Almost all the participants in the study argued that adult educators' identity, profile and educational praxis were influenced to a great extent by the education they had received, taking the form either of undergraduate and postgraduate studies or studies in adult education and distance learning. Some of the educators also pointed out that past conceptions they had of themselves as adult learners and also positive and negative learning experiences informed their identity as adult educators.

Teaching experience

As findings indicate, teaching experience involved adult educators' experience in adult teaching, past positive teacher models and ideal teachers, experiences in teaching in other

settings (secondary education, other university departments, schools) and rich past positive teaching experiences. It is worth pointing out that 5 out of the 8 educators in the study argued that the teaching experience they had from the conventional university has shaped to a great extent their identity and educational praxis in the classroom.

Personality

Data from the interviews with adult educators and learners showed that personal features, qualities, attitudes, skills, and targets that each of the educators developed and exhibit in life have shaped their identity and professional profile. Illustrative is the following quote with Educator 2:

"I have developed my own approaches; my own way of thinking; my own perspective regarding the development of the field and about who and how can benefit from it...I have developed my own philosophy regarding the facilitation of learning and as well as my own teaching techniques and methods. All the above underpin my profile and identity as adult educator".

Training

Training appeared to be a crucial issue in identifying the profile and identity of the adult educator, as indicated in the findings. Training was presented to have two forms: the first is concerned with the training on the psychological and social foundations of adult education; the second is the training (pre-service, induction training and in-service) on the scope and philosophy of the OU and teaching in this context.

Context

The social and educational context of the courses shaped to a great extent the identity of the adult educators. For instance, the philosophy and aims of the thematic units set by their organizers, the underpinning philosophy and aims of the OU, the curriculum, shaped to a great extent the identity and educational practice and professional profile of the educators participated in the study. All the 8 educators and adult learners in the study agreed to the above.

Summing up

In exploring the findings with the intention of identifying the factors that shape the identity of the OU tutors as adult educators, the study has identified, although imperfectly, a number of dimensions (personal, biographical, educational, contextual) which highlighted the essential elements of the phenomena. The above are consistent with other studies in the field (Taylor, 2003, Gravani & Jimoyiannis, 2009) and raise issues regarding future attempts to explore the identity of adult educators in other contexts. It would be interesting, for example, to look at the profile and identity of the adult educator in the context of a conventional university. Moreover, interesting would be to explore the

educators' biographies to explore in detail the extent to which the above factors influence their identity.

Overall, the analysis confirms Solomon's (2005) assumption, mentioned in the introduction of the study, and showed that trying to unveil the identity of adult educators in the context under exploration is a complex process since the former is concerned with the individual and social binary, and the relationship between the two, and is produced through discursive practices and processes that are neither quite complete nor ever unified.

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STØLEN, Gerd¹⁷
University of Tromsø,
Norway

The relations of the actors in research, practice and policy in Norwegian adult education: what research means for actors of vocational education?

Introduction

Adult learning can take place in formal or informal situations in both education and everyday life. This paper discusses aspects of adult learning in which mentoring plays an important part. Daloz (1999) says that mentoring is a learning process which in either a short or a long perspective is supposed to bring about change, growth and maturity in the learning individual. He understands mentoring as a journey during which mentors function as guides. They help and support, they translate unknown elements, and protect the traveler against dangers. Since the guides are familiar with the territory the travelers can trust them during the journey. Mentors come into our lives in a special context, helping us understand problems we face and giving them meaning by locating them within wider perspectives. The mentoring relationship demands a comfortable situation in order to promote growth. It is necessary to dare taking risks, to be active in the dialogue, and to reflect on practice. A transformation is meant to take place. Daloz has a developmental approach to transformative learning. It is intuitive, holistic and contextually based. An individual who goes through such a transformative learning process becomes able to get a wider perspective of her own life and her own possibilities. Daloz is inspired by Jack Mezirow (1991) who for many years had worked to develop a transformative learning theory at Columbia University.

I want to discuss mentoring connected to work. I will draw on material from four M.A. theses from the University of Tromsø, Norway. I will study cases where demands of change have arisen: (a) needs for changing qualifications within an agricultural cooperative (Ulvestad, 2009); (b) challenges facing military families (Berg, 2009); (c) difficulties with changing jobs in a difficult economic climate (Lundberg, 2008); (d) hardships involved in being unemployed over an extended period of time (Dahl, 2007). According to Daloz I want to understand different forms of mentoring as well as the reasons for why mentoring does not always lead to personal growth and transformation. I will analyze the relations between mentor and learners in the four different cases.

The Tasks of a Mentor

¹⁷ gerd.stolen@uit.no

Daloz is very concrete when pointing out which elements are included in the mentoring situation. He claims that the mentor has three specific tasks: To support, to promote challenges, and to create visions. These tasks are important enough on their own but the interrelation between them is also decisive. Of particular importance is how a mentor can both support and challenge. I will now address the elements in more detail.

Giving Support

As a mentor it is important to create supporting structures with close attention, clear expectations, and specific tasks. Listening is one of the most important skills needed for giving support. Listening is more than merely hearing what the other person is saying; it involves empathy. Listening requires understanding the meaning behind the words so that the mentor can comprehend how the learner views the world. A mentor gives self-confidence and strength to the learner even when things get rough and self-doubt occurs. Good mentors have belief in the possibilities of the average person. A mentor must create a space for the learner to open up in a way that is not possible elsewhere. For this to happen, a fundamental trust is necessary to create growth. The relations between mentor and learner are complementary. For the learner it is important to be seen and heard by the mentor. The experience of being listened to so intently is rare. It can also be an important way to create a new self-consciousness.

Encouraging Challenges

A mentor is to give challenges that can support development. The learner is challenged to think thoroughly about his or her current perspectives and, if possible, to gain new ones. In this way, the learner can become conscious of expectations. It is also significant that the learner is to become aware of the possibilities that exist. This requires that the mentor withdraws so that the learner has to close the gap between actual situation and future aspirations. The mentor can assist by giving the learner tasks or activities that encourages reflection. By means of feedback the expectations and views of the mentor can be internalized. The learner must acquire the skill of taking different perspectives and viewing a problem from several angles. Developing this kind of dialogue is an important part of the mentor's role. The mentor can have a different or a contrary point of view in order to create dichotomies and pressure. The process can be painful. The inner dialogue is important because in reflection one can develop a new perspective. Good mentors help the learner to construct positive and self-fulfilling prophecies, while at the same time assisting the learner in creating a "teacher within" so that they can challenge themselves to learn.

Creating Visions

The creation of visions is the third task of the mentor. Metaphors can be used to create a better understanding of future possibilities. Through a vision the dialectical development between the old and the new can run its course. Both support and challenge is necessary in this context. The mentor offers a map for the future by asking questions and listening to the

story of the learner. The experience of being listened to and being met with questions can help the learner to formulate and clarify future plans. The decision to change one's life can be intuitive but to see the broader meaning can create a basis for further growth. The mentors have a particularly important significance here by asking questions. Eventually, the learner will be able to articulate his or her own roadmap. Metaphors can give us a new language. To develop a new language can also be a way to create visions. The words we use and the way in which we use them are strong indicators of how we vision the world. Creating a new vocabulary can provide new frameworks for understanding oneself.

Support and challenges: Stasis, Confirmation, Retreat, and Growth

The relation between support and challenges is important. In order to understand this relation, Daloz describes four different kinds of situations that he calls *stasis*, *retreat*, *growth*, and *confirmation*. If the support and challenge are low, the situation is stasis – it remains the same. If support is enhanced, the potential for some sort of growth increases, but this change has to come from the learner not as a pressure from the surroundings. This kind of confirmation may make the learner feel better but it may also lead to a lack of capacity to engage with the world. Too much challenge and absence of support can make the learner retreat. However, if support and challenges are high growth is achieved.

Here I will analyze professional advisors, military families, career-changers, and unemployed people based on Daloz' categories of stasis, confirmation, retreat, and growth.

A. Agricultural advisors: A group in growth

Being an employee at a major dairy cooperative, Ulvestad (2009) studies agricultural advisors. The background for the study is a report showing that many farmers were not satisfied with the kind of professional help they got. They wanted advisors that they could trust, who had time, was brave, and had professional as well as social competence. The advisors of the cooperative have the agricultural education needed, but they experience new pedagogical challenges when their advice is not taken into account. They have to deal with a very diverse group of farmers with different backgrounds. The results from this report form the basis for a comprehensive program according to which the agricultural advisors are to take classes over 8 months. The purpose is to make them more prepared to disclose the real needs of the farmers by improved communication skills.

I think that advisors are a group in growth. They experience a growth in self-understanding by engaging with each other. By taking the course, the advisors have to reflect on their own profession. Through discussing with each other they are to develop new perspectives. Many of them found this challenging. The age differences within the group made communication difficult. Especially the older advisors were skeptical to begin with. Ulvestad says that the older participants have a lot of self-confidence during the course but are more insecure towards the end.

The agricultural advisors find support among their colleagues. Peer-tutoring and reflecting on action is vital. The reflective competence of the advisors is improved. They learn how to become good conversation partners, something which includes being good listeners. They have known each other for many years but during the course they get closer.

In particular, there is emphasis on the development of reflection and experience in the implementation of new knowledge. Many experience that they change opinions and attitudes. After advisors have taken this class, the farmers are more positive. They now feel at the center of the attention. There is also a feeling of having a better relationship with the advisors. The advisors, too, feel that their tasks have become easier.

B. Military Families: A Group in Retreat

Berg (2009) works at an agency that evaluates the need for mentoring among the families of officers serving in Afghanistan. This kind of service is often very stressful for the military personnel and their families. Each tour lasts from 3 to 6 months. At least one tour is necessary to make a military career. The spouses left back home are solely responsible for the family. They often have to work extra hard and live under a lot of stress. The insecurity about what may happen with the partner stationed in a war zone is the biggest challenge. They often feel alone in handling the problems. Many live away from their own families and friends.

The military families experience that they were quite unprepared at the time of the first tour. They knew what the job entailed but none of them were prepared for how it would affect family life. The communication between father and family becomes very difficult. Especially challenging is staying in touch with the children. It is not easy to explain to them the nature of the job. The adults also experience communication problems with bad phone connections. After each tour it can be quite difficult to reestablish a normal family life. There is little talk about the war experiences with others outside of the family. The experiences are considered private. There is a lack of advice or mentoring which can ease the situation so that not everyone has to learn "the hard way", as one of the fathers says.

I here see a group that faces too many challenges with too little support. The result can be retreat. The families get too little support from the Armed Forces, family, and friends. It is a heavy burden to live with the dangers involved in active service in a war zone. The couples often avoid talking about the difficulties. It is not easy to bring the topic up among friends and family. The experiences are considered private and are therefore not articulated.

