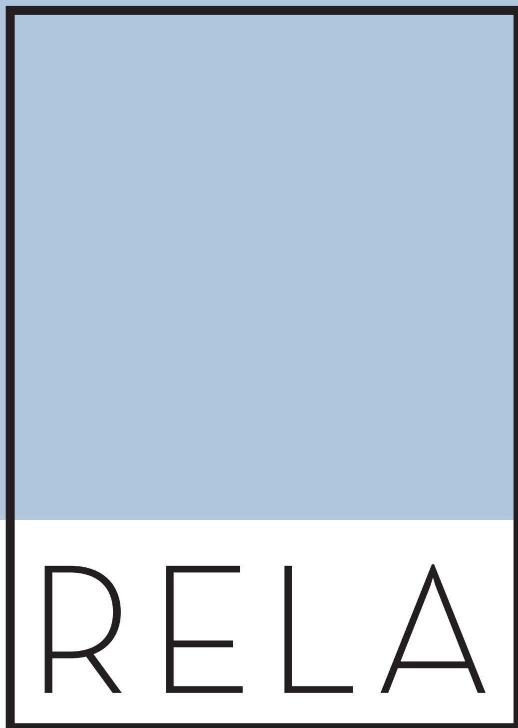
OPEN ISSUE



European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults

2015, Vol. 6, No.1

RELA

European Journal for Research
on the Education and Learning of Adults

Volume 6, No. 1, April 2015

Linköping University Electronic Press
ISSN 2000-7426
www.rela.ep.liu.se

Editorial board

Editors/Editorial group

Professor Andreas Fejes, Linköping University, Sweden, andreas.fejes@liu.se

Dr. António Fragoso, University of Algarve, Portugal

Professor Wolfgang Jütte, University of Bielefeld, Germany

Professor Ewa Kurantowicz, University of Lower Silesia, Poland

Dr. Barbara Merrill, University of Warwick, England

Professor Henning Salling Olesen, Roskilde University, Denmark

Professor Danny Wildemeersch, Leuven University, Belgium

Editorial assistants

Daphne Arbouz, Linköping University, Sweden, daphne.arbouz@liu.se

Lina Rahm, Linköping University, Sweden, lina.rahm@liu.se

Maria Leon, Leuven University, Belgium

Vibeke Lihn, Roskilde University, Denmark

Claudia Lobe, University of Bielefeld, Germany

Ewa Rozkosz, University of Lower Silesia, Poland

Editorial advisory board

Aureliana Alberici, Università Roma Tre, Italy
Jean-Michel Baduouin, University of Geneva, Switzerland
Michal Bron, Södertörn Univeirsty, Sweden
Stephen Brookfield, University of St Thomas, USA
Jim Crowther, University of Edinburgh, Scotland
Bettina Dausien, University of Vienna, Austria
Rob Evans, University of Magdeburg, Germany
Karin Filander, University of Tampere, Finland
Maria Gravani, The Open univeristy, Cyprus
Paula Guimarães, University of Minho, Portugal
Jian Huang, East china Normal University, China
Sabina Jelenc Krasovec, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Larissa Jõgi, Tallinn Univeristy, Estonia
Francoise Laot, Université Paris Descartes, France
Jaap van Lakerveld, Leiden University, The Netherlands
Emilio Lucio-Villegas, University of Seville, Spain
Peter Mayo, Univeristy of Malta, Malta
Tom Nesbit, Simon Fraser University, Canada
Katarina Popovic, University of Belgrade, Serbia
Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha, Braunschweig technical university, Germany
Käthe Schneider, University of Jena, Germany
Emmanuel Soare, University of Pitesti, Romania
Nicky Solomon, University of Technology Sydney, Australia
Maura Striano, Università degli studi di Napoli "Federico II", Italy
Rosa Maria Torres, Universidade Pedagogica Nacional, Mexico
Özlem Ünlühisarcikli, Bogaziçi University, Turkey
Shirley Walthers, University of Western Cape, South Africa
Silke Weber, Universidad Federal de Pernambuco, Brasil
Byung Jun, Yi, Pusan National University, South Korea
Georgios Zarifis, Aristotle University, Greece
Vaiva Zuzeviciute, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults – RELA

VOLUME 6 NUMBER 1 APRIL 2015

Contents

7 Editorial: Open issue.
Andreas Fejes and António Fragoso

Open Papers

9 Inclusion and exclusion factors in adult education of youth with a low educational level in Spain
Francesca Salva-Mut, Elena Quintana-Murci and Danielle Desmarais

25 The role of continuing training motivation for work ability and the desire to work ability and the desire to work past retirement age
Paula Thieme, Michael Brusch and Victoria Büsch

39 The self-perception of adult educators in Eastern Europe in the post-Soviet transitional period
Tetyana Kloubert

55 She reads, he reads: gender difference and learning through self-help books
Scott McLean and Brandi Kapell

73 A sociomaterial model of the teaching-learning continuum
Reinhard Zürcher

European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, Vol.6, No.1, 2015, pp. 7-8

Editorial: Open issue

Andreas Fejes
Linköping University, Sweden (andreas.fejes@liu.se)

António Fragoso
University of Algarve, Portugal (aalmeida@ualg.pt)

In this open issue we present five papers covering different adult education and learning contexts across different geographical spaces, ranging from Spain, Germany, Eastern Europe to Canada. The topics of research range from young people to retired people, adult educators and men and women reading self-help literature.

In the article by *Francesca Salva-Mut*, *Elena Quintana-Murci*, and *Danielle Desmarais*, the focus is directed at young people and their participation in adult education and training. Using a biographical perspective the authors establish three different types of pathways regarding education, and they also study the main factors that exclude or include adults from participation in adult education. Despite the fact that these paths are marked by heterogeneity, a large number of the sample participate in adult education – mainly young adults with low qualifications, with the aim to improve their professional situation or to try to integrate into the labour market. It is, therefore, not surprising that these adults come from a situation of unemployment or economic inactivity. However, they experience a set of barriers to participation that can be institutional, situational or dispositional. The analysis of those barriers lead the authors to state that it is necessary to develop new equity policies and to introduce reforms to the adult education national system, which will allow a second educational chance for young adults.

Paula Thieme, *Michael Brusch* and *Victoria Büsch* direct their interest towards continuing employment in pensionable age, drawing on data from a German national survey. They illustrate how there are significant correlations between continuing training motivation and work ability and desire to work past retirement age. Their results show that training motivation is significantly high across all the studied groups of older adults. While some correlations proved not to be significant, there is no doubts that the stronger the culture of life-accompanying learning, the higher the ability and the desire to work after retirement. As positive experiences can increase training motivation, the authors suggest that new methods geared to the needs of older citizens should be developed. In the same line of reasoning, the training contents for older adults should be more application-oriented and eliciting positive effects – which will further increase motivation.

ISSN 2000-7426
© 2015 The authors
DOI 10.3384/rela.2000-7426.relae10
www.rela.ep.liu.se

Adult educators are the focus in *Tetyana Kloubert's* article. She addresses the self-images of adult educators in exercising their professional agency in contexts of social transformation after the fall of the communist regimes. She has conducted 91 interviews with adult educators in Poland, Ukraine and Russia. The author tries to understand common trends that could illuminate changes occurring during the transitions—with these three countries being used mostly as examples. Adult educators see adult education as a way to attain a set of aims, including, for example, to preserve memory, resist state attempts to forge memories, foster therapy and healing, or to promote political and civic engagement. Thus, the adult educators functions goes beyond the traditional function to moderate and foster learning-building, including other dimensions such as the responsibility for the development of civil society. But Kloubert highlights the issues in Russia and the Ukraine, where adult educators dedicate themselves to dealing with the past much more in their personal engagement—and not as a part of a social demand. She concludes from her investigation that despite the fact that adult educators show an agentic capacity, there are a number of critical questions to be posed. For example, should the agency of adult educators focus on fostering and supporting individual growth, or renewal of society?

Scott McLean and *Brandi Kapell* have conducted in-depth interviews with 134 men and women who read self-help literature. Their conclusions are, first, that women's reading is more focused upon the enhancement of interpersonal relationships. Secondly, the gender differences regarding the reading relating to careers and health were modest. It appears that women have joined men in reading career-related self-help books, and men and women have comparable interests in reading about health and well-being. The authors claim that these differences are related to political-economic and cultural changes. They argue that women's increasing necessity to work for wages makes career related reading just as important for men and women. The disproportioned responsibility towards domestic and emotional work would therefore determine women's tendency of reading self-help books on personal relationships. A parallel could be outlined with women's participation in adult or continuing education: regardless the motives, women feel a stronger responsibility to learning than men, thus explaining gender differences in participation.

In the last article, *Reinhard Zürcher*, proposes a model for the continuum between informal and formal learning connected to a teaching continuum. Drawing on sociomaterial theories, he argues that 'performative, practice-based approaches are indispensable in order to investigate the low formalized section of the TLC [teaching-learning continuum]. The material aspect of sociomaterial theories enables us to argue for the (partial) symmetry of the teaching-learning relationship, for the equivalence of human/non-human action in TLP and to understand informal learning and in particular informal teaching in a new way'.

European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, Vol.6, No.1, 2015, pp. 9-23

Inclusion and exclusion factors in adult education of youth with a low educational level in Spain[1]

Francesca Salva-Mut
University of the Balearic Islands, Spain (f.salva@uib.es)

Elena Quintana-Murci
University of the Balearic Islands, Spain (elenaquintana74@gmail.com)

Danielle Desmarais
University of Quebec, Canada (desmarais.danielle@uqam.ca)

Abstract

In this paper we analyse, from a biographical perspective, youth participation in education and training, aged between 26 and 28 years, who have no qualifications or at most have a qualification corresponding to the Lower Secondary Education Certificate (LSEC) (ISCED 0-2), during the 10 years elapsed between the end of compulsory education (2000) and the time of the interview (2010). As regards their personal life stories, we cover a broad period which includes different stages in the transition into adulthood, stages which take place in a historical context in which we have moved from a time characterised by ease of access to employment among youth with a low educational level to another time in which youth unemployment levels affects over half of the workforce aged 16 to 24 and in which public policies supporting training and social and professional insertion of young people with a low educational level have been reduced.

Keywords: youth pathways; lifelong learning; adult education; low level of education; biographical perspective

Introduction

Theoretical perspectives

The problems arising from the high number of young people with a low level of education (ISCED 2 level or lower) in Spain are considered to be a major issue in the political and media discourse of our country. The main indicators reveal the disadvantage of Spain within the framework of the European Union: with an early school leaving rate of 26.5% (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, 2013a); a youth unemployment rate in the 20-24 year age group of 51.68% (data from the Labour Force Survey for the first quarter of 2013); and 18.5% of young people aged 15 to 24

ISSN 2000-7426
© 2015 The author
DOI 10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela0121
www.rela.ep.liu.se

who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Social and Economic Council, 2013). The fact of not having a job and not being in education or training are two situations that are found to a far greater extent among young people with a low level of education (Social and Economic Council, 2013; Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, 2013b).

Youth transition's into adulthood in general and, particularly, as far as the transition from education into employment is concerned, has undergone significant transformations due to recent social, economic and demographic changes. Despite differences between countries due, among other factors, to the characteristics of national and regional job markets and the structures of education systems, there is a general consensus in the literature concerning this issue as regards the characteristics of transitions in contemporary job markets. They are the following:

- Lengthening of the transition due to the characteristics of the job market and generalised lengthening of schooling (Furlong et al., 2006; Wallace & Kovatcheva, 1998; Casal, 1999; Bradley & Devadason, 2008).
- Complexity: transitions have ceased to be linear, and involve comings and goings between several situations of employment and education (Casal, 1999; Settersten et al., 2005; Machado, 2007; INJUVE, 2008).
- Precariousness: youth transition processes are marked by the flexibilisation and casualisation of jobs and salaries (Bradley & Van Hoof, 2005) and young people are more vulnerable to job loss, worse working conditions (part-time jobs, non-formal economy, low salaries) and ruptures (Casal, 1999; Macdonald, 1994; Fenton & Dermott, 2006).
- Individualisation: there are many different shapes and they are articulated in an individualised way based on the interaction of many factors (Settersten et al., 2005; Jones, 1995, 2002). Yet structural factors—such as social class, gender or ethnicity (Bradley & Van Hoof, 2005; Fenton & Dermott, 2006)—and institutional ones—such as the social and labour policies in each country (Settersten et al., 2005; Quintini & Martín, 2006)—continue to have a fundamental weight.

These changes are found in the context of societies in transformation and in the dialectic relationship therein. The social, political, economic and demographic transformations are many, as are the concepts coined to name them, understand them and explain them. In all cases, what stands out is: the focal role of science and technology and, hence, of knowledge; changes in all the fields of personal and professional life, as part and parcel of contemporary life stories (employment changes, family situations, moving home,…); and a growing social dualisation, which is especially harmful to people with greater educational deficits, and which is made manifest in a particularly virulent way in the current economic crisis.

In this context, the level of education plays a much more central role than in the past, and upper secondary qualifications have become the minimum level required for successful entry into the job market, and the basis of subsequent participation in further education (OECD 2005, 2010). In studies concerning the youth transition into adulthood, the disadvantageous situation of youngsters with a low educational level is clearly documented as regards successfully developing the many complex tasks required by this ever-lengthier period of life.

Since the transition into adulthood is measured in terms of taking on more independent roles, the fact that the transition time is becoming longer makes it a period of

development which for some offers opportunities to explore different situations, to develop skills and to have enough support to do it, whereas those who do not have these chances become even more vulnerable (Berzin, 2010). In the same line of argument, Cote (2006), quoted in Berzin (2010), maintains that once transition from school to employment becomes longer; those who have higher levels of education increase their advantages over those who cannot attain these educational levels.

Although it is hugely complex to understand such a dynamic period on the basis of internationally comparable indicators, a recent study by the OECD (2010) provides relevant data regarding the characteristics of young people's participation in employment and, particularly those who have the greatest difficulties. This and other recent research studies conducted on youth pathways from education into employment (Berzin, 2010; Hango & Broucker, 2007; Kuehn et al., 2009; Quintini & Manfredi, 2009; Walther et al., 2002) clearly reflect not only the youth with a low educational level disadvantages in their process of transition into adulthood, but also the impact of the characteristics of education and training systems on these pathways and the need to develop transition policies that will promote positive transitions.

Along these lines, we highlight the contradictions between the discourse of the knowledge society and transformations in the field of employment (Livingstone, 2010), and education and training policies and practices that largely act as a filter (Arrow, 1973; Spence, 1974; Stiglitz, 1975).

The education role in the transition pathways into adulthood of these young people is not very well known for several reasons. Among these, the low participation of people with a low educational level in the different education options available to adults. In fact, a low level of education is considered the most significant predictor in relation to a low participation in education in adulthood (Bélanger, 2011). Along the same lines, research into early school leaving considers the difficulties involved as regards later access to education to be one of the most harmful effects of this dropout (Dale, 2010). In fact, the concept of NEET (young people not in employment, education or training) was coined in reference to youth with a low educational level who were neither furthering their education nor in employment. In Spain, it became popular first of all through a television programme in which a stigmatising view of young NEETs predominated, as if this fact depended fundamentally on their own free will. The impact of the economic crisis and the dissemination of the results of research into the issue have led to a more accurate, fairer view, the highlight of which is a recent publication by the Institute for Youth with the enlightening title of 'Dismantling NEET. A youth stereotype in times of crisis' (Navarrete, 2011).

In a recent study based on the ETEFIL survey 2005 (Transition, Education, Training and Labour Insertion survey for young people under 25 years old), a follow-up of the young people who had finished Lower Secondary Education (LSE) in 2000-2001 was carried out during 2001-2005. The results of this research—conducted in a representative sample for Spain of 3.012 young people who dropped out of LSE with no qualifications—show that in this group, which represents 34% of all young people who finished LSE in the year of reference, only 31% resume education: 21% obtain the Lower Secondary Education Certificate (LSEC); 2% are in Adult Secondary Education (ASE); and 8% are doing non-formal vocational training (García et al., & Sánchez, 2013).

The adoption of a biographical perspective is a leading heuristic element, to approach the exclusion and inclusion mechanisms in education and training operating in the Spanish context for this type of population, and to provide elements for the construction of a more inclusive education and training system.

We analyse the elements of educational inclusion and exclusion based on a review of the literature concerning participation in continuing adult education (Bélanger, 2011), highlighting the following key aspects:

- A conception of the demand for education and training as a result of a dialectic relationship between the demands of a society or of an organization and the aspirations and experiences of the persons involved. In this sense we consider especially relevant the idea that the demand for training is a social construct in which prior learning experiences have an enormous influence and in which mediation policies are fundamental: 'People's demand for acquiring new capacities for action in order to be able to pilot important shifts in their lives is constructed through accumulation of prior learning experiences, either positive or negative. Hence the paramount importance of policies supporting 'expression and mediation of learning demand" (p. 86).
- Rubenson's valence-expectancy theory (Rubenson, 1977 quoted in Bélanger, 2011), according to which the decision to participate in continuing adult education depends on their appraisal as to the relevance or value of the educational activity and on the perception of being able to do the activity successfully.
- The typology of obstacles to participation, which differentiates between institutional obstacles (characteristics of the educational offer, lack of guidance services); situational ones (linked to personal and labour situations which result in a lack of time or money, a low basic level of education); and dispositional ones (self-concept concerning their own learning ability which results in a low level of confidence, lack of projects, feeling of irrelevance or uselessness concerning the training).

Methods and sample

Given the characteristics of the object of the study, we favour a qualitative or interpretative methodology based on the biographical method and with an ethno-sociological perspective (Bertaux, 1997). The study of the pathways was approached using a retrospective longitudinal methodology (Casal et al., 2011) focused on the pathways followed during the approximately 10 years elapsed between the finalisation of compulsory education (2000) and the interview (2010).

The procedure to design, conduct and analyse the content of the biographical interviews was carried out using the contributions of Desmarais (2009) and the experience accumulated by the team in previous research studies.

The fieldwork took place in an urban setting. The sample is made up of 18 people, born in 1983 or 1984, living in neighbourhoods with different degrees of vulnerability in the city of Palma de Mallorca (Balearic Islands, Spain). It is stratified according to gender (9 women and 9 men) and level of education (9 with no qualifications and 9 with the Lower Secondary Education Certificate).

Access to the sample was obtained from different sources of information due to the obstacles to gain access to young people with the required characteristics, as well as the difficulty that, once contacted; they would want to participate in the research.

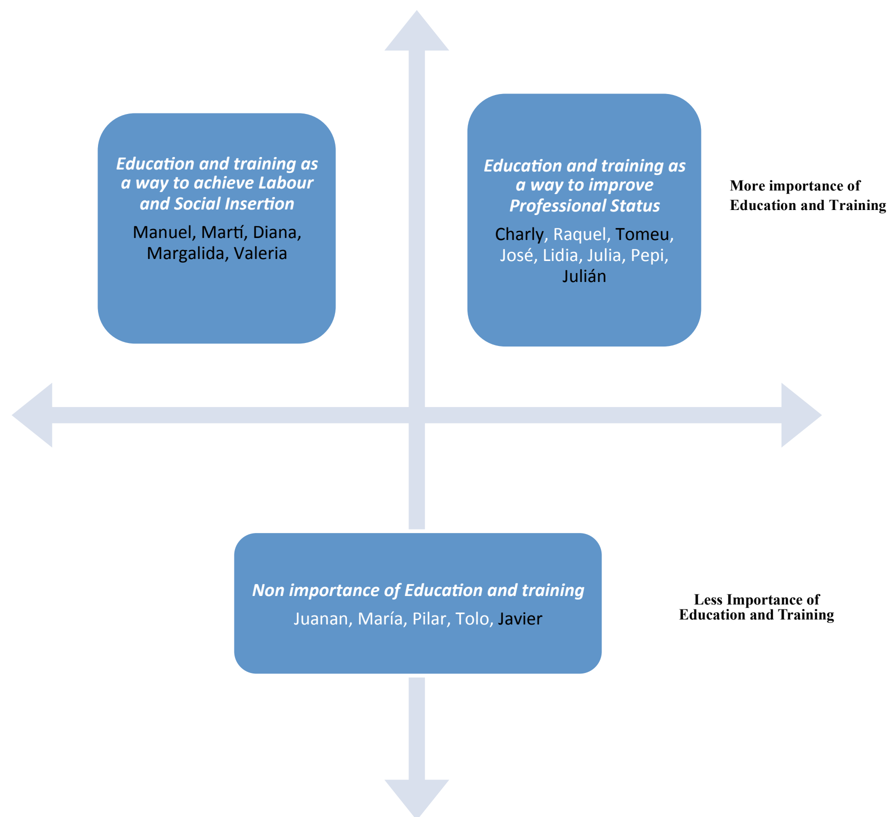
Main findings

An analysis of the education and training pathways leads us to establish three different educational pathways followed by these youths depending on the importance they attach to education and training, their degree of participation in formal and non-formal education, and the main goal they want to achieve by participating in education and training activities.

On a basic level we analyse the importance of education, in the sense of whether it makes certain sense and/or has coherence in relation to the overall youth situation. From this perspective, we can distinguish two different pathways. First of all, a group of 13 young people whose education and training pathway appears to make certain sense and display coherence. A second group, made up of 5 subjects, is characterised by the little or non-importance of education.

The subsequent analysis focuses on the goal of education and training, differentiating between education as a way to improve professional status (in a broad sense that includes basic and specific training addressed mainly at improving job opportunities) and as a means of social and labour insertion.

Figure 1. Typology of pathways according to the importance of education and training and to the goal thereof



Source: Own elaboration

Youth names with ISCED 1 are written in black

Youth names with ISCED 2 are written in white

Education and training as a way to improve professional status

This is the case of Charly, Raquel, José, Tomeu, Lidia, Julia, Pepi, and Julián. The majority of them have the LSEC (ISCED 2) except Tomeu, Charly and Julian (ISCED 1).

The group that has the LSEC qualification is characterised by attempting to continue their studies in post-compulsory education without any rupture between attaining the LSEC qualification and doing post-compulsory secondary studies; whereas in the group that finishes LSE without any qualifications, there is a long break in time before they attempt to resume their studies and the return is produced to a lesser extent than the continuation of studies in the LSEC group.

In all cases, education is abandoned before obtaining the qualification. Dropout occurs at different times, the extremes of which are one girl who leaves 3 months after starting the course and another girl who leaves when she only has two subjects left and the work placement in an Intermediate Vocational Diploma (IVD). Among the main reasons, the most outstanding are a lack of meaning to what they are doing ("I wasn't well advised", "it didn't motivate me", ….); difficulties related to academics (repetition, failed subjects,…), and to relationships in the centre ("I was repeating and was with younger kids and my friends were leaving to study away from home", "I didn't get on with the tutor",…); the influence of friends ("my friends told me I had to earn money like them"); wanting to do other things incompatible with studying; ease in finding a job (in a family business or elsewhere) and the low value placed on qualifications in relation to possible employment options. Overall, what stands out most is the disorientation of the young people and lack of support services for their academic perseverance.

In all cases, after school dropout they got a job and after a couple of years working (following linear or non-linear labour pathways, suffering precariousness, lack of motivation, …) they decided to return to formal or non-formal education as a way to improve their professional status or to achieve better chances of getting a job. They followed the meritocracy model; that is education as an instrument to get a job with better conditions and more stability.

Although due to the size of this text, we cannot analyse all the situations, we would like to illustrate some aspects we consider key to understanding inclusion and exclusion in education. In order to address this, we focus on two cases (Pepi and Charly) we consider are a success as regards the relevance of the education in the context of the young person's pathway considered as a whole; and on one (Lidia) with an as yet unclear outcome and in which the impact of the economic crisis has a clear relevance.

Pepi and Charly have both made a purposeful commitment to education with the belief that it will be useful for their personal project, and this commitment has already had clearly positive results in the 10 years studied. They serve to illustrate two highly differentiated cases that enable us to analyse the elements of inclusion and exclusion.

Pepi follows a pathway focused on employment and studies, which is strongly marked by the desire to combine both activities. She considers herself a good student in compulsory education and obtained the LSEC qualification with no delay, without repeating a year. She enrolled in the social baccalaureate because she didn't know what to do, or what branch to study, and dropped out when she was repeating 2nd baccalaureate for the third time. Subsequently, she had a few months of inactivity, after which she began a period focused on employment, only interrupted by a 4-month period without work. Her work activity took place practically exclusively in the travel agency sector, until she began to work for an internet advertising agency in order to have working conditions that allow her to combine studies and work. She wants to work with children and to get out of the world of "offices" and, therefore, since 2008 she has carried out several educational activities for this purpose. Now she is studying Pedagogy at the UNED (National Distance Learning University).
She is emancipated and lives in a flat she shares with friends.

As we can see, Pepi's pathway is characterised by of subjective and objective success helped by labour market characteristics, her own initiative and family support. Pepi believes that education will enable her to have a job she likes, and is able to manage the different events in her life with this goal. Although during a certain period of her life, the institutional obstacles are insurmountable for her (dropping out of baccalaureate); after several job experiences she makes the decision to continue her studies. With this goal in mind, she uses the option of the university entrance exam for over 25s and enrols in a distance learning degree. Thereby she can keep up and strengthen her process of autonomy and combine work and studies.

The case of Charly has a common point with the above in his clear, determined commitment to specific education that will enable him to practice the profession he desires, after an exploratory period in which he has several jobs; as well as the success of his commitment to education in the context of his pathway. In this case it is worth noting the way he overcame institutional obstacles (inadequacy of the standardised education available, the reason why he himself organises a system that will allow him to train as a tattooist by combining training in the workplace with a specific training course) and dispositional ones (exchanging services as a way of financing his education).

Charly dropped out of school in 4th LSE. Although until then his schooling showed no apparent difficulties, at that time he behaved badly, played truant and had to repeat a year. In 2001, immediately after dropping out of LSE, he did a six-month course in administration and accounting and afterwards began to work as a construction worker in his father's company. After three and a half years doing this job, he was unemployed for a period lasting between three and four months. Subsequently, he worked as a fish deliveryman for approximately a year and a half, until January 2007. But Charly has his own career project: to be a tattooist, which begins to materialise after he turns 23.

During a two-year period (2007 and 2008) a friend teaches him to tattoo in exchange for his work as a builder in his friend's tattoo parlour; at the same time as he takes a two-year long amateur drawing course. At this time he has economic difficulties because he is not earning and doing the building work is very demanding.

Charly chooses a career that is coherent with his social and cultural environment and in which he tries to unite his skills, interests and personal and professional expectations. Identifying himself with the profession of a tattooist enables him to develop professionally in an activity he likes, which he can do without having to take on the role of either employee or employer, with which he can obtain economic autonomy and which keeps him linked to the culture that is characteristic of the profession, which has a lot of elements in common with his personal experiences and cultural practices.

He lives in his parents' home, where he works in the informal economy, and is not thinking about becoming independent until he has greater stability.

Lidia has made a clear commitment to education but the results are still uncertain. The current economic crisis has a very clear impact on her pathway.

Lidia has a pathway characterised by the predominance of periods of unemployment and by her indecision in professional terms. Although she has a school life story with only one repetition of the 1st year of Primary School and she considers herself a good student in compulsory education, she does not finish an IVD in commerce and marketing. She did not like it and had problems with the tutor, which led her to find a job "doing whatever". She had a difficult transition into employment and during the first four years only worked on two occasions for one month at a time, a period in which she did some training courses for unemployed people. Afterwards she has some periods of employment, with the last one finishing in May 2009.

