

POLICIES & WORK MARKET DEMANDS – CHALLENGES AND POTENTIALITIES FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

VOICES FROM RESEARCH



International Conference & Research Workshop
Åland, May 23-24, 2012

*Research Group VETYL (Vocational Education &
Training/Yrkeskunnande och Lärande)*

PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, May 23

07.00	Check-in at Viking Line terminal/Stockholm (Stadsgårdskajen) Vessel to Mariehamn, Åland islands Obs! You are expected to be at Viking line Terminal latest 07.00!
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On-board program

08:00- 08:15	Registration
08.15- 08:40	Opening Welcoming by Professor Lázaro Moreno Herrera, Research Leader for VET/YL (Vocational Education and Training/Yrkeskunande och lärande) Information on practicalities by Associate Professor Viveca Lindberg
08:40- 10:10	Key note speech by Professor Michael Gessler, University of Bremen (30min discussion included) <i>An evidence-based didactic approach for the development of problem-solving skills in VET: Connecting “Project-based Learning” with “Project Management”</i>
10:00- 10:30	Coffee break
10:30- 12:00	Paper session 1 Anna Hagen Tonder: <i>Developing vocational identity through boundary-crossing: the case of the In-depth study project in Norwegian VET</i> Stephanie Allais: <i>National qualifications Framework: learning from experiments in the developing world</i> Franz Kaiser: <i>Core qualifications and identity in business and administration occupations in Germany</i> Discussant: Viveca Lindberg Chair: Eva Eliasson
12:00- 13:00	Lunch
14:00	Arrival to Mariehamn. Walk to Hotel Park Alandia (approx. 10 min. walk)

Åland Academy of Applied Sciences

14:00- 15:00	Registration at hotel Alandia. Time for a short walk in the hotel surroundings.
15:00- 16:30	Paper session 2 Viveca Lindberg: <i>Assesment in nordic vocational education and training - a mapping of research</i> Jan Pettersson: <i>Assessment examples for vocational subjects</i> Ingrid Berglund: ... Discussant: Christian Helms Jørgensen Chair: Petros Gouglakis
16.30- 17:00	Coffee break
17:00- 18:30	Paper session 3 Kaja Reegård, Torgeir Nyen and Anna Hagen: <i>The relevance of VET for health work and child care in Norwegian municipalities</i> Eva Eliasson: <i>Health Care – Upper Secondary School Teachers' conceptions of subject and skills</i> Katarina Lagercrantz All: <i>To Learn the Good Care. Adult Education in Health and Social Care</i> Discussant: Ulf Olsson Chair: Maud Baumgarten
19:00-	Dinner and social gathering at Park Alandia Restaurant & Bar

THURSDAY, May 24

Åland Academy of Applied Sciences

08:30- 10:00	Keynote speech by ----- (30min discussion included)	
10:00- 10:30	Coffee break	
10:30- 12:00	Paper session 4 (Parallel session)	
	Group A Christian Helms Jørgensen: <i>Hybrid qualifications: challenging the separation of vocational and general education</i> Stephanie Allais: <i>National qualifications Framework: a communication tool between labour markets and educational institutions?</i> Discussant: Michael Gessler Chair: Katarina Sipos	Group B Ulf Olsson : <i>On community as a govermental technology the example of teacher education</i> Petros Gougoulakis: <i>The Delphi technique as an instrument for researching VET educators' competencies: How should we tink?</i> Lázaro Moreno Herrera: <i>A didactics for Vocational Education and Training? – Critical exploration of the relation between general and subject</i> Discussant: Viveca Lindberg Chair: Maud Baumgarten
12:00- 13:00	Lunch	
13:00- 14:30	Paper session 5 Maud Baumgarten and Katarina Sipos Etsuo Yokoyama Lisbeth Lindberg: <i>Questions up to this date in a newly released anthology</i> Discussant: Petros Gougoulakis Chair: Katarina Lagercrantz All	
14:30- 15:00	Where to go from here? Open discussion and further cooperation Chair: Lázaro Moreno Herrera Conclusions	