C. Career-Changers: A Group in Growth or Retreat?

Lundberg (2008) works at the Adult Education Unit in the Armed Forces. One of the tasks of this unit is to give advice to officers, of the rank of lieutenant, who are transferring from a military to a civilian career when their contracts expire (at the age of 35). Most of the officers enjoy their work and hesitate to leave. The youngest officers seem to be least motivated to plan a civilian career. Their interest in education is low. The motivation

increases somewhat with age, but few officers have any concrete plans for the future. At the same time, the young officers value education more than the older ones. The latter underline the importance of work experience and letters of recommendation. For them, courses taken during service are more important than formal education. As they approach the age of retirement, the demand for change increases. New plans have to be made and there has to be a strategy for how to carry them out. The planning of new careers also involves planning life due to factors such as family relations and health. Some may have to change how they view their lives.

The main point of the mentoring is to enable the individual to see future possibilities and to find the best solution. In addition to information about possibilities in education, both theoretical and practical, advice about how to establish a business is also given. The employees at the Adult Education Unit encounter pedagogical challenges when the officers show little interest in the advice they are given. The problem is how to mentor a group that wants neither change nor advice.

If the officers are growing or retreating is a highly relevant question when considering the challenges they face. If they choose to receive the support offered to them they can grow. If they decline the offer they will have to deal with the challenges by themselves and retreat. The biggest obstacle is to realize that they have to change careers. If they do not make use of this opportunity they may stagnate due to a lack of someone who can actively help them with the transition. Many can succeed but there are several uncertainties. When the Adult Education Unit approaches the officers and asks how they want to be given advice, mentoring proves to be important. They would like to be given advice by someone who listens to them and shows an interest for who they are as persons.

D. The Unemployed: A Group in Stasis or Confirmation?

Dahl (2007) is a mentor at a program designed to help the unemployed to find work through training. The program is a part of government policy to reduce poverty by making more people able to support themselves through work. On the basis of individual needs, individual plans are made for long-term recipients of social welfare. According to a report from 2004 only 27% of the participants were able to find work. Dahl wanted to see why the number is so low by studying the situation of the unemployed. How do they explain the fact that it is so problematic to find work after getting the training?

Dahl found that the participants did not clearly see the purpose of the program. She therefore asks if this is a good strategy to deal with long-term unemployment. Many of the people taking part joined because they needed something to do or because their family and friends liked the idea. The mentors working for the program are supposed to help the unemployed to get work. The relationship between them can be vital. Everybody talks positively about seeing their mentors and feel that their thoughts and considerations were appreciated. They get very close and personal support from the mentors.

The unemployed also appreciate that they are given tasks to complete and that they are encouraged to engage in discussions. The challenge facing the mentors is to understand what the various men and women want. They need to be attentive to the needs of their clients. It seems that the unemployed are not easy to challenge with respect to possibilities. They are not too willing to join the journey that the mentoring process is supposed to initiate. Those who have been unemployed for an extended period of time have not received a lot of support and very few challenges when the mentoring begins (they are in stasis). During the mentoring, they get more support and can find confirmation. But this requires an inner need and not just external pressure. The mentors in this particular program succeed in achieving trust and dialogue. After years of being considered parts of a bigger group, the unemployed now feel that they are seen as individuals. They feel respected and listened to.

Conclusion: Visions and Transformations

I have now highlighted the relations between mentor and learners in four different cases. I now want to address another issue highlighted by Daloz, namely the role of visions in a process of transformation. What possibilities does a mentor have of creating visions and creating a process of transformation?

Daloz uses the metaphor of a journey to capture the point of mentoring. The various groups have different journeys. They also have different visions. This shapes the transformative dimension of the mentoring. Through visions the dialectical play between the old and the new can unfold. The mentor becomes a very important figure that questions and listens. Daloz also gives language an important role in creating visions and in showing us how far we have come. Through language we show who we are and where we are going. The mentors can contribute with a new language, or “magical” words that can change the ways in which the learner understands the situation.

The military families are characterized by the lack of a language to articulate their private knowledge based on experience. With the help of visions, they can be enabled to express how they feel. This can help their challenging life situation. Engaging with others can help them articulate their tacit knowledge. The agricultural advisors develop a language that give new understanding. By taking a course they were trained to ask good questions. In this way, the farmers could develop a new language that would help them understand themselves in a new way. The career-changers have a need for a new language and new roadmaps toward a new career. Eventually, they will be able to construct their own maps by themselves. In order to get to this point, they need someone to talk to who can help them see a new future. The unemployed have a language and someone who listens to them. But they do not always manage to create new maps. In some cases they have bad experience with education as well as work life. In addition, they have been unemployed for a long time and feel in need of individual mentoring that take their special needs into account. Dahl

(2007) shows, that they all want work but also emphasizes the bad experiences that they have. Creating visions for the unemployed can be challenging.

Daloz contends that visions form the dialectical play between the old and the new. The mentor gives both support and challenges in the transformation. The agricultural advisors provide an example of a transformation process from a bad to a good mentor. By taking part in a course, the advisors became better mentors for the famers. The career-changers are at the beginning of their transformation process. If they are given mentors the process may be successful. But there are no guarantees. Daloz says that mentoring is a learning process which in either a short or a long perspective is supposed to bring about change, growth and maturity in the learning individual. It is a transitional journey that take place in a social environment. The different groups that I have considered represent different contexts of mentoring. While the mentoring of the agricultural advisors, the career-changers, and the unemployed are connected to professional learning, the mentoring of the military families is a personal learning as a consequence of a profession.

According to Daloz I wanted to understand different forms of mentoring as well as the reasons for why mentoring does not always lead to personal growth and transformation. The relation between support and challenges are particularly important. An individual who goes through such a transformative learning process becomes able to get a wider perspective of her own life and her own possibilities.

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BUSCHLE, Christina¹⁸

*Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich,
Germany*

TIPPELT, Rudolf¹⁹

*Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich,
Germany*

FUCHS, Sandra²⁰

*Adult Education Center Munich,
Germany*

Cooperation as a central element of future-oriented adult education

Cooperations among educational actors in the context of lifelong learning

The changing demands of institutionalization require a change of mindset within the individual organizations in the field of education and further training. Cooperative, organizational, and institutional structures have to be developed and the processes and sequences within the organizations have to be changed and optimized within the framework of organization development (cf. Tippelt, Strobel, & Reupold, 2009; Reupold, Strobel, & Tippelt, 2011). In this context, networks constitute an important coping strategy. Regarding the promotion of lifelong learning, the “development of trans-institutional and cross-sectorial cooperative network structures” (DIE, 2009: 2) is a crucial aspect (cf., inter alia, Nittel et al., 2011). Only through successful interactions between school education, vocational education, and adult education can lifelong learning, which should be available to all people regardless of age, origin, or pre-education, be achieved (cf. Tippelt, 2002, 2007).

With regard to networking among educational institutions, the overarching objectives are to achieve an improvement of the transparency of educational programs on offer, in the sense of a more pronounced user orientation, and to increase the quality and usability of the educational programs (cf. Feld, 2008). Within the framework of cross-sectorial educational networks, new resources are created which allow meeting the growing demands and challenges in the educational sector. In this context, Nuissl (2010a) describes networks as constructs which allow building a bridge between intellectual abstractions of education and spatial processes. Networks develop from a reinforcement of existing cooperations between individual institutions and can be regarded as a further development of cooperations (cf. Dobischat et al., 2006; Nuissl, 2010a). They constitute a precise cooperation between different actors who pursue a common objective over a longer period of time (cf. Nuissl, 2010a). The advantages for the different actors resulting from these cooperations are characterized accordingly by that they are meant to contribute to a “more

¹⁸ christina.buschle@edu.lmu.de

¹⁹ tippelt@edu.lmu.de

²⁰ sandra.fuchs@mvhs.de

efficient management of educational programs offered and educational demand" (Nuissl 2010a: 20), to an increase in and securing of the quality of the programs offered, to the creation of user-oriented transparency in the educational field, for instance through joint public relations work, to the strengthening of a joint representation of interests and to the concentration and better use of resources, for instance through cost reduction, concentration of labor input and the creation of synergetic effects (cf., inter alia, Wohlfart, 2006). General requirements in this context are the promotion and support of lifelong learning, the increase in the participation in further education, the targeted addressing of parts of the population that are underrepresented in further education, and the development of education as an important element of a region's profile and of regional identity (cf. Nuissl, 2010a). In order to achieve the general objectives and to make full use of the advantages of networking, an active, "especially personal relationship between the network partners" (Nuissl, 2010b: 24) is of decisive importance.

Cooperations provide an opportunity for just such personal relationships. A basic prerequisite for these to establish themselves is the communication between two autonomous and, if possible, independent partners (cf. Nuissl, 2010a). If cooperations come about, then these are in most cases realized on the basis of a division of labor, but under the premise of a common objective (cf. Nuissl, 2010a). Stable cooperative relationships often prove useful not only in the competition for public funds, they also become significant when the cooperations turn out to be complementary, supportive and, above all, sustainable with regard to the participants' own work (cf. Schütz, & Reupold; 2010; Dollhausen, & Weiland, 2010).

In contrast to networks, cooperations provide security over a longer period of time through clearly defined boundaries (cf. Dresselhaus, 2006). Decisive factors in this are the definition of contact persons and structuring through a specification of responsibilities.

Due to the fact that most pedagogical institutions, for reasons of guidelines and binding contracts, are not able to pursue their own objectives and to decide independently which target groups should be addressed, they have to rely on cooperations (cf. Merken, 2006). In the course of cooperations, it may be possible to create synergies through vertical, but also through horizontal forms of cooperation and to make meaningful and profitable use of the participants' diverse wealth of experience. In the field of further education, horizontal cooperations are, for instance, those cooperations which make themselves felt through the interaction of different institutions of further education with regard to a common objective. Vertical cooperations occur between institutions with different interests and different educational priorities (e.g., cooperation with companies), but they may also span diverse educational sectors.

Under the premise that pedagogical institutions do not always have to fulfill merely pedagogical, but also organizational tasks, the diverse expectations have to be made transparent and synchronized in the course of the cooperation (cf. Merken, 2006; Schütz, & Reupold, 2010). Furthermore, the benefits of the cooperation and the investments that

have to be made by the participants have to be in sensible proportion. In this, mutual trust is just as important as the compensation of diverse interests in the sense of reciprocity. This becomes even more important when taking into consideration that pedagogical institutions, in particular, mainly work with a target group that is in contact not just with one, but with several pedagogical institutions (cf. Merckens, 2006). Only if mutual recognition and respect for the cooperation partner, openness to innovation, and a will to compromise in order to be able to achieve common objectives are given, can cooperations be successful (cf. Carle, Koeppl, & Wenzel, 2009; Faulstich, 2010; Nuissl, 2010a; Schweitzer, 1998). In the following, quantitative interim results of the research project will be presented, which, on the one hand, shed light on the cooperation experiences made by the different pedagogical occupational groups and which, on the other, allow to elaborate on horizontal and vertical cooperation relationships.