Her labour and training pathway is erratic until she makes a clear professional training choice: to do a High Vocational Diploma (HVD) in early childhood education. With this aim in mind she is preparing the entrance exam at an Adult Education Centre. She wants to become emancipated and to be economically self-sufficient, working in a kindergarten.

Education and training as a way to achieve labour and social insertion

This is the case of Manuel, Margalida, Valeria, Martí, Diana, all of whom have ISCED level 1 and are unemployed (except Martí) at the time of interview (2010). After a rupture and/or bifurcation in their lives, education became important as a way to achieve labour and social insertion and to reconstruct their pathways.

Margalida and Valeria illustrate the situation of two women with children, who have lost their customary source of income due to the entry into prison of their respective partners; during the 10 years analysed they did domestic and care work and

for this reason do not have a large experience in the labour market. In both cases they take part in a socio-labour education and insertion project for single women with dependents, where several support and training services are offered such as assistant cook and cleaner, which include work placement and job prospects in a network of collaborating companies. They both value this experience very positively for different reasons: network of friendships, improvement of social skills, guidance and support, training and work placement, access to employment… Although they both consider themselves good students during their compulsory schooling and consider getting the LSEC (Lower Secondary Education Certificate), and also believe the training they are doing in the project relevant, they perceive great difficulties to continuing their education for different reasons: economic, lack of time, lack of confidence in their ability to succeed.

Martí and Diana are two first generation immigrants, from Sub-Saharan Africa. They took Spanish courses for immigrants as a mechanism of integration into the host society. Martí arrived in Mallorca in March 2005 and after a few months, when he was 21, began a Spanish course for adults in a public centre, which lasted approximately a year and a half. Some of this time was also spent working. He has had no other education as he doesn't have time and prioritises working.

Diana moved to Mallorca in 2003 to live with her husband, who she was married to in an arranged marriage agreed on by her family when she was 17. She did a free Spanish course for a year and a half through which she was admitted into the same project as Valeria and Margalida thanks to the mediation of the person in charge of the course, to whom she had indicated her interest in cooking. In summer 2008 she began an assistant cook training course which she interrupted due to her second pregnancy, but which she resumed in summer 2009 and which enabled her to do the work placement in a café-restaurant. In the meantime, from social services, they helped her pay for her son's childcare for four months. In 2010 she is doing a cookery course and wants to study to learn how to read and write. She does not have the support of her family, neither does she have any friends, only the help of the professionals in the programmes and resources in which she has participated and her willpower to be economically independent in order to be able to get divorced.

In the case of Manuel, the onset of his participation in education takes place in January 2008, when he was 23, doing a horticulture course as part of the process of rehabilitation from his addiction to drugs. In this same process, an intensive course for activity coordinator enables him to participate in neighbourhood activities. Finalisation of his rehabilitation process coincides with the first years of the crisis and he manages to get two very short-term jobs one month each, thanks to the support of the rehabilitation project and the leisure club in his neighbourhood, which act as clear elements of integration along with his family and his partner. Having reached 26 he begins Adult Secondary Education (ASE). If we take into account the typology of the educational programmes they pursued during the analysed period of time, all of them participated in non-formal education. Margalida and Tomeu also participated in formal education but at different times in their lives. Manuel began ASE in October 2010, taking subjects he had failed in the 1st and 2nd year of Lower Secondary Education (LSE), in order to continue then with 3rd and 4th. He says he is really motivated and wants to study in order to find a job and be able to become emancipated. The fact of resuming his studies is associated to a new period of his life marked by having overcome his addiction to drugs. Manuel was fired from a tenure job due to this addiction and underwent treatment.

The case of Margalida reveals some differential elements. She dropped out of school at 13 and could not explain the reasons for that, but they appear to be related to the fact that her mother (employee) was going to have a baby, along with family tolerance towards dropping out of school. Thus, her decision to drop out of school is legitimized by the care of her new brother. After three years looking after her brother she enrolled in an Adult Secondary Education Centre where she studied for 9 months to sit the external candidate exam for the LSEC. She attended class and things were going well for her but when she went to register for the exam she was told she could not sit it, as she was not 18 years old. Margalida meets her husband and has a daughter at 17, whereby she resumes her dedication to housework and bringing up a family. The next attempt is made in 2009, in the context of her attempts at studying and obtaining an income due to the loss of her source of income from her partner, who is sent to prison. At this time she can't even start her studies as she can not afford to pay for the books and since a grant for books was incompatible with support from the Minimum Insertion Income which she was receiving.

The five young people that make up this group take part in formal or non-formal education programmes at a time of redirecting their pathway after a rupture; in fact, education plays an important role in all the cases of this redirecting process. In this participation the main trigger is external pressure (Margalida, Valeria, Manuel) or belief in the usefulness of education (Martí, Diana). Nevertheless, and as their life stories reflect, both elements are interrelated. The fact that the triggering factor is one or the other does not detract from the interaction between them both. Thus, for instance, even though Margalida, Valeria and Manuel begin their education due to external pressure, they consider it is useful for them. Conversely, the decision of Martí and Diana also arises from the demands of their environment, as without knowing the language of the host place they won't be able to integrate. In Diana's case we must add that education is her only possible way towards autonomy.

As regards the obstacles that hinder educational inclusion, the most outstanding are situational ones: lack of time and money, self-perceived difficulties for success, need for employment… Among the institutional obstacles, it is worth noting that in all cases participation took place through an offer specifically aimed at people with a certain profile. In all cases participation takes place within the framework of public policies to support socio-labour insertion of people with special difficulties, and activities in which tertiary sector organizations play a central role. The relationship of helping and accompanying throughout the whole process is particularly noteworthy, as is the networking between different organizations.

Concerning the follow-up of the situation, conducted in 2013 (around two years after the biographical interview), it is worth noting the suppression of the project for socio-labour training and insertion for single women with dependents, within the context of cutbacks in public policies.

No importance of education and training

This is the case of Juanan, María, Pilar, Tolo and Javier, all of whom present a strong employment centrality and perceive work as having an instrumental value for different reasons, such as need for economic resources to maintain a single family, pay the mortgage,... In nearly all the cases they have the LSEC –except Javier who has no educational credential—but none of them contemplate education and training despite being unemployed (Juanan, María and Javier).

Juanan thinks education has no value and displays zero intention of studying despite the fact that from August 2008 to December 2010 he has worked for only two periods, one month long each time. He lives in his parents' home and seems to have some economic income, the origin of which he does not explain, but it means he can afford certain consumer goods. In María's case, economic need is what stands out most (emancipated and being a single-parent family) and the impossibility of studying due to economic reasons and lack of time. In both cases, since 2001 (when they were 18 years old) education has not been part of their pathway.

Pilar has a job in a family business and, although she didn't want to work in it and, at some time, she thought of continuing her education in order to have other professional options, her stint in post-compulsory education was very short.

In none of the three cases do we see any environmental pressure with respect to education due to the characteristics of the education-employment transition model and the unskilled job offer before the crisis. In the case of María and Pilar, we can observe the social constraints they face to maintain a single family without any institutional support due to the lack of policies related to reconciliation of work and family life in our country.

In the case of Tolo and Javier, these are two young men with a very strong focus on employment during the period under study. They both grew up in a large single parent family, they are emancipated with their partner and do not have any children, they grew up in a neighbourhood with very high vulnerability, and arrived in Mallorca when they were very young, having been born in another region in Spain.

In both cases a model of emancipation typical of their class and gender is reproduced. In Tolo's case, the immediate transition from education into employment stands out, along with the fact of keeping the same job for the whole 10-year period studied. In Javier's pathway, periods of employment and unemployment are combined, with his ability to cope with adversity and the support of his immediate environment standing out.

Conclusions

The study with a biographical approach of the education and training pathways followed during the 10 years after finishing compulsory secondary education by young people with a low level of education allows us to document the characteristics of these itineraries and to establish three different pathways, as well as to analyse the main educational inclusion and exclusion factors in Adult Education (AE).

In relation to the characteristics of these youth pathways, what stands out is their heterogeneity as well as the fact that most of the youth in the sample participate in Adult Education: mainly young people with the LSEC who do non-formal activities and young people with no qualification who do formal and non-formal activities.

We have been able to document different levels of importance of education and training as well as different goals thereof. Education and training can be seen to play an important role (meaning and coherence in youths' pathway considered as a whole) in 13 of the 18 young people in the sample. In this group, the goal may be mainly to improve professional status or social and labour insertion after a change that affects all the spheres of the person and which implies a rupture or bifurcation in relation to the earlier situation.

As regards factors of educational inclusion, the dialectic relationship between environmental demands and the aspirations and experiences of the people involved are documented and seen to be determinant in the demand for Adult Education. Concerning

environmental demands, the demand for education has increased due to the impact of the crisis. Nevertheless, this increase in external demand contrasts with the rise in obstacles to participation derived from the cutbacks applied in public policies that especially affect more vulnerable groups.

Regarding exclusion factors, numerous obstacles have been documented that hinder participation in Adult Education (AE). According to the theoretical framework, our research results suggest the characteristics of the Spanish Education System influenced and hindered participation in Education and Training of young people with a low educational level (OECD, 2010), and education and training policies and practices act as a filter (Arrow, 1973; Spence, 1974; Stiglitz, 1975).

According to Bélanger (2011), education inclusion and exclusion factors can be institutional, situational and dispositional. Among the institutional type barriers stand out the ones characteristic of AE in Spain, which, far from constituting an integrated system, is made up of different types of initiatives with a poor or insufficient relationship between each other. These offers are poorly or not at all adapted to the needs of young people with a low level of education, except for the ones that are specifically aimed at groups in situations of greatest social vulnerability. In the case of Adult Secondary Education (ASE), access is not allowed until 18, except in certain conditions, and there are no support services or transition modules when, as we have been able to appreciate, a return to education through ASE usually takes place after a long period outside the education system.

The essential role of mediation for inclusion in Adult Education of people with a low level of education stands out, mainly when faced with situations of rupture, which make them redirect their situation. One of the most serious problems we find is that this type of offers figure among the ones that are suffering the greatest budgetary cutbacks, to the point that the labour training and insertion project in which three of the young people with no qualifications were participating has been suppressed due to a lack of public funding.

Concerning situational factors, the influence of the school life story is clearly documented, as well as economic difficulties and time available to be able to devote to education. These factors are compounded, in some of the cases, by the socio-economic characteristics of the current and source families as well as by intra-family relationships. On the other hand, in others—despite the fact that we are talking mainly about people whose immediate environment does not have many economic resources—relationships with the family, partner and/or friends entail a more or less explicit support to education options.

In relation to dispositional factors, what stands out in some of the young people for whom education has not been important during the period studied is the perception that it is of no use in relation to access to employment. Nevertheless, in most cases, education is valued positively and the greatest obstacle lies in insecurity concerning their own ability for educational success, which is closely related to an education offer whose demands have too much in common with a school experience that the whole group has lived through with different types of difficulties.

In the case of women with no educational credential, we detected the prevalence of traditional gender roles and, after early school dropout, motherhood is the way to normalise their life; they present a centrality of domestic and care work, only giving importance to paid employment after a crisis or bifurcation in their paths.

As can be seen, participation in Adult Secondary Education is always produced in situations of unemployment or inactivity and the main motivation is the idea that it will make it easier to gain access to employment or to an intermediate vocational

qualification (IVD). Ambitions to study can clash with a low self-concept in relation to chances of success and with institutional obstacles regarding the characteristics and organization of Adult Education in Spain (age of access, lack of guidance services and of support to perseverance and to preventing early school dropout) and, more generally, with the weakness of our welfare system (few resources, incompatibilities in economic aid, lack of reconciliation policies,…), as well as with the characteristics of Spanish Labour Market influenced youth pathways (precariousness and instability).

For these reasons it is necessary to develop equality policies and to increase economic investment in Education to offer a new reformed Adult Educational System which is integrated and based on good practices, which facilitate the return to education for youth with a low educational level.

Notes

[1] It is part of the project 'Trajectories from secondary education into employment: a biographical perspective' (EDU2009-13312), funded under the National Plan R+D+I (Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. Government of Spain).

[2] The University of the Balearic Islands Education and Citizenship Research Group is considered a Competitive Group and is sponsored by part of the Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands, through the Directorate General for Research, Technological Development and Innovation of the Ministry of Innovation, Interior and Justice and co-financed by FEDER funds.

References

Arrow, K. J. (1973). Higher Education as a Filter. *Journal of Public Economy, 2*, 3-17.

Bélanger, P. (2011). *Theories in Adult Learning and Education*. Leverkusen: Barbara Budrich Publishers.

Bertaux, D. (1997). *Les récits de vie. Perspective ethnosociologique.* Paris: Nathan.

Berzin, S. C. (2010). Vulnerability in the transition to adulthood: Defining risk based on youth profiles. *Children and Youth Review*, *32*(4), 487-495.

Bradley, H., & Devadason, R. (2008). Fractured transitions: Young adults' pathways into contemporary labour markets. *Sociology, 42*(1), 119-136.

Bradley, H., & Van Hoof, J. J. B. M. (2005). *Young people in Europe: Labour markets and citizenship*. Bristol, UK: Policy.

Casal, J. (1999). Modalidades de transición profesional y precarización del empleo. In L. Cachón (Ed.). (1999), *Juventudes, mercados de trabajo y políticas de empleo* (pp. 151-180). València: 7 i mig.

Casal, J., Merino, R., & García, M. (2011). Pasado y futuro del estudio sobre la transición de los jóvenes. *Papers, 96*(4), 1.139-1.162.

Cote, J. E. (2006). Emerging adulthood as an institutionalize moratorium: risks and benefits to identity formation. In J. Arnett & J.L. Tanner (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st century* (pp.85-116). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Dale, R. (2010). *Early school leaving: Lessons from research for policy makers. An independent expert report submitted to the European Commission* . Europe: Network of Experts in Social Sciences in Education & Training. Retrieved February, 14, 2013, from www.nesse.fr/nesse/activities/reports/activities/reports/early-school-leaving-report

Desmarais, D. (2009). L'approche biographique. In B. Gauthier (Dir.), *Recherche social. De la problématique à la collecte des données* (pp.361-389). Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Fenton, S., & Dermott, E. (2006). Fragmented careers? Winners and losers in young adult labour markets. *Work, Employment & Society, 20*(2), 205-221.

Furlong, A., Cartmel, F., & Biggart, A. (2006). Choice biographies and transitional linearity: Re-conceptualising modern youth transitions. *Papers, 79*, 225-239.

García, M., Casal, J., Merino, R., & Sánchez, A. (2013). Itinerarios de abandono escolar y transiciones tras la enseñanza secundaria obligatoria. *Revista de Educación, 361*, 65-94.

Hango, D. W., & De Broucker, P. (2007). *Education-to-labour market pathways of canadian youth findings from the youth in transition survey.* Canada: Statistics Canada. Culture, Tourism and the Center for Education Statistics & Canadian Policy Research Networks.

INJUVE (Spanish Youth Institute). (2008). *Informe juventud en España 2008*. Madrid: Instituto de la Juventud.

Jones, G. (1995). *Leaving home*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Jones, G. (2002). *The youth divide: Diverging paths to adulthood.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Kuehn, D., Pergamit, M., Macomber, J. & Vericker, T. (2009). *Vulnerable Youth and the Transition to Adulthood. ASPE Research Brief.* Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Office of Human Services Policy. US: Department of Health and Human Services.

Livingstone, D.W. (2010). Job requirements and workers' learning: formal gaps, informal closure, systemic limits. *Journal of Education and Work, 23*(3), 207-231.

MacDonald, R. (1994). Fiddly jobs, undeclared working and the something for nothing society. *Work, Employment & Society, 8*(4), 507-530.

Machado, J. (2007). *Chollos, chapuzas, changas: Jóvenes, trabajo precario y futuro*. Barcelona: Anthropos. Editorial del Hombre.

Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (2013a). *Explotación de las variables educativas de la Encuesta de Población Activa: Nivel de Formación y Formación Permanente*. Retrieved February, 10, 2013, from https://www.educacion.gob.es/horizontales/estadisticas/mercado-laboral/Explotaci-n-de-las-variables.html

Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (2013b). *Panorama de la Educación. Indicadores de la OCDE 2013. Informe español*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte.

Navarrete, L. (Dir.). (2011). *Desmontando a ni-ni. Un estereotipo juvenil en tiempos de crisis.* Madrid: Instituto de la Juventud.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). (2005). *From Education to Work. A difficult transition for young adults with low levels of education*. Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) / The Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN).

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). (2010). *Off to a Good Start? Jobs for Youth*. Paris: OECD.

Quintini, G., & Manfredi,T. (2009). *Going Separate Ways? School-to-Work Transitions in the United States and Europe.* OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, 90. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Quintini, G., & Martin, S. (2006). *Starting well or losing their way? the position of youth in the labour market in OECD countries.* OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, 39. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Rubenson, K. (1977). *Participation in recurrent education: a research review.* Paris: Center for Educational Research and Innovation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Settersten, R. A., Furstenberg, F. F., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2005). *On the frontier of adulthood theory, research, and public policy.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press Books.

Social and Economic Council (2013). Jóvenes que ni estudian ni trabajan: aprendiendo a conocerlos. Revista *CAUCES. Cuadernos del Consejo Económico y Social*, 22, 29-41. Retrieved March, 25, 2013, from http://www.ces.es/documents/10180/99102/CAUCES22.pdf

Spence, M. (1974). *Market Signalling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stiglitz, J. E. (1975). The Theory of 'Screening', Education, and the Distribution of Income. *American Economical Review, 65*, 3-18.

Wallace, C., & Kovatcheva, S. (1998). *Youth in Europe*. London: McMillan.

Walther, A., & Stauber, B. (2002). *Misleading trajectories. Integration Policies for Young Adults in Europe?.* Opladen: Leske & Dudrich.

European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, Vol.6, No.1, 2015, pp. 25-38

The role of continuing training motivation for work ability and the desire to work past retirement age

Paula Thieme
Humboldt University, Berlin (thiemepa@hu-berlin.de)

Michael Brusch
Hochschule Anhalt, Köthen (m.brusch@emw.hs-anhalt.de)

Victoria Büsch
SRH University, Berlin (victoria.buesch@srh-hochschule-berlin.de)

Abstract

Germany, relying on a pay-as-you-go pension system has increased regular retirement age to 67 due to its ageing population caused by decreasing birth rates and increasing life expectancy. Using data from the nationally representative 'Survey on continuing in employment in pensionable age', we investigate the relevance of training motivation for work ability and the desire to work past retirement age and whether differences between social groups reflect inequalities in training participation. Results show significant positive correlations between continuing training motivation and work ability and desire to work past retirement age. Differentiated for selected respondent groups the level of qualification has a significant influence. This effect was stronger than any differences with regard to gender or employment participation. Results imply external conditions only partly explain older workers' work ability or desire to work past retirement age. Compared to inequalities in training participation, motivation for continuing training is high across analysed subgroups.

Keywords: training; older workers; work ability; retirement; motivation

Introduction

Due to low fertility and increasing life expectancy in Germany the population is ageing as well as shrinking (Börsch-Supan & Wilke, 2009). The Statistisches Bundesamt (Federal Statistical Office in Germany) foresees that the percentage of older people (65+) will increase from around 20% in 2010 to 28% in 2030 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2009). At the same time, the population of working age will be reduced by 6.5 million until the year 2025 (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2013). Since these changes will have consequences for the economy and social security system the German government

ISSN 2000-7426
© 2015 The author
DOI 10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela0150
www.rela.ep.liu.se

developed strategies to compensate these effects. Especially the pension system, organised as a pay-as-you-go system, needed reforms. Hence, in 2008 it was decided that starting in 2012 retirement age will be raised stepwise from 65 to 67. Furthermore, the German government put into action the first demographic strategy called 'every age counts' with six fields of action. One of these fields is 'Keeping workers motivated, skilled and healthy' (Federal Ministry of the Interior, 2012). This accompanies the paradigm shift from widespread pre-retirement regulations to a prolonged working life. As a consequence, it is important to understand if individuals of the age of 55 and older would be willing and able to continue working even beyond retirement age. It can be shown that continuing training helps to keep people employable (e.g., Kenny, English & Kilmartin, 2007; Staudinger & Heidemeier, 2009) and that upon reaching retirement age, individuals are still in rather good health with years of active time to spend (Tesch-Römer, Heribert & Wurm, 2006).

This observation is reflected in our data source, the nationally representative survey on older workers' attitudes towards working life conducted by the German Federal Institute of Population Research in 2008 (fully described in Büsch, Dorbritz, Heien & Micheel, 2010) that found 47.3% of respondents aged between 55 and 64 years prepared to work past traditional retirement age. As this figure leaves room for improvement we seek a deeper understanding of factors determining the wish to work past retirement. Earlier work (e.g., Blancke, Roth & Schmid, 2000; Bretschneider, 2007) points to lifelong training as an important determinant allowing for individual task and job mobility, and for leading an independent working life. Another closely related factor is work ability, enabling individuals to maintain and update knowledge and skills, thus staying employable. Therefore, this paper aims to give insight into the role of continuing training motivation for work ability and the desire to work past work retirement age. As both work ability and training participation have been shown to differ across social groups we also analyse possible group differences.

This paper makes a new contribution to the literature because it highlights the role of training motivation for staying employed at a later age. As a consequence, organisations and policy-makers are challenged to establish motivation-enhancing work environments that follow a life span approach to instilling and promoting learning and training motivation. The paper is structured as follows: First a general description of continuing training and participation in Germany is given, with insight into motivational aspects, outcomes of continuing training (work ability and desire to work past retirement age) and a brief discussion of social heterogeneity in participation. Second, we conduct multivariate analyses to test our proposed relationships and discuss results with regard to previous findings on the subject. Third, the paper concludes with suggestions for organisations and policy-makers.

Continuing training

Individuals are increasingly expected to become active on their own behalf, displaying the ability to self-organize themselves as an indicator of their professional competences (Dienel & Willke, 2004). This 'lifelong learning', or 'self-directed learning' (Garrison, 1997) is one precondition to achieve and retain 'employability' on the labour market (Europäische Kommission, 1995). Thus, an individual's affinity towards continuing training has become a point of interest in e.g. job interviews and is perceived as an important factor in holding a job (Vollmer, 2012).

Continuing training motivation is determined by contextual as well as personal factors (Mathieu & Martineau, 1997; Colquitt, LePine & Noe, 2000) such as achievement motivation (Mathieu, Martineau & Tannenbaum, 1993), self-efficacy (Van Erde & Thierry, 1996) or job-related personal factors such as job involvement, organizational and career commitment (Colquitt et al., 2000). Generally, interest in continuing training is high, but decreases with age (see Berg, Elders & Burdorf, 2010; Schröder & Gilberg, 2005; Hansen & Nielsen, 2006). For individuals 50 years or older, the most important reason for not participating in training is lack of obligation (Huber, 2009), implying, possibly, a lack of motivation. It has been surmised that older workers experience diminishing learning skills, negatively affecting their learning motivation and perceived self-efficacy (Dworschak, Buck & Schletz, 2006). But as there is hardly any decline in cognitive functioning in healthy adults under 65 years (see Baltes et al., 2006), declining learning abilities do not seem to explain this motivational drop. Expecting a poor pay-off for training may also contribute to lack of training motivation among workers with decreased work ability, as they are more at risk of premature departure from working life and thus feel less motivated to invest in their career (Berg et al., 2010).

Training motivation strongly influences training outcomes (Schiefele & Schreyer, 1994). As participants' motivation to learn is 'influenced by beliefs concerning effort-performance and performance-outcome relationships, career/job attitudes, and reactions to skill needs assessment' (Noe, 1986, p. 743), training participants with similar abilities are likely to be more successful at acquiring knowledge, being able to change behaviour, and effectively using that knowledge in their work if they are motivated (Noe, 1986). This implies that training has a stronger effect on work ability if individuals are motivated.

Outcomes of continuing training motivation

In our analysis we focus on work ability and desire to work past retirement age as outcomes of continuing training motivation. As workers need both physical and mental abilities that match job demands to perform their tasks successfully, the term 'work ability' depicts a balance between job requirements and individual characteristics, such as health, knowledge, skills or motivation (Berg et al., 2010). Work ability seeks to measure 'How good is the worker at present, in the near future, and how able is he or she to do his or her work with respect to the work demands, health and mental resources' (Ilmarinen, Tuomi, & Seitsamo, 2005, p.3). Follow-up studies (von Bonsdorff, Huuhtanen, Tuomi & Seitsamo, 2010) found that lower work ability predicts earlier retirement between ages of 55 and 65 (see Sell, 2009; Hopsu, Leppänen, Ranta & Louhevaara, 2005), and the reverse (Salonen, Arola, Nygård, Huhtala & Koivisto, 2003).

On average, work ability declines with age, although with decreasing stability (Ilmarinen et al., 2005). On an individual level, this effect is due to different personal biographies, health, training level or individual coping strategies employed to counter age effects. Additionally, there is the effect of the different organisations on workers throughout their occupational biographies (Dworschak et al., 2006). For older adults aged 55-64 health and functional capacities as well as work factors influence work ability most, while competences, values and attitudes play a lesser role that further decreases with age. Gender differences are minor (Ilmarinen et al., 2005), but there is a difference between individuals working physically as opposed to cognitive workers, with the latter enjoying higher work ability (see Tuomi, Huuhtanen, Nykyri, & Ilmarinen, 2001).

Education science has brought forth various theories on self-directed learning and learning motivation, focussing on goal- and content-related conditions as well as interest-related aspects of learning. Within the latter, person-object-theory focuses on an individual's interest that is directed towards a certain subject, motivating the person to learn more about it and gain relevant skills and abilities (see Krapp, 2005). With this interest comes a positive emotional association, reinforcing the learning process. Similarly, self-determination theory hypothesizes that intrinsic or extrinsic motivation lead to different outcomes in terms of quality of emotional experience as well as differing quality of knowledge acquired. As training motivation activates people to seek out training, learn and apply training contents to their work environment (see Beier & Kanfer, 2009; Noe, 1986), we expect continuing training motivation to be positively related to work ability:

H1: Individuals who are highly motivated to train also ascribe to themselves higher work ability.

While work ability is a desired outcome of continuing training it is also a necessary precondition for working past retirement age, along with the desire to do so. The general desire to work past retirement age is high: almost half of those aged between 55 to 64 can well or rather well envision working past retirement age (Büsch et al., 2010). Studies indicate that upon reaching retirement age, individuals are still in rather good health with years of active time to spend (Tesch-Römer et al., 2006). Still, blue-collar-workers in physically challenging jobs go into pension on average 8 years before white-collar workers. They also give health as the main factor for leaving work life, while the latter usually work until legal retirement age (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014; Berg et al., 2010).

Retirement is less an event but a process that starts long before the actual act takes place. It is rooted in environmental factors, such as job characteristics (see Brusch & Büsch, 2012) or marital life and personal factors such as physical well-being, financial and skills status (Beehr, 1986; Shacklock, Brunetto, & Nelson, 2009). Indeed, there is evidence that those motivated to work longer years can be broadly separated into two groups, those who need to work longer due to financial needs and those who enjoy their work so much that they do not wish to stop (at least not completely, see McNair, 2006). Here recognition and management and team support play major roles (Saba & Guerin, 2005; Van Dam, van der Vorst & van der Heijden, 2009). Those who see themselves working past retirement age wish to pass on knowledge and experience to younger workers, they also cite fun at work as a main reason and that it helps them to stay fit. They feel strongly connected to their workplace and tend to feel too young to retire. Those who do not want to continue working give physical hazard at work and hard or monotonous labour, stress and bad health as the main reasons. Organisational offers such as training opportunities and special age-friendly work equipment do not seem to have a profound effect on prolonging working life (Boockmann, Fries & Göbel, 2013). It would seem likely that a person with high continuing training motivation would also express the desire to work past retirement age as it may bring new experiences and knowledge and provide the opportunity to apply or transfer knowledge and gain recognition. We thus posit:

H2: Individuals who are highly motivated to train also feel more inclined to work past retirement age.