Departure

16:00	Departure from Mariehamn to Stockholm (Kapellskär harbor north of the city) with Viking line vessel
18:30	Arrival to Kapellskär harbor (linked Bus trip to Stockholm)

KEYNOTES

Wednesday 23, 08:40-10:10. Viking Line

Professor Michael Gessler, University of Bremen: *An evidence-based didactic approach for the development of problem-solving skills in VET: Connecting “Project-based Learning” with “Project Management”*

Thursday 23, 15:00-16:30. Åland Academy of Applied Sciences

Associate Professor Christian Helms Jørgensen, Roskilde University:

ABSTRACTS

PAPER SESSION 1

Wednesday May 23, 10:30-12:00, Viking Line

DEVELOPING VOCATIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH BOUNDARY-CROSSING THE CASE OF THE IN-DEPTH STUDY PROJECT IN NORWEGIAN VET

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Abstract:

A number of political reforms have been implemented in order to improve completion rates in upper secondary education in general, and in vocational education and training in particular. In many cases, the reform initiatives are linked to policies of decentralization, flexibilization and individualization. The aim is to increase the scope for individual choice and to remove institutional barriers to individual pathways from both education and work (Jørgensen 2009). Often, the political initiatives seem to be based upon a perception of educational choices as being rational and goal-oriented, thereby failing to recognize the close relationship between learning and identity. However, as pointed out by Colley et al (2003), learning cannot only be understood as the acquisition of technical skills and knowledge, but should also be seen as a process of becoming. In this perspective, it is important to understand how vocational identities are formed.

In Norway, the In-depth Study Project (IdSP) was introduced as a new subject in all vocational programmes with the implementation of the so-called Knowledge Promotion Reform in 2006. An important aim was to provide VET students with personal experience in the use of work methods and tasks within relevant trades at an early stage in their training. The IdSP is a hybrid subject, cutting across the institutional division of school and work, placing the students in a unique position to act as brokers or mediators (Tuomi-Gröhn, Engeström and Young 2003) between the school and the workplace.

In this paper, we investigate the biographical meaning that vocations have for the VET students and how meaning and vocational identities are formed and transformed as students move between school based training and practical work experience within the framework of the IdSP.

The paper is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collected as part of an evaluation project carried out in 2007-2012 (Dæhlen, Hagen & Hertzberg 2008; Dæhlen & Hagen 2010; Nyen & Tønder 2012).

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS: LEARNING FROM EXPERIMENTS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Dr Stephanie Allais

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Abstract

As many countries around the world start to develop NQFs, it is important to look to the experiences of those countries with longer experience with NQFs. This includes two sets of countries: a small set of wealthy English-speaking countries in which NQFs or proto-NQFs initially developed, and countries in the developing world, which developed NQFs through 'technical assistance', international agencies, donor support, and policy borrowing in developing countries. This paper draws briefly on the former group, but focuses on the latter, which is less well documented in research.

NQFs in developing countries have formed part of a package of reforms mainly focused on TVET, which have also included giving more power to employers, often through competence-based qualifications and/or qualifications frameworks; quality assurance systems; outcomes-based and 'institutionally-neutral' funding; and managed autonomy for public providers. These are all mechanisms to create and support regulated markets in TVET, in the hope that this will enable individuals to get skills which can lead to jobs or work. NQFs in these countries have closely followed the English and Australian models. I draw on experiences in Botswana, Chile, Mauritius, South Africa, and Mexico, which, I argue, demonstrate the weakness of this approach.