Cooperation in further education

The project "Pedagogical Work Within the System of Lifelong Learning" (German abbreviation: PAELL), sponsored by the German Research Association from April 2009 until March 2011 focusses on different aspects of pedagogical work in the system of lifelong learning. The project is comparative in design and looks at the broad spectrum of pedagogical professions. In addition to questions concerning the implementation of lifelong learning, aspects of working conditions and assessments of pedagogues' self-concepts and perceptions of their profession by others, the project examines both quantitatively and qualitatively which cross-sectorial cooperations have already been realized and it investigates the respective motives for these cooperations. In this context, we compared different pedagogical professional groups (among others educators, school teachers and teachers in further education) and interviewed people working in education in both Bavaria and Hessen. We based our investigation on the assumption that the specific professional awareness of adult educators can best be grasped through a comparison with representatives of other pedagogical professions.

The research design involves a quantitatively-oriented written questionnaire survey (N=1.601) as well as 27 qualitative group discussions with about 137 people working in the pedagogical field covering different regions within the two federal states. Within the framework of the quantitative survey, in total 5668 questionnaires were sent out, 1601 of which could be taken into account for the evaluation (return rate of 28.2%). In the course of the project, the qualitative results will be related to the quantitative results. In the following we will present selected results from the questionnaires, focusing individual attitudes towards cooperation experiences in the field of further education as well as existing cooperations within and outside of the educational field.

The central results on lifelong learning gained within the PAELL project do not only show "that the maxim of LLL has established itself among the practitioners within the institutionalized system of lifelong learning, but also how it is drawn upon in the

professional self-descriptions" (Nittel et al., 2011: 181). In this context, teachers of further education explain that, to them, lifelong learning represents a never-ending process which can and should be considered neither an everyday phenomenon, nor a political panacea. The primary focus is on the normative obligation which prompts teachers in further education to continuously partake in further training and thus to develop and consolidate their own skills and competences. Accordingly, they are capable of pursuing their own pedagogical task, one of the aims of which is the promotion of lifelong learning among their own addressees. An investigation of the contrary group of primary school teachers yielded similar results and with regard to the other pedagogical occupational groups examined, which are less contrary in character, it is, in this context, significant that the formation of a common "We"-identity could be possible. And it is just this possibility which provides a useful platform for the realization of valuable and necessary cooperation relationships between the practitioners and, in this sense, also in the field of further education. Against the background of this option, we will now outline the first quantitative results on cooperation experiences and forms of cooperation, the focus being on adult education (cf. Nittel et al., 2011).

Cooperation experiences in the field of further education

On the basis of the cooperation experiences made by the individual actors in the educational field, it can be said that, all in all, similar trends seem to prevail in the different occupational groups, just as was the case with regard to lifelong learning (cf. illustration 1). By means of the multi-dimensional method of the semantic differential, cooperation experiences in the field of further education were inquired about ("The cooperation was all in all ..."). In this context, participants had the chance to determine trends/polarities on a scale from 1 to 6. Thus, the following semantic differential could be generated:

Despite similar trends in the perception of cooperations across the diverse pedagogical occupational groups, the above illustration shows significant differences between the professions. These were identified by means of the single-factor variance analysis and were then more closely specified by applying the Tamhane T₂ test. When focusing on adult education/further education (n=99), highly significant differences between further education and other professional groups manifest themselves with regard to the perception of cooperations as being successful, innovative, and cost-intensive. Compared to the vocational school (n=101), participants from the field of further education perceived of cooperations as being more successful ($p < .033$) and more innovative ($p < .001$). In addition, teachers in further education consider cooperations to be more successful than participants from the field of university education (n=79) ($p < .002$).

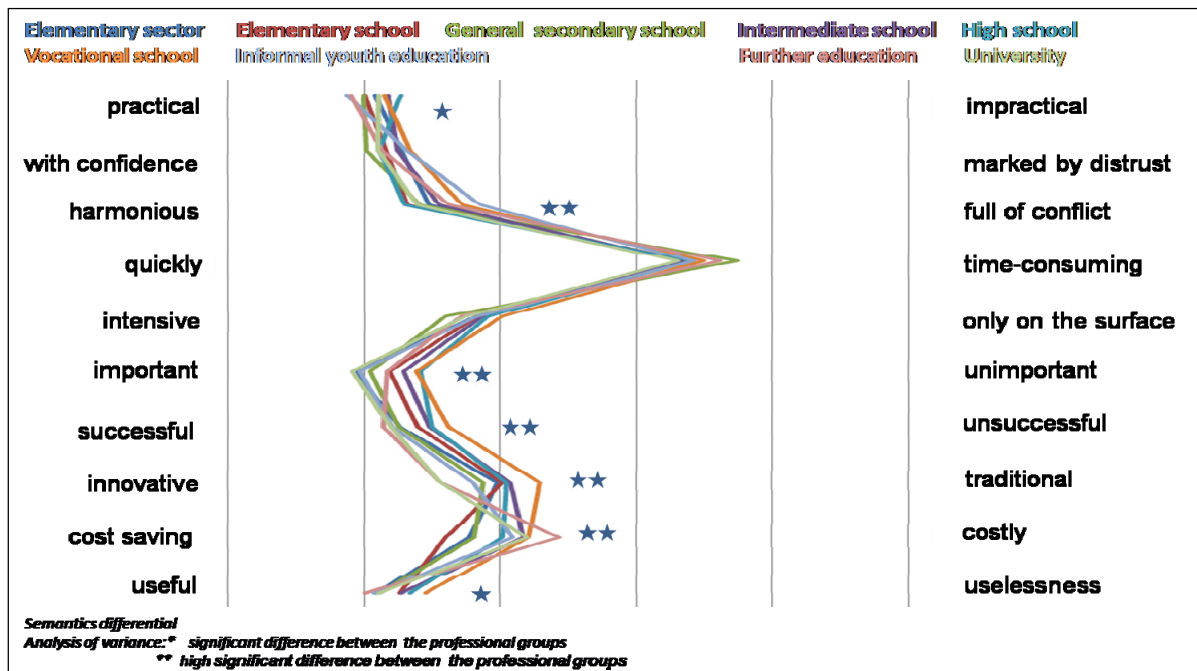


Illustration 1: Cooperation experiences of pedagogical actors
(Source: Fuchs & Tippelt, 2012, to be published)

Furthermore, they think of cooperations as being more cost-intensive ($p < .000$) than do, for instance, participants from the field of elementary or primary education. The results focusing on the cooperation experiences of the quantitatively surveyed personnel in adult education show that, on the one hand, these cooperations are consistently perceived as rather positive, namely as practice-oriented, important, successful, and profitable. On the other hand, this professional group also regards cooperations as cost-intensive. The investment of time and money could, among other factors, be considered the reason for that the pedagogical professions, with only a few exceptions, mostly cooperate within the same professional group and less often across the different occupational groups (cf. the following chapter).

Existing cooperations within and outside of the educational field

When looking at the results regarding the answers given by the different occupational groups in the field of education ($N=1601$), it can be stated that the professional fields examined most often cooperate with their own pedagogical professional field or with those professional fields adjacent to their own.

With the exception of the primary school ($n=296$), which cooperates more strongly with pre-school education (vertically) than horizontally (i.e., with other primary schools) and the elementary sector ($n=364$), which cooperates about as strongly with the primary school as it does with institutions from its own sector (horizontally and vertically more or less equally strong at this transition), the results suggest that all pedagogical occupational groups

cooperate significantly stronger horizontally (in their own ranks) than vertically (with other pedagogical occupational groups).

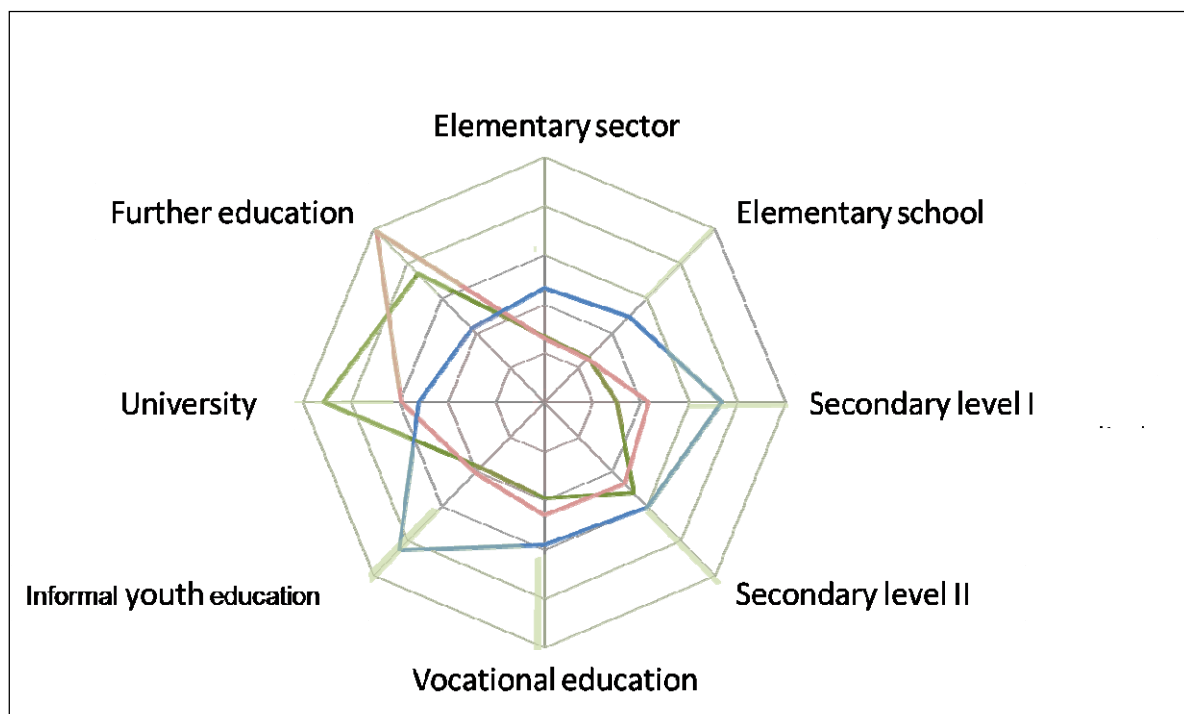


Illustration 2: Cooperations within the educational field

(Source: Fuchs & Tippelt, 2012, to be published; annotation: this is a post-hoc chi-square test. The significance level of 5% corresponds to a critical z-value of ± 1.96 . The values higher than + (marked green in the graph) and lower than -1.96 (marked red in the graph) (z-value, which corresponds to a p-value of 0.05) are significant on a significance level of 5% in the comparison of the individual occupational groups.)