In line with our argumentation we also propose that the quantity of trainings taken is not relevant for the desire to work past retirement age (see also Boockmann et al., 2013):

H3: The actual number of continuing trainings taken has no effect on the desire to work past retirement age.

Nevertheless, the desire to continue working past retirement age may not always result in an opportunity to do so: many organisations rather lay off older workers or do not even hire them –negative age-stereotypes are still in place and hard to eradicate, even if proven wrong (see Baltes et al., 2006; Schulz & Stamov Roßnagel, 2010).

Social heterogeneity in training participation

As the workforce in Germany is ageing steadily and pension age has been raised so as to sustain the pension system, a substantial amount of research is focused on organisational and political barriers and drivers of older workers' inclusion in continuing training in order to maintain their employability. In Germany, socio-demographic and socio-cultural characteristics still influence educational participation and outcomes, so educational inequalities are present (see Hradil, 1999), as can be seen in numerous group-related incidents of inequality in continuing training participation, e.g. employment-related, gender- or age-related (e.g. Bilger et al., 2013). Early educational (dis)advantages often permeate individual life-spans, influencing further educational and career paths and life choices (see OECD, 2002).

Analyses against the backdrop of social stratification seek to understand 'who gets what and why' (Alexander, 2001, p. 169). The concept of social stratification involves the 'classification of people into groups based on shared socio-economic conditions' (Barker, 2003, p. 436) and the development of a vertical and horizontal differentiation between these groups with varying access to resources. Although the reality and the beliefs about this structure are passed on between generations, they are indeed changeable (Macionis & Gerber, 2010).

According to Tippelt and von Hippel (2005), different social milieus and social strata show differences when it comes to continuing training. Social circumstances and behaviour lead to different lifestyles, which can be understood as a framework for individuals' behaviour and identity, characterised by relative stability (on lifestyle sociology see also Lüdtke, 1989). The upper/middle social strata, represented by postmaterial and modern performer milieus is rather well-educated with good income – their training participation and learning motivation are the highest. The lower/middle social strata, represented by consumption-materialists and hedonist milieus with generally lower income and less education perceive learning as more of a strain, often based on previous negative experiences in their education, but also due to often unfavourable working conditions (e.g. shift-work) or financial limitations.

While there is evidence that e.g. belonging to a lower social stratum is negatively related to participation (and sometimes success) in education or training, the effect on training motivation may be the opposite (see e.g. Walter & Stanat, 2008), as training or education might be e.g. perceived as a means of improving one's less advantageous position in society or the workplace.

Job-related continuing training is usually offered and (at least partly) paid for by the employer, so the question of employers' selection criteria of training participants also needs to be examined. Human capital theory provides a framework explaining why an employer might hesitate to invest resources in e.g. older or female employees as the pay-off of that investment might seem risky – e.g., women might get pregnant and leave their job, temporary workers might soon move on to their next job, older employees are facing their retirement. Closely connected to that, negative discrimination and stereotyping with regard to age, gender or other socio-demographic variables are still prevalent in the workplace (on age stereotyping see e.g. Amrhein & Backes, 2007). For older workers this might be the belief that their learning abilities and motivation have diminished, part-time workers are suspected that they do not invest as much energy or

commitment in their work as full-time workers and so on. These attitudes and beliefs may have been proven wrong, but as they have been formed over decades, they seem just as hard to change.

Furthermore, participation may also depend on other factors such as informal obligation, social pressure, or legal, union or company regulations that come along with a particular status, level of qualification, making participation in continuing training more or less likely (see Wittpoth, 2009). Finally, it needs to be questioned if training participation is a positive end in itself, meaning that lower participation is generally perceived negatively and in need of improvement. Arguably, non-participation can be found in all socio-demographic groups, implying that people have different ways to handle their work and life environments, with classical classroom-based vocational training being only one possible way and, e.g. learning by doing another (Görlitz et al., 2012).

Just how much of the differences in participation are rooted in involuntary exclusion may be approached by assessing the existence of corresponding group differences in continuing training motivation. According to lifestyle theory, learning motivation is more prevalent in milieus of the upper stratum, characterised by e.g. higher levels of qualification. Thus, this analysis also looks into the moderating role of socio-demographic variables, such as gender, employment participation (e.g. working hours and contract duration) or level of qualification:

> H4: Continuing training motivation varies among different socio-demographic groups.

We also expect significant group differences when it comes to the relationship between continuing training motivation with work ability and with the desire to continue working past retirement age. Since groups with less employment participation – who are often women (Kümmerling, Jansen & Lehndorff, 2008) – will face larger barriers to training participation than others, lack of training opportunities will lead to lower work ability, even if they are highly motivated to train. With regard to the desire to continue work after retirement age, part-time workers may already face less recognition at work and their financial gain through work is comparably low. For temporary workers, lack of recognition but also lack of opportunity may be detrimental to continuing work. We thus hypothesise:

> H5: Social group influences moderate the relationship of continuing training motivation with work ability and the desire to work past retirement age.

Empirical Investigation

Our empirical analysis is based on interviews collected as part of a larger study (‘Weiterbeschäftigungssurvey’, or ‘Weiterbeschäftigung im Rentenalter - Wünsche, Bedingungen, Möglichkeiten’, [*Survey on continuing in employment in pensionable age*]), commissioned in 2008 by the German Ministry of the Interior and conducted by the German Federal Institute of Population Research, which is fully described elsewhere (see Büsch et al., 2010). By means of methods of multivariate analyses, we test the influence of continuing training motivation on work ability and the desire to continue work after reaching retirement age. Additionally, we test if there are significant group differences with regard to gender, level of qualification, working hours or contract duration.

Data set and collection

The ‘Weiterbeschäftigungssurvey’ aims to provide insights on factors that play a part in working past retirement age. For the survey 1,500 employed individuals (workers, employees, civil servants, the marginally employed and those in job-creating and structural adjustment measures) aged 55 to 64 were voluntarily and anonymously questioned on work, health and retirement via computer-assisted telephone interviews. The survey excluded pensioners, the unemployed, seasonal workers, short-term-workers and workers in part-time employment prior to retirement who are already released. The sample was selected from a population of 3.8 million people, representing 40.6% of this age group, 7.4% of all persons aged 18 to 64 and 4.7% of the total German population in the annual average of 2006.

The realised sample is not representative for the older population in Germany, although intended. This is most apparent with regard to disposable income: Most male respondents (37.5%) belong to the highest income group (3,000€ and more), female respondents also find themselves in higher income groups (28.9% with a monthly disposable income of 2,000€ - less than 3,000€). Male median income is 2,620€ and female median income is 1,980€.

75% of respondents were under 60 years old and 44.4% were female. Most respondents work in small (10-49 employees) or medium (50-249) enterprises (each almost 25%). The majority worked in the educational, social or health sector (25%), followed by manufacturing industry (22%) and other services (22%). The sample consists of blue-collar workers (24.5%), white-collar workers (63.5%) and civil servants (12.0%).

The following analysis focuses on white-collar workers only, so a subsample of 953 employees will be used for our further analysis. From the survey we obtained three items to measure continuing training motivation: ‘Continually learning new things is very important in my life’, ‘I shall always strive to continually train’, and ‘I like to attend continuing training classes’ rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (with 1=‘fully applicable’ to 5=‘not at all applicable’), achieving an acceptable Cronbach’s α of roundabout 0.7. Work ability is directly measured by asking respondents to self-assess their current work ability, their work ability five years ago, and predicted work ability five years from now. All three items used again a 5-point Likert-type scale (with 1=‘very high’ to 5=‘very low’) and achieved a Cronbach’s α of 0.628. Desire to work past retirement age was measured by the single item: ‘Would you like to be working after reaching official retirement age, e.g. in minor employment?’ Respondents answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1)=yes, (2)=rather yes, (3)=don’t know, (4) rather no, (5)=no. As control variables we used gender, working hours, contract duration and level of qualification.

Working hours as per contract are captured by asking respondents to categorise themselves as either part-time (15-35 hours/week), full-time (35 hours/week or more), marginally employed (less than 15 hours) or unemployed. Contract duration was measured by asking, ‘Is your work contract temporary?’ with respondents answering either yes or no. Level of qualification was also self-rated, answering the question, ‘What is your level of qualification?’, selecting among the options ‘no vocational graduation’, ‘Apprenticeship or similar’, ‘Master craftsmen/ technicians or similar’, ‘Graduates of universities or of universities of applied sciences’, or ‘Other graduation’. Respondents were also asked to give the number of continuing trainings taken during the past three years.

Data analysis and results

In Table 1, the main results regarding the desire to work past retirement age, work ability, and continuing training motivation are given as mean values (standard deviation; ‘std. dev.’). Here, the analyses are separated for different respondent groups and are enhanced through a test of significance for the most important intrinsic training motivation (with a t-test in case of two group levels and an F-test in case of more than two group levels).

In general, continuing training motivation is quite high (with an overall mean of about 1.8) – in contrast to a moderate work ability (about 2.2) and desire to work past retirement age (about 2.5). The high training motivation of our older sample seems in accordance with the theory of age-related motivational maintenance which posits that in the course of a life-time learning motivation does not necessarily decline but stays high or even increases (see Gegenfurtner & Vauras, 2012). In addition, heterogeneity of continuing training motivation is quite low (standard deviation much lower than for the desire to work past retirement age). Analysing different groups of respondents, male full-time employees with a fixed-term contract and the highest qualification level are most strongly motivated to train. However, only the difference for the differentiation with respect to qualification level is relevant from a statistical point of view ($p<.001$).

Trait		Work ability	Desire to work past retirement age	Continuing training motivation	
Parameter	n	Mean (std. dev.)	Mean (std. dev.)	Mean (std. dev.)	t- or F-value (significance)
Total sample	953	2.204 (0.572)	2.532 (1.188)	1.803 (0.854)	–
Men	411	2.131 (0.551)	2.471 (1.228)	1.797 (0.819)	-0.173 (0.863)
Women	542	2.259 (0.581)	2.578 (1.155)	1.807 (0.880)	
Full-time	689	2.132 (0.568)	2.533 (1.200)	1.771 (0.846)	-1.037 (0.300)
Part-time	208	2.360 (0.541)	2.585 (1.146)	1.841 (0.845)	
Fixed-term contract	54	2.225 (0.615)	2.038 (1.188)	1.704 (0.833)	-0.869 (0.385)
Permanent contract	898	2.202 (0.570)	2.561 (1.183)	1.808 (0.855)	
No vocational graduation	17	2.294 (0.539)	2.188 (1.167)	2.098 (1.110)	5.127 (0.000)
Apprenticeship or similar	444	2.247 (0.579)	2.590 (1.199)	1.919 (0.929)	
Master craftsmen/ technicians or similar	195	2.189 (0.539)	2.521 (1.167)	1.720 (0.761)	
University Graduates	286	2.141 (0.586)	2.488 (1.192)	1.660 (0.747)	
Other graduation	11	2.212 (0.402)	2.091 (0.944)	1.848 (0.780)	

Table 1. Main results differentiated for selected respondent groups.

In a next step, the relationship between continuing training motivation and the other two traits, work ability and desire to work past retirement age, is analysed (Table 2).

Trait	Correlation of continuing training motivation with	
	work ability (using Pearson)	desire to work past retirement age (using Spearman)
Total sample	0.204**	0.116**
Men	0.287**	0.135**
Women	0.150**	0.102*
Full time	0.221**	0.133**
Part time	0.071	-0.010
Fixed-term contract	0.184	0.128
Permanent contract	0.206**	0.112**
No vocational graduation	0.018	0.450
Apprenticeship or similar	0.191**	0.117*
Master craftsmen/ technicians or similar	0.167*	0.126
University Graduates	0.245**	0.082
Other vocational graduation	0.042	0.272

Table 2. Correlation of continuing training motivation with work ability and with desire to work past retirement age for selected respondent groups (**…significant correlations at the p<.01 level, *…at the p<.05 level).

For the total sample our analysis yields a weak significant positive correlation between continuing training motivation and work ability. A weaker significant correlation shows for continuing training motivation and the desire to work past retirement age. On group level, some small differences could be observed. Correlations for men are stronger than for women. Full-time employment is correlated to both work ability and desire to work past retirement age, whereas no correlations are found for part-time workers. Similarly, individuals with permanent contract again show weak significant correlations while there is no such effect for individuals with fixed-term contracts. With regard to qualification level the picture is more complex. For individuals without vocational graduation no correlations could be observed. While both correlations are found for the qualification level of apprenticeship, for master craftsmen only a very weak significant correlation for continuing training motivation with work ability is found. The strongest correlation with regard to qualification level is found for university graduates, also only for work ability.

Considering this data, a detailed analysis for men seems to be reasonable. Here, the analyses of the relationships of continuing training motivation with work ability leads to a Pearson correlation of 0.309 ($p<.01$) and of continuing training motivation with the desire to work past retirement age to a Spearman correlation of 0.169 ($p<.05$). But further analyses, e.g. linear regression analyses, showed no relevant relationships (i.e. very low r^2 values).

Confirming previous research (Boockmann et al., 2013), the actual number of trainings taken seems to have no effect on the desire to work past retirement age, as can be seen in Table 3.

Trait	Work ability (using Pearson)	Desire to work past retirement age (using Spearman)
Number of trainings (past three years)	-.067*	-.008

Table 3. Correlation of actual trainings taken (within past three years) with work ability and with desire to work past retirement age (*…significant correlations at the $p<.05$ level).

All in all, results confirm hypotheses H1-3, establishing a positive correlation between continuing training motivation and factors work ability and desire to work past retirement age, also giving renewed support to the relative unimportance of actual trainings taken for the desire to work past retirement age. Differentiated for selected respondent groups the level of qualification has a significant influence on continuing training motivation, giving support to H4. This effect was stronger than any differences with regard to gender, weekly working hours or contract duration. It is also apparent that group differences moderate the relationships posited in H1 and H2, thus supporting H5. As surmised, only full-time and permanent employees motivated to train also feel inclined to work longer years and feel higher work ability. Impact of qualification level seems limited to moderating the strength of the correlation of continuing training motivation and work ability, with the strongest effect for university graduates.

Conclusion

Focussing on white-collar employees aged 55 to 64 in Germany, the present study adds a motivational viewpoint to the literature of determinants of work ability and the desire to work past retirement age, also addressing issues of social inequalities and discrimination (with regard to e.g. gender and qualification level).
First, our study shows continuing training motivation to be high, also across all respondent groups, with university-educated individuals being slightly more motivated, supporting Tippelt and von Hippel's (2005) findings. We show a weak significant correlation between continuing training motivation and self-assessed work ability, suggesting work ability as a possible outcome of training motivation similar to the findings of Krapp (2005) and Beier and Kanfer (2009). With regard to work ability the strongest correlation with continuing training motivation can be found for men, followed by individuals with university degrees. Methodically, one explanation for the relevance of qualification level might be that self-assessed work ability as measured in this study can be understood to mean both physical and mental ability to work. Less qualified workers might be working in more physically challenging tasks, so they possibility think more about their physical work ability when answering this question. Thus whether he or she likes to train and learn might have less effect on their work ability. It also lends support to findings on higher work ability for cognitive workers (Tuomi et al., 2001).

Furthermore, we show that it is indeed rather motivation for continuing training than actual participation that positively influences the desire to work past retirement age. Here, the strongest effect is also for men, but, interestingly, not for the university-educated group. This effect was stronger than any differences with regard to gender, level of qualification, working hours or contract duration for the three analysed constructs of work ability, continuing training motivation and desire to work past retirement age. Thus, our study shows that with higher qualification level the importance of continuing training increases. Hence, we can say that the stronger the culture of life-accompanying learning is set up for the purpose of managing the aging process and not age, the higher the ability as well as the desire to work past retirement age (see also Schulz et al., 2010).

Even though results show the meaning of continuing training participation to be low for the desire to work past retirement age, without continuing training it can be assumed that the ability to prolong working life is low. In addition to this, positive training experiences can further increase training motivation. Hence, new methods and settings that accommodate the needs and expectations of older employees should be developed. Training contents for older training participants should be more application-oriented (Lehr, 2000) and more focussed on eliciting positive affect to increase motivation (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004) as older individuals tend to direct their motivation more on personally meaningful and socially rewarding behaviours (Mather & Carstensen, 2005). Thus, trainings that further social contact and interaction have a positive effect on motivation (Gegenfurtner et al., 2012). Additionally, the 'Weiterbeschäftigungssurvey' shows that for older employees a longer distance to the learning site leads to a lower continuing training motivation. Finally, it seems important that there is a continuing positive learning experience starting at a much earlier age, as learning histories and memories do influence training perceptions and behaviour (see Tippelt & von Hippel, 2005). Thus, organisations would be wise to strengthen employees' training motivation by boosting their feeling of self-efficacy and valence not just in trainings but also generally at work and over a longer period of time (see Torraco, 1999).

While literature shows different socio-demographical groups to have different shares in continuing training participation we could show that generally, continuing training motivation is rather high (mean of 1.80), with hardly any differences between groups (only the difference for qualification level is statistically significant). This could imply that inequalities in participation are less a result of varying motivation among these groups, but of other barriers. As a first step, continuing training concepts should accommodate differences in interests and barriers of social milieus, as well as different learning backgrounds and expectations (see Tippelt & von Hippel, 2005). Negative stereotypes and discrimination need to be addressed, too, in order to create a supportive and appreciative organisational climate that fosters a learning culture. Consistent with the lifelong learning approach, it seems necessary to develop a life span approach to instilling and promoting learning and training motivation and avoid longer periods of non-training that may decrease learning abilities (Dworschak et al., 2006).

Finally, we address the limitations of our study. First, the realised sample is not representative for the older population (although intended), so it would be unwise to apply results to older employees in general. Second, causalities remain unclear. It could be argued for example, that someone who wishes or needs to stay employed after reaching legal retirement age feels motivated to train because he or she feels the necessity of continuing training for keeping the job – rather than assuming that individuals who like to train are also e.g. more interested per se in working longer years.

Third, our measures lack a focus on any particular type of continuing training, so we cannot safely assume that any continuous training motivation measured is actually aimed at on-the-job training. As reliability of the scales used in the survey is modest, our correlation results could be biased and the effect size may be higher. Furthermore, answers to questions about work ability, continuing training motivation and desire to work past retirement age are subject to social desirability and may not represent the true attitude of the respondent. For future research it would also be helpful to analyse longitudinal data to understand how these relationships develop in the long run-

References

Alexander, K. L. (2001). Comment: The Clouded Crystal Ball: Trends in Educational Stratification. *Sociology of Education*, *74*, 169-177.

Amrhein, L., & Backes, G. M. (2007). Alter(n)sbilder und Diskurse des Alter(n)s. *Zeitschrift für Gerontologie und Geriatrie*, *40*(2), 104-111.

Baltes, P. B., Lindenberger, U., & Staudinger, U. M. (2006). Life span theory in developmental psychology. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 1. Theoretical models of human development (6th ed.)* (pp. 569–664). New York: Wiley.

Barker, C. (2003). *Cultural studies: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Limited.

Beehr, T. A. (1986). The Process Of Retirement: A Review And Recommendations For Future Investigation. *Personnel Psychology*, *39*(1), 31-55.

Beier, M., E., & Kanfer, R. (2009). Motivation in training and development: A phase perspective. In S.W. J. Kozlowski & E. Salas (Eds.), *Learning, Training, and Development in Organizations* (pp. 65-97). New York: Psychology Press.

Berg, T. I. J. v. d., Elders, L. A. M., & Burdorf, A. (2010). Influence of Health and Work on Early Retirement. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, *52*(6), 576-583.

Bilger, F., Gnahs, D., Hartmann, J., & Kuper, H. (Eds.). (2013). *Weiterbildungsverhalten in Deutschland. Resultate des Adult Education Survey*. Bielefeld: W. Bertelsmann Verlag.

Blancke, S., Roth, C., & Schmid, J. (2000). *Employability ('Beschäftigungsfähigkeit') als Herausforderung für den Arbeitsmarkt - Auf dem Weg zur flexiblen Erwerbsgesellschaft - Eine Konzept- und Literaturstudie*, Arbeitsbericht Nr. 157. Retrieved April 11, 2014, from http://elib.uni-stuttgart.de/opus/volltexte/2004/1716/pdf/AB157.pdf

Boockmann, B., Fries, J., & Göbel, C. (2013). *Specific measures for older employees and late career employment*. ZEW Discussion Paper No. 12–059. Retrieved November 12, 2014, from http://ftp.zew.de/pub/zew-docs/dp/dp12059.pdf

Börsch-Supan, A., & Wilke, C. (2009). Zur mittel- und langfristigen Entwicklung der Erwerbstätigkeit in Deutschland. *Zeitschrift für Arbeitsmarktforschung*, *42*(1), 29-48.

Bretschneider, M. (2007). *Kompetenzentwicklung aus der Perspektive der Weiterbildung*. Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung. Retrieved May 17, 2013 from http://www.die-bonn.de/doks/bretschneider0601.pdf

Brusch, M., & Büsch, V. (2012). The Role of Job related Factors to Prolong Working Life: An Analysis for the German Labour Market. In *Proceedings of the 15th QMOD Conference on Quality and Service Sciences* (pp. 272-281).

Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2013). *Arbeitsmarktberichterstattung - Der Arbeitsmarkt in Deutschland, Ältere am Arbeitsmarkt*. Nürnberg. Retrieved May 26, 2014, from http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer Content/Arbeitsmarktberichte/Personengruppen/generische-Publikationen/Aeltere-amArbeitsmarkt-2012.pdf

Büsch, V., Dorbritz, J., Heien, T., & Micheel, F. (2010). *Weiterbeschäftigung im Rentenalter. Wünsche – Bedingungen – Möglichkeiten*. Materialien zur Bevölkerungswissenschaft, 129. Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung.

Colquitt, J. A., LePine, J. A., & Noe, R. A. (2000). Toward an Integrative Theory of Training Motivation: A Meta-Analytic Path Analysis of 20 Years of Research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*(5), 678-707.

Dienel, H.-L., & Willke, G. (2004). *Deutschland in der globalen Wissensgesellschaft – Auswirkungen und Anforderungen*. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Dworschak, B., Buck, H., & Schletz, A. (2006). Building workplaces in line with the ageing process. In T. Tikkanen & B. Nyhan (Eds.), *Promoting lifelong learning for older workers: an international overview* (pp. 208-224). Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Europäische Kommission (1995). *Lehren und Lernen. Auf dem Weg zur kognitiven Gesellschaft*. Retrieved June 26, 2014, from http://europa.eu/documents/comm/white_papers/pdf/com95_590_de.pdf

Federal Ministry of the Interior (2012). *Every Age Counts. The Federal Government's demographic strategy*. Retrieved June 26, 2014, from http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/Infomaterial/BMI/demografiestrategie_englisch_3561138.html

Garrison, D. R. (1997). Self-Directed Learning: Toward a Comprehensive Model. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *48*(1), 18-33.

Gegenfurtner, A. ,& Vauras, M. (2012). Age-related differences in the relation between motivation to learn and transfer of training in adult continuing education. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *37*(1), 33-46.

Görlitz, K., & Tamm, M. (2012). *Revisiting the Complementarity between Education and Training: The Role of Personality, Working Tasks and Firm Effects*. Retrieved June 26, 2014, from http://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.408035.de/diw_sp0477.pdf

Hansen, L. E., & Nielsen, T. (2006). Company policies to integrate older male workers in Denmark. In T. Tikkanen & B. Nyhan (Eds.), *Promoting lifelong learning for older workers: an international overview* (pp. 140–148). Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

Hopsu, L., Leppänen, A., Ranta, R., & Louhevaara, V. (2005). Perceived work ability and individual characteristics as predictors for early exit from working life in professional cleaners. *International Congress Series*, *1280*, 84-88.

Hradil, S. (1999). *Soziale Ungleichheit in Deutschland.* Opladen: Leske & Budrich.

Huber, M. (2009). Frauen ab 50 – Bedürfnisse und betriebliche Barrieren im Bereich der beruflichen Weiterbildung. In B. Blättel-Mink & C. Kramer (Eds.), *Doing Aging – Weibliche Perspektiven des Älterwerdens* (pp. 127–138). Schriften des Heidelberger Instituts für Interdisziplinäre Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung 7. Baden-Baden: Nomos.

Ilmarinen, J., Tuomi, K., & Seitsamo, J. (2005). New dimensions of work ability. *International Congress Series*, *1280*, 3-7.

Kanfer, R., & Ackerman, P. L. (2004). Aging, adult development and work motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, *29*(3), 440-458.

Kenny, A., English, R., & Kilmartin, D. (2007). *Key skills: Enhancing employability within a lifelong learning paradigm*. Retrieved January 7, 2014, from http://arrow.dit.ie/cserart/30

Krapp, A. (2005). Basic needs and the development of interest and intrinsic motivational orientations. *Learning and Instruction*, *15*(5), 381-395.

Kümmerling, A., Jansen, A., & Lehndorff, S. (2008). Immer mehr Frauen sind erwerbstätig–aber mit kürzeren Wochenarbeitszeiten. *Gelsenkirchen: Inst. Arbeit und Qualifikation. IAQ-Report*, (2008-04).

Lehr, U. (2000). *Psychologie des Alterns.* Wiebelsheim: Quelle & Meyer.

Lüdtke, H. (1989). *Expressive Ungleichheit. Zur Soziologie der Lebensstile*. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.

Macionis, J. J., & Gerber, L. M. (2010). *Sociology*. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Mather, M., & Carstensen, L. L. (2005). Aging and motivated cognition: The positivity effect in attention and memory. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *9*(10), 496–502.

Mathieu, J. E., Martineau, J. W., & Tannenbaum, S. I. (1993). Individual And Situational Influences On The Development Of Self-Efficacy: Implications For Training Effectiveness. *Personnel Psychology*, *46*(1), 125-147.

Mathieu, J. E., & Martineau, J. W. (1997). Individual and situational influences in training motivation. In J. K. Ford, S. W. J. Kozlowski, K. Kraigerand, E. Salas & M. S. Teachout (Eds.), *Improving training effectiveness in organizations* (pp. 193-122). Hillsdale: Erlbaum.

McNair, S. (2006). How different is the older labour market? Attitudes to work and retirement among older people in Britain. *Social Policy and Society, 5*(4), 485-494.

Noe, R. A. (1986). Trainees' Attributes and Attitudes: Neglected Influences on Training Effectiveness. *The Academy of Management Review*, *11*(4), 736-749.

OECD (2002). *Bildung auf einen Blick*. Retrieved May 26, 2014, from http://www.bildungsserver.de/db/mlesen.html?Id=16709

Saba, T., & Guerin, G. (2005). Extending employment beyond the retirement age: The case of health care managers in Quebec. *Public Personnel Management*, *34*(2), 195-214.

Salonen, P., Arola, H., Nygård, C. H., Huhtala, H., & Koivisto, A. M. (2003). Factors associated with premature departure from working life among ageing food industry employees. *Occupational Medicine*, *53*(1), 65-68.

