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Wolfgang Jütte, Susanne Lattke

International and comparative perspectives in the field of professionalisation

Introduction

In many regions of the world, professionalisation in adult and continuing education is brought into the focus of educational policy. Teachers of adults ("teachers" in a very broad sense) are widely recognised to be a critical factor for the quality of adult learning processes. This is not to deny the importance of informal or self-organised learning processes which are also receiving growing (policy) attention, especially in the context of debates on validation. However, these informal learning processes will never completely replace more organised forms of adult learning that take place under the guidance and/or with the support of a "teacher" (or "trainer", "instructor", "facilitator", "guide", "docent", "tutor", "coach", "animator", etc.). Moreover, even the growing importance of informal learning and its social recognition goes hand in hand with the emergence of new professional roles in the field of adult education, for example: Counselling and guidance staff will be increasingly needed to provide some support to adult learners in largely self-guided learning; and, secondly: professional staff will be increasingly needed for the validation of informally acquired competencies of adults. Whereas these tasks are not part of the traditional teaching role they increasingly belong to the range of professional roles and profiles that can be associated with the field of adult education and learning.

The range of professional profiles within the field of adult education is very wide and diverse – as is the whole field of adult education (for the situation in Europe, see for example Research voor Beleid 2008, p. 2010). Adult education as a field is very closely linked to the societal structures of a country or region, to its traditions and its socio-cultural, economic and political fabric (Nuissl 2005, p. 47). At the same time, adult education is much less regulated than other parts of the education system. It may therefore react more flexibly to upcoming demands and develop itself in various forms and directions. As a result, the field of adult education is extremely diversified as regards target groups, teaching content, providers, institutional arrangements, funding structures and legislation. Even the term "adult education" is not an unambiguous one – often very different names are used to refer to the more or less structured and organised learning provision for adults.

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Joachim Ludwig, Stephanie Günther

Insights from Germany: Theoretical models of professional knowledge and their relevance for empirical research

Introduction

The professionalization of adult educators is gaining importance. Two developments can be highlighted in connection with this. Firstly, pedagogical actions are becoming more relevant in an increasing number of social areas of action. Experts who generally haven't had a professional pedagogical education are realizing this as well. Here, the question posed itself as to what this pedagogical professionalization should and must include. Secondly, professionalization in the context of quality is becoming more important. Teacher competence is being considered and studies conducted, especially in schools. That, in turn, has effects on adult education. The quality of pedagogical actions is seen as the most significant basis for educational quality.

How can the process of professionalization of teachers in adult education be described adequately? This question is closely linked to the conception of professional pedagogical actions and pedagogical knowledge. Only from this perspective can the process of professionalization be queried. The question of pedagogical knowledge thereby takes on a key role. This can be shown by the discourse surrounding research on professional pedagogical actions. Observations concerning different positions of cognitive-scientific orientations of competence made in this area on the one hand and action-theoretical orientation of professionalism on the other differ most pronouncedly in their definition of knowledge. Whereas the competence-theoretical approaches define knowledge as a constant factor and as a guide for acting in predefined situations, professional-theoretical approaches see it as being bound to the context and as a foil to be used for interpretation and reflection in order to help with orientation and understanding in contingent situations of action. What importance the different types and structures of knowledge have in the process of professionalization is still an object of research desideratum. The question of professional knowledge is to be considered in more detail here.

The conception of professional pedagogical actions as presented here views the professionals' comprehending access to the learners' understanding of the self and of the world as the core professional role. Professionals face the challenge of understanding conflicts and tensions in pedagogical situations and to act upon them accordingly (Chapter 2). In order to do this, pedagogical knowledge is necessary. Furthermore, so is the competency to act, which, however, is not covered in this paper. To be able to describe the process of professionalization from the perspective of such a conception of professional actions, we will distinguish pedagogical knowledge between general and professional knowledge (Chapter 3).