This also manifests itself when looking more closely at the field of further education. When comparing the sector of further education, for instance, with that of informal youth education and university education (cf. illustration 2), the application of the post-hoc chi-square test clearly shows that institutions of further education ($n=111$) cooperate strongly with other institutions of further education (existing cooperations: $n=65$). This is not the case with regard to informal youth education ($n=163$), which - in addition to cooperations with its own occupational group - shows a remarkably high level of cooperation (green area in the graph) with both levels of secondary education, or with regard to university education ($n=88$) where, according to the answers given by the university personnel, a strong cooperation with further education is taking place. Although cooperations with other educational fields and institutions do exist, such as cooperations with universities ($n=88$), and increasingly with chambers and with the business sector, these preferably take place in one's own ranks (horizontal cooperations with institutions of adult education), as is also shown by the results from other pedagogical professions. With regard to the benefit of cooperations (cf. chapter 2), a possible explanation for the poorly developed cooperation relationships may be that the field of further education does not seem to derive any benefit from the experience potentials of other pedagogical occupational groups or that no

common grounds and mutual interests for cooperation seem to exist (cf., inter alia, Dollhausen, & Weiland, 2010; Merkens, 2006). The graph and the results gained also show that, when looking at the example of cooperation between university and further education, the participants from the field of university education and the participants from the field of further education differ in their perception of the existing cooperation relationships concerning further education. The university sector seems to cooperate more with the field of further education than vice versa.

Another main finding is that cooperations between the field of further education and both the elementary sector and the primary school are underrepresented. Possibly, cooperation between these pedagogical professions has not proven profitable or sustainable with regard to the participants' own work (cf. inter alia Dollhausen, & Weiland, 2010; Carle, Koepfel, & Wenzel, 2009).

Outlook

The results presented give a first insight into existing cooperations within and between the different pedagogical professions and they show in how far positive or negative cooperation experiences have been made and in which areas cooperations would be desirable (e.g., the clearly under-represented cooperation relationships between the field of further education and that of pre-school and primary education).

Although the project's quantitative interim results clearly show that, in the field of further education as well as in the other pedagogical sectors, cooperations are mostly horizontal and their benefit thus seems to primarily manifest itself among the respective group's own ranks or cooperations with other pedagogical educational fields are not possible for other reasons, the first qualitative evaluations, in particular, make it clear that there is a strong will to cooperate vertically, too, and that there is a need for cooperations across all educational fields. Within the context of the project, this reveals the need for a more thorough investigation of the reasons for the lack of cooperations and the differences in the assessment of cooperation experiences. For this, the quantitative and qualitative results have to be dovetailed more tightly in order to be able to gain more detailed evidence.

Taking into account the fact that pedagogical occupational groups, in particular, have to deal with target groups that are in contact with not just one but several pedagogical institutions, existing cooperation relationships prove necessary in the context of lifelong learning in order to be able to meet the diverse expectations and needs (cf. inter alia Merkens 2006). For cooperations to be successful, the different pedagogical occupational groups need to be open to the objectives and needs of the other pedagogical professions. Thus, it will be possible to recognize the work of other professions and to develop an understanding for their pedagogical work. Accordingly, the trust necessary for a positive cooperation and for the creation of common objectives can be achieved so that, as a consequence, synergies and the resulting benefits can be generated (cf. Faulstich, 2010; Nuissl, 2010a; Carle, Koepfel, & Wenzel, 2009; Merkens, 2006; Schweitzer, 1998).

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Academic Identity of Adult Education

The standard story?

According to the standard story, adult education has developed into an academic field of study in stages. It emerges as backing adult education practice, then as supporting education of adult educators, thirdly as transforming educators' practice into theory. In the fourth stage it transforms into a mature discipline by proceeding into meta-theoretical reflections on its accumulated concepts and theories. (cf. Finger 1990, Tuomisto 2011.)

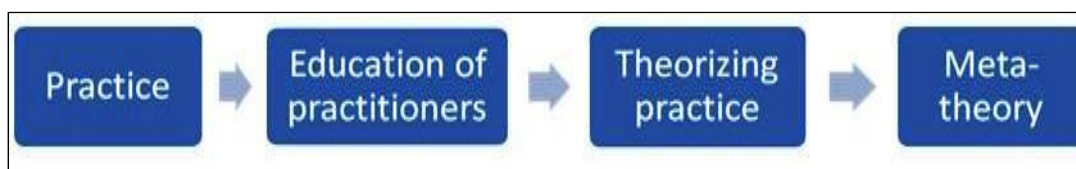


Figure 1. Standard story on academization of adult education

I argue in this paper, that the standard story is not correct, at least not a universal story. The academic identity of adult education is an outcome of continuous, intertwined struggles inside disciplines and wider political and economical programmes. The struggles are increasingly trans-national, although for participants they may seem genuinely domestic. In the following sections, I will first describe the status of adult education in the latest university reform in Finland. After this I will contextualize the status quo into short disciplinary genealogy of adult education since the turn of the 1970s. The next section suggests an interpretation about the formation of the academic identity of adult education, and the final section discusses the trans-national context and the role adult education professionals in the identity formation process.

Adult Education in the School of Education

The Finnish universities experienced a major reform in 2010. After their expansion as state universities since the 1970s, they were now all privatized and many of them merged into larger units²². Alongside with the eager adoption of the EU higher education policy – Bologna process and bfulgs – University of Tampere – the birth-place of academic adult

²¹ anja.heikkinen@uta.fi

²² According to the University Act 2010, Finnish universities gained economical and managerial autonomy. They mobilized into an employer association and joined the Central Union of Finnish Industry. The academic staff lost their status as civil servants and changed into employees of the university-company. Although the unions of professors and other academic staff had negotiated a contract, according to which their work-conditions would remain at least as good as before, there have been huge differences in the way in which universities have applied the contract.

education in Finland – started a radical reorganization since the beginning of 2011. The previous departments and faculties were replaced by broad Schools, which should, instead of disciplinary studies, cater wide, standardized, learning-outcomes-based, industrially relevant degree-programmes and research. Each School is governed by a director (“dean”), who is full-time, basically a “professional” manager, appointed by and accountable to the rector of the university, not to the staff and students. The only democratic organ is the Board of the School, whose members are elected among three groups – professors, other staff and students. The director is supported by a steering group and groups for curriculum development, for research and doctoral studies and for continuing education and external service, all appointed by her/himself.

In the School of Education, this means that, for example

- instead of previous study programmes, the staff and students must develop one degree programme under the title “Education and Society”
- the aims, contents and methods of degree programmes must follow the orders of the study and scientific councils, nominated by the rector.

Although there is neither disciplinary nor labour market grounds, degree programmes must be split into one 3 years’ broad, problem and outcome-based BA curriculum and 2 year’s MA curriculum, the latter profiling into “education and society”, “pedagogical aspects of education” and “mediatisation of education”. The BA, MA and Dr dissertations should be accomplished without distinctions between early childhood, primary or secondary school, general and adult and vocational education. The previous subject and content-based departments and curricula of Education (general, adult, vocational), of Teacher training (early childhood, primary school teacher, subject teacher education) and in this case, strangely also vocology (from previous department of Speech studies) were abolished with their 3-partite (professors, other staff and students) department councils and open staff meetings. The previous 3-partite council with elected dean, who worked beside her/his full-time job as one of the professors, was replaced by one Board of the School. Furthermore, the previous administrative and support staff in the departments and in the faculty was gathered into the University centre for administrative services, with their own budget and management. The obvious implication for adult education has been that it is expected to relinquish its identity and tradition.

Academic positioning of adult education in 1970s-1980s

What was the identity and tradition of adult education until the university reform, especially in University of Tampere, where academic adult education was centered until 1980s. Why does it seem so difficult to defend it especially there, compared to other universities? In order to highlight the embeddedness of disciplinary transformations in wider institutional programmes, I describe one period, which was quite influential for later development of the identity of academic adult education at least in Tampere, perhaps in Finland more generally.

The period is connected with the establishment of vocational education as an academic discipline. Like academic adult education, it did not emerge from vocational education practice. And similarly the headquarters for initiating the discipline was in the state departments. The most important institute for disciplination of vocational education was Hämeenlinna Institute for vocational teachers (AHO), which was established in 1958 by the Department for Vocational Education in the ministry for trade and industry. It was not before the 1970s that vocational orientation gained interest in academic adult education. Since its start in the 1920s it had focused on popular adult education. The turn into technocratic education politics, vocational education could not be ignored any more. University of Tampere and the Centre for Development of State Administration (Valtionhallinnon kehittämiskeskus, VHKK) were following Nordic and Central-European work and occupation research, democratization of work, imperatives of internationalization and computerization to competences, social organization and management of workers and work processes. However, establishment of sectoral research institutes in ministries liquidated plans about multi-disciplinary research and studies programmes on work-life, where adult education and comparative research would have a crucial role. (Kirjonen 2008). The initiatives led to establishment of the Centre for Work-life Research in the Faculty of Social Sciences and strengthening of work-psychology in Helsinki University of Technology, in VHKK and in the state Institute for Occupational Health.

Academization of vocational education was suggested as part of teacher education reform in the turn of 1970s. Initiators shared a background on attitude surveys with teacher trainees, on teaching and staff training in vocational schools of industry, and on activities in the Foundation for Free Education, struggling against leftist influences in universities and teacher training. (Peltonen et al. 1991, Honka et al. 1998, Sauri 1988, Suutarinen 2008.) Neither leaders of the big industry nor of the new National Board of Vocational Education (AKH) wanted to start vocational teacher training in the new faculties of education, which were formed after moving of teacher seminars into university. The decision about establishing a professorship in vocational education in University of Tampere was made in 1982, but the position was not filled before 1987.

It may seem strange that the chair was located in the Department of Primary School Teacher Training (HOKL) in Hämeenlinna, and not in the Department of Adult Education. The crucial figure in making the choice was Matti Peltonen, the professor of adult education during 1978-84. Alongside his professorship he worked in vocational and staff training of the United Paper Mills, in AHO and AKH and in the Union of Finnish Industry (STK), where he moved in 1982 to act as the chair of its Council for Educational Affairs. (Honka et al 1998.) In the early 1980s, the Department for Adult Education was not a proper place to continue his work and fulfill his visions. Both Matti Peltonen and the first professor of vocational education Pekka Ruohotie had completed their doctorates under the supervision of professor Väinö Heikkinen. He was a central person in the academization of vocational education in HOKL, when his former colleague Matti Suonperä – who already collaborated

with AHO – was appointed as its director. (Suonperä 1989.) In the stabilization of mutual relations between HOKL, AHO and AKH, a crucial player was EdD, DI Juhani Honka. He was the principal of AHO until his move into the AKH in 1985, and during its closure in 1991 he moved to the United Paper Mills’ as an HRD manager. Also his doctorate was supervised by Peltonen and he was appointed as an adjunct professor of vocational education in University of Tampere.