In brief, I argue that experiences in these countries demonstrate that an NQF can damage educational provision, by relying on a market of provision emerging, instead of ensuring that the state supports and builds education institutions. NQFs may drive energy and resources away from institutions and into the fruitless project of defining disembedded outcomes, and are likely to force institutions into unhealthy and unnecessary competitive relationships, and to undermine their work by forcing them to work to objectives that are external and artificial to them. NQFs represent a significant opportunity cost, both in terms of policy development, and in terms of the enormous bureaucratic burdens they impose on underfunded, overworked educational institutions. Strong education systems may be able to function well despite such systems, and even make it appear as if they are complying to them. It is the poor countries, and weaker parts of education systems, where damage can be done, but it is also in these countries where the policy mechanism can be evaluated more clearly.

CORE QUALIFICATIONS AND IDENTITY IN BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION
OCCUPATIONS IN GERMANY. FINDINGS OF ACTUAL ANALYSIS IN A RESEARCH
PROJECT OVER ALL *RECOGNIZED TRAINING OCCUPATIONS IN THAT FIELD*

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Abstract:

In the labor market we have a rapid development in the sector of commercial service. Therefore, the VET system has to change its orientation from a crafts and industrial to a more trading and commercial oriented structure. This change happened in Germany over the last decades. In the meantime 60% of apprenticeships are in business and service occupations and 12 new training occupations for new services were developed within the last 15 years.

BIBB started a research project in order to have a detailed look at these developments and investigate what kind of qualifications the commercial service occupations need. In addition we looked at the possibility to cluster some of the occupations in groups. A computer supported content analysis was carried out. 35.000 coded sentences had to be sorted according to 80 main topics. Dominant qualifications were identified and similarities and the differences between occupations. At the same time a historical study was carried out in order to understand the development from the medieval merchant and his assistants to clerks and staffer after the industrial revolution and their specific identity at work. Finally we analyzed the literature about how commercial work has changed over the last hundred years because of changes in work organization and the development of technology.

The paper will pull together the main findings and comment on the research methods of the project. Main topics are the specific work experience and qualifications in commercial service occupations, generic skills (key skills) which were developed in VET irrespective of the occupation that was trained and what in our opinion will be the main subjects that had to be trained to face the challenges as employee at the labour market and as part of the society organizing your private life in the next decades.

Further comments can be made by the author on the relevance of the national framework in Germany for VET in the discussions during the conference.

PAPER SESSION 2

Wednesday May 23, 15:00-16:30, Viking Line, Åland Academy of Applied Sciences

HYBRID QUALIFICATIONS: CHALLENGING THE SEPARATION OF VOCATIONAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION.

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Abstract

In many countries there is a growing political interest in modernising vocational education, to reinvent new forms of apprenticeship and vocationalize general education. The intention behind these policies is to provide alternative educational opportunities for students who drop out of general education and to create closer links between general education and the labour market and to ease the transition of students into working life. But at the same time vocational education is suffering from problems of falling esteem in comparison with general education and an 'academic drift' of young people. This is a common problem in the Scandinavian countries even though they historically have had divergent trajectories and have organised vocational and general education at higher secondary level in very different ways. In Sweden the integrated 'Gymnasieskolan' is moving toward a separation of vocational and general education with the introduction of a new apprenticeship programme separate from the general track in 2011. This programme does not qualify for access to higher education, but only to the skilled labour market. Denmark has historically had a strong division between the general and the vocational tracks, but has in 2011 a new integrated programme was introduced in the Danish dual system (the *eux* programme). This programme combines access to higher education with access to skilled employment. The divergent initiatives in these two countries can be seen as an indication of the problematical relations between vocational and general education.

The paper will explore the opportunities for hybrid qualifications based on a study of the new hybrid Danish programme, the *eux*, which seeks to integrate general and vocational education. The study has revealed a number of problems and dilemmas for education policy and teaching. These dilemmas relate to the didactical level as well as to the system level. The challenge of integrating vocational and general education are also explored by making a comparison of the ways this has been handled in the Scandinavian countries, and in addition some suggestions are made of how to handle this challenge.

Reference to reports on hybrid qualifications: <http://hq-ill.eu/>

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS: A COMMUNICATION TOOL BETWEEN LABOUR MARKETS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS?