Schiefele, U., & Schreyer, I. (1994). Intrinsic motivation to learn and learning: A review of recent research findings. *German Journal of Educational Psychology*, *8*(1), 1-13.

Schröder, H., & Gilberg, R. (2005). *Weiterbildung Älterer im demographischen Wandel: empirische Bestandsaufnahme und Prognose*. Bielefeld: Bertelsmann.

Schulz, M., & Stamov Roßnagel, C. (2010). Informal workplace learning: an exploration of age differences in learning competence. *Learning and Instruction, 20*(5), 383-399.

Sell, L. (2009). Predicting long-term sickness absence and early retirement pension from self-reported work ability. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, *82*(9), 1133-1138.

Shacklock, K., Brunetto, Y., & Nelson, S. (2009). The different variables that affect older males' and females' intentions to continue working. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 47*(1), 79-101.

Statistisches Bundesamt (2009). *Bevölkerung Deutschlands bis 2060, 12. koordinierte Bevölkerungsvorausberechnung*. Retrieved June 26, 2014, from https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Bevoelkerung/VorausberechnungBevoelkerung/BevoelkerungDeutschland2060Presse5124204099004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Statistisches Bundesamt (2014). *Rente mit 63: Derzeit nur jeder Zweite aus Altersgründen im Ruhestand*. Retrieved June 26, 2014, from https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/ImFokus/Arbeitsmarkt/RenteMit63.html

Staudinger, U. M., & Heidemeier, H. (2009). *Altern, Bildung und lebenslanges Lernen*. Stuttgart: Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft mbH.

Tesch-Römer, C., Heribert, E., & Wurm, S. (2006). *Altwerden in Deutschland. Sozialer Wandel und individuelle Entwicklung in der zweiten Lebenshälfte*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Tippelt, R., & Hippel, A. von (2005). Weiterbildung: Chancenausgleich und soziale Heterogenität. *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, 37*, 38-45.

Torraco, R. J. (1999). Integrating learning with working: A reconception of the role of workplace learning. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 10*(3), 249-270.

Tuomi, K., Huuhtanen, P., Nykyri, E., & Ilmarinen, J. (2001). Promotion of work ability, the quality of work and retirement. *Occupational Medicine, 51*(5), 318-324.

Van Dam, K., van der Vorst, J., & van der Heijden, B. (2009). Employees' intentions to retire early: A case of planned behavior and anticipated work conditions. *Journal of Career Development, 35*(3), 265-289.

Van Erde, W., & Thierry, H. (1996). Vroom's Expectancy Model and Work-Related Criteria: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*(5), 575-586.

Vollmer, A. (2012). *Weiterbildungstrends in Deutschland 2012*. Retrieved June 26, 2014, from http://www.sgd.de/sgd-news/sgd-news_80.php

Von Bonsdorff, M. E., Huuhtanen, P., Tuomi, K., & Seitsamo, J. (2010). Predictors of employees' early retirement intentions: an 11-year longitudinal study. *Occupational Medicine*, *60*(2), 94-100.

Walter, O., & Stanat, P. (2008). Der Zusammenhang des Migrantenanteils in Schulen mit der Lesekompetenz: Differenzierte Analysen der erweiterten Migrantenstichprobe von PISA 2003. *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft*, *11*(1) 84-105.

Wittpoth, J. (2009). Beteiligungsregulation in der Weiterbildung. In R. Tippelt & A. von Hippel (Eds.), *Handbuch Erwachsenenbildung/Weiterbildung* (pp. 771-788). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, Vol.6, No.1, 2015, pp. 39-54

The self-perception of adult educators in Eastern Europe in the post-Soviet transitional period

Tetyana Kloubert
University of Augsburg, Germany (tetyana.kloubert@phil.uni-augsburg.de)

Abstract

This article addresses the self-images of adult educators in view of exercising their professional agency in contexts of social transformation after the fall of the communist regimes. It draws on research undertaken in Poland, Ukraine and Russia in 2009 which investigated the self-perception and self-evaluation of adult educators with regard to their own educational practice—vis-à-vis the challenges of transition in general and of the need of rethinking the dictatorial past in particular. The interviews with 91 adult educators in three countries illustrate the impact of socio-political change in the period of democratization on the concept of one's professional identity. They also demonstrate how transition policies create dilemmas for practice which adult educators accommodate or resist. The article discusses how different self-images are linked to socio-political challenges of society in the transition times. It analyses the possibilities, challenges, impacts and constraints of different perception and forms of educational practice in the light of the current situation in three countries.

Keywords: self-images of adult educators; education in the time of transition; identity crisis of adult educators; Eastern Europe

Introduction

An evaluation of the challenges of education in a society can begin with the question about the self-perception and self-understanding of educationists—how do they perceive their professional tasks, mission and function vis-à-vis a given socio-political situation. But within such a broad profession as adult education the questions posed above are anything but clear or even predictable. In times of social and political transition, the role and function of adult education becomes even more complicated, and adult educators must adapt to the current challenges and needs of adult learners, as well as review and redefine their role as facilitators of the on-going transition.

This paper illustrates the self-perception of adult educators in three Eastern European countries (Poland, Russia and Ukraine) in view of the on-going social

ISSN 2000-7426
© 2015 The author
DOI 10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela0131
www.rela.ep.liu.se

transformations started in the 1990s. It is based on interviews with adult educators from the field of political and civic education which were carried out in 2009. The results presented here are part of a bigger research project dealing with the topic 'Coming to Terms with the Past as a Problem of Adult Education: A Case Study in Eastern and Central Europe'. This project aims to define and describe the problem and phenomenon of dealing with a totalitarian past in educational institutions. As social actors whose positions are based on claims of knowledge and enlightenment, adult educators seem to be predestined to play an important role in the transitional period in Eastern Europe, in contemplation of new ideational trends as well as in discussion about past and actual political processes. When speaking about adult educators in Poland, Russia and Ukraine, I refer to a special group of adult educators, i.e. those who deal with questions about their particular country's past and its implications for present developments. At the beginning it can be noted that it was dealing with history that ushered in the modern nation-building process in the three countries under investigation. This process was largely influenced by the romanticized "re-discovery" of national history and identity which was developed in the struggle for political independence and national emancipation (especially in Poland and Ukraine). Peter Niedermüller described public debates about history in East Central Europe after 1989 as the 'discourse of the national issue' (1997, p. 267). In all three countries, memory culture is often in the service of catching up on the nation-building process. The emphasis has been laid on strengthening national and cultural self-consciousness as well as on the development of their own "true" identity. This public debate had a strong impact on education and on the self-perception and self-description of the professional issues of adult educators, as will be shown below.

Before discussing the role of adult educators during transition, the research focus, i.e. "coming to terms with the past", must be explained. I believe that this is an essential theme of education and public discussion during periods of transformation.

In his essay 'What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean' Dragović-Soso provides three arguments to justify dealing with the past: first, a psychological argument—confronting the past is indispensable for healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation in various contexts; second, a political argument—confronting the past strengthens democracy and promotes respect for human rights, thereby preventing future conflicts and crimes; and third, an ethical and moral argument—the question of taking responsibility for the suffering of the victims by recognizing their trauma. (Dragović-Soso, 2010, p. 34). All three arguments are important for constructing a new system after the end of an authoritarian regime:

> Through the process of confronting the past, the *nation learns* to respect human rights and builds a culture of tolerance. And, finally […] it achieves a degree of social consensus about the past and recognises the abuses that have taken place, thus removing history as a point of contention, and counter-acting myth-making and the demonization of other groups. All of this together works to consolidate peace and contributes to future reconciliation. (ibid., p. 37, emphasis by T. K.)

Dealing with the past can be assumed as a tool of personal life management, social mobilization and democratic development, as it was depicted in the study 'Coming to Terms with the Past as a Problem of Adult Education' (Kloubert, 2014). The past can also serve as a tool to integrate or marginalize social and religious groups in society, to serve as a guide or to promote ethnic, national or group identity. Thus, the examination of the past belongs clearly to the field of education, and the educators are hence actors and initiators of these processes. The educators (in the broad sense of the word) can

thereby assume different tasks and influence by some means or other the personal and societal transformation, according to the specific understanding of their role. Theodor Adorno, the author of 'Education after Auschwitz' and 'Dealing with the past', discussed the actuality of adult education and saw its function in the "enlightenment" (Adorno, 1986, p. 329) and formation of the "vanguard" (ibid.):

> No one will expect from adult education [...] that it, directly by itself, would be able to decisive changes. But probably it can lighten the type of man who is attuned to it […], so that they cope with the present conditions as the vanguard (ibid.)

Adorno speaks of the "human force[s]" of adult educators 'who are able to mediate between the forms of political democracy and the actual level of awareness of the population' (ibid., p. 330). In addition to a political, judicial, and historical examination of the past, adult education fulfils its social mission in the context of inclusion, reintegration, readjustment, ability to act, and orientation (or 're-orientation as a dimension of orientation') (Friedenthal-Haase, 2002, p. 76).

This paper will discuss how adult educators deal with the challenges of transition and what roles they intend to play in these processes. It will also discuss whether adult educators perceive themselves capable of promoting democratic change and how and why they intend on doing so. The relevance of the topic stems from the considerable information deficit about the educational praxis concerning this subject in Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, few of the materials published on this topic are based on empirical research. Further research is needed to identify the relevant theoretical principles and fruitful research practices. It is also important to identify training practices and learning processes that will facilitate understanding of transition in discussions about the past—across groups, countries, cultures, and boundaries.

Data Collection and Methods

"Adult educator" is a broad category that includes people involved in the provision of adult education opportunities. However, the focus of this research was on those who are involved in direct contact with adult learners. Following the concept that a nation expresses and transmits its traditions and experiences through education, I have chosen the educators—the human agents of education—as respondents for my empirical research. The method of qualitative research used was that of conversational interviews with some experts in adult education. All the interviews were conducted "face-to-face" with individual respondents. Qualitative interviews yield rich insights into personal biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes, and feelings. Semi-structured interviews as used in my research project rest upon a basic schedule, in question form, of areas to be covered in the interview. The schedule guides the interview, but permits various input from the subject to come up naturally and in any order. This schedule ensures that basically the same information is obtained from all subjects.

The research methodology used was close to the methodology of the grounded theory. According to the grounded theory, the study is less about the verification of theories, but more about structuring and categorization of the field under research. For the evaluation, open coding (inductive and deductive conceptualizing and categorizing of the texts) and axial coding (creating and revising categories and subcategories) were applied (cf. Strauss & Corbin, 1996, pp. 75 et seq.). In the process of coding, the data

from the interviews have been reduced and regrouped by dividing it into units of analysis and coding each unit. The process involved identification and analysis of categories of meaning which will be presented below.

The reasons for the selection of the countries under research will now be explained. Poland, as an EU member, is, on the whole, a stable democratic state. It draws its self-image to a large extent from history and religion, discussing at the same time difficult issues of its own involvement in the atrocities of the past (such as involvement of the Poles in the Holocaust). The selection of Ukraine for the study can be explained by the fact that, on the one hand, the country stepped onto the path of democratization after the Orange Revolution,[1] but on the other, after this revolution the new political powers launched a strong politics of national history, which was to be brought into line with the democratic aspirations. Furthermore, 'most current hopes for a further democracy development east of the Bug' (Nolte, 2007, p. 5) were directed towards the Ukraine. Russia was selected as an example of a country that is ruled autocratically and tries to pursue a strong official line of cultural memory on the one hand. On the other hand, Russia is relevant for the study as a state which served in the past as a main actor in the dissemination of the communist regime. The interviews were conducted in various regions of each country. In Russia they were carried out in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, the Republic of Komi (as a place where many GULAG camps were located, such as Vorkuta, Uchta and Pechora), as well as Perm (a region which in modern Russia is regarded as a small isle of functioning civil society). In Ukraine, three regions were included: Kiev as the capital, Lviv as a regional capital in Western Ukraine, and Donetsk as a regional capital in Eastern Ukraine. The division into Western and Eastern Ukraine has a historical basis and corresponds nowadays to different political, social and ideological attitudes. In Poland, three historically different regions were selected: the regions of Warsaw, of Gdansk and of Kracow. All in all, 91 interviews were conducted. These took place in Russia during April and May 2009, in Poland in June and the first half of July, and in Ukraine in July and August 2009.

The participants in this research seldom refer to themselves as "adult educators", but they perform the work of adult educators regardless of how they may denote it. They have worked at least four years in this field and can share a great deal of experience from their everyday practice. The interviewees represent different types of educational institutions within all three countries (public, private and church-related institutions and NGOs).

In order to find the eligible institutions, I have used the criteria developed by the German Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the Socialist Unity Party Dictatorship (Cf. Kasianov & Jilge, 2008; Ruchniewicz, Tyszkiewicz, Mählert, & Lotz, 2004), as well as topographic information from the book 'Places of Memory of the Mass Terror 1937/38' (Kaminsky, 2007). After a rough analysis of the initial data (in this case on the basis of the protocols), I identified the other institutions where individuals should be carried out. These were, for example, those of whom I became aware from the local context, or who were mentioned in conversations with the interviewees. This process was conducted according to the principle of variance maximization in order to review the assumptions which had been made (cf. Strauss et al., 1996, p. 150; Flick, 2002, p. 102). The findings were obtained both inductively and deductively.

The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions. All of them were open-ended. The intention was to get the respondents to talk about their reflections on each of the topics. All the interviews were tape-recorded. With a few exceptions all of them have been transcribed. The interviews were conducted in Russian, Polish and Ukrainian; for

citation I have translated the passages into German and English. Each participant's responses were analysed for frequent patterns or similarities. Once this was accomplished, all of the findings were compared – again looking for thematic patterns that had emerged from the participants' responses. Themes were identified based on the participants' responses to the interview schedule. Each response was read as a means of finding similarities and differences within the text. Once these were identified and noted, the passage was reread with the themes in mind and matched within the body of each response. All responses were then related to the appropriate themes.

The key question of the part of the research concerning the self-image of adult education was:

- What is the pedagogical self-concept of the leaders of adult education? Is the process of "coming to terms with the past" considered as a process of education (or, for example, merely as one of dissemination of information)? (In the interpretation of the interviews the elements of the pedagogical self-concept will be defined. It is probable that the leaders do not consider themselves explicitly as adult educators – that is why the implicit concept should be revealed. The pedagogical understanding in the different societies will be compared. One of the guiding questions will be: Is it is possible to discern a sort of pedagogical agenda?)

Differences between countries exist not only on the macro level, but also in the nature of the institutional landscape in the three countries themselves, and thus on the meso level: While adult education as an academic discipline is gaining in importance in Poland and classic adult education institutions such as community colleges, folk universities, etc. are becoming more and more established there, practical adult education in Ukraine and Russia is not well developed and organized and is often not explicitly represented as such. Initiatives for adult education can be found in libraries, museums, NGOs, associations, foundations, etc., although the representatives of these institutions do not understand their work as adult education.

As a basis for discussion, the interviewees were presented with the following quote from Horst Siebert: 'adults are capable of learning, but they are unteachable' (1996, p 90: 'Erwachsene sind lernfähig, aber unbelehrbar').[2] This citation initiated reflection on their methods, goals, and difficulties. In many cases, this topic was expanded upon by reflection on perceived successes and failures as well as desires and intentions with respect to their professional activities. Explicitly formulated principles, implicit inner motives, and bases for decision-making provide information about how adult educators assess their role in teaching about the past and how they wish to operate.

Agnieszka Bron suggests that there are many difficulties associated with research and data collection in different countries. She states that such studies can be effective only if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- A knowledge of the language of the investigated countries;
- Experience of living in the country;
- The control of one's own cultural and personal biases (cf. Bron-Wojciechowska, 1989, p. 13).

If I attempt to apply these criteria to myself, at least two of these are fulfilled due to the fact that Ukrainian and Russian are my mother tongues and I have learnt Polish since

my childhood. I have spent several months or years in each of these countries. As for the third aspect, the control of one's own cultural biases, this means primarily the critical awareness of and reflection on such biases which must be the constant effort of every researcher, regardless of their field of research.

Returning to the adult educators in the three countries examined, I will explore their ideas of professional identity and professional mission in times of social transition.[3]

Identity Crisis of adult educators and their new roles

In the field of adult education, the study of educators has a long research tradition (Jarvis & Chadwick, 1991; Merriam & Brockett, 1997). According to them, adult educators fulfil a wide range of activities (Kraft, 2006; Lattke & Nuissl, 2008) such as teaching, management, counselling and guidance, program planning, media use, and administrative support positions. Recent studies funded by the European Commission pointed out the key competences for adult learning professionals (Buiskool, Broek, van Lakerveld, Zarifis & Osborne, 2010), such as being an autonomous learner, communicator, team player, and networker as well as being responsible for developing the profession further, being an expert, being able to deploy a wide variety of learning methods, styles, and techniques, being a motivator, and being able to deal with the heterogeneity of groups. However, the study of the self-perception and self-ascription of adult educators during social and political upheaval and the resulting transformation has been neglected.

After the collapse of the socialist system in Eastern Europe, the intelligentsia in general and educators in particular found themselves in a deep identity crisis (cf. Gessen, 1997). During the Soviet era, many educators were granted various national privileges. They were, however, blind to the social realities and served the ideological apparatus of the state. The Polish researcher Hanna Palska (1994) refers to the quasi-intelligentsia existing in the Polish People's Republic – they were obliged to defend Communist propaganda but had no social mandate. An intelligentsia that was recognised in the public sphere but not at the service of the state did not exist. This was hardly possible anywhere in the Soviet Union because of the severely repressive state penal system (see Šanovs'ka, 2007, p. 179 et seq.; Gawin, 2008). Since the collapse of the system, their essential roles as propagators of party opinion and socialist interpretation have become obsolete, but their new roles have not yet been defined. The situation in Ukraine and Russia (and to some extent even in Poland) was therefore complicated by the fact that the transformations of the late 1980s and early 1990s revealed the lack of intellectuals[4] represented in the public sphere. The intelligentsia had gradually disappeared by the end of the Soviet era because there was no longer a demand for their typical function. Ryvkina, a Russian sociologist, argues that:

> The most important feature of the Soviet intelligentsia was to inform society – not an abstract function of information or education, but a very specific education: education of the people in the spirit of socialism and Soviet patriotism. [...]. The most important distinguishing feature of the intelligentsia was its 'service' to the Soviet system. (Ryvkina, 2006, p. 140)

Because their activity became obsolete after the collapse of the system, the intelligentsia as a social group was rendered useless. The second cause of the disappearance of this

group, as described by Ryvkina, was the role of the intelligentsia in the collapse of the USSR: they wanted to democratise the system, but they accelerated the end of the system without having a program in place (ibid.). With respect to the role of the dissident intelligentsia in the collapse of the USSR, the following words are often quoted: 'We aimed at communism, but hit Russia', which are attributed to the dissident Alexander Zinoviev. These words are mistakenly interpreted as a sign of repentance for the decay of Soviet dissidents. Ryvkina also describes another core problem of the contemporary Russian intelligentsia—"the flight of the intelligentsia". Intellectuals, i.e. teachers and doctors, either enter the commercial sphere or emigrate. According to Ryvinka, society demands pragmatic solutions, thereby obliging the humanists ("Gumanitarii") to give way to the representatives of techno-industrial professions ("Technokraty")[5] (see Ryvkina, 2006, p. 138 et seq.).

The phenomenon of independent intellectuals, who were free of state doctrine and independent of government funding, needed to be established in the years of democratisation. A professional career in education meant the production of personal and professional freedom as well as the extension of skills and knowledge. Do adult educators as a part of the intelligentsia understand themselves now as the critics and examiners of political, social and economic processes, as advocates for deprived groups, or as leisure providers?

Lepskij (2002) reflects on the possible roles of the intelligentsia in modern Russia and also diagnoses the loss of the social function of the intelligentsia in Russian society. He describes the five key roles currently attributed to the Russian intelligentsia (cf. ibid, p. 8):

- Mediators of the Western models: a role connected with attempts to implement Western models of life in Russia after 1991;
- Developers of the "image of the enemy": This position distracts from the real causes of the crisis by raising topical issues of social change;
- Permanent opposition to power: According to Lepskij, society faces the problem of consolidating all forces and resources for the survival of Russia; the opposition to power weakens Russia's chances.
- Judge and prophet: In this position, the intelligentsia takes responsibility for answering the classic question: Whose fault was this? What should be done? But in this situation, like in the Soviet period, the people appear as an object and not as the subject.
- Social diagnosticians: The intelligentsia points out the grievances of society which must be addressed. According to Lepskij, this position is still too early for Russian society.

Lepskij describes all five roles as being unsuitable for overcoming the crisis of modern Russian society. In his eyes, the required function of the intelligentsia, i.e. "the engineering of society" would not be exercised today. The most important "mission" of the intelligentsia has to be 'the awakening of reflective social consciousness' (p. 8). In this case, the intelligentsia can be understood (according to Lepskij) as a 'subject of social transformation'. The self-described roles of adult educators in Russian, Polish and Ukrainian society will now be analysed in connection with the question of the extent to which adult educators explicitly, or rather implicitly, want to engineer the social transformations described by Lepskij.

The professional profiles of the educators that were interviewed are extremely diverse—classical roles as 'legislators and interpreters' (Bauman, 1987) can be

complemented with additional categories of professional self-images. Some respondents spoke of themselves as historians, dissidents, active citizens, social workers, or political scientists, and not as teachers. In the interviews, however, extensive educational reflection does take place (see, for example Interview_P19, para 57). Most of the adult educators interact with adults in a didactical way without any explicit qualifications for their activity. The interviewed adult educators have intuitively distinguished their work from educational work with children and youth, often without having educational or more andragogical qualifications. Adult-oriented education is more intuitive in such cases. Discussion about the quality and professionalism of adult education only appeared in a few statements. It is thus justified to speak of a lack of professional self-confidence in respondents. It is noticeable from the conducted interviews that adult educators in all three countries apprehend one of their core functions as enhancement of and development of communities or society through the education of individuals, i.e. through encouragement and advancement of identity development and power over life choices.

The interviewees were involved in different adult educational practices and had diverse priorities. However, some characteristics of their descriptions of their practice and of their professional identity can be seen as significant in shaping their professional identity formation. The responses of adult educators were regrouped according to similarities and distinctions using such categories as educational aims and methods, the image of the participants, the question of personal motivation vis-à-vis their jobs, the description of their own successes and failures in educational practice, expression of their wishes and plans for the future development of the own practice. The adult educators described their own professional objectives in performing a vast variety of roles and sub-specialties. Despite the differences in personal situations and histories, some commonalities in interviewees' descriptions of themselves in a professional context were identified. Common skills and descriptions of these varying roles can be clustered into five general groups of self-images of interviewed adult educators. A rough grouping of the tendencies of adult educators is presented below. Here, I briefly describe the possible implications borne by particular self-understandings of the actors in adult education.

1. "Popularisers" take the roles of experts and are eager to spread their knowledge in the respective groups of society – to popularise it.

The function of education is therefore seen as dissemination of contents on one side, and the acquisition of information on the other. In these cases, the storage and transmission of knowledge is emphasised as the core of the educational process. After the collapse of the Soviet Union with its strong censorship, the need to accumulate previously unknown knowledge and ensure that this knowledge continues to exist seems intelligible. The respondents emphasised the need for "extensive education" without using the term itself. The task of a lesson is to 'give the largest possible amount of knowledge on the given topic during a course' (Interview_P04, para 42). One respondent described himself as an information provider:

> We must fix the lack of knowledge, some of which was caused by the [socialist] school. [...] Another important thing is to bring the knowledge to the people, where they live […], for example by our lecturers who drive through the area [to the people]. (Interview_P12, para 63)

This adult educator also expresses one of the key priorities of his educational praxis, which is the training of multipliers – the adults who continue to spread the received knowledge, skills, and attitudes. According to another respondent, the acquisition of knowledge has an addition ethical value because knowledge is associated with such characteristics as decency and honesty: ‘The more a person knows, the more he is ... he will not take out too much, he will be a moral man himself. He won’t commit vulgarities, steal or commit other crimes.’ (Interview_R12, para 67).

This self-perception had been instilled in these three countries even before the Soviet regime: In Ukrainian, the word “education” is derived from “osvita”, and in Polish it is derived from “oświata”, which includes the word “svitlo/światło”, meaning “light”. Therefore, the osvitjanyn/oświatowiec (“educator”) is the one who brings light in the darkness of the “ignorance of the masses”. For such an educator, participants play the role of the ignorant and have to be illuminated. The “popularisers” identify their areas of influence, real or intended, quite differently: from villages to the entire EU. An adult educator from Poland argues that: ‘There must be an institution that articulates in the EU the perspective important for the Polish state. [...] We, like any other European country, must present our experience of the world’ (Interview_P14, para 82-83). Perhaps one of the greatest dangers of “popularisers” is that they only popularise what they perceive to be correct and important. In addition, the critical analysis of this knowledge has less of a priority.

In all three countries studied, it became clear that most adult educators perceive themselves as a source, reservoir, or at least a heritage keeper and disseminator of knowledge. This self-awareness can only conditionally meet the requirements faced by social and political transformation. In his book ‘Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy’, Christopher Lasch pointed out that democracy requires a lively public discussion, and not just the dissemination of knowledge. The need for knowledge can occur when issues and problems are discussed (see Lasch, 1995, pp. 170 et seq.). An examination of the past that is not based on dialogue and a common search for answers risks becoming propaganda or agitation.

2. The dissemination approach of a populariser culminates in self-perception as a “missionary”.

Education is understood as an indispensable mission this is to be fulfilled. Some of the adult educators interviewed see their educational work as an opportunity to restore justice. One adult educator argues that the ‘restoration of justice’ is to be ensured by honouring people who have been killed for political reasons (see Interview_P15, para 10). Other respondents feel themselves called to ‘open the eyes’ of their students. Here, the old legacy of political education comes to the forefront – an image of instruction and indoctrination. It is still believed that the main function of political adult education is ‘conveying’ messages to the participants.

Under strong pressure from the Russian politics of history that propagated “the happy oblivion”[6], critical Russian andragogues who are in opposition to state power feel even more obliged to fulfil their educational mission, i.e. searching for the truth or teaching critical thinking. One adult educator speaks of his work as ‘battle for the souls of people’ (Interview_R15, para 14). By contrast, another adult educator (from a state educational institution) follows the mission of patriotic education and strengthening Russian national identity: he fears the ‘forgetting of their own roots’ (Interview_R11, para 102) and the ‘meltdown in European culture’ (ibid.). The intended duty is therefore to 'preserve our originality (samobytnost) as the Russian people’.

The populariser and missionary models can, however, be based on the overestimation of one's own role within certain social groups. These adult educators have the task (at least in their own minds) of ensuring tradition as well as 'finding the truth and spreading it' (Interview_P19, para 27). One respondent admits, however, that the concept of truth prevents discussion because the "truth" is out of the question.