Ruohotie started teaching in vocational education with Honka and his colleagues from big industry, who were graduates from University of Tampere under supervision of either Heikkinen or Peltonen. The degree programme was first offered as continuing studies for the HRD staff in big industry and for principals of vocational institutes, in collaboration with the Institute for Leadership, AKH, AHO and the Union for Finnish Industry (STK). The mission was to “produce academic experts with a distinctive background of their own.” (Honka et al 1998.) In 1989 programme was included into the Department of General Education (not Department of Adult Education), but no connections were established either with its staff or with the main campus in general. For some years collaboration with the Swedish-speaking vocational teacher training was important: partly because it was organized in University of Åbo Akademi, but the Finnish-speaking took place in branch-specific vocational teacher institutes. More vital, however, were the connections to Nordic networks in anticipation of Finland’s joining the EU in 1995. (Nyberg 1991.)²³

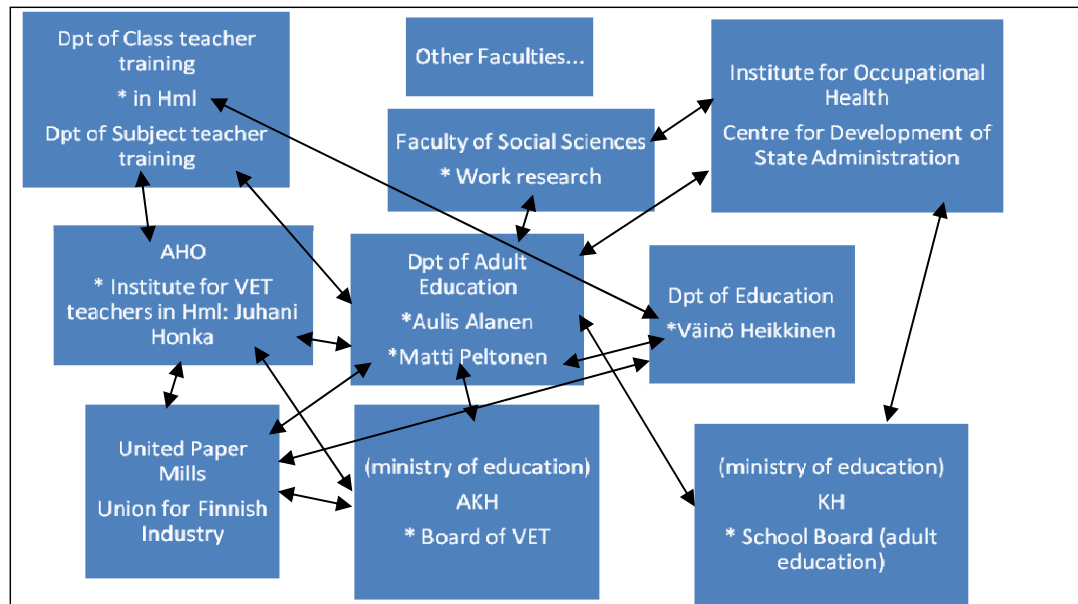


Figure 2. Struggle about academic adult education in 1970s-80s.

²³ Since the AKH and KH (School Board) merged into the National Board of Education in 1991 with radical downsizing of its staff, Honka returned as a principal to AHO and acted as a “research professor” in the Research Centre for Vocational Education. During the 1990s polytechnic reform he had an important role in implementation of state-subsidized licentiate and doctoral studies for vocational teachers, who were upgrading their qualifications for polytechnics. After administrative muddle in the Centre he moved to the Council of Häme Region around 2005.

The figure summarizes the central organizations and actors involved in the struggle about adult education during the 1970s-80s. AHO and United Paper Mills made up a knot, where all the threads were pulled together: the STK and its cooperators in state administration and in Departments of Adult education, Education and Class teacher training. The sociological orientation of adult education and critical work research closed the connection to main campus: they might have interpreted vocational education as welfare-work and tool for democratization. On the other hand, although adult education was defined as social science until the merge into new Faculty of Education in 1974, connections to social sciences remained weak. (Tuomisto 2011.) This may largely have been due to the defense of its status and identity. Under the premises of HOKL vocational education could build its identity on management and training traditions of big manufacturing industry. Instead of learning from domestic experimental psychology or educational research, it focused on increasing efficiency of production and business, through the psychic machinery.

Why Finnish vocational education did not disciplinarize like in Germany, but neither developed into Anglo-Saxon HRD studies? In Finland industrial employment did not build on crafts, nor did trade unions build on guilds or journeymen's associations. On the contrary, it developed reactively according to productive needs of the big export industry. Trade unions did not gain the right to negotiate work contracts before 1940, when major solutions in vocational education were already fixed. (Kyöstiö 1955, Tuomisto 1986, Heikkinen 1995). The rapid development trade unions and leftist parties after World War II mobilized manufacturing industry, leaders of vocational education administration and institutes to defend their programmes in vocational education. (Heikkinen et al 1999, Vesikansa 2004, Purhonen 2004.) The competing programme of rural industries and institutes failed, while it could not connect with leftist parties and trade unions. The relation between vocational education and adult education might have been different, if it had developed under ministry of education, like popular adult education, instead of branch ministries. Furthermore, contacts between rural and workers' edifying movements might have been closer, if Finnish vocational education were not so dominated by the big manufacturing industry.

Adult Education as a Contested Discipline

My hypothesis is that academization of adult education does not follow the conventional standard story (figure 1). Instead of studying practices, it became as an ideological programme, which legitimized institutionalization and professionalization of adult education. This took place in strategic alliances and networks of key actors between politics, industry and universities²⁴.

²⁴ There is no space to go to details of the picture nor to the disciplinarization of adult education more broadly, but my assumption the pattern might be similar.

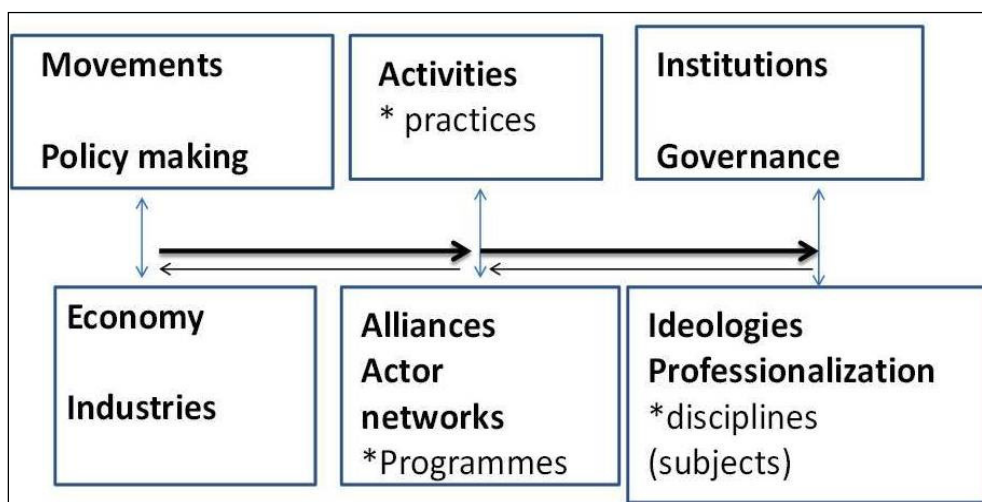


Figure 3. Formation of academic identity of adult education.

If in early years of academization (as “free popular edification work”) the actors and networks were connected to attempts to integrate workers’ and rural movements to peaceful development of the young nation-state and national industries, they were replaced by other agendas, alliances and actors in the 1970s-80s, and later in the 1990s-2000s.²⁵

The transformation of the Finnish academic identity of adult education has its unique, national features. Still, it never did, and currently cannot separate from trans-national developments. The period of 1970s was characterized almost everywhere in the world with movements against imperialist wars and colonialism, with radical student (and staff) movements for democratizing university governance and for developing research and studies to respond needs for economical and societal democracy. (Varsori 2004.) The big industries gave up their post-war patriotism and were concerned about consequences of democratic and radical movements, especially in reproduction of academic professionals, who are holding key positions in politics, economy and education.

Since the collapse of socialist systems and the formation of trans-national, continental economical blocks, new and stronger trans-national alliances and actors are influencing the academic identity of adult education. However, even more than before, academics are deeply involved and no innocent victims of the process. The leaders of state departments and big industrial and financial companies have turned their focus to trans-national negotiation and decision forums. Their interest in development of national industries and societies has disappeared in front of globalizing production and financial markets and of trans-national status opportunities. Still, until now the academy is producing the knowledge

²⁵The convergence of adult, vocational and HE traditions are clearly visible in the current EU innovation policies. In Finland the agenda is most explicit in polytechnics, which have committed to “new” conceptions of knowledge, research and science. The value of widened, pragmatic knowledge is evaluated through its functionality, i.e. how well it suits, labels and operates in certain environment. (Anttila 2005.) The border between basic and applied research should be abolished, contexts of production and use of knowledge should coincide, the knowledge product should satisfy both customer’s and provider’s demands.

and professionals, which is required to run the wheel and to legitimize its course. (Marshall 1997, Heikkinen et al 1999.)



Figure 4. Identity of academy in manufacturing adult education busnocracy.

Figure 4 suggests the contemporary constellation, where academic adult education and educators are positioning themselves as global intelligentsia, interested mainly in competition and profits available in trans-national research and global higher education markets. At the same time they are contributing to professional knowledge, divisions and hierarchies of adult education work, which response to the needs of trans-national policy-making and global production and financial markets. Of course there might be an alternative...

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The use of experiential learning in the adult education field

Introduction

The use of the accreditation of previous learning is widely used across the EU for access to qualifications. However, most of this previous learning has been accredited and it is this which enables access to further qualifications. The use of experiential learning in order to access qualifications is much less widely used as it may present a number of problems for any receiving institution. The following paper will discuss the accreditation of experiential learning and how it could be used to access adult education qualifications.

RPL in Scotland

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) in Scotland is an approach associated with widening access to learning. RPL is generally recognised as having two parts to it; the accreditation of prior learning (APL) and the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL). RPL can be used in place of, or to supplement, traditional national qualifications where the holder is looking to access further, usually accredited, learning opportunities. Its use as a means of entry to further accredited learning, however, is neither standardised nor widespread. Like many other activities associated with developments to widen access to higher education, RPL in Scotland is still a peripheral activity. There are some examples of very good practice and much of the policy and strategy documents produced to support RPL, in particular those coming from the EU, are well focused with welcomed aims and objectives.

Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components of the EHEA, both internally and in a global context. (London Communiqué, 2007).