Research results suggest that professionals draw on various dimensions of knowledge in their actions. In our contribution we will present a selection of professionalization-theoretical research results and use this data to propose a framework model of pedagogical knowledge (Chapter 4). With the provided connection between different models of knowledge we will adapt a research desideratum. This seems to us a necessary and fruitful subject matter both in practice and theory. Practical because the object of pedagogical further education – the knowledge of adult educators – can thus be analyzed and evaluated more differentially. If we knew more about the body of professional knowledge then it could practically be taken into account when developing pedagogical further education for professionals. Concerning the theoretical advantages, it could be compared with and related to other theoretical models and thus used to further develop them. Research on knowledge used in professional actions is, as yet, a desideratum. The respective results would, additionally, be useful for empirical research on professional actions (Chapter 5).

Professionalism: Concepts of professional actions

Structure-theoretical conceptions of professionalism originating in the ideas of Ulrich Oevermann (cf. Oevermann 1981, 2000 and 2002) have been and still are used in adult education in order to theoretically comprehend actions in adult and further education concerning structure and logic. Oevermann describes professional actions as “an expert-like service of substitute crisis management” (Oevermann 2003, p. 17) for which, i.a., the tension between subsumption-logical and reconstructive procedures is constitutive. Accordingly, professional actions cannot be realized in the mode of “engineer-like use” of knowledge (cf. Oevermann 2002, p. 25) but are always dependent on a respective case specific use of knowledge. This idea of professional pedagogical action as substitute crisis management was transferred to adult pedagogical actions in 1984 by Enno

Schmitz.¹ According to him, this is stipulated if “decisions that have been made or are to be made [by the subject] cannot be justified“, if “subjects of actions find themselves at odds with their own decisions” (Schmitz 1991, p. 59f.) and if a “portending translation between the context of meaning of the subjective and objective realities“ (Schmitz 1984, p. 95) becomes necessary. Hans Tietgens later adopted these reflections and drafted events for adult education as places to negotiate interpretations for everyday situations in life (cf. Tietgens 1988, p. 59; Ludwig 2011). In doing this, substitutional interpretation refers in its core to the subjective appropriation of the learner. Professional actions in adult education can thus be understood as work on the “verbal and social meaning that the learner continuously produces whilst processing a subject matter, whether intentionally or unintentionally [...] The aim of the action and interpretation is to be the support of the productivity of meaning in the learner that [in turn] encourages learning”. (Koring 1992, p. 188).

Action-theoretical conceptions of professionalism, originating in the ideas of Fritz Schütze, are working on a reconstruction of problems of action that are to be treated professionally (cf. Schütze et al 1996, Schütze 2000). Werner Helsper (1996, p. 530) has systematized these problems as antinomies in pedagogical action. People acting in a pedagogical role are required to reflect their actions along different antinomies, to understand and counterbalance them:

Subsumption vs. Reconstruction

Distance vs. Proximity

Organization vs. Interaction

Heteronomy vs. Autonomy

Pedagogical professionals are expected to understand critical pedagogical situations in the tension of the general application of rules and in specific cases whilst also reflecting their relationship to the learners and the situation.

Both the structure-theoretical and the action-theoretical approach emphasize the central role of the professional's comprehension that can only be realized on the basis of professional knowledge. This knowledge of the professional forms the basis for understanding pedagogical situations and the learner's process of understanding the world and the self that takes place therein.

¹ Here, Schmitz refers to term “substitutional interpretation” (stellvertretende Deutung) which Oevermann (1981) used to describe psychoanalytical practice and later developed further in the field of professionalization-theory as “substitutional crisis management” (stellvertretende Krisenbewältigung).

Pedagogical knowledge as the basis for professional action – between general and professional knowledge

Knowledge is necessary in order for a professional to be able to understand and therefore manage the tension between subsumption and reconstruction.² The professionalization of adult educators aims to develop pedagogical-professional knowledge and the ability to act in education and consultation. In other words: Professionalization aims to develop pedagogical action competence.