Dr Stephanie Allais

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Abstract

National Qualifications Frameworks are an increasingly popular policy internationally. One of their key aims is to bridge the gap between education institutions and labour markets, and provide greater transparency for employers. In many countries the success of qualifications frameworks is premised on the involvement of employers, but at the same time qualifications frameworks are seen as a mechanism to facilitate greater employer involvement in specifying appropriate competencies for educational qualifications. Many countries are turning to this approach, in some instances to improve on previous competency-based vocational education systems, and in others to reform their entire education and training systems.

Although qualifications frameworks are being implemented in many countries, and much is expected of them, there is very little empirical research into them. This study, commissioned by the International Labour Organization in 2009, examined the implementation and impact of National Qualifications Frameworks in 16 countries around the world. It is the first study to take a critical comparative look at attempts to implement qualifications frameworks internationally, and examine the results.

The study found very limited positive evidence in favour of national qualifications frameworks. While in many cases this could have been because of the early stage of development of the framework, it also found considerable evidence of many difficulties. Among these, a key one was employer involvement: in a nutshell, in nearly all cases employers did not participate in structures designed for them to lead, despite the desire of policy makers for employer leadership. In other instances, it seemed that emphasis in improving assessment mechanisms could undermine employer organizations with a history of involvement in assessment and certification. Further, the idea of prescribing outcomes or competences to educational institutions met with various problems.

The study suggested that a sectoral focus which did not have to operate within a one-size-fits-all framework, and which emphasized employer-education institution relationships as well as research into areas of future growth may be more effective. It also emphasized the need for building and sustaining strong educational institutions with the capacity for research and responsiveness.

PAPER SESSION 3

Wednesday May 23, 17:00-18:30, Viking Line, Åland Academy of Applied Sciences

HEALTH CARE – UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS’ CONCEPTIONS OF SUBJECT AND SKILLS

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Abstract

In accordance with the reform GY 11 (Prop. 2008/09), students attending the Health Care Programme in Sweden are supposed to be capable of work in both the health care and social service sector directly after the education. This leads to increasing demands on health care teachers and is one reason to our interest for this study. The overall aim is to examine how health care teachers talk about the health care subject. Our questions are: What choices are made when education are planned and performed and what aspects do the teachers take into consideration? How do teachers talk about the relation between the vocational knowledge developing during education and the requirements of work places? How is the health care worker described in the speech of the teachers? How is the speech related to power relations as gender, ethnicity and class?

Theoretically, our assumption is that knowledge develops in a social and cultural context. Answers to questions about what is worth knowing and how knowledge may best be transmitted, reflect a historically developed culture. The concept *knowledge culture* is an analytical tool we intend to use to consider if there is a specific culture, or perhaps several cultures. Our influence also comes from Pierre Bourdieu and his concept *habitus*, in our case *vocational habitus*. The concept of vocational *habitus* is used to illuminate the “good” health and care worker, as she/he is represented by the teachers. Qualitative interviews with health care teachers are used as a method. The interviews are conducted from February to May in 2012. The criterion for selection of informants is diversity in professional background, age, sex, years in profession and school forms as our intention is to get a broad view of perceptions. Hopefully, there are some tendencies in the result that we can present at the conference but most of all we want to discuss the framing and evaluation of the study.

THE RELEVANCE OF VET FOR HEALTH WORK AND CHILD CARE IN NORWEGIAN MUNICIPALITIES

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Abstract:

In this paper we examine Norwegian municipalities' perceived relevance of two vocational education and training (VET) programmes: Health work and Child care and youth work. These programmes qualify for work in sectors where needs for skilled labour are anticipated to be high. Health workers are typically employed by municipal nursing homes and home care services, whereas the child care and youth programme qualify for work in kindergartens, schools and school recreation schemes. The main research question is: What is the municipal sector's perceived relevance of VET for health work and child care?

