

Seminar E Speakers and Abstracts

Seminar E- 'Validation and Professionalisation'

at Room A220, 1530-1700 on 29 May 2012

Chair: Professor Ekkehard Nuisl

E1: What impact does teacher training have on the students' performance? The effects of a teacher training programme on the students' outcome

Professor Bjarne Wahlgren, Director of The Danish National Centre for Competence Development

International educational research focuses on the professionalisation of teachers. An important question is which competences are needed to be a professional teacher. One of the answers is that teachers' social-pedagogical competence is an important factor which affects the students' learning outcome. A developmental project was launched to shed some light on the relationship between social-pedagogical competences and the adult students' outcome of teaching programmes. The project was implemented in four Danish institutions that teach adults in the general subjects. The project includes a programme in which teachers are trained to use a specific teaching method: cooperative learning (CL). This method focuses on social interaction among students. By using the specific method it is assumed that students develop better skills in some areas compared to students taught with traditional adult educational principles.

This study examines the extent to which the training programme for teachers is effective; that is, do teachers develop the ability and willingness to apply the specific method? The results show that teachers are able to apply the method in a reflective way. The results also show that teachers actually use the method. The study examines the effects of the application of this method on the students. The results show that some effects are evident. The students are first and foremost more willing to cooperate. However, no effects can be documented on a number of other areas, including the perception of the learning environment, the perception of being integrated in the classroom, increased satisfaction with the teaching programme, higher completion rate or better marks. The results raise a discussion: what kind of teacher training and which adult educator competences can be expected to have a wider positive impact on the students' outcome?

E2: The validation of competencies as a way of professional professional development of adult educators

Professor Simona Sava, Romanian Institute for Adult Education

The validation of competences is seen in European education and training policies as a valuable pathway for professional development, as it builds on the self-reflection of people on their learning experiences and competencies acquired within a wide range of learning environments and situations. For adult educators, as a heterogeneous group of professionals, with limited opportunities of formal qualification, but with a large experience acquired on the job, the possibility to document in a structured way, to get evaluated and then certified their pedagogic competencies of dealing with adults, it is an important step towards professionalisation, as it is conferring and improving

transparency and transferability of skills and (pedagogic) competences, irrespective of sectors of activity.

In the last years, most of the European countries have introduced national systems and practices for the validation of competences. Their discourses and concerns for the professionalisation of adult educators are varying a lot, as well as their national solutions and attitudes towards the validation of competencies as an alternative for professionalisation. The Validpack instrument was developed in 2008 with European cooperation. In 2011 a research was carried out in 20 European countries to check out the extension to which such instrument can be used and adapted within different national contexts, giving to the adult educators the possibility to validate and certificate their prior experiences and competences. Some reflections will be drawn upon the research findings, as well as on the added value of the validation process, as a way of personal and professional development of adult educators.

*1. Validation of Informal, Non-Formal, Psycho- Pedagogical Competencies of Adult Educators (VINEPAC), Project No. RO/06/C/F/TH-84201 – within it the Validpack instrument was created, consisting in a set of instruments for the validation of adult educators' competences.

www.vinepac.eu

2. Capitalizing on Validpack: going Europe wide (CAPIVAL), Project No. 511883-2010-LLP-RO-KA4-KA4MP – that aims to extend the use of Validpack instrument at European level and to adapt this instrument at different countries needs. www.capival.eu

E3: The status quo and development trends of continuing education in China -- the case of Zhejiang University

Professor Shanan Zhu, Zhejiang University, China

Through the analysis of the situation of regular higher education and adult higher education in China, we come to a conclusion that continuing education will embrace a new stage of development in the coming period. The evidences include the trends of the mass higher education, the rapid expansion of universities and the significant changes of internationalization of higher education, which lead to the transformation of the continuing education from the compensation of degree education to non-degree training. Secondly, economic upgrading and the enhancement of overall national strength create the demand for creative talents and human resources. Also, economic restructuring enhances the demand of working population stratification and mobility; and the process of construction of a harmonious society acquires the improvement of quality of social management personnel and civil servants. All these account for a greater and better continuing education. From the status quo, universities are the major force in the development of continuing education.

Zhejiang University, as one of the top three leading universities in China, has been engaged in continuing education since 1956. In recent years, Zhejiang University has witnessed a good momentum of development. Its continuing education has consistently ranked top 3 in Chinese universities. With the analysis of continuing education management system, mechanism and initiatives at Zhejiang University as well as the geographical advantages of private economy in Zhejiang Province, we explore the measures of the universities under the big picture of continuing education in China.