Professionalism is a fleeting state which is produced “interactively and which must be maintained” (Nittel 2011, p. 48). It is the product of the examination of contradictory demands in a pedagogical situation. “Whenever it is a matter of actions beyond routine and tried, tested and regulated courses of action; whenever the space and necessity to make decisions appears, thus whenever new or case specific solutions to new problems are required, does knowledge assume a decisive function” (cf. Stehr 2001, p. 63). Effectively, it forms the basis for the capacity of the professional to understand and interpret. Knowledge, seen in this light, is a prerequisite for action competence. In order to gain knowledge of competence and its development, there is no way around analyzing the knowledge that the professionals use as orientation and on which they draw on.

In the following paragraphs, we will view pedagogical knowledge along the difference between general and professional knowledge. In doing this, the distinction between definitude and contingency assumes a key role. General pedagogical knowledge is characterized by the controlling thought and definitude (cf. Vogel 1999, p. 36sq). Kruse denotes general knowledge as “naive-empiricist knowledge of opinion” or “doxa” (Kruse 2005, p. 53) because it disambiguates tensions on the conditions of the daily necessity to make decisions. Functional knowledge that is readily available and in this sense is functional for the new situation is utilized to decide this situation and to handle it. In general actions, this routinized disambiguation dominates over the comprehending access to the situation. This can only be continued as long as no irritations occur. At this point, when the routines of interpretation and action can no longer be adequately utilized in dealing with a situation, when something becomes questionable and confusing, then the possibility arises of transforming the reasons for action and the associated basis of knowledge.

The professional actor isn't however relieved of having to make a decision (as a scientist would be). Professionals must make justifiable decisions which

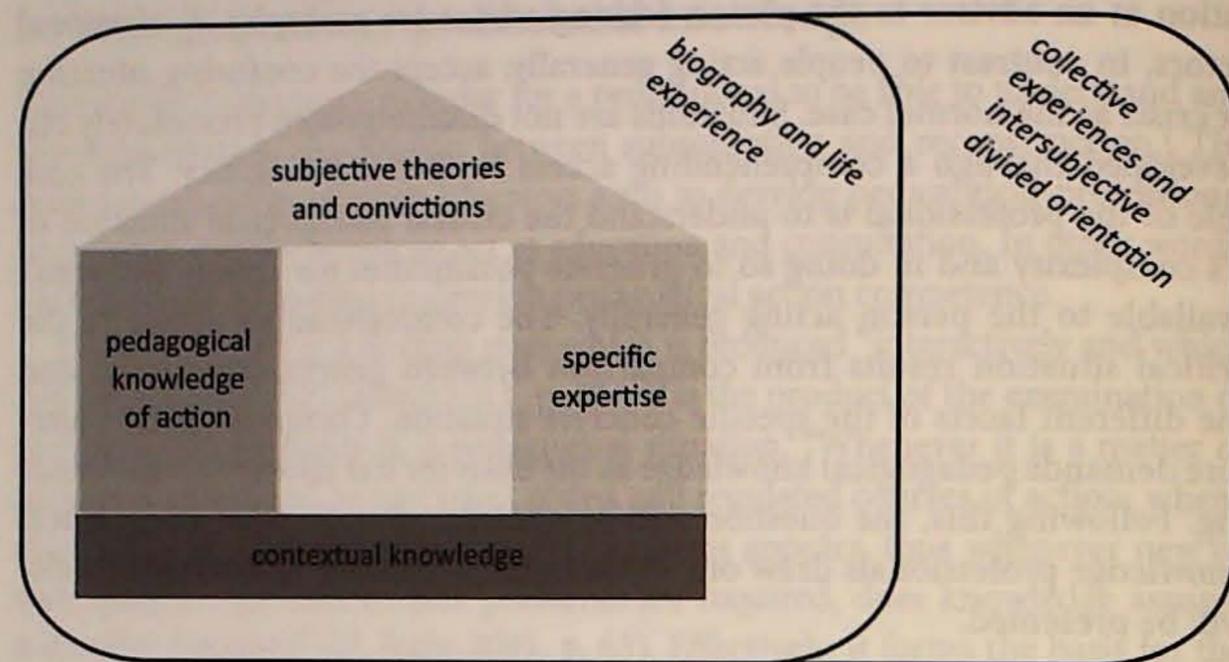
2 Donald Schön denotes the act of practitioners drawing on practical knowledge during the act of understanding of situations of action as “reflection in action” (cf. Schön 1983).

