

Professional Regulation

School of Education Theory and Methods Seminar

Wednesday 13 February 2013

1.30pm to 4.00pm

Room 433, St. Andrew's Building

Tea and coffee will be available

Regina Egetenmeyer

*Professor of Lifelong Learning at Johannes Gutenberg-Universität
Mainz, Germany*

Approaches towards Professionalisation in Adult Education:

Interpretivist versus competency approach

The question of professionalisation of adult education in Germany was first raised in the years immediately after the Second World War when the Volkshochschulen (adult education centres) were being reopened and developed. By the 1970s and 1980s a Volkshochschule system was growing, becoming the fourth sector of the German educational system, and the need for qualified adult educators was raised. The first stage in the professionalisation of adult education was the production of self-study materials and weekly courses for practitioners. At the same time, academic programmes at German universities were also being designed to give their young students a fundamental and broad qualification in adult education. In the 1980s, in the Pädagogische Arbeitsstelle des

Volkshochschulverbands (Pedagogical Institute of German Adult Education Association), theoretical and empirical research on the question of professionalization was started. Tietgens and Giesecke (1988) worked on an interpretative approach which they argued should form the core of professionalism in adult education. This was supported by further research in the late 1990s. The core of professionalism is, according to Tietgens (1988, p. 38), a 'situative competence' which means 'the ability to use broad, scientifically deepened and diverse abstract knowledge adequate in concrete situations'. Or contrariwise: 'to acknowledge in just these situations which parts of the knowledge could be relevant.' Giesecke (2010) defines professionalism as 'differentiated handling with research results of the discipline, together with interdisciplinary knowledge for the interpretation of an actor's situations in a specific practical field.' This approach can be supported by the argument that adult educators have to deal with paradoxical and contradictory situations (Dewe, 1988; Nittel, 2000). They have to act professionally in situations where no concrete, applicable professional knowledge is available.

In contrast, there is currently developing a pan-European competence-oriented approach towards professionalism in adult education, as represented by the Key competence study for adult learning professionals (Research voor Beleid 2010). This approach focuses on naming lists of competences for students to acquire. At the same time, several validation instruments for application in the pan-European context (e.g. VALIDPAC) are being developed so that adult educators' competences can be validated one at a time but confined to their own institutional context. The competence approach conflicts with the interdependent, holistic and hermeneutic elements which are central to the German interpretative approach to adult professionalism, which is based on the skills of the individual as distinct from the needs of the institution. The principle behind this is that professionalism in adult education has to encompass the ability to adapt to different learning settings. The presentation will outline the differences between these two approaches and explores the possibility of a bridge between them.

Dewe, B. (1988). *Wissensverwendung in der Fort- und Weiterbildung*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Gieseke, W. (2010). *Professionalisierung in der Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung*. In R. Tippelt & A. von Hippel (Eds.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (pp. 385-403). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Nittel, D. (2000). *Von der Mission zur Profession*. Bielefeld: Bertelsmann.
Research voor Beleid (2010, 15 January). *Key competences for adult learning professionals. Contribution to the development of a reference framework of key competences for adult learning professionals. Final report*. Accessed May 26, 2010, from

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/moreinformation/doc/2010/keycomp.pdf>

Tietgens, H. (1988). *Professionalität für die Erwachsenenbildung*. In W. Gieseke (Ed.), *Professionalität und Professionalisierung* (pp. 37-41). Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt.

*Regina Egetenmeyer is Professor for Lifelong Learning at the Institute for Educational Sciences, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (Juniorprofessur). Previously she was research fellow at the University of Duisburg-Essen and the German Institute for Adult Education/Bonn. Regina has published several papers in German and international journals and editorial books which focuses on adult education. Her recent publications include: Egetenmeyer, R.; Schüßler, I. (Eds.) (2012): *Akademische Professionalisierung in der Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung. (Academic Professionalisation in Adult and Continuing Education)* Hohengehren; Egetenmeyer, R.; Nuissl, E. (Eds.) (2010): *Teachers and Trainers in Adult and Lifelong Learning. Asian and European Perspectives*. Frankfurt/Main. Regina's current research interests include professionalisation in adult education, international-comparative adult education, and informal learning.*

Mark Murphy

Reader in Education, School of Education, University of Glasgow

The politics of regulation: Exploring bureaucracy and its consequences for public sector professions

The new bureaucracy of accountability has altered the landscape of public services since its development in the last several decades. In particular, the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms – audit, inspection, performance indicators, evaluation – has opened up the public sector to ever greater scrutiny. As a tool of political regulation, however, they are not without their critics, accused of among other things, undermining professional autonomy, instrumentalising public services and trivialising democracy. While these criticisms are concerning, from a purely functional point of view the issue is whether or not accountability mechanisms are an effective form of regulation. Previous studies of accountability indicate its tendency to deliver unintended consequences, consequences that have implications for the act of accountability itself. Less established are the reasons why these unintended consequences occur in the first place: why are phenomena such as risk avoidance, impression management and what some have termed the ‘accountability trap’ so prevalent in a public sector supposedly geared towards the efficient delivery of high quality public services?

Based on findings from recent research with public sector professionals in England, this paper argues that at least part of the answer to this question lies in the nature of social regulation itself. The evidence suggests that increased political regulation of teachers, nurses, social workers, among others, has unwittingly highlighted the existence/magnified the importance of, other forms of regulation that tend to get sidelined or forgotten entirely when it comes to talk of regulatory mechanisms – temporal, legal and normative regulation. Exploring the connection between these forms of regulation is important, as they have the effect, in this study at least, of mediating the effect of political regulation on the working lives of public sector professionals. The paper explores this world of

regulation and public sector professions via a combination of ideas adopted from neo-Weberian sociology and research in the field of public administration, in particular research informed by the work of Michael Lipsky and his theory of street-level bureaucracy. For more detailed background on the ideas presented in this paper, please go to www.socialtheoryapplied.com – I will post up some position papers from the 7th February onwards.

Mark Murphy is Reader in Education, School of Education, University of Glasgow. He previously taught at King's College London, University of Chester and the University of Stirling. He gained his Doctorate in Education from Northern Illinois University, his dissertation focusing on European Union education policy. Mark has published widely, with numerous articles in journals such as the *Journal of Education Policy*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *International Journal of Lifelong Education* and the *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. His most recent books include *Habermas, critical theory and education* (co-edited with Ted Fleming) (Routledge, 2010) and *Social theory and education research* (4 volumes) (Sage, 2013). Mark's current research interests include educational sociology, critical theory, accountability in higher education, and public sector reform.