Based on both survey data and qualitative interviews, we find that managers in the municipal sector perceive the trades as highly relevant, providing skills that meet present and future needs. However, these perceptions are not reflected in municipal recruitment practices.

Apparently, there is a disparity between perceived relevance of vocational skills on the one hand, and limited employment opportunities on the other. Furthermore, findings from the national Apprentice Survey 2010-2011 show that apprentices in these two programmes are more inclined to undertake higher education compared to apprentices in other trades.

Considering the tradition of VET being relatively short in the municipal sector compared to other parts of working life, VET does not appear to be established as the normal entrance route into this part of the labour market. An interesting question for further research is whether the educational and vocational structure in this field is sufficiently attractive to secure the needed number of new recruits.

The findings are based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. First, a survey based on telephone interviews was conducted among 50 municipal health and care service managers and 50 municipal child care and youth service managers. Second, to learn more about the informants' motivations and experiences, nine qualitative interviews were conducted with local unit managers in nursing homes, home care services, kindergartens, schools and day care facilities for school children in two municipalities in Norway. A third data source is the Apprentice Survey 2010-2011, a web survey conducted under the auspices of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.

TO LEARN THE GOOD CARE. ADULT EDUCATION IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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Abstract

The overall purpose of my PhD project in progress is to investigate adult students' experiences of their education in health and social care in upper secondary school, with questions related to learning, participation and identity. My questions are raised due to changes of the health and social care sector and in education that has occurred over the last decades. There are demands of improved efficiency together with more complicated job tasks in health and social care. In education for adults distance education is becoming more and more common and a flexible form of learning. I see it is important to get deeper insight in what way this changes will affect the student's experiences of their education.

The theoretical framework in the study has a phenomenological-hermeneutic approach influenced by the German philosophers Hans George Gadamer, and the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. Experience- based phenomenology, as well as the hermeneutic orientations are used in this study to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of the student's experiences on education related to my questions.

My empirical material consists of deep interviews by means of open structured interviews with fifteen students from different schools. The findings suggested that teachers are important for the student's learning process in school, while the workplace supervisor is important for them in their practice. On one hand the students do not recognise education as important for their skill in practice, but on the other hand the student expresses the importance of education. Even if they do not have any use for the knowledge they receive in school in their everyday practice at work, it can prove to be useful in their everyday lives. It is possible that education affect their identity.

My intention with the study is to gain a deeper and better understanding of the students' experiences and thereby give a contribution for what is important in the process of learning for adult student as a heterogeneous group of students at vocational education in health and social care.

Keywords: adult student, education in health and social care in upper secondary school, phenomenological-hermeneutic, learning, identity

PAPER SESSION 4: Parallel sessions

Thursday May 24, 10:30-12:00, Åland Academy of Applied Sciences

Session A

ASSESSMENT IN NORDIC VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING – A MAPPING OF RESEARCH

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Abstract

This paper takes it's point of departure in a review of Swedish research on assessment in education, limited to compulsory school and upper secondary (16+) education (Forsberg & Lindberg 2010). The national Swedish review was complemented with a review of articles in Scandinavian and International peer reviewed journals. An aspect of the results was that little attention has been paid to assessment in vocational education and training. The issue for this paper is to complement this review with specific focus on VET in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

With a growing interest in the outcomes of vocational education, in terms of competences, key-qualifications and general qualifications, questions like: what is assessed? How is the assessment done? What is used as point of reference for the assessment? and who is responsible for the assessment? become important. Specifically, in VET, the two latter questions are of interest, as representatives for working life as well as for education may be involved. For this review, not only internationally published journals but also nationally published articles with peer review are considered, as well as studies initiated or supported by national authorities for education. The results presented here are preliminar.

ASSESSMENT EXAMPLES FOR VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS

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Abstract:

To observe and evaluate student's knowledge is a key task for teachers. Assessments are part of the learning process but also form the basis for grading. PRIM-gruppen, a research group for assessment of knowledge and competence at Stockholm University, has on The National Agency for Education mission worked to develop an assessment support in vocational subjects. The purpose of the assessment support is to support upper secondary school assessment work in vocational subjects and to inspire collegial conversation. One aim is also to implement the policy of GY2011, the new school reform, with concrete examples.