are adequate for the specific case (by making substitutional offers of interpretation as an advisor to the person seeking advice for example). Professional actors, in contrast to people acting generally, accept the confusing situation or crisis as the normal case. Situations are not disambiguated prematurely but developed through a comprehending access to their contingency. The core role of the professional is to understand the critical pedagogical situation in its complexity and in doing so to generate possibilities for action that aren't available to the person acting generally. The comprehending access to the critical situation results from comparison between general knowledge and the different facets of the specific concrete situation. Comprehension therefore demands pedagogical knowledge as the basis for the effort of understanding. Following this, the question will be considered as to what pedagogical knowledge professionals draw on. To this end, a selection of research results will be presented.

Models of professional pedagogical knowledge – a proposal for a framework

There are several different theoretical models that attempt to apprehend adult pedagogical knowledge. The available research results support the thesis that professional knowledge and action consist of different dimensions of knowledge. However, they understand knowledge in very different manners, aspects and dimensions. For example the interpretational pattern approach, belief research, subjective theories, general theory, self conception theory, expert knowledge, methodical knowledge etc. How do these sets of knowledge relate to one another? How do adult educators draw on them? The connection between different models of knowledge is as yet a desideratum, what is missing is a framework model of adult pedagogical knowledge that allows the different models and their respective research results to be compared and related to one another. Subsequently, we will outline our proposal of such a framework by presenting selected research results and systematizing them on four layers of professional knowledge.

Figure 1: The framework of professional pedagogical knowledge



The layer of subjective theories and convictions

We will begin with the model of subjective theories, in which the knowledge of the professional actor is clearly and obviously aligned with the model of scientific theories. The research program of subjective theories derives from the conceptual parallelism of subjective sets of knowledge in the sense of theories on the one hand and scientific theories on the other. The term "theory" is understood as regards the functions ascribed to it; the situational definition, explanation, prognosis (cf. Groeben, Scheele 2000). Furthermore, subjective theory attains the role of controlling actions. In the framework of subjective theory, (cf. Groeben et al. 1988, Dann 1994) the knowledge of educators is taken into account as regards their actions. Here, pedagogical knowledge is modeled as the theory which is updated and which dictates action in any situation of action. These can be theories of educating and learning, of adult education, of the relations between individual and society etc.

Apart from subjective knowledge in the narrower sense, further models in this layer can be assigned which examine knowledge as convictions (belief research³) and the concept of self. Assumptions concerning anthropology and the occupational understanding of the self are examined within the framework of this model: Who am I as an educator? What are my roles? etc.

3 For a historical summary of belief research in the English language, see Calderhead 1996.

Jochen Kade implements his research bidirectionally on approximations of the understanding of the self by course instructors who offer profession related courses in which the mediation of knowledge and skills are the priority (cf. Kade 1989). On the one hand by using the framework of the respective occupational biography and the subjective interests and orientations that are thereby expressed, on the other by utilizing the respective perceived tasks that result from the conception of the educational processes (ibid. p. 16). Kade devises a stable self-consciousness as regards the pedagogical concepts employed by himself and certain "images of participants" (ibid p. 160).

The epistemological convictions of the adult educators which are implied in their concepts of knowledge likewise belong to the convictions (beliefs). Christiane Hof (2001) examined the views of adult educators regarding the status of knowledge. She considers the question as to "what the course instructors do and how they justify their actions" (ibid. p. 13). Her epistemic interest addresses the relation between the implicit "concept of knowledge" of the course instructors (ibid p. 10) and their respective educational concepts. Hof views the course instructors' comprehension of knowledge in recourse to Hofer and Pintrich not as a collection of statements on knowledge but as "beliefs about knowledge (...) interconnected in complex and coherent ways" (Hofer, Pintrich 1997, p. 18, quoted from Hof 2001, p. 12). Hof reconstructs three different pedagogical self-understandings that result from perceptions of knowledge – the course instructor as the specialist, as methodology expert and as conversation partner. Independent of type, she recognizes that the construction of the participant as conceived by the course instructors consistently refers to two aspects: The affiliation with a specific target group on the one hand and the motive for participation on the other. The reference point of the course instructors when considering the teaching-learning setting is either the knowledge that he or she wants to impart to the participants (Instruction model) or the problem which participants bring into the course for further education (Problem solving model) (cf. ibid., p. 127f.).