In the case of Ukraine, the self-perception of adult educators as missionaries has another dimension, which is described by the Ukrainian writer and journalist, Mykola Rjabčuk. This dimension refers to the Ukrainian national idea. As Rjabčuk puts it, intellectuals in Ukraine have 'a national duty' (Rjabčuk, 2009). One adult educator expresses this thought quite vividly: 'When I teach in Eastern Ukraine, I strive to consolidate […] the Ukrainian identity' (Interview_U07, para 41). Ukrainian intellectuals, Rjabčuk writes, are faced with the dilemma of choosing between a professional impartiality/neutrality on one hand, and current national interests on the other. As one example, he cites discussions which are particularly well known in L'viv: the attitudes of Ukrainian intellectuals concerning the Ukrainian Insurgent Army during the Second World War (OUN-UPA). Different interpretations, arguments, and visions clash at this point. According to Rjabčuk, cosmopolitan intellectuals couldn't approve of the totalitarian ideology of the OUN as well as its terrorist methods of struggle. On the other hand, the OUN simultaneously fought against the totalitarian regime – the Soviet Union – and fostered Ukrainian aspirations for continued independence and freedom (cf. ibid.). Intellectuals must therefore make a choice between defending and abandoning the "national duty".

3. The self-perception as a "moral authority" is connected with that of the missionary.

After the collapse of the system, the adult educators who offered resistance and experienced political repression during the Soviet time gained credibility because they could consistently defend their position over the years. One respondent from Russia insists that educational activity must be validated through life experience: 'How can you teach people the protection of human rights, if you are not concerned with the protection of human rights. It would be shameful' (Interview_R03, para 7). These adult educators usually have a real (or imagined) sense of authority within a group, which is based on achievement, social position, or experience. The cognition of this real or constructed authority can move educators to use it for different goals, such as provoking inciting discussion within a social group or providing arguments for certain decisions. However, their role and public acceptance seems to have dwindled in the 20 years following the collapse of socialism – not least in view of the growing generation with the mercy of a more recent birth.

In view of this special role, an important issue for educational practice in the transition period arises: the question of the personal involvement of the educator in the totalitarian system. Theodor Litt (1958) asked a controversial question after the Second World War: How should non-Democrats educate the young generation in democracy? From this point of view, a general question about the authorisation and biographical motivation of adult educators can be derived. Kade spoke about a 'biographical anchor' (Kade, 1989, p. 9), which is an interrelation between the educational praxis of adult educators and their own life stories. In analysing the interviews, it seemed relevant to know the biography of the andragogues (especially of those who deal with the question of coming to terms with the past), because many of the respondents trace their motivation to practise the profession back to their personal or family biography, and describe its influence on their activities.

4. "Facilitator and dialogue partner" provide learning opportunities and supports self-organisation and self-development

After the collapse of the socialist system, an established circle of educators sought new forms and models of educational praxis, which can be increasingly characterised by keywords such as dialogue, openness, and interaction realised in the form of projects, courses, meetings, or workshops. From the view of a "facilitator and dialogue partner", education means providing the opportunity to gain experience as well as contexts that facilitate learning and support self-organisation and self-development.

The adult educator tries to bring together different visions and facilitate discussion instead of providing the learners with knowledge. They advocate dialogue-based education without using this term in their answers. This is clearly evident in Poland and Ukraine. In Russia, however, it is only present in non-governmental institutions. One of the main functions of such a practice is to encourage participation, or in the words of a respondent, to 'gain access, assure and encourage' (Interview_P01, para. 67). Such educators explicitly distance themselves from the principle of "educating the masses" and emphasise collaborative work and discussion. Previous experiences, as well as the knowledge and opinions of the participants, are given priority.

Some adult educators endeavour to foster dialogue, something that couldn't be done under the totalitarian regime because of its monological nature, as well as its "culture of homogeneity" and "culture of unambiguousness" (Baberowski, 2003). Some interviewees assert the inability to discuss and to pose questions among the participants, which they see as a result of the former totalitarian influence. In Russian (and to a lesser extent Ukrainian) adult education, isolated discourses still exist. An adult educator from Poland insists that his institution be a platform 'for expressing different opinions' (Interview_P19, para 31). Another respondent wants to counteract the earlier practice of imposing opinions and suppressing the alternatives. He encourages the participants to adopt a 'ductus of nonconformity' (Interview_P20, para 157). Thus, in this role the adult educators try to recognise diversity in the group with regard to a historical, social, economic, religious, and cultural background as well as differences in learning needs, learning gaps, learning experience, gender, and age. The educator understands the value of diversity, respects differences, and can deal with diverse personal contacts and learning processes.

Educators also demand the development of individual thinking and analytical skills. The artificial creation and distortion of historical consciousness, as was the case in the period of socialism, enables the manipulation of popular sentiments, 'which assumes without question that our eastern neighbour is our closest ally and NATO is our greatest enemy' (Interview_P21, para 90). Education should now strive to make citizens resistant to such propaganda about the historical background (cf. ibid.).

The interviews generally show that Russian and Ukrainian educators often find difficulties transitioning to an open model of discussion and interactive education: This mainly concerns the shift of focus from productive and reproductive tasks to creative thinking. Reorientation is especially difficult for educators who had been educated in the Soviet departments affected by ideology because they are uncertain regarding the methods and the lack of professional andragogical discussion.

5. "Modernisers and idealists" are explicitly eager to facilitate and promote social and political change through education.

In such cases, an adult educator organises and realises a class not according to the existing demand, but they affect, form and express a demand in the sense of the approach of "community development" (Zeuner, 2007). They should not, however, be

misunderstood as a technocratic “change agents”, who initiate prescribed political change. Such educators are representatives of active elites who, in situations of crisis and transformation, try to offer clarification and options for future development. The ability to make individual judgements and discuss them form the basis for education, which has a role in social development: ‘The main goal is to be an active citizen’ (Interview_P01, para. 39). In interviews with Russian adult educators, the idea of “changing society” through the education of adult members of the society was most often articulated.

Among some Russian respondents, it seems especially important to re-evaluate the relationship between the state and the citizen: The participant should understand ‘that he has rights, and that these must be respected’ (Interview_R02, para 58). Another respondent argues that dealing with history should enable a person to regain dignity as a human being: ‘One must begin to believe that he is valuable’ (Interview_R32, para 34). Through his educational work, a respondent from Russia wants to ‘support the small person in his resistance’ (Interview_R03, para 48).

Thus, these adult educators as intellectuals intend to form a particular institution in society, which, among other things, creates a basis for civil society. They aim to create awareness of certain issues, to clarify the contexts of the problems, to help create a hierarchy of problems, and thus to find possible solutions. The intended social transformation is seen as a long-term process which begins to germinate in educational discussions:

> Politics is made from above and consciousness formed at the [discussion] table. [...] The initiatives will in the end cause people to develop different perspectives. [...] I know that our work is not the smallest link in the chain that leads to a change of consciousness in society. (Interview_P15, para 29)

In a totalitarian state, an institution with these functions was, in principle, impossible – there was no public space for it. The perception of this role began after the collapse of the totalitarian system. The adult educators see their work as being largely focused on developing society. In the interviews, Russian adult educators assessed the chance of their work having a broad impact on society as being quite low. Nevertheless, they often expressed a high level of intrinsic motivation that turns their work into an important mission in life.

Synthesized outcomes and discussion

“Adult educator” is not a profession in the classical meaning (cf. Jütte, Nicoll & Olesen, 2011). However, from the interviews one can see a wide range of professional self-images, both in the ways that adult educators see themselves as members of a profession, and how they define themselves as part of a specific socio-political context. All these self-images have different impacts on educational practice and on opportunities for social development as it was shown above. Based on the interviews, education is generally not identified as a systematically planned effort from the perspective of the actors. The role of education is often seen as awakening curiosity and interest in a specific topic; in-depth study is planned only in rare cases. The best metaphor for this effort, which has also been implied in some interviews, is the understanding of education as throwing a seed onto the ground. One would ‘leave a trace’ (Interview_R22, para 79), give a jump start (see Interview_R22, para 79), wake

from sleep (see Interview_R33, para 1). In terms of dealing with the past, adult educators mainly see themselves involved in creating a stable basis for further developments: The objective is to collect and disseminate knowledge, ensure the spread of ideas, and coin new terms to allow for a common general discussion.

It must also be noted that the cooperation between adult educators is often unsatisfactory. Dealing with the past in the context of education mainly causes discourses that are separate or even isolated from each other, without any meta-reflection (this especially concerns Ukraine, and partly Russia). The integration of discourses remains a challenge nowadays in all three countries. There are attempts in adult education (mainly in Poland, minimally in Ukraine) to face this challenge by providing discussions and dialogues from different perspectives in the context of educational practice. A decisive impulse should come from adult education as a theoretical discipline, although it hardly exists as such in Ukraine and in Russia and seems to be just getting established in Poland.

It remains to sum up which social forces can be expected to promote democratic change in the interest of the population, and whether these forces are present in Russia, Poland and Ukraine. These forces are indeed active in all regions of these countries. One difference, however, is whether they are supported or hindered by the state. In Poland, institutions that deal with a critical examination of the past seem to be supported by the state. There is therefore no difference between the freedoms of educational life in state vs. non-state institutions. It is clear from the interviews that the Polish government supports initiatives to increase political and legal culture as well as social and political self-organisation, to stabilise civil society and to adopt civil forms of interaction.

In Ukraine, adult educators speak about "non-interference" or "ignorance" when they refer to governmental attitudes towards their work. The state does not stop their initiatives, but without support, they face certain insurmountable obstacles. In Russia, there is a vast gap between state and non-state educational institutions in terms of dealing with the past. The current political powers in Russia hardly support initiatives to deal with the past. In fact, they have hindered this through defamation campaigns, obstacles to financing, and their own public education programs. Adult educators often speak of obstructions, self-censorship and resignation to (and therefore acceptance of) the given rules. Under these circumstances, some adult educators in Russia feel themselves obliged to be advocates of the population in their relationship with the state (which is sometimes not demanded by the population). Some adult educators even see themselves as having a moral and historical duty to the public. Their work means more to them than any profession they might practise; it is an intense social engagement that borders on self-sacrifice.

Analysis of the interviews permits the conclusion that in Russia and partly in Ukraine there is a gap between the intelligentsia (which the adult educators understand themselves to be a part of) and the population. This gap was mentioned repeatedly by the interviewees when speaking about the incongruities, misunderstandings, disrespect on the part of participants of the courses, or from the public opinions that were witnessed. The importance of discussion about the past during the time of transition seems to have already emerged. However this understanding has hardly found a way to the broader social groups. The main difficulty in dealing with the past in Russia and Ukraine is still the fact that this discussion has remained a primarily intellectual phenomenon for which there is still no adequate social platform.

The decision to deal with issues from the past in a professional context has a special significance for most adult educators. This decision is often motivated by the

educator's own biography and own personal involvement in the past, in some cases due to political beliefs or social consciousness. Adult educators often want not only to transmit knowledge; they also seek to change values, and want thereby to contribute to social change through their work. It should also be noted that that almost all of the adult educators are not conscious of the biases that may result from their own personal biographies. The question of personal bias should gain in transparency – for adult educators themselves, as well as for the participants. Monique Eckmann speaks in this context of the question that every educator at a historical site should pose him/herself 'What perspective am I speaking from?' (Eckmann 2010, p. 64)

Conclusions

It is difficult to summarise this investigation of three heterogeneous countries without forgoing detail. This paper has not focused on the differences in the self-understanding of adult educators between Poland, Russia, and Ukraine, but has rather tried to figure out the common tendencies in order to describe the changing configurations in adult education during transition, using these three countries as examples.

From the perspective of its actors, adult education aims to conserve memory (see Interview_R05, para 15), to protect "true" memories (see Interview_R01, para 85), to resist the state's attempts to falsify memories (see Interview_R36, para 45), to promote political and civic engagement, to foster therapy and healing, to proselytise the "true" ideas, to advertise education, and to aid in the struggle against existing conditions. In addtion, to the "classical" function of an educator as a transmitter of knowledge or, in the modern sense, as a facilitator or moderator of the learning process, has been added a new task or function, namely the responsibility for the development of the community and the civil society. From the interviews, it can be concluded that adult educators who intend to fulfil the function of "engineering the society" (after Lepskij) do exist, even if they may be in the minority. Actors wishing to contribute to the shaping of socio-political changes through education are represented in all regions in each country.

In Russia and Ukraine, adult education, which is dedicated to dealing with the past, is unfortunately more a personal commitment than it is a social demand. In Russia, and partly in Ukraine, a growing gap between the intelligentsia and the population can be inferred. In these countries, the main difficulty is that dealing with the past and learning to change remains primarily an intellectual phenomenon for which there is still no adequate social context.

The data demonstrate the agency of adult educators. But they also pose questions for critical reflection: What is the strategic potential of "engineering of society" through adult educators who are not visible beyond their immediate context? Should their agency focus on fostering and support of individual growth, or on a renewal of society? Can both of these categories be understood separately from each other? It becomes evident, however, that in seeking for social change it is also indispensable to change the status quo in the field of adult education itself in all three of these countries.

Notes

[1] The research was conducted in 2009; the 2013/2014 Revolution on Euromaidan in Kiev was not considered in the study.

[2] This quotation was used as a thought-provoking impulse; constructivism is not the author's theoretical perspective.
[3] The extensive and important question of professionalization in adult education is, however, beyond the scope of this study.
[4] Intelligentsia refers to a Eastern European, or more precisely Russian phenomenon, while intellectual is a concept with US origins; however, both concepts share much in common (cf. Kochetkova, 2010, p. 12 et seq.). According to Lipset, intellectuals (and intelligentsia) are expected to dedicate themselves to 'create, distribute and apply culture' (Lipset, 1960, p. 311). Such an understanding of intelligentsia obviously includes adult educators.
[5] In Poland, opportunists and careerists were met with scepticism and given the pejorative name *Wykształciuchy* (Grzelka, 2010).
[6] The term used by one of the respondents referring to the tendency in the Russian politics of memory including the practice of thinking themselves righteous and forgetting the crimes of the past.

References

Adorno, T. W. (1986). Aktualität der Erwachsenenbildung. Zum Deutschen Volkshochschultag Frankfurt a. M., 1956. In T. W. Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Vol. 20.1: Vermischte Schriften I, pp. 327-331). Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
Baberowski, J. (2003). *Der Rote Terror. Die Geschichte des Stalinismus*. München: Dt. Verl.-Anst.
Bauman, Z. (1987). *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-modernity, and Intellectuals*. Ithaca. New York: Cornell University Press.
Bron-Wojciechowska, A. (1989). *Workers and post-secondary education – a cross polity perspective*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
Buiskool, B., Broek, S., van Lakerveld, J., Zarifis, G., & Osborne, M. (2010). *Key competences for adult learning professionals. Contribution to the development of a reference framework of key for adult learning professionals*. Final report. Zoetermeer: Research voor Beleid.
Dragović-Soso, J. (2010). Conflict, Memory, Accountability: What Does Coming to Term with the Past Mean. In W. Petritsch & V. Džihid (Eds.), *Conflict and Memory: Bridging Past and Future in [South East] Europe* (pp. 29-46). Baden-Baden: Nomos Verl.-Ges.
Eckmann, M. (2010). Identitäten, Zugehörigkeiten, Erinnerungsgemeinschaften. Der Dialog zwischen "Vermittlungsposition" und "Empfangsposition". In B. Thimm, G. Kößler & S. Ulrich (Eds.), *Verunsichernde Orte. Selbstverständnis und Weiterbildung in der Gedenkstättenpädagogik* (pp. 64-69). Frankfurt a. M.: Brandes und Apsel.
Flick, U. (2002). *Qualitative Sozialforschung: Eine Einführung*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt-Taschenbuch-Verlag.
Friedenthal-Haase, M. (2002). Orientierung und Reorientierung: Kategorien und Aufgaben lebensbegleitender Bildung. In M. Friedenthal-Haase (Ed.), *Ideen, Personen, Institutionen. Kleine Schriften zur Erwachsenenbildung als Integrationswissenschaft* (pp. 67-82). München, Mering: Rainer Hampp Verlag.
Gawin, M. (2008). Abdykacje i restauracje. Debaty o zmierzchu inteligencji polskiej w latach międzywojennych i współcześnie. In H. Domaoski (Ed.), *Inteligencja w Polsce. Specjaliści, twórcy, klerkowie, klasa średnia* (pp. 241-264). Warszawa: IFiS PAN.
Gessen, M. (1997). *Dead Again: The Russian Intelligentsia after Communism*. London: Verso.
Grzelka, M. (2010). O kształcie debaty publicznej (casus intelektualisty). *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne (17)*, 41-52.
Jarvis, P., & Chadwick, A. (Eds.). (1991). *Training adult educators in Western Europe*. London: Routledge.
Jütte, W., Nicoll, K., & Olesen, H. S. (2011). Editorial: Professionalisation: The struggle within. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 2*(1), 7-20.
Kade, J. (1989). *Kursleiter und die Bildung Erwachsener. Fallstudien zur biographischen Bedeutung der Erwachsenenbildung*. Bad Heilbrunn/Obb: Klinkhardt.
Kaminsky, A. (Ed.). (2007). *Erinnerungsorte an den Massenterror 1937/38. Russische Föderation*. Berlin: Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED Diktatur.
Kasianov, G., & Jilge, W. (Eds.). (2008). *Vademecum Contemporary History Ukraine. A guide to archives, research institutions, libraries, associations and museums. Commissioned by Stiftung zur*

Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur. Berlin [et al.]: Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur.
Kloubert, T. (2014). *Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit als Dimension der Erwachsenenbildung: Polnische, russländische und ukrainische Perspektiven*. Frankfurt am Main [et al.]: Peter Lang.
Kochetkova, I. (2010). *The Myth of the Russian Intelligentsia: Old Intellectuals in the New Russia*. New York: Routledge.
Kraft, S. (2006). *Aufgaben und Tätigkeiten von Weiterbildner/inne/n – Herausforderungen und Perspektiven einer weiteren Professionalisierung in der Weiterbildung*. Retrieved from www.die-bonn.de/esprid/dokumente/doc-2006/kraft06_02.pdf
Lasch, C. (1995). *Revolt of the elites and the betrayal of democracy*. New York: W.W. Norton.
Lattke, S., & Nuissl, E. (Eds.). (2008). *Qualifying Adult Learning Professionals in Europe*. Bielefeld: Bertelsmann.
Lepskij, V. (2002). Stanovlenije strategičeskich sub'jektov: postanovka problemy. *Refleksivnyje processy i upravlenije, 2*(1), 5-23.
Litt, T. (1958/1953). *Die politische Selbsterziehung des deutschen Volkes* (4th ed.). Bonn: Bundeszentrale für Heimatdienst.
Lipset, S. (1960). *Political man*. New York: Doubleday.
Merriam, S., & Brockett, R. (1997). *The profession and practice of adult education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Niedermüller, P. (1997). Zeit, Geschichte, Vergangenheit. Zur kulturellen Logik des Nationalismus im Postsozialismus. *Historische Anthropologie, 30*(5), 245-267.
Nolte, H.-H. (2007). Einleitung: Revolutionen, Kontinuitäten und Demokratiebildung. In H.-H. Nolte (Ed), *Transformationen in Osteuropa und Zentralasien. Polen, die Ukraine, Russland und Kirgisien* (pp. 5-11). Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau Verlag.
Palska, H. (1994). *Nowa inteligencja w Polsce Ludowej. Świat przedstawieo i elementy rzeczywistości*. Warszawa: Wydawn. Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN.
Rjabčuk, M. (2009). *(Bez)vidpovidal'nist' intelektualiv u (dys)funkcional'nomu suspil'stvi: subjektyvni refleksiï*. Talk held at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv. Retrieved from http://zaxid.net/blogs/showBlog.do?bezvidpovidalnist_intelektualiv_u_disfunktsionalnomu_suspilstvi_subyektivni_refleksiyi&objectId=1092167
Ryvkina, R. (2006). Intelligencija v postsovjetskoj Rossii: Isčerpanije social'noj roli. *Sociologičeskie issledovaniia, 6,* 138-146.
Šanovs'ka, O. (2007). Inteligencija jak subjekt suspil'no-polityčnych peretvoren': dosvid ukraïs'koï myrnoï revolucïï 1989-1991. *Inteligencija i vlada, 9,* 179-193.
Siebert, H. (1996). *Didaktisches Handeln in der Erwachsenenbildung. Didaktik aus konstruktivistischer Sicht*. Neuwied [et al.]: Luchterhand.
Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1996). *Grundlagen Qualitativer Sozialforschung*. Weinheim: Beltz.
Zeuner, C. (2007). *Welche Potentiale bietet Weiterbildung für die Bewältigung gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen im kommunalen und regionalen Umfeld?* Vortrag, gehalten im Rahmen der Fachtagung "Weiterbildung als Mitgestalter gesellschaftlicher Wandlungs-prozesse" Hannover. Retrieved from http://www.lewus.de/download/ZeunerPerspektiven_derWB.pdf

European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, Vol.6, No.1, 2015, pp. 55-72

She reads, he reads: gender differences and learning through self-help books

Scott McLean
University of Calgary, Canada (smclean@ucalgary.ca)

Brandi Kapell
University of Calgary, Canada (bkapell@ucalgary.ca)

Abstract

Despite considerable scholarly attention given to self-help literature, there has been a lack of research about the experience of self-help reading. In this article, we explore gender differences in self-help reading. We argue that men and women read self-help books for different reasons and with different levels of engagement, and that they experience different outcomes from reading. We provide evidence from in-depth interviews with 89 women and 45 men. Women are more likely to seek out books of their own volition, to engage in learning strategies beyond reading, and to take action as a result of reading. Men are more likely to read books relating to careers, while women are more likely to read books about interpersonal relationships. We argue that these gender differences reflect profound political-economic and cultural changes, and that such changes also help explain the gendered evolution of adult, continuing, and higher education in recent decades.

Keywords: gender differences; popular culture; self-help reading; informal adult education

Introduction

Reading self-help books has become a significant part of popular culture in many countries. Influential sociologists have linked self-help literature to important trends, including the increasing 'reflexivity' of identity formation (Giddens, 1991) and the deployment of 'psychotherapeutic technologies' in the governance of citizens (Rose, 1999). Authors, publishers, and scholars have long recognized that self-help reading is a highly gendered activity, with books, marketing campaigns, and research focused primarily upon women. Remarkably, despite the participation of millions of men and

ISSN 2000-7426
© 2015 The author
DOI 10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela0138
www.rela.ep.liu.se

women each year, there has not been significant empirical research on gender differences in self-help reading.

The analysis of gender differences in self-help reading is connected to core concerns of adult educators. Empirical research on gender differences is integral to the study of primary and secondary schooling, and of post-secondary education. Such research has revealed how gender structures the experience of students in school systems, and how the experience of schooling (re)produces gendered identities and divisions of labour. Reading self-help books is a form of 'public pedagogy' (McLean, 2013, 2014; Sandlin, O'Malley, & Burdick, 2011; Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010; Wright & Sandlin, 2009), through which adults access resources from popular culture and learn without the involvement of educational institutions. Past studies of adult learning through related forms of popular culture have included those focused on women's experiences (Jarvis, 1999; Kapell & McLean, 2015; Wright, 2007), but gender differences in informal adult education have not been subject to empirical research in a manner parallel to work done in the context of schools and post-secondary institutions.

In this article, we explore gender differences in self-help reading. We argue that men and women read self-help books for different reasons and with different levels of engagement, and that they come away from their reading with different outcomes. We support this argument with evidence collected through qualitative interviews undertaken with 89 female and 45 male readers of self-help books in the fields of health and well-being, career and financial success, and interpersonal relationships. We conclude that gender differences in self-help reading reflect profound political-economic and cultural changes, and that such changes also help explain the gendered evolution of adult, continuing, and higher education in recent decades.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Given the commercial success and social influence of self-help books, scholars and members of the health and human service professions have created a substantial secondary literature in this field. Members of health and human service professions have assessed the use of self-help literature in the context of therapeutic and clinical practice (Coleman & Nickleberry, 2009; Ogles, Craig, & Lambert, 1991). Literary and cultural critics have interpreted the structure and meaning of self-help texts, and related the popularity of self-help reading to broader social changes (Cheng, 2008; Cherry, 2008; Cullen, 2009; Woodstock, 2007). Studies exist of the historical evolution of self-help reading (Biggart, 1983; Effing, 2009), and of the contributions of such reading to contemporary forms of governance that rely on internal forms of self-regulation (Hazleden, 2003; Philip, 2009; Redden, 2002; Rimke, 2000).

Given the gendered nature of self-help readership, many analyses of self-help books have been influenced by feminist perspectives. Simonds (1992), Leavitt (2002), and Ehrenreich & English (2005) have authored manuscripts focused on self-help books for women. Hazelden (2004, 2009), Grodin (1991) and Hochschild (1994, 2003) have produced insightful analyses of the implications of self-help reading for women's lives. Zimmerman and various colleagues have published feminist analyses of self-help texts pertaining to parenting and family relations (Krafchick et al., 2005; Zimmerman, Holm, & Haddock, 2001). While substantially more focus has been given to women as self-help readers, some studies have been published regarding books directed to male audiences (Bloch, 2000; Courtney, 2009).

Despite considerable scholarly and professional attention given to self-help literature, there has been a remarkable absence of empirical research about both the overall experience of self-help reading, and gender differences in that experience. Overall, researchers have tended to be speculative rather than empirical when it comes to describing the impacts of self-help reading on readers: few studies have been published that assess learning processes and outcomes among those who read self-help literature. Existing studies tend to interpret the meaning of self-help books, and then impute the supposed impact of those books on those who read them. There are some exceptions to this pattern; existing works that have undertaken original research with actual readers of self-help literature include Barker, 2002; Bruneau, Bubenzer, & McGlothlin, 2010; Gabriel & Forest, 2004; Grodin, 1991; Knudson, 2013; Lichterman, 1992; Ogles, Craig, & Lambert, 1991; Scholz & Forest, 1997; and Simonds, 1992.

When it comes to exploring gender differences, the gap between theoretical interest and research involving self-help readers is even wider. Of the nine works identified above as having undertaken direct research with self-help readers, five were conducted exclusively with female participants (Barker, 2002; Bruneau, Bubenzer, & McGlothlin, 2010; Grodin, 1991; Scholz & Forest, 1997; and Simonds, 1992).

Of the four publications we found which involved both female and male research subjects, only one systematically assessed gender differences. Lichterman (1992, p. 438) interviewed six men and nine women, but simply concluded: ‘Men as well as women read self-help psychology books. It is beyond the scope of this article to propose systematic differences between female and male readings’. Knudson (2013) interviewed 21 women and 15 men, and found differences between ‘habitual’ and ‘targeted’ readers of self-help books. Ogles, Craig & Lambert implemented an experimental design with 48 women and 16 men to explore the contributions of self-help reading to psychological coping with ‘divorce or breakup’, but made no observations about gender differences. Gabriel & Forest (2004) published the only article we found that reported gender differences in the experience of self-help reading based on empirical research. However, the 15 men and 14 women in this study were undergraduate students in a first-year psychology course rather than actual readers of self-help books, and the study merely reported that there was ‘no statistically significant evidence for sex differences’ (p. 662) in participating students’ responses on an assignment to ‘highlight important information’ (p. 657) from a 30-page excerpt from a self-help book.

Our literature review reveals considerable scholarly and professional interest in self-help reading as a gendered component of popular culture, but little empirical research about gender differences among readers. In the next section of this article, we explain the methods we used to bridge the gap between deconstructing the gendered implications of self-help texts and understanding gendered experiences of self-help reading. First, however, we develop a theoretical framework that enables both the interpretation of our findings, and an understanding of why our research with self-help readers is important to those interested in other forms of adult, continuing, and higher education.