But as with many other approaches to widen access to higher education opportunities the adoption of RPL as an alternative learning pathway to higher education is not a simple matter. However, the task of making use of alternative accredited qualifications for access to qualifications is becoming easier with the development of national qualification frameworks. In Scotland, all publicly funded education institutions, and this includes all higher education institutions and the great majority of further education colleges and other post-compulsory education providers, must define their qualifications in terms of their level and credit points against the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF). This has gone some way to enable those with other higher education qualifications, such as a Higher

²⁶ j.g.bradley@stir.ac.uk

National Certificate (an equivalent qualification to the HEI's Certificate in Higher Education which equates to year one of an ordinary degree programme) and the Higher National Diploma (an equivalent qualification to the undergraduate diploma) to access degree level awards. The holders of these awards can access degrees with advanced credit where they enter the programme in either Year Two or Year Three of a four year honours degree programme. However, this acceptance of advanced entry with higher national qualifications is neither uniform nor ubiquitous. In the Scottish Government's report on the future of post-16 education in Scotland, *Putting Learners at the Centre*, it states: -

Even when learners do successfully engage with the system, barriers to smooth progression remain. Learners can, for example, experience difficulties in articulation, particularly from college to university; and whilst some progress has been made to overcome these - through formal articulation agreements between some groups of colleges and (usually) the newer 'post 92' universities - articulation opportunities are determined by institutions rather than through a consistent process adopted across the further and higher education sectors. (Scottish Government, 2011: 22).

This lack of coherence with these 1+3 (i.e., one year at a further education college and 3 years at university instead of four years at university) and 2+2 modules runs against the policy of making the learner pathways to degree level awards more flexible.

Even where the system works there can also be internal institutional barriers. As with other non-traditional schemes that seek to widen access to learning, any previous accredited learning must, in the main, 'sync' with the programmes against which the applicant is looking to gain credit.

Prior learning is valued largely in terms of its similarity to pre-existing conceptions of 'desirable' knowledge and skill. There is no politics of difference. There is no critical epistemological or pedagogical engagement. The gatekeepers have widened the gate slightly in terms of greater flexibility regarding the site of knowledge production but care is taken not to let any actual outsider knowledge slip through unnoticed. (Harris, 1999: 124).

Although, in this quote, Judy Harris is focusing on the situation in South Africa this approach to the use, or otherwise, of RPL is reflected both in the UK and across the European Union. The onus is always on the RPL applicant to prove the 'desirability' of their previous qualifications and to make them fit into a prescribed learning framework and mirror the knowledge that is contained in programmes at the receiving institution against which the RPL qualifications are being matched.

In the case of the use of advanced credit to gain entry to AY2 or AY3 many institutions carry out curriculum matching exercises. These exercises are designed to ensure that the learning

gained in another learning environment matches that offered at the receiving institution even though the credit awarded is notional credit and the applicant can only use this credit to access a particular accredited programme at the receiving institution. So these curriculum matching exercises can be used as a method of barring entry rather than enabling the applicant to enter their chosen programme.

Many receiving institutions insist that the learning completed by the RPL applicant matches exactly that learning at the receiving institution for which they are being given credit. Yet, in Scotland, students at further education colleges who undertake higher national qualifications cover more subject specific material than that offered in the first two years of a degree programme in the same subject. For example, students undertaking a Higher National Diploma will undertake 30 units (which have a notional forty hour teacher/student contact time per unit) in their subject or in related subjects over their two year period of study. However, students studying the same topic at degree level in a higher education institution may only cover twelve modules or units (each with the same forty hour staff/student contact time) over the same period and only four of these may be topic specific. Universities will argue that their programmes are more academically challenging than those offered at further education colleges but there has been little comparative research undertaken which can substantiate these claims.

In Scotland, the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has been at the centre of this standardisation of credit and in the main has most benefited those learners who are looking to use previous credit to access undergraduate or post graduate studies at universities. The awarding of credit in this way enables those who have undertaken accredited programmes to have that credit recognised by a receiving (usually HE) institution and in this way reduce the time and cost of gaining a degree level or post graduate level qualification. However, even this fairly straightforward transfer of previously awarded credit does favour the body or institution which is awarding the credit and this can work against the spirit of the national qualification framework. In particular, the receiving institutions, especially HEIs, are the sole arbiters of the awarding of credit in this situation. Some institutions play a pro-active role in awarding credit and look to create flexible learning pathways for those with prior awards but many other institutions are less than active in the awarding of credit and this can, and does, hinder the creation of flexible learning pathways. Advanced access to university degree programmes using credit previously gained from a non-university provider then is difficult and the Scottish Government are currently considering legislation on this to ensure that those with appropriate qualifications can gain advanced access to degree level awards.

In Scotland then, in the main, then the majority of credit awarded is given only for those qualifications which are nationally recognised. Even here, though, the amount of credit that is awarded for national qualifications can vary depending on the view of the receiving institution. Since each HEI in Scotland is an awarding body in its own right this further complicates the system.

The awarding of credit for non-standardised or in house or training programmes which have not been levelled against the SCQF presents even more difficulty. Although there are some institutions in the HEI sector that are pro-active in this area and although further education colleges can credit non-standard programmes this type of activity is neither orthodox nor common place. This then can work against the individual learner who is looking to gain credit for previous training and progress with their learning to the next level.

The situation in the rest of the UK is no less clear in terms of the awarding of credit for both standard and non-standard awards although the government objectives for this are clear:

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment which considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning and is distinct from credit transfer (for existing achievements within the QCF) or exemptions (for certificated achievement outside the QCF). (Edexcel, 2011: 3).

The use of RPL in this way, though, is more visible in England and awarding bodies, such as City and Guilds of London, can enable applicants to have their experience accredited at assessment centres. However, England has a range of qualification authorities and because not all national qualifications are within the qualifications framework there is, once again, no common approach to the awarding of credit for either RPL or RPEL.

This lack of a common usage of the language of RPL and the lack of common understanding of the concept of RPL is also reflected in many countries across the European Union. However, if there is a common theme in the awarding of credit for previous learning it is that, in the main, credit is only awarded for previously achieved accredited learning. The awarding of credit for learning gained through experience is an even more muddled and confused landscape where although this type of learning may be recognised and valued, frameworks which would enable credit to be awarded for experiential learning do not exist or are remote or institution specific.

RPL and the use of experiential learning

In Scotland, experiential learning is viewed as a pre-requisite for many professional degree level awards such as social work, community education or nursing but only in support of an application by appropriately qualified applicants. In others it is viewed as a desirable component for any applicant and can be highly valued in different parts of post compulsory education. Some institutions will, and do, accredit skills or knowledge that have been gained through work but these are, in the main, sector or employer specific and often linked to only one institution.

Yet the notion of upgrading skills and knowledge without the need to resort to a structured, campus based, nationally accredited university or college programme is commonplace in

today's world.

Most people presently have gained ICT skills through experience rather than through a particular, formal learning programme. RPEL offers no repeat of learning and assessment; Saves time and money; may encourages take up and retention and may support progression and personalise learning. In our culture we only value what we have been taught not what we have taught ourselves. (Lillas, 2011).

So the gaining of accreditation of prior experiential learning then is very difficult. The difficulty in terms of prior experiential learning according to Andersson et al. is that the knowledge has to be made 'visible':

The important thing is to what you know, rather than what course you have studied, and learning from experience might not give exactly the same knowledge as learning from studying. (Andersson et al., 2004: 58).

Conclusion

Much of the problem appears to lie with the system where any applicant looking for advanced credit for previous learning, either accredited or experiential, has the onus placed on them to ensure that their claim is couched in a way that matches that which is demanded by the receiving institution. This relationship leaves the RPL applicant powerless and at the mercy of the credit gatekeepers highlighted earlier.

In Scotland, initial discussion is under way with the aim of developing the national credit qualifications framework further in order to change this power relationship in terms of the awarding of credit, especially credit for informal and experiential learning. This work is focusing on adult education tutors and support workers, in the first instance, with the eventual aim of enabling this group to construct a record of their achievement which will then be accredited against the SCQF. The main objective of this work is to enable adult educators to use their skills and knowledge to open a pathway to professional level qualifications in the adult education field. Unpaid and volunteer tutors are an integral part of the adult education provision in Scotland and one area, Community Learning and Development, recently estimated that 40% of their professional staff started their career in an unpaid role. Much of the skills and knowledge which adult educators develop in the field in Scotland is through experience and in-house training. However, this is more often than not non-accredited and they then have to undertake further, accredited qualifications before they can enter a professional, i.e., degree level, qualification programme. For some this can mean a period of study lasting more than five years.

As all Scottish national qualifications are levelled and their credit points measured against the national framework this should make credit transfer much easier. Use, then, can be made of the national framework to accredit skills and experiences where these applicants

would be able to have their experiential knowledge and skills accredited against the SCQF. They can then use this as entry level credit to a national, professional level programme if appropriate. However, there is an opportunity to develop the system further where learners could also exchange this credit for national qualifications without having to undertake any additional study. This proposal would then change the nature of the current system of the awarding of credit and place the learner, not an awarding body, at the centre of the process. It would also give far greater significance to experiential learning. This proposal would see the system in Scotland for awarding credit change to a scheme that recognises, and gives credit to, learning of equal value rather than credit being awarded only for that learning which matches exactly that provided by an awarding body and all that this entails. This scheme of recognising experiential learning as being of equal value to accredited learning is a new approach in the accrediting of informal, non-formal and experiential learning but this work has the potential for a seismic shift in the system of recognising and accrediting experiential skills and knowledge.

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Interactive Professionalization in Continuing Education and Training: The Bielefeld approach

Introduction

This paper focuses on the discourse on professionalisation in Continuing Education and Training from a relational point of view. First, the different rationales of science and practice will be outlined. Using the metaphor of the stage, we will show how professional systems can be considered as professional networks of representatives from science and practice. The mode of operation of the approach is demonstrated on the example of formats and projects of the "Lifelong Learning Lab Bielefeld" (L3:Lab). Instructional design settings aiming at generating professional knowledge in Higher Education focus on the triangle of the groups of participants, i.e. academics, students and practitioners, and identify it as a space of possibilities for communication and communicative action. Thus the need for networking relations and trust management in professionalisation processes becomes visible.

Interactive Professionalisation – a relational perspective

In regard to its historical development, the debate on professionalisation in Adult Education has been conducted from multiple perspectives. Both the structural functional approach (Parsons, Marshall) and the criteria-centred approach (Oevermann, Koring) strive to find a clear classification of the concepts "professionals" and "laymen". In the early 1990s, Dewe, Ferchhoff and Radtke emphasise the link between theory and practice and define different forms of correlation (see Dewe, Ferchhoff, & Radtke, 1992: 70ff.). The essential point here is not the distinction between theory and practice but the demand for a common knowledge base. As a result, the researchers draw the conclusion that "professional knowledge" is not, as usually described in classical theoretical positions on professionalisation, produced by transforming science into practice, but is an independent "third" form of knowledge that is not part of theory or practice (see Dewe, Ferchhoff, & Radtke, 1992: 78ff.). The observation of science and practice, however, suggests that the production of scientific knowledge is not primarily based on practical activity-oriented knowledge and vice versa. This is not surprising if we understand science and practice as two separate self-organized systems

²⁷ wolfgang.juette@uni-bielefeld.de

²⁸ markus.walber@uni-bielefeld.de

²⁹ julia.behrens@uni-bielefeld.de

that can influence each other only in terms of resonances. As social systems carry societal functions, the two systems are only bound to their own self-organised guiding difference. As a result, the scientific community aims to produce scientific knowledge; the practical system strives for viable practical knowledge. The production of professional knowledge, taking into consideration scientific and practical knowledge, results from an independent system of professionalisation. In this system, communication between representatives of science and practice can emerge. Hence, the interactive dynamics are constitutive, which is why the generation of professional knowledge – still taking the “blind spots” of the different perspectives into account – is called Interactive Professionalisation. This does not focus on creating a new social system but on creating interactive systems. The difference here is that interactive systems can be characterised by the communication between “physically” present people, unlike social systems (cf. Simon, 2008: 99ff.). Thus “Interactive Professionalisation” aims at creating opportunities for the interactive development of professional knowledge, involving scientific and practical perspectives (see Figure 1).