Hof's results show that knowledge is conceived both instrumentally; as objective knowledge of the world – and discursively; as knowledge that is based on a foil for interpretation and is treated constructively.

The layer of pedagogical knowledge of action

The distinction between subjective theories and convictions on the one hand and pedagogical knowledge of action on the other is a difficult one. Pedagogical knowledge of action becomes relevant for educators whenever programs or pedagogical situations are in planning or when it is necessary to act in a certain

pedagogical situation, in other words, when an interaction with participants is realized; whilst teaching or consulting.

Trautwein and Merkt examine strategies for action of teachers in higher education in the field of university didactics as “technological prescription knowledge on educational and teaching methods and educational scenarios” (Trautwein, Merkt 2013, p. 186). “Here, knowledge of the educator concerning information on how he or she can act can be located [...] These strategies are applied in order to accomplish the aims derived from the teaching-learning philosophy” (ibid.). Here, Trautwein, Merkt model pedagogical knowledge of action as strategic knowledge in the sense of a technological basis for action. This knowledge is intended to serve the realization of pedagogical aims.

One model that deviates from this is the professionalism-theoretical model of knowledge that assumes knowledge of both the interaction and the situation and which is only updated in pedagogical situations (cf. Dewe 1996). This knowledge informs on how to deal with different experiences that exist between educator and learner, with lack of time, with non-existent reciprocity and therefore on how to deal with the tension between autonomy and heteronomy in pedagogical situations.

Dewe distinguishes between justified and decisive rationality regarding the use of scientific knowledge in the practical actions of educators: Justifications give elapsed actions a meaning and for this reason not synonymous with the anticipation of future actions (cf. Dewe 1996, p. 732). If knowledge is directly related to practice, then it can be said to be a “substantial use” of knowledge. Dewe speaks of “legitimate use” whenever knowledge is used *ex post* as justification for making decisions (ibid.). As a result, dealing with knowledge is characterized by a transformation or reinterpretation of scientific knowledge. Only by this does knowledge, in relation to the interpreting case, to the situational contextuality and the inherent logic of the specific life practice become effective in any way. Dewe therefore concludes “that the use of this [scientific] knowledge simply can’t be conceived as the sole use of a decision. It can be made clear that this frequently relates to justification of decision making and justification of action respectively and in this light, presents itself as a use of justification” (ibid., p. 725).

An additional element of the pedagogical knowledge of action is the professional’s hermeneutic-methodical knowledge that constitutes the foundation for the reconstruction of latent structures of meaning. According to the knowledge-theoretical model of professionalism, substitutional proposals of interpretation can only be made on the foundation of the reconstructed meaning in the pedagogical situation. Interpretations only arise during interaction and can only then be processed. The interpretations of the participants can only be substitutionally interpreted by the educator during interaction, not during the didactical planning prior to this.

The layer of specific expertise

A further layer of the knowledge model is described by specific expertise. In addition to the realization of the participant-educator interaction (relation), the processing of contents (subject) also belongs to pedagogical actions (cf. Dewe 1996, p. 714; Dewe, Feistel 2010, p. 90). From a professional theoretical perspective, this deals with the professional penetration of a specific problem in education or consultation.

Pedagogical actions necessarily relate to a subject matter. Pedagogical actions are significantly determined by specific expertise. Bastian (1997) was able to show that artists working as course teachers at adult education centers practiced their work on the basis of the meaning of the object of art and aesthetical practice which had been obtained biographically. They differ from one another in as far as the object – in this case aesthetical practice – was occupied by very different meanings in their biography and day to day life. Their expertise attains a specific orientation because of this and in turn affects their profile as educators.