Between the 1950s and the 1990s, there were profound and interrelated shifts in the engagement of women in paid employment and formal education; understanding those shifts is integral to interpreting gender differences in self-help reading. The first shift was the increasing proportion of women participating in wage labour markets. In Canada, where most of our interviewees lived, the proportion of women engaged in wage labour increased from 24% to 60% between 1951 and 1991 (Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1951; Statistics Canada, 2005). The increasing participation of

women in wage labour has profoundly influenced adult, continuing, and higher education in recent decades. Once again, data from Canada illustrate the dramatic nature of these changes. In 1950, women made up just 22% of university undergraduates in Canada (Statistics Canada, 1983). This proportion increased to 50% by 1987, and to 58% by the year 2000 (AUCC, 2011). The aspirations of women to develop their knowledge and skills, and the need for women to obtain credentials to compete in the labour market, have also helped drive an enormous expansion of continuing professional education programs. Women now constitute a significant majority of students in all major university continuing education units across Canada (McLean and Carter, 2013).

The rapid growth of women's participation in wage labour and higher education has not been accompanied by corresponding decreases in women's engagement in domestic responsibilities such as childrearing and housekeeping. Hochschild (1989) used the term 'the second shift' to describe the increasing tendency for women to work outside of the home while also dedicating substantial time to domestic labour. She estimated that in the 1970s, women in North America and Western Europe worked an average of 15 hours per week more than men, when both paid and domestic labour were taken into consideration. Other scholars subsequently affirmed the empirical reality of a gender imbalance in total time spent in paid and domestic labour in places such as Australia (Craig, 2006), Canada (Arai, 2000), and the United States (Milkie, Raley, and Bianchi, 2009; Osnowitz, 2005).

Hochschild (2012) also argued that women have retained disproportionate responsibility for 'emotional work' both in the paid marketplace and at home. She explained why women have disproportionate responsibility for the management of emotions and relationships: 'The reason, at bottom, is the fact that women in general have far less independent access to money, power, authority, or status in society' (p. 163). Hochschild's assertion about the financial disadvantages faced by women is reflected in the persistence of gender-based income inequality; in 2008 in Canada, the average hourly wage for women was 83% of that for men, while the average annual salary of female, full-time and full-year workers was just 72% of that of males (Drolet, 2011).

The increasing participation of women in paid employment and higher education, coupled with a persistent gender gap in wages and disproportionate responsibility for domestic labour and emotional work, provides important context for the interpretation of gender differences in the experience of self-help reading. Women pursue self-help reading more, and more intensively, than men because women must compete on an unequal playing field for wage-employment, while also maintaining disproportionate responsibility for domestic labour and the maintenance of interpersonal relationships. Such challenges provide ample motivation for women to read self-help books, and for women to outnumber men in a wide range of other adult, continuing, and higher education contexts.

Research methods and participants

In 2012, we conducted interviews with 134 adults who had read a self-help book, in the areas of career success, interpersonal relationships, or health and well-being, over the course of the previous year. Interviewees were recruited primarily through online advertisements placed in the 'books' sections of Kijiji websites for Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton, and Winnipeg. Most participants were Canadian, although 14 were

American and three were British. Since our interest was to explore the experience of, and learning outcomes associated with, reading self-help books, rather than to test particular hypotheses, we did not engage in systematic or random sampling procedures. Therefore, our interviewees do not represent the full range of readers of self-help books, and we do not employ inferential statistics in this article.

Qualitative interviews were conducted via online chat software, telephone calls, and the exchange of e-mail messages. The interviews focused on the experience of reading a specific self-help book, and were organized in five main sections: motivation; learning goals; learning strategies; learning outcomes; and impact. Questions were open-ended, encouraging participants to share their experience of self-help reading in their own words and with minimal direction. Interviews were transcribed verbatim or cut and pasted from chat software or e-mail messages. Participants completing interviews received a $25 honorarium (about 16 British Pounds).

Overall, two-thirds of our participants were female. Since our sampling procedures were not systematic, we cannot claim that this statistic reflects overall self-help readership patterns. The fact that twice as many women as men participated in our research could reflect actual differences in readership, but it could also reflect gender differences in the level of stigma associated with self-help reading, the attractiveness of our recruitment messages, and the level of utilization of Kijiji in shopping for books. While we cannot infer that our data reflect gender differences in readership among the broader population, we can use our data to explore some fascinating gender differences in learning experiences in a domain where previous research has largely focused on women.

Female participants in our study were, on average, older than male participants, and had higher levels of formal educational attainment. The mean age of our female participants was 34 years, while the mean age of our male participants was 30 years. The most significant difference was in the participation of readers over the age of 40: 29% of women and only 11% of men in our study were between the ages of 40 and 65. Once again, it is uncertain whether this reflects the actual scarcity of older male readers of self-help books, or other factors. With regards to educational attainment, 67% of women and 53% of men in our research had completed at least an undergraduate diploma or degree.

Participants to our study earned a living through a wide range of activities. Gender differences were most pronounced in rates of unemployment and engagement in homemaking responsibilities. No men identified 'homemaker' as their primary occupation, while 20% of them cited being currently unemployed. For women, 17% were homemakers, and just 7% were unemployed. The most common field of paid employment for women was in the domain of education, health, and social or government services. A total of 26 women (29%) were employed as schoolteachers, post-secondary instructors, health care workers, social workers, and government service workers. Just 6 men (13%) were employed in this sector, in jobs ranging from schoolteacher and police officer to chiropractor. The most common fields of employment for men were in the domains of technical, sales, and service. A total of 16 men (36%) were employed in jobs such as information technology analysts or developers, sales representatives, and welders. A total of 14 women (16%) were employed in this sector, in jobs ranging from flight attendant and customer service representative, to writer and landscaper. Similar proportions of men (13%) and women (15%) were employed in positions responsible for the management and administration of businesses. In short, participants to our research were engaged in a broad range of

productive activities, with gender differences in those activities reflecting well-documented patterns.

Findings

We found that the experience of reading self-help books was fundamentally different for men and women. We found important gender differences in why people read self-help books, how they read them, and what they learn from them.

Why do people read self-help books?

There are many reasons for reading self-help books, but such reasons may be organized into two categories. Some people read self-help books in response to experiences or transitions which they are trying to understand, overcome, or address. Just over half (71) of our participants engaged in self-help reading to deal with changes that they had experienced in their careers, their health, or their relationships. Just under half (63) of our participants had other reasons for reading – some were addressing a chronic issue or concern in their life, others held an intellectual or general interest in the subject matter of the book, and others received the book as a gift, or through attending a workshop. Table 1 reveals substantial gender differences in the proportion of men and women whose self-help reading was directly linked to a change they had experienced.

Table 1: Gender and motivation to read

Catalyst	**Women**		**Men**	
	Number	%	Number	%
Career	9	10%	6	13%
Health	24	27%	8	18%
Relationship	19	22%	5	11%
None	37	42%	26	58%
Total	89	100%	45	100%

Gender differences were slight when it came to the proportion of men and women who turned to self-help books as a result of career-related transitions. In explaining their motivation to read, men made statements such as 'I was working for a year, then unfortunately myself and a few colleagues were laid off a few weeks ago' (Jed); 'I've been a business owner since October 2011 and so I am often reading business-related material' (James); and 'When I was reading this book I just started a new career and was hoping that this book would give me advice and provide some useful tools I could bring to the workplace' (Sachin). Women used very similar language, as the following examples demonstrate: 'I had just started a new job and was feeling a bit anxious about how to make a good impression and learn my new duties quickly and effectively' (Hailey); 'I just began substitute teaching and felt really nervous and unprepared going into it. I thought it would be good to read from an experienced guest teacher' (Kim); and 'I have just finished my PhD and am looking for a job so I have quite a lot of spare time on my hands' (Julie).

A somewhat greater proportion of women than men identified health-related experiences as a catalyst for self-help reading. The eight men who did so reported both physical and mental health concerns, as in the following examples: 'I joined the weight loser competition from work before I read this book' (Graham); 'When I read the book I was very depressed, and suffered from a great deal of anxiety, my life was not in very good shape to say the least' (Clive); and 'I was in treatment for an eating disorder for some time and part of my treatment was to read this book' (Gabriel). Women likewise reported both physical and mental health concerns: 'My car accident was 2.5 years ago now. I fractured my skull in the accident, and now have post-concussive syndrome' (Robin); 'I was feeling depressed and stuck in my life and felt like if I understood myself and could make myself better, I would be happier' (Gillian); and 'I have been struggling with peri-menopause, with wild swings in hormones' (Wendy). Despite a greater proportion of women citing health-related experiences as catalyzing their self-help reading, and despite women reporting a somewhat broader range of health concerns, gender differences were slight when it comes to motivations for reading self-help books pertaining to health and well-being.

It was in the domain of interpersonal relationships that men and women differed fundamentally in their motivations. Proportionally, twice as many women as men cited relationship experiences or concerns as key to their self-help reading. Further, women reported a much greater range of relationship issues as having motivated their reading. Of the five men who described relationship issues, three had recently broken up with their girlfriends, one had a son diagnosed with diabetes, and one was struggling to parent a highly active and emotional child. In contrast, women read self-help books due to: the dissolution of an intimate relationship (four participants); divorce (two participants); a recent or forthcoming marriage (three participants); conflict with friends or family members (two participants); a child diagnosed with a psychological disorder (two participants); the start of a new, intimate relationship; difficulties in an intimate relationship; the death of a spouse; an infant's sleeping problems; having an extra-marital affair; and the loss of a sense of community in a church group. In short, women were more likely to read a self-help book due to changes in their relationships, and they reported concerns with a broader variety of relationship issues.

Men were more likely than women to read a self-help book for reasons unrelated to a specific experience or transition in life. Illustrations of such motivations among men include: 'My friend told me to read it.' (Mathew); 'It was required reading for a course I was taking through work' (Evan); and 'I like reading books that are both entertaining and informative' (Samuel). Parallel illustrations from female readers include: 'My relationship with my mother has always been what I would call "strained". She is very controlling and always gets her way' (Melia); 'My husband had finished reading it and said I would benefit from it' (Sioban); and 'After smoking for 23 years, I knew that I was getting ready to quit. I bought the book. I didn't actually read it for five months' (Elisha). In summary, both men and women read self-help books for a variety of reasons, but women are more likely to read due to experiences or changes relating to health or relationships, while men are more likely to read due to a general interest or unsolicited recommendations.

The tendency for women to be more proactive or purposeful in their self-help reading was also reflected in the responses we received to the question of how participants selected the self-help books that they discussed with us. Men (53%) were more likely than women (42%) to rely upon recommendations from friends, family members, or co-workers, while women (35%) were more likely than men (22%) to find self-help books through browsing online or at a bookstore or library. About one-quarter of both men

and women selected books due to recommendations from health care practitioners or workshop leaders, prior reading from the same author, or the general fame of the author or the book.

Men and women both read self-help books for a variety of reasons. Women are substantially more likely to read due to concerns regarding interpersonal relationships, and somewhat more likely to read due to health concerns. Men are somewhat more likely to read due to career concerns, and substantially more likely to read for reasons unrelated to specific changes or experiences in their lives. Women are also more likely to be proactive and purposeful in selecting self-help books. This finding is amplified in the subsequent section, which demonstrates that women read self-help books in a more highly-engaged and linear manner.

How do people read self-help books?

Women and men differed in their degree of engagement with, and likelihood to take action from, self-help books. A total of 91% of female participants, and 84% of male participants, completed reading the entire self-help book which they discussed with us. In terms of the learning strategies employed to engage with the content of the book, women were more likely than men to take notes or highlight the text (49% to 38%), keep a learning journal or undertake exercises as suggested by the author (38% to 20%), and undertake follow-up activities such as reading additional books by the same author (13% to 9%). Men were equally likely to talk with friends or family members about their self-help reading (42%), slightly more likely than women to re-read the text more than once (33% to 28%), and more likely to employ no other learning strategy beyond the process of reading itself (18% to 12%). Finally, women were more likely than men to take concrete steps to implement advice provided by the authors of self-help books. Nearly two-thirds of female readers did so, while less than one-half of the men did so.

To describe the informal learning process associated with self-help reading, we developed a three-step model: define clear learning goals; identify salient learning outcomes; and take specific action in response to learning (McLean & Vermeylen, 2014; Vermeylen & McLean, 2014). As would be expected, there was attrition in the learning process at each of these steps: 93% of our participants were able to define specific learning goals which they claimed to possess at the outset of their reading; 83% indicated that they learned something of significance and identified opportunities to apply such learning to health, relationship, or career issues in their lives; and 61% were able to describe fairly concrete actions which they had undertaken in response to learning from their reading.

Based on the responses of our participants to questions about each of these three steps in the learning process, we constructed three basic pathways to summarize their experiences. First, the 'linear' learning pathway describes those readers who had one or more clearly-defined learning goals, learned something relevant during their reading, and took concrete action in their lives as a result of reading. Second, the 'incomplete' learning pathway describes those readers who had one or more clearly-defined learning goals, may have identified opportunities to apply lessons learned from reading to their lives, but did not take specific and concrete action based upon their reading. Third, the 'incidental' learning pathway describes those readers who either had no clear learning goal at the outset of their reading, or whose learning goals and eventual actions were not clearly linked with learning outcomes from the book they had read.

There were significant gender differences in the learning pathways experienced by participants to our research. Table 2 illustrates that women were more likely than men to be linear and successful self-help readers.

Table 2: Gender and learning pathways

Pathway	Women		Men	
	Number	%	Number	%
Linear and successful	58	65%	21	47%
Purposeful but incomplete	20	22%	14	31%
Incidental or random	11	12%	10	22%
Total	89	100%	45	100%

The most common learning pathway described by our participants was a linear process through which self-help readers addressed health-related issues. Janna, a thirty-four-year-old homemaker, spoke with us about her motivation for reading *The Dukan diet,* by Pierre Dukan:

> Having struggled with weight loss, I was open to different ideas and methods. I was hoping to learn how to lose weight and maintain that weight loss. I was also hoping this would help with willpower and alternate cooking methods. In the weight loss process, I was hoping to gain insight as to what triggers overeating. Why, how and when I eat. I wanted to be able to control these factors in order to be successful. Losing weight to be able to keep up with my kids and minimize the risk of illness and disease (diabetes).

Janna summarized her key learning from the book: 'I plan more and eat a healthier diet. I make better choices. Pre-planning menus and having food on hand were very important. Making sure I had allowable snacks'. She described the following concrete actions she undertook as a result of reading:

> I had to be very organized and learn to pre-plan meals. I made daily and weekly lists. Eventually this also applied to the rest of my day and home-life. Pre-planning meals, menus and lists made the whole house run easier. Self-help books – regardless of their main 'point' offer an excellent opportunity to learn more about you. How you learn and communicate. Reading this book brought me to the Facebook page where I was able to develop friendships with other people and also learn about other methods of goal setting and accountability.

Other participants described linear learning pathways relating to: physical health issues (e.g., dietary practices, smoking cessation, exercise, and pre-natal health); emotional or mental health issues (e.g., stress, anxiety, depression, addictions, and moodiness); interpersonal relationships (e.g., intimate relationships, parent-child relationships and communication skills); and career or financial success (e.g., developing time management and goal-setting skills, charting a career path, and understanding the character traits of successful people).

While a majority of female participants to our study experienced linear and successful learning pathways, a majority of men had either incomplete or incidental experiences of learning. Chase, a twenty-three-year-old who is currently unemployed and has not attended university, described his learning goals in reading *Do what you are: Discover the perfect career for you through the secrets of personality type,* by Paul

Tieger: 'I didn't know what career path to take' and 'I wanted to change my ideas on college and university. I had this idea that college/university was for people going on to be doctors or whatever'. Chase had clear motivations for reading this book. However, he indicated that his learning did not translate into meaningful change and, in fact, he felt disengaged by the book to the point where he didn't even finish reading it:

> I didn't really find out anything important or anything I didn't already know. I didn't finish reading the book because it couldn't hold my attention. I think that it was the content that couldn't hold my attention because it seemed to be repeating the same things over and over again. I didn't find the book helpful, so I didn't apply the strategies it suggested into my daily life.

In terms of taking concrete action resulting from reading, Chase indicated that he had such intentions ('I was hoping to learn how to distinguish the differences between hobbies and passions'), but he did not actually describe doing so.

While Chase's self-help reading pathway could be described as purposeful but incomplete, Louis' was incidental. Louis was a twenty-four year old sales representative who read *The Greatest Salesman in the World* by Og Mandino at the recommendation of his employer. He described not having explicit learning goals: 'I didn't really expect anything, just that it was the recommended reading material for my work. I was working in Toronto selling educational books door to door and this was the only book that I had to read'. Despite not having chosen to read the book himself, Louis enjoyed the book: 'It is just such a great book in which you can pull something from every time you read it'. He claimed that through reading this book, he learned the art 'of making positive habits and the ability to separate my emotions from my surrounding environment'. Twenty-one participants had incidental learning pathways. Some, like Louis, related narratives of being given books by friends, relatives, or employers, and experiencing learning and change despite an absence of pre-existing learning goals. Others related narratives of picking up self-help books out of a general interest in a subject matter, and then learning something either loosely related or unrelated to their initial interest.

In summary, the women in our research displayed a higher level of engagement with self-help books, and a greater likelihood of being linear and successful learners rather than incomplete or incidental learners. Predictably, then, there were also substantial gender differences in the types of learning accomplished by self-help readers.

What do people learn from self-help books?

Of our 134 participants, 49% read books relating primarily to health and well-being, while 26% read books dealing with interpersonal relationships, and 25% read books on topics relating to career and financial success. There were distinct gender differences in readership of different types of books. Women were more likely to read books pertaining to health and well-being (54%) and relationships (29%), as opposed to those pertaining to careers (17%). In contrast, men were more likely to read books pertaining to careers (40%) and health (40%), as opposed to those pertaining to relationships (20%).

In addition to reading books about different topics, men and women approached those books with different goals, and followed up their reading with different sorts of actions. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the learning goals and outcomes of men and women who read career-related self-help books. Note that in this and subsequent tables, goals

are stated as direct quotations from interviewees, while outcomes are synopses drawn from interview transcripts.

Table 3: Male self-help reading and careers

Reader	Book	Goals	Outcomes
James 31 year old chiropractor	*The 4-hour work week*, by Timothy Ferriss	I wanted to learn how to separate myself from my business more. Because when I first bought my business I was here, like, all day, everyday.	Restructured a staffing model in his business, with receptionists empowered to make more decisions.
Ben 28 year old software developer	*Think and grow rich*, by Napoleon Hill	I was merely curious about the strategy that someone could employ to amass this amount of money.	Successfully requested a work assignment in a different city.
Darren 25 year old IT analyst	*The Secrets of success at work*, by Richard Hall	I wanted to see if there was something I could do to make myself a better job candidate and a better person overall.	Broke down large work assignments into smaller components, enabling more effective completion of projects.
Milo 29 year old unemployed	*How to get control of your time and your life*, by Alan Lakein	I was hoping to learn effective time management skills, in part so that I could learn how to waste less time and get the most out of the amount that I have.	Employed priority setting and time management techniques.
Evan 37 year old police officer	*Strengths finder 2.0*, by Tom Rath	To learn the value of determining my strengths as opposed to focusing on things I needed to learn to do better.	Focused on strengths and found co-workers with complementary strengths.

Table 4: Female self-help reading and careers

Reader	Book	Goals	Outcomes
Grace 52 year old recovery coach	*Live your life's purpose*, by Dorothy Ratusny	I guess what I thought that I would get out of it, would be confirmation of what my life's purpose is. Not from the book, but from what the book would lead me to do.	Entered a training program and established a new business, following being laid off from the public sector.
Delilah 24 year old restoration technician	*Fish!*, by Stephen Lunden, Harry Paul, and John Christensen	I don't think there was anything I was hoping to learn, just wanted to find a new perspective. I found I was a negative person and didn't enjoy my job and always looked at the negative side of things.	Implemented strategies to think more positively about work.
Laila 20 year old student	*The Secret*, by Rhonda Byrne	I really wanted to learn how to stay happy at all times in life and learn to live positively.	Decided on a career path, applied to business school, and was accepted.
Nelly 31 year old opera singer	*The Naked voice*, by W. Stephen Smith	Ideas and methods that would prove to be healthy, effective and efficient (for singing).	Practiced vocal exercises to improve her professional singing voice.
Kim 25 year old school-teacher	*Substitute teaching from A to Z,* by Barbara	I was hoping to learn ways to deal with classroom management when it's not your own class as well as some tips and tricks for	Implemented classroom management techniques (as a schoolteacher).

	Pressman	getting students to respect, obey and listen to you.	

Among participants in our study, men were more than twice as likely to report learning outcomes relating primarily to career and financial success. Further, as Tables 3 and 4 illustrate, women were more likely to express learning goals and report outcomes which linked career success with other goals, such as happiness and well-being.

Women and men read self-help books pertaining to health in similar proportions and with similar goals and outcomes. Tables 5 and 6 illustrate the learning goals and outcomes of men and women who read health-related self-help books.

Table 5: Male self-help reading and health

Reader	Book	Goals	Outcomes
Ryan 32 year old musician	*The four agreements*, by Don Miguel Ruiz	I was hoping to find some strength in myself. It kind of a cliché story, but I had my heart smashed open and I was having a tough time getting back to me.	Spoke with friends about the emotional pain he was feeling.
Clive 28 year old unemployed	*Stop saying you're fine*, by Mel Robbins	The main goals for me were to get back on track again, but specifically deal with anxiety and depression.	Started keeping a daily journal and feeling more positive.
Gabriel 25 year old loan officer	*Life without Ed*, by Jenni Schaefer	I was hoping to learn some key coping mechanisms in order to help me fight the eating disorder that I was struggling with.	Kept a daily journal and overcame an eating disorder.
Owen 31 year old IT analyst	*Man's search for meaning*, by Viktor Frankl	I was interested in how a person's spirit can find resiliency and be indefatigable.	Used internal dialogue with self (based on book's messages) when faced with sadness.
Graham 32 year old computer lab technician	*Healing foods*, by Amanda Ursell	The main goal was exploring the nutrition and health benefits of food and preventing cancers and other type of diseases.	Purchased and consumed healthier foods.

Table 6: Female self-help reading and health

Reader	Book	Goals	Outcomes
Melia 44 year old homemaker	*The mindful woman*, by Sue Patton Thoele	My hope in reading this book was to change negative thought patterns and to focus on being less judgmental and to help me 'be more present in the moment'.	Practiced meditation.
Elisha 37 year old school-teacher	*Allen Carr's easy way to stop smoking*, by Allen Carr	My goal was to stop smoking. I did not want to continue to damage my body.	Quit smoking.
Lauren 32 year old homemaker	*The perfect 10 diet*, by Michael Aziz	I was hoping to learn a little bit more about nutrition.	Changed family meal-time practices.
Kiera 20 year old student	*Thoughts and feelings*, by Matthew McKay et al.	I wanted to be able to control my mood, and through that be able to have a more constant and enjoyable life. I am often anxious, and I was hoping that through reading this book, I will be able to be less anxious and enjoy my time more.	Kept a 'Thought and Evidence Journal' to promote a more calm and rational approach to stressful situations.
Gracia 30 year old school-teacher	*Feeling good*, by David Burns	When I started to read the book my goals surrounded finding some relief from my anxiety and depression.	Implemented strategies to think more positively about stressful situations.
Wendy 48 year old unemployed	*Navigating midlife*, by Robyn Vickers-Willis	I was hoping to gain insights on how to cope with a raft of unsettling emotions, thoughts, and responses.	Took an 'intensive journaling' workshop.

Table 5 provides a virtually comprehensive picture of the men who reported health-related learning outcomes, with the exception of two men who claimed to have adopted a vegan diet as the result of self-help reading. In addition to those identified on Table 6, twenty-three other women reported health-related outcomes relating primarily to dietary changes, practicing meditation, and various stress management strategies. Apart from the larger range of learning goals and outcomes reported by women, there were only modest gender differences in health-related learning from self-help books.

Gender differences in self-help reading were most pronounced in the domain of interpersonal relationships. Table 7 identifies all five men who reported learning outcomes pertaining to relationships, and Table 8 presents data from five of the 22 women who reported such outcomes.

Table 7: Male self-help reading and relationships

Reader	Book	Goals	Outcomes
Justin 25 year old student	*How to change the life you have for the life you want*, by Amanda Ball	Problems with school courses, and inability to attain any meaningful relationships.	Became more assertive and positive in workplace relationships.
Nate 30 year old IT analyst	*The five love languages*,	I was hoping to understand my wife a little better and get some insight into our	Changed patterns of conversation with spouse.

	by Gary Chapman	relationship.	
Fraser 27 year old student	*Always know what to say*, by Peter Murphy	I wanted to learn how to interact with people better. I was always a shy person and it was hard for me to engage someone in conversation about anything.	Took a deep breath prior to speaking with people.
Finn 25 year old graphic designer	*The Game: Penetrating the secret society of pick-up artists*, by Neil Strauss	Initially I just wanted to ascertain the validity of what the book claimed, rather than taking away an experience from it. Once I got into it though, I started to think more about improving self confidence, and if the book were to advise anything with regards to a personal healthy body image.	Used a 'magic card trick' to break the ice when meeting girls in bars.
Reg 43 year old welder	*Raising your spirited child,* by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka	I wanted to better associate with my child. Learn about how he thought and what I could do to develop a better relationship with him. How to diffuse my frustrations.	Tried to understand a child's behaviour, and act differently in response to that behaviour.

Table 8: Female self-help reading and relationships

Reader	Book	Goals	Outcomes
Nicole 47 year old flight attendant	*Will I ever be good enough?* by Karyl McBride	I think if anything was a goal, it was to find a way to free myself of feeling guilty about how I often feel about my mom, to validate how I feel, and to forgive the things about her that make me crazy.	Changed patterns of conversation with her mother.
Danica 45 year old unemployed	*When good people have affairs*, by Mira Kirshenbaum	I was hoping to understand what compelled me to be the kind of person that had an affair. I was hoping to learn how to decide what to do with my life from then on.	Ended an extra-marital affair.
Robin 37 year old health care educator	*The Ultimate guide to sex and disability*, by Mirium Kaufman et al.	Right on the cover it states that it's about sex and disability, and also covers chronic pain patients. I'm not sure that I had certain goals, but I was interested in both of these subjects.	Expanded range of sexual practices.
Rachel 36 year old urban planner	*The five love languages*, by Gary Chapman	I was hoping to learn what the love languages are, and which love languages myself and my husband use.	Changed patterns of conversation with spouse.
Sheila 24 year old real estate agent	*The New male sexuality*, by Bernie Zilbergeld	I was hoping to become more successful in my romantic relationships with men and better understand what drives them sexually.	Establish a new and 'successful' relationship with a boyfriend.

In addition to those identified on Table 8, seventeen other women reported relationship-focused outcomes relating primarily to their behaviours with husbands and boyfriends, and in situations of interpersonal conflict. The gender division of responsibility for intimate relationships implied by these results is striking. Of 45 men in our study, just one reported reading a self-help book with intentions and results focused primarily upon an intimate relationship; in contrast, 11 of 89 women reported goals and outcomes pertaining mainly to the enhancement of an intimate relationship.

Conclusions

In this article, we have described two key gender differences in the experience of self-help reading. First, women's reading was focused significantly more upon the maintenance and enhancement of interpersonal relationships. In contrast, there were relatively modest gender differences in self-help reading pertaining to careers and health. Men were proportionally more likely to read self-help books relating to career and financial success, but there were only minor gender differences in learning goals and outcomes among readers in this sub-genre. It would seem that women have joined men as readers of career-related self-help books, and men and women have comparable interests in books about health and well-being. Strikingly, though, women were far more engaged in self-help reading designed to enhance intimate and family relationships. Second, women appear to be more proactive, purposeful, and linear in their reading of self-help books. Women's engagement with self-help books differs from men's in that they are more likely to seek out books of their own volition, to complete the reading of the book, to engage in learning strategies beyond simply reading, and to engage in concrete action as a result of reading.