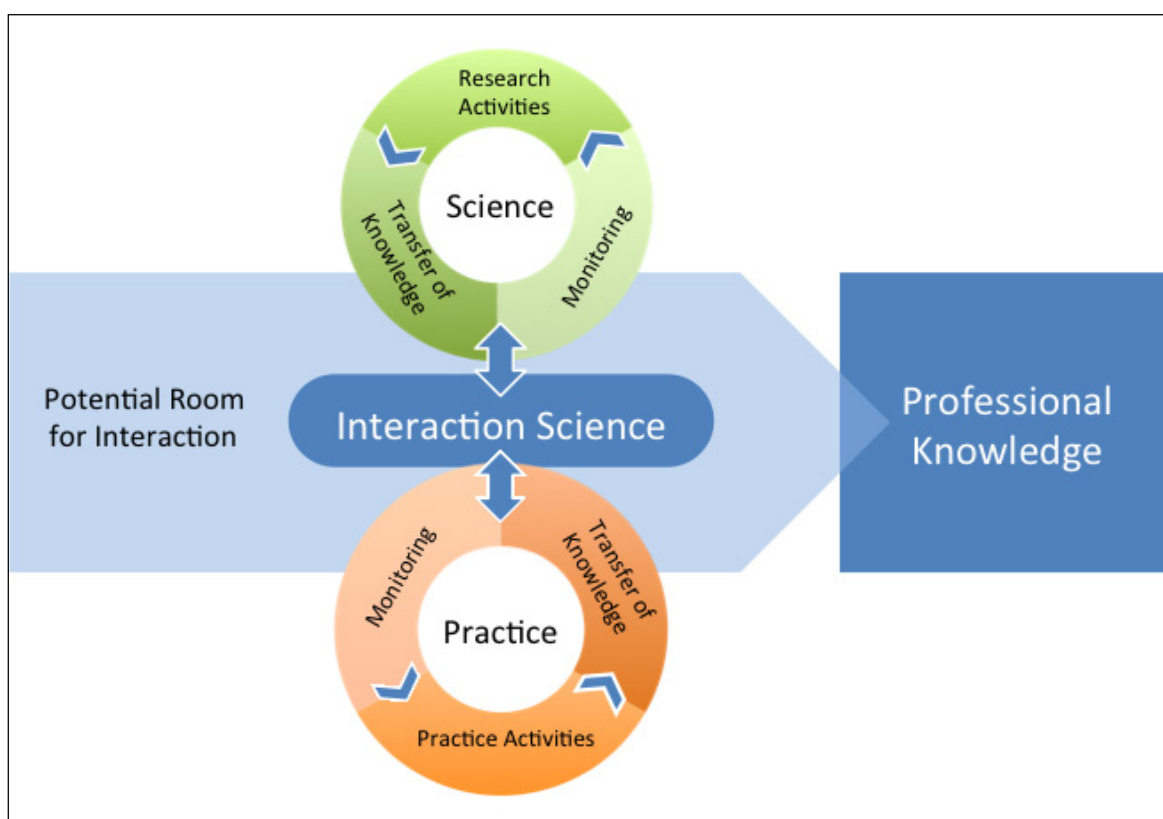


Figure 1. Interactive Professionalisation (Source: Authors)

The characteristic trait of the interactive system is that the knowledge resources both from science and practice are represented by people. In this way scientific knowledge can be reflected in accordance to practical knowledge gained through experiences. The constitutive part here is no longer the agent for theory and practice but the “moment of encounter” of the two. Initially, scientific and practical observations principally remain. But

contrasting and relational processes can be positively perturbing (see Dewe, Ferchhoff, & Radtke, 1992: 78). The perturbations are resolved in the respective system based on the rules of self-organisation. This creates a potential double benefit: the science system can identify current practice-relevant research questions; the system of practice derives scientifically based recommendations for practical actions.

Interaction stages for professionalisation

Professionalisation can be seen as a network of representatives from science and practice, as the illustration shows using the metaphor of the "stage" (Fig. 2).

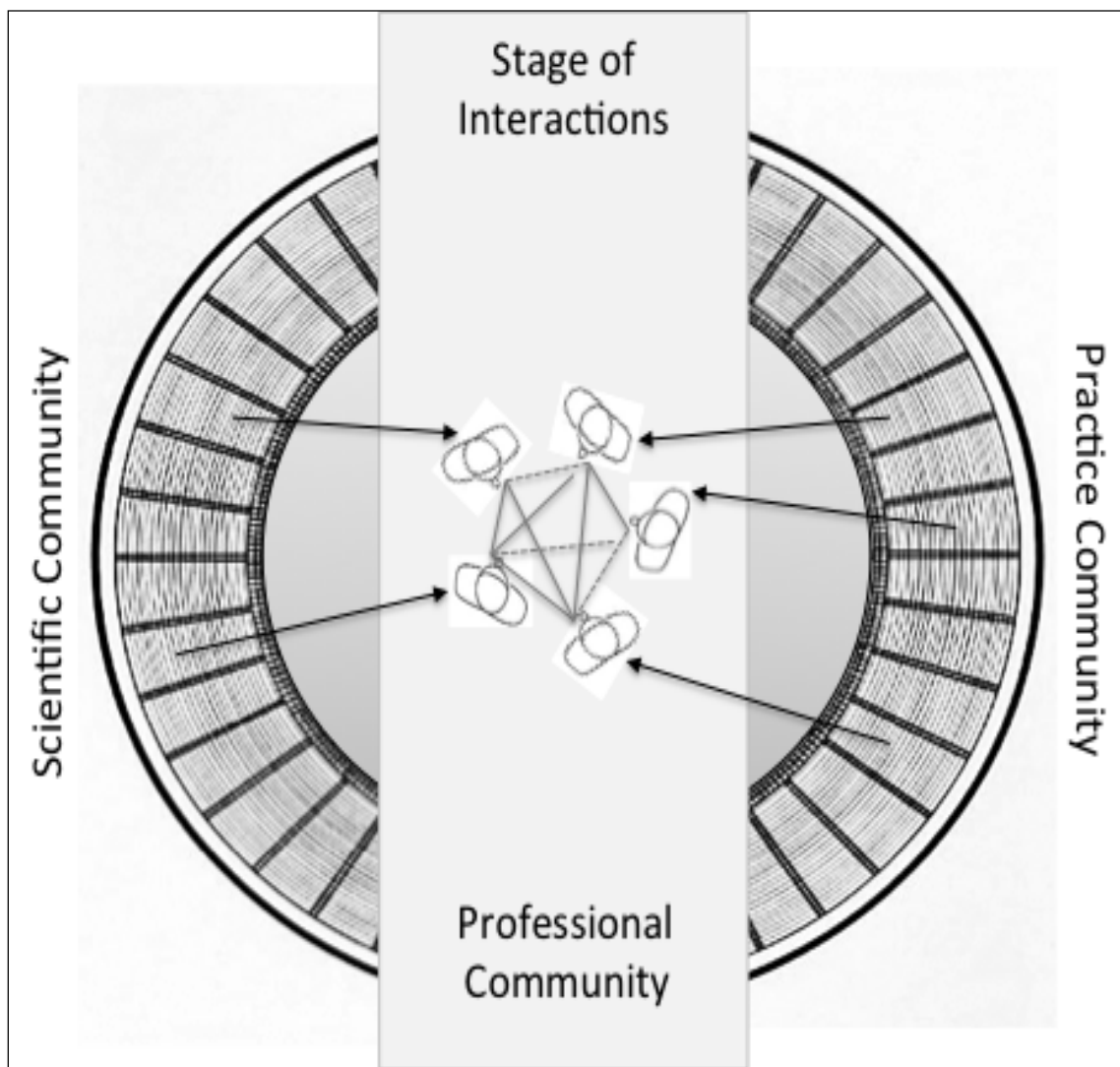


Figure 2. Professionalisation on the "interaction stage". (Source: Authors)

The attempt to capture the development of a professional knowledge base through the metaphor of the interactive stage derives from Dewe's (1996: 714) "tools for analysis which are guided by the theory and sociology of knowledge" according to which "the professional knowledge base is not determined outside-in and is not pre-determined or substantially

conveyable, but can only be reproduced on the basis of empirical observations concerning the action of adult educators (teachers, managers, employees) in the context of knowledge application" (ibid., Dewe, 1996: 714 trans. iO). Insofar, the representatives act in terms of a double hermeneutic, in which both the actors of the scientific system adjust their research activities to the matters of practice, and the actors in the system of practice use scientific knowledge and become a part of the respectively other system (see Schöffter, 2006: 3f.). In addition to that, the metaphor of the "stage" emphasizes the relational perspective which is essential for the research on social networks. In his theory of "embeddedness", the American sociologist Mark Granovetter (1985) refers to how actions are embedded in social relations. To enable professionalisation processes, it is necessary to initiate possibilities to develop relationships while respecting social structures. This aims both at "embeddedness" through personal relationships, and at structural embeddedness. Social relationships provide opportunities or disable purposeful actions of the actors and can thus lead to "perturbations" that represent the triggering dynamics for the generation of professional knowledge. The special quality of this interference thus results from the relations between the actors involved.

Bearing in mind the theoretical background that has been outlined above, it is crucial for professionalisation processes that representatives from both systems are involved in interactions. It is the interweaving of perspectives (see Gieseke, 2010) that illuminates the respective blind spots and allows the development of professional knowledge and the subsequent reflection in the respective systems. The stage thus provides social spaces in which interaction related to professions and disciplines can be realized.

Professional knowledge in this sense has to be understood as an independent and complex kind of knowledge, which can consist of constitutive characteristics such as academic-scientific knowledge, practical expertise, professional routine knowledge, local knowledge and intuitive forms of knowledge concerning the organisation (cf. Nittel, 2002: 31). In particular, social capital is gathered in addition to technical and methodological expertise.