Layer of contextual knowledge

The three layers presented above are framed by contextual knowledge. This layer of knowledge is processed in both the structural-theoretical and the action-theoretical models. An example: If I am active as a teacher in trade union educational work then it is crucial to be aware of the prevailing core pedagogical notions e.g. the notion of subject orientation. As a university lecturer it is essential to know the university processes and structures in which my lessons are incorporated (cf. Trautwein, Merkt 2012). Here, the context primarily describes the institutional context of pedagogical actions. The context secondarily includes the participant’s social environment. Adult educators must be aware for which social context the participants are implementing educational effort. This is the only way they can be in a position to comprehend participants’ problems in the specific pedagogical situation, which, in turn, is the prerequisite for substitutional interpretation. Thirdly, the context includes the social framing of the specific knowledge, its historical development and situational contextuality.

The outlook: On the empirical research on pedagogical knowledge

The amount of data on pedagogical knowledge of adult educators is limited. To an extent, research on the field of school and teachers’ actions can be consulted but this too is limited due to the fact that processes and contexts of education

differ so much. Incidentally, the amount of available data on teachers' actions is also small (cf. Baumert, Kunter 2013).

Groeben and Scheele (2000) refer to a core methodical problem. With their model of subjective theories, no connections can be made between subjective theory as pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical action. Although results concerning pedagogical knowledge can be generated using the model of subjective theories, the question as to how these are linked to the pedagogical situation of action remains unanswered. This problem is dealt with by Dewe and Feistel (2010) by conducting research from the position of the pedagogical situation of action and reconstructing the reasons for action that adult educators implement with their knowledge. From this perspective, knowledge cannot be determined extraneously and is only reconstructable by means of the empirically observed actions (cf. Dewe 1996, p. 714). Consequently, empirical research should reformulate the question. It is not the pedagogical action succeeding knowledge that should be questioned but the knowledge that justifies specific pedagogical actions.

Knowledge research continues to show that pedagogical knowledge is, to a high degree, biographically and socially framed. On the one hand, pedagogical knowledge is framed by biography and life experience (e.g. Kade 1989, Bastian 1997, Gieseke et al 1998, Hoerning 1998). Kade was able to show teachers in adult education that their conceptions of education followed their own experiences of education (cf. Kade 1989, p. 158). Bastian came to similar conclusions in her research on specific knowledge of artists active in the field of education (cf. Bastian 1997, p. 136). On the other hand, the genesis of pedagogical knowledge in the professional is always additionally related to existing collective experiences. These can be certain professional practices as well as discourses in the discipline of educational science. This is shown by studies on patterns of interpretation of adult educators (cf. Arnold 1985, Harmeier 2009). Patterns of interpretation represent socially communicated, collective (in the sense of shared inter-subjective) orientations (cf. Oevermann 2001). The layers of knowledge described in Chapter 4 would accordingly be the result of social patterns of interpretation: "individual attitudes, expectations and beliefs represent reifications of social patterns of interpretation. Social patterns of interpretation are constitutive for individual attitudes, not vice versa: individual attitudes for social patterns of interpretation" (ibid., p. 19).

Patterns of interpretation and biographical processes refer to the development of pedagogical knowledge on all four layers of knowledge. Patterns of interpretation do not form a separate layer of pedagogical knowledge but organize knowledge on the layer of convictions as well as on the layer of pedagogical knowledge

of action, specific knowledge or contextual knowledge. Whoever is interested in a reconstruction of the correlation of meaning and justification in pedagogical situations of action would do well to use the biographical development and the collective patterns of interpretation to which he or she refers as a foil during the process of interpretation.

The framework model outlined here is a proposal to bring together the different models used to examine pedagogical knowledge. The models are not free of imbrications and the interaction between the different layers has been barely analyzed empirically. At this point, a large domain for research on adult education opens up. This research is desperately needed if the structure and development of professional knowledge is to be empirically supported. More clarity on pedagogical knowledge would ultimately also improve the conceptualization and implementation of pedagogical further education.

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