Our empirical research with readers of self-help books has provided a rich description of gender differences in reading practices and outcomes. These findings have important implications, both for those interested in understanding gender issues in society, and for those interested in adult, continuing, and higher education. Our findings support the interpretation that Hochschild (1989, 2003, 2012) has made of the evolving role of women in paid and domestic labour. We argue that women read self-help books more frequently and more intensively than men for the same reasons that women have come to constitute the majority of students in adult, continuing, and higher education in recent decades: the increasing necessity to work for wages, coupled with persistent wage gaps and disproportionate responsibilities for domestic labour mean that women tend to work harder than men in order to obtain and maintain well-remunerated jobs. Being on the disadvantaged side of the wage gap makes self-help reading for career-related purposes just as important for women as it is for men. Bearing disproportionate responsibility for domestic labour and emotional work makes self-help reading oriented towards interpersonal relationships more important for women than for men. Women would seem to have more at stake in their engagement with self-help books, and thus be more proactive, purposeful, and linear in their reading.

Our observations about the differences between male and female readers of self-help books are of value to those engaged in more conventional forms of adult and continuing education. There are many contexts in post-compulsory schooling where women outnumber men. It is important to keep in mind that this imbalance does not exist simply because women like schooling more than men do, or because women had more positive prior experiences of schooling than men did. In many circumstances, women face a higher degree of compulsion to participate in adult and continuing education – whether as a strategy to earn more money or as a strategy to maintain relationships for which they feel a stronger sense of responsibility than do men. Self-help books oriented toward female readers have been particularly successful not because women are more gullible than men, or because they have more spare time; rather, such books have been successful because they address the concerns of women in the context of substantial political-economic and cultural change. It is not a coincidence that rates of participation in self-help reading, adult and continuing education, and higher education have all expanded dramatically over the past sixty years, nor is it a coincidence that women constitute the majority of learners in all these domains. Such

phenomena share common roots in the incorporation of women in wage labour markets, coupled with persistent gender imbalances in wages and domestic labour.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge research assistance provided by University of Calgary graduate students Kristen Atwood, Jaya Dixit, and Laurie Vermeylen. Research for this article was supported by a Standard Research Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

References

Arai, A. (2000). Self-employment as a response to the double day for women and men in Canada. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 32*(2), 125-142.

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. (2011). *Trends in higher education—Enrolment*. (Vol. 1). Ottawa: AUCC.

Barker, K. (2002). Self-help literature and the making of an illness identity: The case of fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS). *Social Problems, 49*(3), 279-301.

Biggart, N. (1983). Rationality, meaning, and self-management: Success manuals, 1950-1980. *Social Problems,30*(3), 298-311.

Bloch, J. (2000). The new and improved Clint Eastwood: Change and persistence in promise keepers self-help literature. *Sociology of Religion, 61*(1), 11-30.

Bruneau, L., Bubenzer, D., & McGlothlin, J. (2010). Revisioning the self: A phenomenological investigation into self-help reading. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development, 49*, 217-230.

Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. (1951). *Ninth Census of Canada, 1951.* Ottawa: King's Printer.

Cheng, M. (2008). The selves of self-help books: Framing, argument and audience construction for social and autonomous selves. *LORE, 6*(2), 1-27.

Cherry, S. (2008). The ontology of a self-help book: A paradox of its own existence. *Social Semiotics, 18*(3), 337-348.

Coleman, M., & Nickleberry, L. (2009). An evaluation of the remarriage and stepfamily self-help literature. *Family Relations, 58*(5), 549-561.

Courtney, J. (2009). Real men do housework: Ethos and masculinity in contemporary domestic advice. *Rhetoric Review, 28*(1), 66-81.

Craig, L. (2006). Does father care mean father share? A comparison of how mothers and fathers in intact families spend time with children. *Gender and Society, 20*(2), 259-281.

Cullen, J. (2009). How to sell your soul and still get into heaven: Steven Covey's epiphany-inducing technology of effective selfhood. *Human Relations, 62*(8), 1231-1254.

Drolet, M. (2011). Why has the gender wage gap narrowed? *Perspectives on Labour and Income, 23*(1), 3-13.

Effing, M. (2009). The origin and development of self-help literature in the United States: The concept of success and happiness, an overview. *Atlantis, 31*(2), 125-141.

Ehrenreich, B., & English, D. (2005). *For her own good: 150 years of the experts' advice to women*. Garden City: Anchor Books.

Gabriel, B., & Forest, J. (2004). Concordance among readers of self-help books about important ideas. *Psychological Reports, 94*, 655-662.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Grodin, D. (1991). The interpreting audience: The therapeutics of women's self-help book reading. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication 8*, 404-420.

Hazelden, R. (2003). Love yourself: The relationship of the self with itself in popular self-help texts. *Journal of Sociology, 39*(4), 413-428.

Hazleden, R. (2004). The pathology of love in contemporary relationship manuals. *Sociological Review, 52*(2), 201-217.

Hazleden, R. (2009). Promises of peace and passion: Enthusing the readers of self-help. *M/C Journal*, *12*(2), 1-9.
Hochschild, A. (1989). *The second shift: Working parents and the revolution at home*. New York: Viking.
Hochschild, A. (1994). The commercial spirit of intimate life and the abduction of feminism: Signs from women's advice books. *Theory, Culture and Society, 11*(2), 1-24.
Hochschild, A. (2003). *The commercialization of intimate life: Notes from home and work*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Hochschild, A. (2012). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Jarvis, C. (1999). Love changes everything: The transformative potential of popular fiction. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 31*(2), 109-123.
Kapell, B., & McLean, S. (2015). Public pedagogy from the learner's perspective: Women reading self-help relationship books. *Studies in Continuing Education* (in press).
Knudson, S. (2013). Crash courses and lifelong journeys: Modes of reading non-fiction advice in a North American audience. *Poetics*, *41*, 211-235.
Krafchick, J., Zimmerman, T., Haddock, S., & Banning, J. (2005). Best-selling books advising parents about gender: A feminist analysis. *Family Relations, 54*(1), 84-100.
Leavitt, S. (2002). *From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A cultural history of domestic advice*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Lichterman, P. (1992). Self-help reading as a thin culture. *Media, Culture, and Society, 14*(4), 421-447.
McLean, S. (2013). Public pedagogy, private lives: Self-help books and adult learning. *Adult Education Quarterly, 63*(4), 373-388.
McLean, S. (2014). Learning on the margins of adult education: Self-help reading about health, relationships, and career success. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 46*(1), 4-22.
McLean, S., & Carter, L. (2013). University continuing education for adult learners: History and key trends. In Nesbit, T., Taber, N., Brigham S. & Gibb, T. (Eds.), *Building on critical traditions: Adult education and learning in Canada*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, pp. 283-293.
McLean, S. & Vermeylen, L. (2014). Transitions and pathways: Self-help reading and informal adult learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 33*(2), 125-140.
Milkie, M., Raley, S., & Bianchi, S. (2009). Taking on the second shift: Time allocations and time pressures of U.S. parents with preschoolers. *Social Forces, 88*(2), 487-517.
Ogles, B., Craig, D., & Lambert, M. (1991). Comparison of self-help books for coping with loss: expectations and attributions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 38*(4), 387-93.
Osnowitz, D. (2005). Making time in domestic space: Home-based contractors and household work. *Gender and Society, 19*(1), 83-103.
Philip, B. (2009). Analysing the politics of self-help books on depression. *Journal of Sociology, 45*(2), 151-168.
Redden, G. (2002). The new agents: Personal transfiguration and radical privatization in New Age self-help. *Journal of Consumer Culture, 2*(1), 33-52.
Rimke, H. (2000). Governing citizens through self-help literature. *Cultural Studies, 14*(1), 61-78.
Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of freedom: Reframing political thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Sandlin, J., O'Malley, M., & Burdick, J. (2011). Mapping the complexity of public pedagogy scholarship: 1894-2010. *Review of Educational Research, 81*(3), 338-375.
Sandlin, J., Schultz, B., & Burdick, J., Eds. (2010). *Handbook of public pedagogy: Education and learning beyond schooling*. New York: Routledge.
Scholz, D., & Forest, J. (1997). Effects of fictional, autobiographical and self-help literature on personality measures. *Psychological Reports, 80*, 91-96.
Simonds, W. (1992). *Women and self-help culture: Reading between the lines*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
Statistics Canada. (1983). *Historical Statistics of Canada*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
Statistics Canada. (2005). *PCensus, 1991.* Ottawa: Statistics Canada electronic database.
Vermeylen, L., & McLean, S. (2014). Does age matter? Informal learning practices of younger and older adults. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 26*(1), 19-34
Woodstock, L. (2007). Think about it: The misbegotten promise of positive thinking discourse. *Journal of Communication Inquiry, 31*(2), 166-189.
Wright, R. (2007). 'The Avengers,' public pedagogy, and the development of British women's consciousness. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* 115, 63-72.

Wright, R., & Sandlin, J. (2009). Cult TV, hip hop, shape-shifters, and vampire slayers: A review of the literature at the intersection of adult education and popular culture. *Adult Education Quarterly, 59*(2), 118-141.

Zimmerman, T., Holm, K., & Haddock, S. (2001). A decade of advice for women and men in the best-selling self-help literature. *Family Relations, 50*(2), 122-133.

European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, Vol.6, No.1, 2015, pp. 73-90

A sociomaterial model of the teaching-learning continuum

Reinhard Zürcher
University of Teacher Education, Austria (reinhard.zuercher@phwien.ac.at)

Abstract

It is widely accepted today that the range between informal and formal learning can be conceptualized as a continuum. Since substantial models are not available, the specific features of this continuum depend on one's preference. In this paper, I will propose a model for the continuum that defines its constituting variable 'formalization' and thereby its points and ends. Because the parameters of the learning process can reach different degrees of formalization, the continuum is split into sub-continua for each parameter. In a second step, the perspective on learning is expanded to the general teaching-learning process, with the consequence of complementing the learning continuum with a teaching continuum. In order to argue for entangled teaching-learning states and to address questions of materiality and causality, I draw on sociomaterial theories. Finally, some consequences for (adult) education research are discussed.

Keywords: informal learning; informal teaching; teaching-learning continuum; sociomaterial theories; (adult) education research

Introduction

From Dewey's introduction of the term 'informal education' (Dewey, 1899) until today, education researchers have not managed to formulate a consistent theory of informal learning (and of the learning continuum from informal to formal learning) that allows for a quantification of degrees of formalization of arbitrary learning processes. At present, the question 'How informal or how formal(ized) is a specific learning process?' can hardly be answered with convincing arguments. Reasons for this lack of a theory can be found on the one hand in history, as the terms informal and non-formal learning evolved in diverse educational contexts (Colley, Hodkinson, & Malcolm, 2003, pp. 4-17), and on the other hand in the rather arbitrary attribution of specific learning processes to these contexts. Moreover, real learning processes have proved to be of enormous complexity, they are hybrid, indeterminate, deal with fluid boundaries and

ISSN 2000-7426
© 2015 The author
DOI 10.3384/rela.2000-7426.rela0139
www.rela.ep.liu.se

'messy objects' (Fenwick, 2010b), and their status of formalization cannot be described through static and more or less subjective definitions of informal, non-formal and formal learning, for which the definitions of the Commission of the European Union (2001, pp. 32-33) are a well-known example. Their specifying dimensions 'context', 'structure', 'certification' and 'intention' are suited for the purposes of educational policy, but as they represent a selection fraught with a certain arbitrariness and are not derived from any overarching theory, they are of little use to research (for a more detailed discussion of this point and of the debates about (in-)formal learning in general, see Zürcher, 2010).

An alternative conception of (in-)formal learning proposed by Livingstone (2001, pp. 2ff) consists of a matrix with four basic types of learning: formal schooling and elder's teachings, non-formal and further education, self-directed and collective learning, informal education/training. This conception is not convincing either, since learning processes cannot be attributed exclusively to one of these domains, a fact that Livingstone (2001, p. 3) frankly concedes.

As these domain models with unspecified boundaries between the domains proved to be unsatisfactory, continuum models were suggested. Simple kinds of continuum models settled for dissolving the boundaries between the domains. Rogers (2004) added 'participatory education' as a further domain to the continuum, and more sophisticated models introduced sub-continua for a number of characteristics of the learning process (Colley et al., 2003, p. 28; Rohs, 2007, p. 34). However, in each case it remained unclear what really happens at a certain point in the continuum.

I have therefore proposed a re-interpretation of the formalization of learning processes, in which the degree of formalization represents the number of options (or the degree of freedom) in choosing each single parameter of the learning process (Zürcher, 2010). This model, which will be elaborated later on, implies that formalization is literally understood as a progressive generalization and standardization of the learning process. The analytic approach of the model differs distinctly from the traditional discursive ones that discuss the teaching and learning conditions in a great variety of contexts, be it the family, the community, volunteer projects or the workplace, and which extract from these contexts different types of learning, like in Livingstone's matrix. The proposed model is compatible with the assumption of Colley et al. (2003, p. 32) that each domain of formal/non-formal/informal learning contains aspects of the other two domains, that most learning situations encompass attributes of (in-)formality and that there is no safe way to establish the differences between formal and informal learning as fundamentally different types of learning (Colley et al., 2003, p. 31). In several points, however, the model goes beyond this insofar as 1) it represents a continuum of formalization degrees where learning situations appear in any case as partially formalized, 2) since the parameters of the teaching-learning process (TLP) usually differ with respect to the extent of their formalization, the continuum is split into sub-continua for each of the parameters, and 3) it introduces a definite time-dependence, as the formalization degrees of the TLP-parameters can change with every activity in the respective learning environment.

In former decades, linear continua have already been utilized for specific learning forms, e.g. from self-directed learning to other-directed learning or from the instructional domain to the autodidactic domain (Candy, 1991). However, their coarse-grained and qualitative character reduced their usability, and for that reason continua for the degree of self-direction only gained limited popularity. In the present model, the control of the learning process appears as one of the many sub-continua endowed with a measure of formalization.

Another point concerns the relation of learning to teaching, with a focus on the widely neglected 'informal teaching'. Due to limitations of space, teaching cannot be discussed here in its full breadth from rigorous instruction to collaborative projects, social movements etc. With respect to the formalization model, teaching is merely considered with regard to a) its measure of formalization, b) its causal relation to learning, and c) its extension to objects. As a consequence, my remarks about teaching may seem somewhat abstract.

Usually the existence of 'informal teaching' is denied with the argument that the rationale of informality requires the non-existence of teaching. As one of the few exceptions, Livingstone (2001, p. 2) introduced 'informal education/informal training' into the discussion of informal learning. In Livingstone's diction, informal education is a kind of private tutoring of a teacher (and informal training of a trainer). Beyond that, for community educators or for tutors in science centres, the notion 'informal educators' is in use.

If informal teaching is to be a viable educational concept, a new perspective on the relationship between learning and teaching is required. The 'Standard Paradigm of Learning' (Beckett & Hager, 2002), which is used here as representative of traditional theories, views learning as the activity of individual minds that acquire transferable, de-contextualized knowledge. Courses are designed to transmit knowledge for later use to solve problems in daily work practice. Learning occurs exclusively in the minds of individuals and it is assumed that the components of the process – subject, object, content, media, etc. – can be neatly separated for model-building and research. Dichotomies like theory/practice, thought/action, teaching/learning or informal/formal lurk in the background, in which an individual existence is ascribed to each counterpart (Dean, Sykes & Turbill, 2012, p. 3). For informal/formal learning, this means that learning takes place either in one or the other state. For teaching/learning this means that teaching is a business of informed individuals like teachers, trainers or parents, and without a teaching person a learner can only teach him-/herself autodidactically, a process in which learning and teaching amalgamate.

In the 20th century, systems theory and quantum theory began to interpret the behaviour of the elements or participants of a system as determined by the state of the whole system. Dewey and Bentley (1949) developed the transactional perspective on learning and 'new ways of learning and knowing as inseparable for action' (Dean et al., 2012, p. 2) were suggested by investigations in work-integrated learning that led to practice-based approaches. The core of these performative, sociomaterial approaches is the mutual enactment of practice and knowing: Learning is enacted or embodied and human entities are inseparably interconnected with non-human entities (Dean et al., 2012, p. 5; Fenwick & Edwards, 2013, p. 50). Non-human entities like objects and artefacts co-constitute the emerging practices. But when 'material things are performative' (Fenwick et al., 2013, p. 53), then one is led to ask: Can non-human entities teach?

The synopsis of the learning continuum, the inseparability of teaching-learning acts and the equivalence of human beings and things in these acts lead to one conclusion: The learning continuum must be complemented by a teaching continuum that extends from informal to formal teaching. But how do these two continua fit together? Do the points of one continuum show a (bijective) one-to-one correspondence with the other continuum? Or is there just a single teaching-learning continuum (TLC) in which the points denote the state of formalization of an inseparable teaching-learning act? Which kind of causality dominates the teaching-learning process (TLP)? What are the consequences for research?

The formalized learning continuum

In the following, the teaching aspect is temporarily disregarded. Existing learning continua still cling to the three domains 'of informal learning – non-formal learning – formal learning', or they implant additional domains like in 'formal education – non-formal education – participatory education – informal learning' (Rogers, 2004). Here, the underlying categories are not properly differentiated. Whereas e.g. participatory learning is a learning form (with participation as its principal characteristic), the informal/formal dichotomy represents the formalization of learning forms and is thus a superordinate category insofar as it affects 'all' forms of learning.

I have already proposed some features of a teaching-learning continuum elsewhere (Zürcher, 2010). In the present paper, this model is refined, the relationship of teaching and learning is analysed in more detail and the notion of 'informal teaching' is discussed. For the sake of a comprehensive picture, I will briefly repeat the basic features of the model.

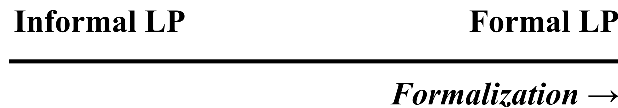
My point of departure is the assumption that the usual tripartition of the continuum into informal, non-formal and formal learning is too coarse-grained to be useful for research. The definitions of these three domains are descriptive and the transitions between these domains are rather mysterious. The suggested analytic model exhibits some new features (Zürcher, 2010). At first, the meaning of (in-)formality had to be clarified, and this can be done by analysing the semantics and the use of these notions in practice and research. As a result I became convinced that 'formal' – deriving from 'form' – does not indicate that a process or state has been formed, but formalized. But what does 'formalization' entail? It can be interpreted as regulation insofar as, with increasing degrees of formalization, the number of prescriptions and restrictions increase, and at the extreme of complete formalization only one course of action is left. The degree of regulation/formalization can be modelled as a qualitative or quantitative continuum. If quantified, an appropriate measure could be a scale from 0% to 100% or from innumerable options to one option. At the same time, formalization represents the complexity of the respective process or state, with maximum complexity at the informal end and with minimal complexity at the formal end.

Formalization as the constitutive variable of the continuum manifests itself in a variety of ways. As mentioned, the number of possibilities of a learning process for its enactment is its defining characteristic. The manifestations of formalization are, among others, reduction of complexity, linearization, trivialization, standardization, and in special cases abstraction and quantification/mathematization. Complexity is reduced insofar as the transactional learning processes are downsized to interactions or actions whereby the possibilities for their enactment decrease. Nonlinear interactions that are common between individuals are replaced with prescribed behaviour. Knowledge, curricula and assessments are standardized in order to offer the same conditions to all students and to be able to compare their learning outcomes. In the case of the parameter learning content, abstraction eliminates sensual qualities and mathematization introduces a symbolic level that represents the physical world by formulae.

Through this interpretation of formalization, we arrive at a continuum that extends from informal to formal learning: Purely informal learning at the one end indicates the maximum number of possibilities (i.e. zero regulation) within the learning process, the parameters of which (time, content, control, etc.) can be freely selected. Purely formal learning at the other end signifies learning processes with only a single way to proceed. The former may be everyday learning, the latter military drill or traditional classroom learning where all pupils have to fulfil exactly the same requirements demanded by the

teacher. A point in the continuum signifies the degree of formalization of a learning process (LP) at a certain point in time.

Figure 1. Formalization continuum of learning processes

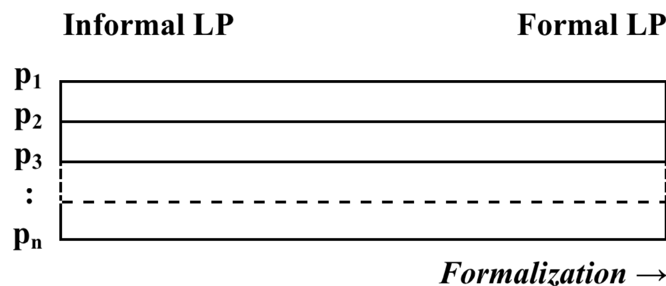


Source: Authors' own design

It is obvious that contextual restrictions and inner conditions of the learners do not allow purely informal or formal learning, so that all actual learning processes find themselves in the inner region of the formalization continuum, with a certain distance from its extreme ends.

A further aspect of the continuum concerns its splitting into the parameters of the learning process so that each parameter varies along its own sub-continuum. For a specific learning process, it is not possible to fix a comprehensive degree of formalization: The duration of the learning phases, content and method, learning control, the social constellation etc. may exhibit different degrees of formalization and they may change with the progress of learning. As a consequence, it is necessary to determine the degree of formalization for each parameter p_1, p_2…, p_n of the learning process as well as its time dependence:

Figure 2. Sub-continua of the learning continuum



Source: Authors' own design

Foundational constituents of sociomaterial theories

> All things – human and non-human, hybrids and parts, knowledge and systems – emerge 'as effects' of connection and activity. (Fenwick et al., 2013, p. 53)

To transform the learning continuum into a teaching-learning continuum, the basic concepts of so-called sociomaterial theories are best suited (Beckett et al., 2002; Fenwick, 2010a; Fenwick, 2010b; Fenwick et al., 2013). For this reason and with a focus on teaching and learning, I will briefly repeat their most important features here.

A 'system' is created by isolating specific entities under certain aspects from the whole, whereby a 'boundary' between the system and its environment or 'context' originates. Boundaries emerge as well when a system is divided into subsystems. In the case of a transactional teaching-learning process (TLP): When, for the sake of simplifying a TLP, learning is separated from teaching, a boundary is introduced to

exclude other parts of the activity, to reduce the relational network and to stabilize the partial system that is under view. The perpetual transitions are fixed to identify the dominating parameters of the process. As a consequence learning (or teaching) is detached from the whole transaction, which involves the risk of misinterpreting causes and effects, the influence of materials and situational parameters.

Learning embedded in different social practices and in a multitude of contexts (classroom, workplace, home…) must be considered in a similar way: If a single context, e.g. formal learning at school, is isolated, boundaries are introduced to all other learning contexts. As a consequence, the learning outcomes have to be transferred across a boundary into other contexts, e.g. from training to the workplace. 'Boundary objects' with the property of functioning as elements of many different contexts allow for border-crossing between these contexts (Tsui & Law, 2007, p. 1290). Teaching and learning and especially informal teaching and informal learning appear as a result of boundary-making: For practical reasons, a part of the inseparable TLP is isolated to reduce complexity and to study specific features from the singular perspective of teaching '*or*' learning.

An important change in perspective, put forward in particular by actor-network theory (ANT) and its most prominent exponent Latour (2005), is the substitution of domains or containers by 'relational networks'. Relational framings, like in theories of learning that emphasise activity, favour 'concepts of Union and networks rather than those of context' (Edwards, 2009, p. 3). For ANT, knowledge is generated through relational strategies, through networks and performed through inanimate as well as animate beings in precarious arrangements (Fenwick et al., 2013, pp. 56-57). This implicates that we need to abandon separate domains like subject/object, teaching/learning or formal learning/informal learning.

As the notion 'sociomaterial' suggests, 'material' plays an essential role in the theory. The material includes natural objects and artefacts, tools and technologies, texts and schemes etc. A sociomaterial approach represents 'a post-humanism that refutes the anthropomorphic centrality of human beings and human knowledge in defining the world and its relations' (Fenwick et al., 2013, p. 58). Learning is assumed to be a materializing assemblage and not a cognitive achievement or way of interacting. Teaching 'is not simply about the relationships between humans but is about the networks of humans and things through which teaching and learning are translated and enacted as such' (Fenwick et al., 2013, p. 54).

The relations of the entities in a TLP are informed by 'affordances' of the involved human beings, materials, tools and technology. Affordances, i.e. the range of (perceived) opportunities that the environment (humans, objects…) offers for possible interactions and performances (Greeno, 1994), can be cognitive, affective, social or educational. Sociocultural affordances that are important for learning are 'the social structures and patterns of participation within the community of practice that create opportunities to learn' (Willis, Davis & Chaplin, 2013, p. 36). Educational affordances of subjects depend, among others, on prior knowledge, learning ability, phantasy, motivation and volition. Affordances are a kind of potential glue, a part of which is utilized by the participants in a TLP, which actually ties them together.

'Transactions' take place between individuals and their environment with the result of (learning) experiences. Transactions denote the whole TLP, in which no single elements can be isolated: 'Transaction is Fact such that no one of its constituents can be adequately specified as fact apart from the specification of other constituents of the full subject matter' (Dewey et al., 1949, p. 137). If two of the constituents, e.g. two subjects or a subject and an object, are isolated, we arrive at an 'interaction': 'Inter-action

suggests that entities are separate and predetermined prior to their encounter' (Fenwick et al., 2013, p. 59). An 'action' finally is the result of a further reduction in perspective that views the activities of a single entity. It is obvious that an investigation which confines its analysis to the activities of a teacher or a learner is unable to describe the emergent reality of a TLP.

Characteristics of sociomaterial theories

In the first instance, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), actor-network theory (ANT), and complexity theory (CT) are considered to be performative, sociomaterial theories. Although they exhibit different genealogies and purposes, they conform to the assumption that learning cannot be reduced to psychological processes within the heads of human beings. For a complete description of learning, its social and material conditions are indispensable.

Practice- and performance-based approaches take into account not only the situatedness of learning, its tacit dimension and its dynamic character, but also the effects of materials and artefacts, the mutual interaction of human and non-human entities, and the inseparability of cognitive, affective, social and material relations in every kind of practice. These complex states are assemblages in perpetual transition and are a much better fit with everyday learning and workplace conditions, whereas the Standard Paradigm of Learning is incommensurable with informal learning (Dean et al., 2012, p. 1). It privileges individual cognitive processes and assumes knowledge to be de-contextualised and transferable.