To visualise the processes and effects of such interaction systems, a network-analytic perspective is necessary. Its potential derives from the fact that professional action as described above in networks of social relationships happens and thus shows "what is behind the stage". Behind the obvious visible interaction processes and results a hidden reality of informal network relationships and interactions of the actors involved often develops. Ortfried Schöffter (2001: 3) described this as "latent social networks [with] an expression of life-world processes of institutionalism with long-term structural outcome". They form places where social capital is produced and maintained. New relationship opportunities provided in this way have a positive impact on the professionalisation process. In addition, the social integration in scientific discourses and practice has an impact on the professional self. Furthermore, interactions in working groups carry out not only functions concerning information and the initiation of relationships but also those of mutual relief and assistance (see Juetten, 2002: 204f.). Hence the persons involved not only receive the latest news but

also communicate with colleagues working under similar conditions or confronted with similar problems. The communication among professionals "in the sense of professional exchange" can also contribute to the development of a professional ethos (cf. Peters, 1999). In this respect, we can expect that in these interactive forms of organisation much can be learned and reflected which is needed for professionalism and professional action.

So far, little is known concerning the relationships in which professional Adult Educators act, what range these networks have, what functions the relations within have, which entry strategies with regard to resources are reflected. The actors involved usually have limited knowledge only concerning the character of structures of personal networks. Over time, the persons involved build up their own information and contact networks, but how these networks develop exactly, is beyond the knowledge of the individual. This is because of the latency of the structure of work relations, which are usually only activated when necessary. As contacts are very much part of working routines, they are not perceived as a distinct quality. Affirming one's own "network level" beyond one's own system can contribute to reflected interactive professionalisation.

Empirical studies in the field might not only be interesting for research on co-operation (cf. Juette, 2002), but also for research on professionalisation. Against this background, it would be worth knowing more about the ways of communication of Adult Education professionals in the sense of a professions ethnography approach. How can we find out about the "network level" of the actors involved? In what kind of networks and relationships are they involved? What kind of impact does the structure of these personal professional networks have on professional performance in the field of education and science? Above all, the point is to examine communication behaviour from the perspective of professional performance. Comparative field studies would be useful here. Whose networks and relationships are consolidated and more heterogeneous? Who maintains a larger and more intensive professional network of contacts? What proportion of contacts is online and what proportion offline?

Interactive (Higher Education) educational settings - The "Lifelong Learning Lab Bielefeld"

There are various attempts to actively create professional knowledge by using special instructional settings. The working group Continuing Education and Governance of Lifelong Learning at Bielefeld University focuses on an action-based approach considering perspectives from both science and practice by using innovative forms of networking as part of the recently established "Lifelong Learning Lab Bielefeld" (L3: Lab: Bielefeld).

The L3: Lab: Bielefeld is to be seen as a space of possibilities for co-operation between educational practice and research, in which all participants contribute with their specific expertise to the relevant issues in order to work in a co-operative and subject-related manner on relevant scientific and creative topics. The approach attempts to establish a

circular model of communication that systematically and sustainably supports and fosters the exchange between practitioners, scientists and students.

Interactive Instructional Designs

At the core of the L3: Lab: Bielefeld is an approach of interactive teaching methods, which - in contrast to theoretical educational approaches or classical learning theories – regards the actors involved as interpreting beings and comprehending stakeholders at the centre of instructional designs and analysis (see Kron, 1994: 169ff.). Didactical settings become spaces of opportunities for communicative action, while in the methodological reflection, the communicative dimensions relationship; content, communication and acquisition are taken into account. An interactive perspective in the context of instructional design settings in Higher Education opens up the opportunity for students to gather experiences both in science and practice by referencing and establishing relations between both fields. By working scientifically on practical issues, the complexity of professional practice can be experienced. All parties in this “triangle” benefit from mutual references. Students are given the opportunity to present the results of their practical work and to discuss it with practitioners. Practitioners obtain access to the latest scientific results and theories and can discuss their questions and problems. In turn this may lead to new scientific research projects (see Figure 3). The functionality of the model will be explained further in the following and will be illustrated with specific formats and projects of the L3: Lab: Bielefeld .

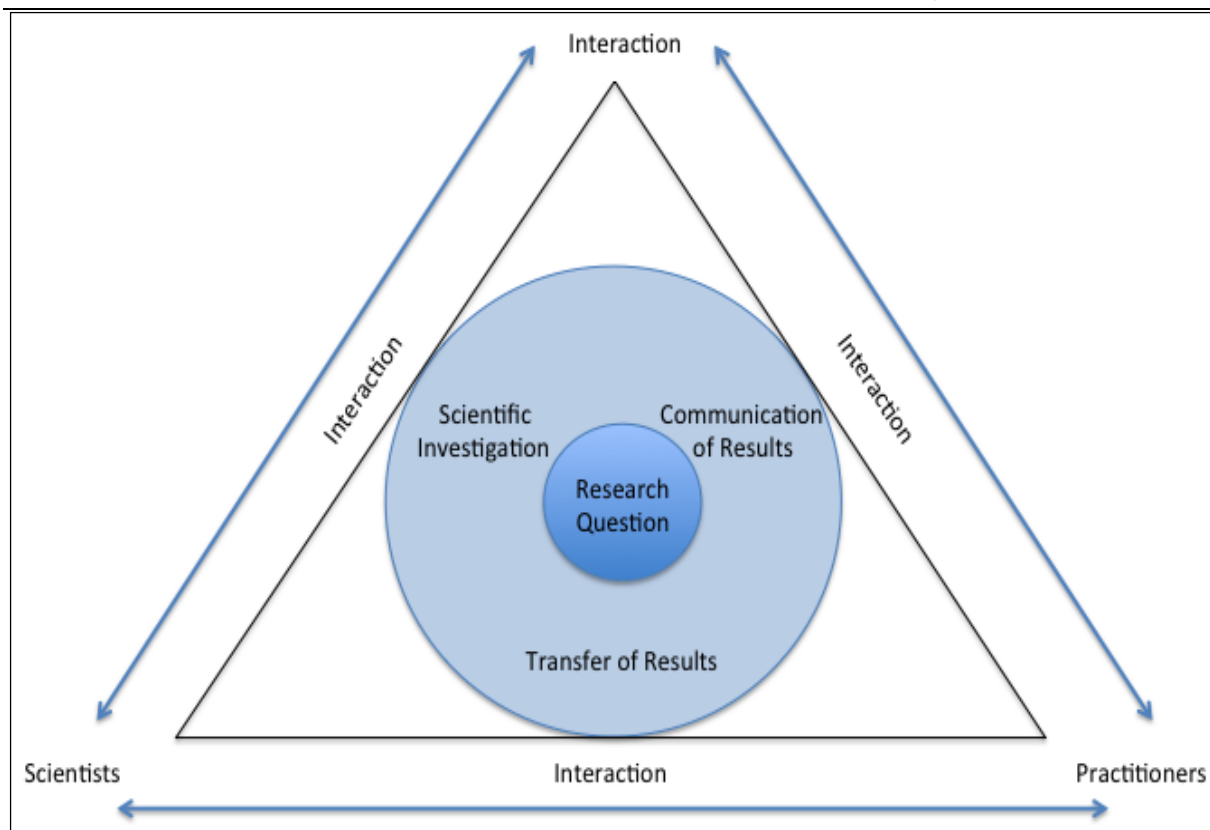


Figure 3. Interactive Instructional Designs. (Source: Authors)

Project studies

The project studies are a study format that allows masters degree students in Education Science to carry out their own research project during their studies. The students work in groups in which they develop their research question and then carry out their study as a group supported by the teacher. The question must be related to a problem of practical relevance. It is left to the students to decide whether they want to work in co-operation with an organization or do independent research. The project, which the students have to finish within a year, is supervised by a teacher. At the end of the study, the students write a project report that will also be handed over to the practitioners involved. The successful implementation of the project studies requires intensive co-operation between science and practice. This ensures that students gain an early, practical insight into their future professional role.

Project "ProfessoR / into-the-job"

The project "ProfessoR - professionalisation of students through regional integration" creates possibilities for communicative exchanges between students, practitioners and academics. It provides direct contact and allows communication with practitioners of various relevant fields contributing to the professionalisation of students. The project consists of workshop discussions and evenings with practice representatives as well as a "practice day" with lectures and workshops for students. The aim of the individual measures

is always to bring students into contact with practice representatives and to allow direct communication. The special value lies in the combination and exchange of information between scientists, professionals and students. This will allow students to deal with interesting questions both from a scientific and practical perspective and to reflect on questions concerning their future profession and professionalism.

Discussion rounds

Discussion rounds create an opportunity for participants to talk about current research on continuing education in a frank atmosphere. After a brief input these rounds leave a lot of room for dialogue and communication between the members of the working group, young researchers and foreign guests. Thus research on Continuing Education can be experienced as "work-in-progress" in the broad field of general, vocational and academic Adult Education.

Creation of systems for professionalisation: from references to relationships

The precarious relationship between professional practice and academia has often been mentioned in literature and theory. Efforts concerning professionalisation in the field have too often not been a joint venture of the various "stakeholders". The relationship varies between a lack of mutual notice and precarious exchange relationships. Wiltrud Gieseke (1989: 18) argues that "anti-scientific attitudes of the Weimar Republic, when Adult Education was rejected by the universities, had an effect lasting until the 1970s."

"One wanted to qualify Adult Educators independent of Higher Education, yet enforce scientific demands on the educational qualifications of the heads of departments. The diploma programmes were not established in consultation with the associations, although there were contacts. (...) Their rejection or very hesitant acceptance of graduates with this degree was a delayed and unconscious revenge that has long proven to be harmful to the professionalism of Adult Education. (...) The representative of the associations did frequent the chairs of Adult Education connected to the degree courses. In the work of the associations, where scientific support was sought, Adult Education professors assumed offices, but their graduates had and still have difficulties to find their place in the institutions. In adult education, the typical interlocking of scientific and practical qualifications belonging to a profession would have had a chance to constitute itself as a unified process, but instead this disappeared in intra-group interpretations which were handled implicitly and unconsciously and informed by history." (Ebd. Gieseke, 1989: 18).

As a consequence, "the development towards a scientifically based professional development (...) was missed at the first attempt" (Gieseke, 1989: 12). The shift to the Bachelors and Masters degree system and the generational change require, but also allow, a new start. Though future developments cannot be foreseen, we may assume that the importance of network and co-operative structures will continue to increase.

If the Bielefeld approach is taken into account in the new conception of curricula and classes, the link between science and practice can be created in advance, thus fostering the link between practical action and scientific reflection skills and helping students develop professional knowledge. Our own studies show that students want the practice perspective to be included, but the disciplinary access to practice remains a challenge for instructional design approaches.

Trust Management

This paper demonstrated the potential resulting from interactive processes of professionalisation within a particular organisational context. University lecturers and professionals from educational practice come together to co-operate. Students are assisted in this self-training approach, both for the sake of high quality academic standards and to review their practical knowledge and skills. The practice system receives the opportunity to innovate. Creating professional systems is often difficult and not possible without preconditions. It is common that members of both systems first have to be convinced of the benefits of dealing with the counterpart. Forming a relationship requires special agreements, systematically maintaining a dialogue helps to build the trust needed.

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