The material is available at the time of this abstract published on the website for The National Agency for Education. I've been in a part of the development of these assessment examples, and have during this project been responsible for the examples aimed for *The Building and Construction Programme (BA)*, *The Child and Recreation Programme (BF)*, *The Handicraft Programme (HV)*, *The Industrial Technology Programme (IN)* and *HVAC and Property Maintenance Programme (VF)*. Certain aspects of the material and the films based on these examples are here to be described.

In order to support equality in the assessment and grading, ideas on how the assessment should be done need to be included already at the teacher's planning of education and their teaching. Teachers should ensure that the repository of training and teaching allow students to have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and skills at all levels from the descriptions of the knowledge requirements.

Scoring rubrics that appear in the published assessment examples can help the teacher to see the connection between points in the aim of the subject and knowledge requirements and facilitate the observations and documentation.

To develop the student's view of what the different grades of knowledge represents an important pedagogical / didactic task for the teacher. This creates opportunities for feedback in order to support students learning. Here it is not enough to hand out curriculums with knowledge requirements. Examples that show what value the words might mean in their various contexts provide clarity. The published assessment examples tries in a similar way to create a communication between professional teachers in order to strengthen the consistency of how different performances can be evaluated.

In connection with job training communication with supervisor about student knowledge is needed. In the film, from BF shows an example of three-way conversation where both supervisor, teacher and the student participate. The film, from the BA shows examples of conversation between two teachers about the student's demonstrated knowledge.

Session B

THE DELPHI TECHNIQUE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR RESEARCHING VET EDUCATORS' COMPETENCIES: *HOW SHOULD WE THINK?*

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine the advantages and constraints of the Delphi survey technique as a research method in general and an instrument of researching VET in particular. The Delphi methodology is outlined and reflected a) from a theoretical point of view, b) through the experience gained from the recently completed EU project Qf2Teach and c) in relation to a research design intended to explore the core competencies, needed by VET educators to face the challenges from a fast transforming labour market. The main aim of the project Qf2Teach was to determine the core competencies needed by ACE (Adult Continuing Education) Learning Facilitators today and in the future by conducting a Delphi study based on the assessments and opinions of a selected expert-panel. A second aim of the project was to develop a research-based concept for a transnational qualification framework for ACE Learning Facilitators, linked to the existing overarching European Qualification Framework (EQF), in an effort to determine visible and comparable qualification levels of adult professionals throughout Europe.

ON COMMUNITY AS A GOVERNMENTAL TECHNOLOGY – THE EXAMPLE OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Ulf Olsson, Stockholm University, Sweden
Kenneth Petersson, Linkoping University, Sweden
John B. Krejsler, Aarhus University, Denmark

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reinstatement of community as a historical practice and governmental technology in contemporary political discourses of European Union (EU), and more specifically in the context of higher education including the education and training of teachers in the Nordic countries. Our focus is not educational policy as a base for ways of thinking about and organising education in Europe, but as a base for ways of thinking about and constructing Europe as a community (Novoa, 2004; Larner & Walters, 2004). To do this we use a genealogical method inspired by Michael Foucault, exploring the system of reasoning that orders contemporary political discourses and policies in the early 19th and the turn of the 21st Century (Foucault, 2004). We are discussing and reflecting the construction of community as a political technology in two different historical discourses, both of which deal with social integration; the discourse of Philanthropy in early 19th century Europe on the one hand, and the contemporary discourse on European Higher Education and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), on the other. The question is in what way and under what circumstances the community as a political technology is reproduced and operate from one time in history to another.