I will now proceed to summarize those aspects of performative ontologies that support the argument for a unified teaching-learning continuum, in which informal teaching appears as a kind of missing link:

- *Relationality*: The essential characteristic of performative ontologies in general and of transactions in particular is the relational network between the involved entities. The isolation of single relations generates a distorted picture.
- *Inseparability*: All entities of a transaction – like a TLP – are related in a way that none exists without the others.
- *Causality*: The entities of a transaction emerge jointly, transactions develop via emergent causality. 'The phenomena of learning may be viewed as "emergent" phenomena in interconnected networks' (Jörg, 2009, p. 16). In case a boundary is introduced to isolate teaching and learning, these two entities can be said to be connected in reciprocal causality.[1] (One could assume that the control of the TLP is unidirectional, that it is at the side of the teacher in case of a lecture and at the side of the learner in case of self-directed learning. This view neglects the fact that in all possible cases of a teaching-learning act, both sides are indispensable actors of the process.)
- *Indeterminacy*: Emergent causality implies an indeterminate development of states. Knower, known and knowledge do not pre-exist, future possibilities develop at every encounter (Fenwick, 2010a, p. 115). Situations and actions are indeterminate, educational processes cannot be predicted. (However, experience allows for anticipating the development of educational processes with a certain probability.)
- *Materiality*: 'We employ no basic differentiation of subject vs. object any more than of soul *vs*. body, of mind *vs*. matter, or of self *vs*. not-self' (Dewey et al.,

1949, p. 136). The material includes objects, bodies, tools, texts, etc. that constitute together with humans the transactional TLP. The material world is treated as embedded in the immaterial and the human (Fenwick, 2013, p. 50). Things like materials, spaces, concepts, rules, discourses etc. emerge in the practice of action through the encounter of human and non-human entities.

- *Symmetry*: Between matter and living beings, a partial symmetry exists insofar as both can teach but only living beings can learn. A second symmetry can be seen between teaching and learning because of their inseparability: Without teaching there is no learning and vice versa.[2]
- *Singularity*: Whereas the Standard Paradigm of Learning privileges the average learner, for relational ontologies each learner's transactions are unique as the learner's knowledge and experiences evolve.
- *Time dependence*: In transactional inquiries, time is a key dimension. Time is 'a full duration, rather than as composed of an addition or other kind of combination of separate, instantaneous, or short-span events' (Dewey & Bentley, 1949, p. 114). Time is a continuous albeit not a uniform flow, since 'habits have different levels of inertia, and this is a major factor of change and learning' (Lorino, 2013, p. 9).
- *Knowledge*: 'Knowledge is viewed as a set of emergent patterns of action, always in the making, and learning as one specific aspect of the process of acting and meaning-making' (Lorino, 2013, p. 1). Knowledge emerges by adaptive self-organization and is enacted in networks.
- *Unit of analysis*: For research, the unit of analysis is the whole system and its development. The interactions among human and non-human entities constitute the focus of analysis.

These characteristics are contrasted with those of the Standard Paradigm of Learning in the following table:

Table 1. Characteristics of teaching-learning processes as seen by two different paradigms.

TLP characteristics	**Standard Paradigm of Learning**	**Sociomaterial approaches**
relationality	action; interaction	interaction; transaction
separability	teaching and learning separated humans and non-humans separated internal and external conditions separated	inseparable teaching-learning acts humans and non-humans entangled inseparable internal and external conditions
causality	linear	emergent
determinacy	planable and predictable teaching and learning	unplanable and unpredictable teaching-learning
centrality/multiplicity	key variables; central perspective; few identifiable influences	no key variables; multiple perspectives; multiple influences
symmetry	asymmetry between teaching and learning asymmetry between humans and materials	symmetrical teaching-learning partial symmetry between humans and materials
singularity	average learner	individual learner
time dependence	linear	dynamic state, perpetual transitions; dependence on inertia of the systems
knowledge	representation; growing body of knowledge in subject's minds	emergence; adaptive self-organization; enacting knowledge in networks
unit of analysis	components of the system; separate entities	whole system; inter-/transactions among human and non-human entities of the system

Source: Authors' own design

The relationship of teaching and learning

Sociomaterial theories enable us to look at the relationship of teaching and learning in a new way. This relationship, the core of didactics, remains an issue of permanent debate. The present paper focuses primarily on an abstract model and leaves psychological or methodological questions aside.

Teaching and learning, or teaching-learning?

Does a teacher teach if nobody in the classroom learns anything? Certainly not. He/she generates information for possible listeners, but if they do not integrate this information into their cognitive/affective structure, their knowledge will not extend and if they do not change their behaviour or their attitudes they do not learn. Without listeners paying attention, the teacher produces signs and gestures, but does not teach. A further question arises when someone learns something with the help of tools in everyday life or at work: Who is teaching? Is the person teaching him-/herself or do the objects teach?

Sociomaterial, performative ontologies or the transactional view of teaching and learning that Dewey and Bentley (1949) elaborated far ahead of their time contest that teaching and learning cannot be conceptualized as separate processes. Learning is not just an effect of the act of teaching ($T \rightarrow L$) and it is not just an interaction where teaching and learning, being separated, depend on each other ($T \leftrightarrow L$). Teaching-learning is a single and intertwined activity where both, teaching and learning, emerge exclusively together within their respective context (TL).

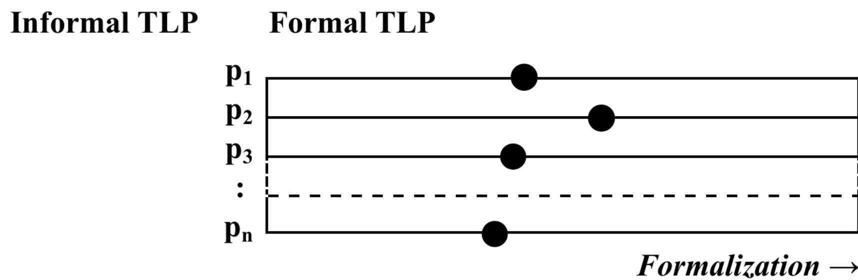
Who, then, teaches, and who learns? If the TLP is inseparable, then it is reasonable to state that objects (O) can teach subjects (S), although not vice versa. Therefore TLP are possible between subjects on the one hand ($S_1 \leftrightarrow S_2$) and between object and subject on the other hand ($S \leftarrow O$), whereby in the second case the symmetry is broken. This assumption of entangled teaching-learning implies some far-reaching consequences for teaching and for the learning continuum.

The teaching-learning continuum (TLC)

Whether a model is useful depends on its explorative power: Can it explain a greater wealth of phenomena than former models, does it enable us to investigate more aspects in detail, can these aspects be determined with higher accuracy? Second, a model is a question of efficiency and elegance, e.g. by minimizing the preconditions and by eliminating possible contradictions. So, the TLC may be supposed to be useful when it 'best covers the ground' (Dewey et al., 1949, p. 141).

Preconditions for a unified TLC are: Teaching and learning are processes that can be formalized; the parameters of the TLP exhibit different – and time-dependent – degrees of formalization; teaching-learning is an inseparable transactional process; humans and non-humans are equivalent (and therefore also things can teach). Given these premises, the TLC can be modelled in the following way, with p_1, p_2…, p_n as the parameters (e.g. time, space, content, control, intentionality) that define the TLP ('deleted for anonymity'):

Figure 3. Sub-continua of the teaching-learning continuum with a snapshot of a possible TLP



Source: Authors' own design

The model for the formalization of TLP is thus a time-dependent pattern of the state of formalization of its parameters. There may be predominant or stable configurations in this pattern, which coincide with real TLP. In the model, each parameter p is formalized on its own terms. A simple measure is the percentage to which a parameter is formalized. At a deeper level, it is the number of possibilities for a TLP to enact itself. Is it possible to define a single degree of formalization for the complete TLP, e.g. a mean square of the formalization degrees of all parameters? This will not be the case, because the parameters of the TLP differ in importance and they are not calibrated to the same scale.

Informal teaching – the missing link

> Stones are mute teachers; they silence the observer, and the most valuable lesson we learn from them we cannot communicate. (Goethe, 1830, p. 266)

For the TLC, we have assumed that objects can teach as well, a fact that is crucial for the area of low degrees of formalization. But whereas the designation 'informal learning' for learning in this area is well accepted, 'informal teaching' remains widely unnoticed. Some examples:

(1) Parents want to teach their children some basics of cooking. They gather them in the kitchen, inform the children about tools and materials, demonstrate some methods, and finally they prepare dinner together. Is this kind of coaching informal teaching?
(2) Friends debate personal and political affairs in a café and afterwards they go dancing at a disco. Who were their teachers who improved their knowledge and dancing skills?
(3) A farmer wanting to bring in his harvest looks at the cloudy sky and then he decides, in combination with what he has heard on the radio weather forecast, to wait until the next day. Has he been taught informally by the sky and the radio information?
(4) A surgeon consults an x-ray picture with the result of certainty what measures to take. Obviously the picture imparted her valuable insights.

This small extract from innumerable situations refers to the fact that in any possible learning case, somebody or something with a teaching function is involved. Hitherto,

according to conventional interpretations, informal teaching was performed exclusively by human beings in everyday or work situations. The TLC extends the teaching aspect to things and differentiates the parameters of the TLP. For the mentioned examples, this means that in order to get a picture of the scope of (in-)formality in each single case, the degree of formalization of every parameter has to be determined.

Can teaching and learning be analysed on their own, although sociomaterial theories maintain the inseparability of teaching and learning? For practical reasons, informal teaching and informal learning may be treated as isolated concepts, provided that their inseparability and their close ties to the environment are kept in mind. (Similar procedures are common in descriptions of isolated factors in ecology or regarding single forces in physics.)

Discussion

The main aspects of the model presented in this paper are the TLP in the light of sociomaterial theories (A.), the technical features of the model (B.) and its educational consequences (C.).

A. It is clear that in comparison to a TLC, the consideration of the functionalities of a learning continuum or a teaching continuum alone would be much simpler. The relationship of teaching and learning, being a source of much confusion, would not have to be taken into account. In effect, up till now even the learning continuum has hardly been investigated. For a complete picture, however, the TLC is indispensable.

The most remarkable characteristic of the TLC is its material dependence, expressed in the symmetry between matter and living beings in teaching activities. When, for example, I stroll through the woods and learn that the tree branch angle and the maximum leaf area depend on each other, one could maintain that it is only a question of semantics to say 'The trees taught me…' or 'I have taught myself…' or 'I have learned…'. In the view of the model, these three perspectives fuse to a single teaching-learning act with the realization of the fact as a result.

Symmetry has been assumed to exist between teaching and learning, which should be synchronous and inseparable. On the other hand, the aims of a teacher and those of learners are not a priori symmetric, they frequently differ. This seeming contradiction disappears when the two counterparts are seen as two different aspects: Symmetry between teaching and learning concerns the process as such, it is a precondition for a TLP to take place. On the other hand, the aims and the control of the TLP can shift along the continuum, from learner to group to teacher to government agencies.

Complexity has been assumed to be a general interpretation of the formalization continuum: The higher the degree of formalization, the lower the complexity of the teaching-learning states. Complexity is, however, a difficult measure, since there is a number of different approaches and meanings. We confine ourselves to the view that complexity is a relational measure: The higher the number of the relations of the given elements/actors, the higher the complexity of the system. In effect, informal TLP entail a multitude of individual relations, whereas formal TLP exhibit only a few general relations. The informal domain can be seen as a complex adaptive system with its self-organizing nature, whereas the formal domain resembles an ordered system where the agent behaviour is limited to the rules of the system.

Another subtle point concerning complexity can be derived from social systems, for which Hetherington (2013, p. 81) stated that 'any action that reduces complexity in social systems means weaving interactions together in 'different' ways that have the

potential to result in emergent phenomena'. This means that the reduction of complexity with increasing formalization is tempered with a counteracting increase of complexity because of new possibilities that result from regulative measures. Applied to the TLC, this would result in a lesser decrease of complexity with increasing formalization, e.g. because of new and ordered social constellations of learners, or, concerning content, because of abstractions like formulae that did not exist in the informal domain. On the other hand, this is not necessarily the case, since all the more regulated states in the formal area can be thought to be implicitly present in the informal states, too.

B. The essential issue of the continuum model is an appropriate measure for the degree of formalization. In the model presented here, the most general measure is the number of possibilities a TLP commands at a certain point in time. But what is a 'probability'? One possible answer is to see probability as a complement to actuality: A possibility is an actuality that has not (yet) taken place. Next, a possibility may be discontinuous (possible/not possible) or continuous (from weak to strong possibility, depending on probability). Third, a situation or an object affords all (learning) possibilities but in a TLP only those accessible to the learner are relevant. And fourth, only a small number of possibilities are actually realized. For the continuum, we adopt as a measure the number of accessible possibilities, which may vary in probability.

Another question concerns the formalizability of the parameters of a TLP: Are they 'all' formalizable? Furniture, class time or a curriculum can be standardized but parameters like motivation or volition can obviously only be partially influenced. Material and organizational properties are open to formalization, mental and affective properties remain – at least to some extent – under control of the individuals.

C. The term 'continuum' induces the image of a seamless transition from informal to formal learning situations in the real world. In this case, knowledge and behaviour acquired in everyday socialization processes could be extended and generalized in school without any problem. In fact, these two worlds differ qualitatively, as Scribner and Cole (1973, p. 556) asserted – the values, attitudes and content are not the same and they influence the organization of the learning systems. Informal education rests upon person-oriented values, formal education upon universalistic values and standards of performance. In between, individualistic values meet general ones, a prototypical situation in adult education groups. It is common practice in education to bridge these domains either by including everyday experiences in school or adult education or vice versa by presenting formalized concepts of the world that are of little importance to the individual's experience. From the perspective of the formalization model, larger distances between TLP of low and high formalization degrees should be bridged very cautiously in order to be sustainable.

The degree of formalization as a measure of the TLC is an intuitively accessible measure, but in practice its identification for each parameter of the TLP is not really simple. This may not be a problem for the parameter 'space' when two out of five possible learning places are used. Difficulties arise with parameters like the aim of learning, the control of the TLP or motivation, where it is nearly impossible to draw on a fixed number of possibilities, because they are relational entities and depend on prior knowledge, learning ability, context etc. Because of this fact, we must conclude that the degree of formalization is an individual characteristic, even when all students in a classroom or all learners in a training session are presented with the same lecture.

It may seem that the abstract model of the formalization continuum (Fig. 2) is quite distant from pedagogical reality or everyday life. In fact, each point in a continuum line denotes a special situation and condition for a learner and thus represents his or her area of freedom for learning. For instance it is obvious that a restriction of learning to its

formalized domain deprives young people of their free development. Other formalization movements like the Bologna System at the tertiary level or the introduction of educational standards at the secondary level seriously reduce spaces of free individual development. The formalization pattern of the model yields an immediate picture of the amount of control in TLP, as well as who is in command, thus visualizing the power relations in the TLP. The formalization continuum leads to the question of which degrees of formalization are best for an individual or a group under the present conditions – and who is entitled to decide this question? Here, value judgements come into play.

Implications for research

> For use in research adequate report of the full event is necessary, and for this again adequate behavioral description must be secured. (Dewey et al., 1949, p. 133/footnote)

How reasonable is it to isolate individual characteristics of a TLP and to investigate their interdependence under the condition that a TLP is an inseparable transactional process? Causes and effects in teaching-learning situations are difficult to isolate and to study independently, since any change of an agency in the system influences other states and forces acting in the system. E.g. the conversion of a traditional classroom into a space that meets the requirements of modern pedagogy – functional zones, individual furniture, etc. – influences other variables (materials and tasks, the social constellation, the atmosphere...) of the TLP. The isolation of monocausal effects results in conclusions of restricted value. This applies all the more to the informal domain, as here the TLP are less ordered and more complex than in the formalized area.

Towards the informal end of the TLC, the number of possible realizations and interdependencies of the characteristics of a TLP becomes overwhelmingly high. In this area, sociomaterial theories and especially Complexity Theory are the method of choice. These approaches apply, of course, to all TLP, but for the present paper the less formalized and comparatively little investigated domain that represents notably early childhood, everyday learning and work-integrated learning is of greater interest. Two points are considered here: A. In which aspects do sociomaterial approaches influence research settings for the low formalized domain? B. In which way can the formalization model support this research and what are the open questions concerning the model?

A. A relational, performative approach emphasises knowledge as practice and proceeds from the mutual enactment of practice and knowing (Dean et al., 2012, p. 4). It starts with ‘a sensibility and a language for speaking about the orders that are tried to construct out of the messy conditions and circumstances that constitute the educational world’ (Fenwick et al., 2013, p. 60). TLP are embedded in material interaction and are not exclusively a playground for the concepts and feelings of the participants. Investigations concerning the informal domain have to consider not only the invisible educational activities in material contexts, but also the aspects of everyday and work life that seem, at first sight, not to be important for learning (Dean et al., 2012, p. 8). In addition, sociomaterial research takes the whole network of relations into account, explores the entangled human/non-human interactions, matters and meanings and pays attention to the process of making and disappearing boundaries that include or exclude human beings and objects. This aspect of inclusion/exclusion applies to the researchers, too, insofar as they are responsible for their own participation not only in research, but also in the on-going processes in their field of studies.

This last point is reminiscent of action research, and in fact this approach exhibits substantial similarities with Complexity Theory. Among others, action research accepts the inherent unpredictability, the emergent nature of change, the role of agent interaction and of self-organization in open systems (Phelps & Hase, 2002; Phelps & Graham, 2010). Complexity Theory in turn offers a solution to old problems of traditional theories, e.g. the mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, the contextuality of case studies and their generalization or the multiple correlations of elements that lead to unpredictable emergences. Complexity Theory allows us to conflate the binary concept qualitative/quantitative and to conceptualize context in case studies in relation to the boundaries of the case in a meaningful way (Haggis, 2008).

From a general point of view, the complex processes of teaching-learning interactions suggest a multiple-method approach that has become known as 'bricolage' (Kincheloe, 2001, 2005). Bricolage not only includes divergent methods of inquiry but also diverse theoretical and philosophical understandings of the elements encountered in the research process. Distinguishing 'method' and 'methodology', Alhadeff-Jones (2013) designed a theoretical framework for researchers based on three moments: the definition of the research process and its sub-systems, a matrix to model the research process, and the development of a research method. This last moment requires adopting a strategic position, and, since a complete description of all methodological dimensions is impossible, the method cannot be predefined in advance but has to be developed and adapted according to the contingencies in the course of the inquiry process.

Returning to the low formalized domain, a few investigations based on complexity thinking are already available. Dean et al. (2012) studied informal learning in work-integrated learning, based on a relational, performative approach. With the help of ethnographic vignettes the learning processes of three business interns, working for sixteen days in a local organisation, were tracked. The methods included participant observation, open interviews, photographs and artefacts (assessments, workplace artefacts, researcher's notes and reflections). This enabled the research team to uncover usually overlooked aspects of informal learning.

Hetherington (2013) discusses case study approaches and especially the problem of the necessary complexity reduction in the context of introducing a new curriculum for 11-12 year old pupils. She began with the usual methods – interviews, observations and questionnaires – and used a research journal. To capture the time-dependence of the case, Hetherington explored the students' work in lessons, made interviews with focus groups of students and observed the professional development of the teachers in relation to the new curriculum over two years. Her own role moved close to an action research perspective, as she regarded herself as being situated within the case itself, thus reducing and producing complexity at the same time.

Summing up, for researchers who are aware of the enormous complexity of TLP sociomaterial approaches can seem very attractive. A warning from Fenwick and Edwards (2013, p. 57) should, however, be kept in mind: 'There is a danger in becoming overly fascinated with conceptions that trace complexity and assemblings, without asking how such analysis is any more productive in understanding and responding to educational concerns'.

B. As described earlier, the formalization model is conceptualized on the basis of sociomaterial theories. How can it support investigations in the area of low formalized TLP? Traditional research of informal learning processes relies on interviews and questionnaires that offer information about the content and duration people believe they learn informally. These data yield no information about unintentional and unconscious learning processes and they depend heavily on the definition of informal learning (with

the result that the value of comparative studies and statistical analyses is rather limited). Case studies on learning processes in the community or at work are frequently realized as biographical research with qualitative methods or based on grounded theory.

The TLC serves first of all to understand the deeper meaning of formalization in TLP and second as an instrument at hand that can be used for investigations into formalized processes. The formalization pattern indicates the scope of individual freedom and at the same time the scope of external control in TLP. Beyond that, the model serves as a kind of periodic system: It indicates the empty spaces in the continuum that are not covered e.g. in the TLP of an educational institution. This information can be valuable for planning well-balanced educational scenarios.

Since the presented TLC (Fig. 2) is the first of its kind, numerous questions remain to be solved, e.g.: Which parameters $p_1, \ldots, p_n$ should be chosen to adequately represent a TLP? Are all parameters equally important? In which way are they related? What is a convenient formalization measure for the parameters? Is it possible to identify a complete formalization pattern for a specific TLP? How does this pattern change with time? Do typical educational situations show a recurring formalization pattern?

Conclusion

Performative, practice-based approaches are indispensable in order to investigate the low formalized section of the TLC. The material aspect of sociomaterial theories enables us to argue for the (partial) symmetry of the teaching-learning relationship, for the equivalence of human/non-human action in TLP and to understand informal learning and in particular informal teaching in a new way.

Apart from emergent causality and irreversible time dependence, the central feature of TLP appears to be connectivity of the involved actors, elements and processes. These transactional TLP with their entangled teaching-learning states and context dependence present considerable challenges for research, especially when quantitative investigations with empirical methods are on the agenda. The suggested model offers a transparent image of the formalization state of TLP, but a lot of questions regarding its details remain to be solved.

Notes

[1] Another appropriate candidate for causality could be the recently discussed ‘superpositional causality‘, in which a single event can at the same time be cause and effect of another event (Oreshkov, Costa & Brukner, 2012).
[2] This is not to be confounded with the flow of information, which is usually asymmetrical (Nomiku, Pitsch & Rohlfing, 2013, p. VII).

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the anonymous reviewers for valuable and constructive comments.

References

Alhadeff-Jones, M. (2013). Complexity, Methodology and Method: Crafting a Critical Process of Research. *Complicity – An International Journal of Complexity and Education, 10*(1/2), 19-44.

Beckett, D., & Hager, P. J. (2002). *Life, Work and Learning: Practice in Postmodernity.* London: Routledge.

Colley, H., Hodkinson, P., & Malcolm, J. (2003). *Informality and formality in learning: a report for the Learning and Skills Research Centre*. London: Learning and Skills Research Centre.

Candy, P. C. (1991). *Self-Direction for Lifelong Learning. A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Commission of the European Union (2001). *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*. Brussels, 21. 11.

Dean, B., Sykes, C., & Turbill, J. (2012). *'So, what did you do?' A performative, practice-based approach to examining informal learning in WIL* (pp. 1-13). Paper presented at the 9th International Conference on Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education of the World Association for Cooperative Education, Bahcesehir University, Istanbul.

Dewey, J. (1899/1966). *Lectures in the Philosophy of Education*. New York: Random House.

Dewey, J., & Bentley, A. F. (1949). *Knowing and the Known*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Edwards, R. (2009). Introduction: Life as a learning context? In R. Edwards, G. Biesta, & M. Thorpe (Eds.), *Rethinking Contexts for Learning and Teaching. Communities, Activities and Networks* (pp. 1-13). New York: Routledge.

Fenwick, T. (2010a). Re-thinking the "thing": Sociomaterial approaches to understanding and researching learning in work. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 22*(1/2), 104-116.

Fenwick, T. (2010b). Workplace 'learning' and adult education. Messy objects, blurry maps and making difference. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 1*(1/2), 79-95.

Fenwick, T., & Edwards, R. (2013). Performative ontologies. Sociomaterial approaches to researching adult education and lifelong learning. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults, 4*(1), 49-63.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. (1830). *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre oder die Entsagenden*. Goethe's Werke, Dreyundzwanzigster Band, Aus Makariens Archiv. Stuttgart und Tübingen: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung

Greeno, J. G. (1994). Gibson's Affordances. *Psychological Review, 101*(2), 236-342.

Haggis, T. (2008). Knowledge must be contextual: exploring some possible implications of complexity and dynamic systems theories for educational research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 40*(1), 159-176.

Hetherington, L. (2013). Complexity Thinking and Methodology: the Potential of 'Complex Case Study' for Educational Research. *Complicity: an International Journal of Complexity Theory and Education, 10*(1/2), 71-85.

Jörg, T. (2009). Thinking in Complexity about Learning and Education: A Programmatic View. *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity and Education, 6*(1), 1-22.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2001). Describing the Bricolage: Conceptualizing a New Rigor in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 7*(6), 679-692.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2005). On to the Next Level: Continuing the Conceptualization of the Bricolage. *Qualitative Inquiry, 11*(3), 323-350.

Latour, B. (2005). *Re-assembling the Social - An Introduction to Actor Network Theory*. London: Oxford University Press.

Livingstone, D. W. (2001). *Adult's Informal Learning: Definitions, Findings, Gaps and Future Research*. NALL Working Paper No. 21.Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

Lorino, P. (2013). *Transaction and Transformation: A Pragmatist Perspective on Learning as Transforming Action and Transacting Forms*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Organizational Learning, Knowledge and Capabilities, The George Washington University, 25 – 27 April.

Nomiku, I., Pitsch, K., & Rohlfing, K. J. (2013). Asymmetry and adaptation in social interaction (Editorial). *Interaction Studies, Special Issue, 14*(2), VII-XII. DOI 10.1075/is.14.2.001nom.

Oreshkov, O., Costa, F., & Brukner, C. (2012). Quantum correlations with no causal order. *Nature Communications 3*, Article Number 1092. DOI: 10.1038/ncomms2076.

Phelps, R., & Hase, S. (2002). Complexity and action research: exploring the theoretical and methodological connection. *Educational Action Research, 10*(3), 507-524.

Phelps, R., & Graham, A. (2010). Exploring the complementarities between complexity and action research: the story of Technology Together. Cambridge *Journal of Education, 40*(2), 183-197.
Rogers, A. (2004). 'Looking again at non-formal and informal education – towards a new paradigm'. *The encyclopaedia of informal education*. London: YMCA George Williams College.
Rohs, M. (2007). *Zur Theorie formellen und informellen Lernens in der IT-Weiterbildung*. Dissertation, University of the Federal Armed Forces Hamburg, Hamburg.
Scribner, S., & Cole, M. (1973). Cognitive consequences of formal and informal education. *Science, 182*(4112), 553-559.
Tsui, A. B. M., & Law, D. Y. K. (2007). Learning as boundary-crossing in school–university partnership. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(8) 1289–1301.
Willis, J., Davis, K., & Chaplin, S. (2013). Sociocultural affordances of online peer engagement. *Journal of Learning Design, 6*(1), 34-45.
Zürcher, Reinhard. (2010). Teaching-learning processes between informality and formalization. *The encyclopaedia of informal education*. London: YMCA George Williams College.

Aims & Scope

The European journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA) is a refereed academic journal creating a forum for the publication of critical research on adult education and learning. It has a particular focus on issues at stake for adult education and learning in Europe, as these emerge in connection with wider international and transnational dynamics and trends. Such a forum is important at a time when local and regional explorations of issues are often difficult to foreground across language barriers. As academic and policy debate is increasingly carried out in the English language, this masks the richness of research knowledge, responses and trends from diverse traditions and foci. The journal thus attempts to be linguistically 'open access'. Whilst creating a forum for international and transnational debate, contributions are particularly welcome from authors in Europe and other locations where English is not the first language.

RELA invites original, scholarly articles that discuss the education and learning of adults from different academic disciplines, perspectives and traditions. It encourages diversity in theoretical and methodological approach and submissions from non-English speakers. All published contributions in RELA are subjected to a rigorous peer review process based on two moments of selection: an initial editorial screening and a double-blind review by at least two anonymous referees. Clarity and conciseness of thought are crucial requirements for publication.

RELA is published on behalf of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA).

www.rela.ep.liu.se

ESREA
European Society for Research on the Education of Adults
www.esrea.org

ISSN 2000-7426