We explore the differences and similarities between the two discourses in terms of relationships between governance, knowledge, and political reasoning. The analysis of the relationships between community, future, hope, fear and education becomes crucial. In the 19th century the community as a political technology was operating in a context of industrialisation of societies. It dealt with fears about disintegration of social structures and problems of social and political unrest, poverty and lack of morality (Popkewitz, 2008). Ultimately, the fear was of a societal development that threatened a religious social order ordained by God. In contemporary European narrative, community as political technology operates in a context of global competition. The fear is of Europe as a community losing its economic position in the global arena. However, the discourses of the communities constructed at the different periods, operate in the context of fears and hopes for the future, and education becomes the key solution for development of the two versions of Europe as sustainable and inclusive societies.

Contemporary documents selected concerning educational policy, the Bologna Process and Life Long Learning are White Papers, scripts and memos from the European Commission, the European University Association and the Nordic countries. For analysis of the narrative of early 19th century philanthropy we selected documents produced by influential philanthropists from the era.

A DIDACTICS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING? – CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN GENERAL AND SUBJECT DIDACTICS

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Abstract

Earlier studies like the one by Klaus Hoffmann (c.f. 1996, p.95) indicates that the literature on didactic models offers “a confused profusion of planning strategies, and especially the beginning teachers are faced with a considerable classroom dilemma”. Moreover Hoffmann argues that “there is hardly any sufficiently well-founded theory of teaching on the basis of which specific and individual instructional models of practice and action could be substantiated, transferred and integrated”. This claim, with additional arguments, is to be found in subsequent research on didactic particularly in what can be called the German and Nordic tradition (e.g. Kansanen 2009, Meyer, 2010, Uljens 1997). Also of particularly interesting in this context is the proposal of the so called “design for learning” by Staffan Selander (e.g. 2008) which might bridge the more traditional notion of didactics in the Germanic and Nordic context and the curriculum theory Anglo-Saxon tradition. In the subject/area of vocational education and training (VET) participants involved in the learning process are systematically challenged by a complex and multidimensional variation in context with demands for innovative approach to didactics.

The paper acknowledges that depending on perspective and even language the concept didactics is defined in different ways. The debate about conceptualization, particularly concerning the equivalence in English of what in Germanic and Latin languages is termed ‘didactics’, is well documented in the research literature (e.g. Wetsbury, Hoppmann & Riquarts, 2000). The paper claims that beyond transcending the language discussion there is indeed a need, particularly relevant for VET, to develop a close linkage between what some authors (e.g. Wenerstam & Hansen, 2006) consider “an empirically based” side of didactics associated to empirical findings and the “non-empirical” associated theoretical constructs for understanding the teaching-learning process.

The paper intends to critically revisits a number of influential didactical works both from German, Nordic and Anglo-Saxon contexts in search to contribute to the development of didactics for specific intricate subject of vocational education and training. The paper does not intend to propose alternative solutions but suggest lines of development, encourage discussions and the further research that is required.

As for methodology & methods the study uses meta-research, in other words, using text analysis as specific method it looks into research done on didactics included both theoretical explorations and empirical studies.

Exploratory in character this study tries to identify potential paths for development of research on didactics in the complex area of vocational education and training.

QUESTIONS UP TO THIS DATE IN A NEWLY RELEASED ANTHOLOGY

Lisbeth Lindberg
Gothenburg University

Abstract

In Sweden there is a new teacher education reform since 2011 (SFS 2010:541) with a vocational teacher education, 90 hp. In the official document Prop. 2009/10:89 it says that: "In order to provide for necessary knowledge it is of utmost importance that the vocational educational perspective is present throughout the program".

An anthology has been processed from an initiative by researchers who have cooperated in vocational teacher education and research in vocational training.

The chapters in the book *Lärande i yrkesprogram och introduktionsprogram* are based on empirical studies around different aspects of learning and teaching in vocational programs and individual programs/introductory programs. In short the introductory chapter will be used as a base for this presentation.

The aim is to present this contribution and to invite you to a discussion about more published texts for vocational teacher students in order to read pedagogical texts from a vocational education perspective with direction towards their future