

English Summaries

Matilde Grünhage-Monetti: Learning at the workplace – an “intimate” event (pp. 26–29)

The author takes the example of two female employees with a background of migration to show how strongly adults' motivation to learn and their learning decisions are influenced by personal, deeply private motivations, even when they are pushed into learning by an external influence, as is often the case in companies. The theoretical basis on which the author interprets the case examples in the light of the “intimacy of lifelong learning” is the understanding of learning set out by Danish professor Knud Illeris. The examples are from the DIE project “German at the workplace”.

Sigrid Nolda: Exploring the inner aspect of learning. Methodological considerations for investigating lifelong learning (pp.30–32)

This article sets out research methods required for qualitative research aimed at understanding the inner aspect of learning. The aim is to make qualitative single case studies more relevant with regard to issues of education policy and social analysis. For this purpose, the following measures are proposed. (1) Close reading and reflexivity: Precisely studying the source texts sheds light upon divisions between official and unofficial discourse on lifelong learning, revealing the relevant personal elements which have a crucial effect on learning. (2) Longitudinal and cross-cultural analyses: single case data need to be investigated more in historical or intercultural contexts, requiring a different way of dealing with data (opening it up for third-party assessment). (3) Controlled generalisation: generalisations, which are drawn from single case interpretations, should have an exactly defined scope and are primarily to be justified, not simply maintained.

Heide von Felden: Referred back to oneself. Reflexive modernisation and new learning requirements (pp. 34–37)

This article probes the relationship between our risk society, reflexive modernity and individual learning. First, social conditions are illuminated (with reference to Beck, Giddens and Lash) which force people to endure uncertainty (Mitscherlich and Marotzki) and gain critical ego strength. Next the author focuses attention on the reality of contemporary ways of dealing with demands, turning to findings from narrative interviews. Finally, she looks into the supportive potential of adult education / further education.

Michaela Harmeier: Receptive or hostile to continuing education? Course tutors caught between the pressure to conform and resistance (pp. 39–41)

This article presents the results of a qualitative dissertation. The author has investigated the acceptance of adult education teacher training courses among part-time and freelance teachers based on the example of the initial adult education teacher training qualification offered by the North Rhine Westphalia VHS (adult education centre) regional association. For the issue of acquiring teaching skills in adult education, the course tutor's own professional self-image, which comes with a great deal of self-reflection, is far more important than, for example, his or her teaching qualification, professional status or cultural professional character.

Charlotte Heidsiek: Diversity management questioned from the point of view of organisational educational science (pp. 42–44)

Diversity management is a popular management approach. It promises to allow diversity in organisations and thus to appreciate people for what they are. It undertakes to recognise different points of view, ideas, abilities and

potentials; not to standardise cultural variety but to reinforce it. For adult education, this concept seems highly promising. After all, one claim of educational management is to promote personality development and personal progress in a business context. However, critical scrutiny shows that variety is only welcomed as long as it is “used systematically”. A discussion of the concept from the point of view of organisational educational science shows that diversity management does not sufficiently exhaust its educational potential.

Christina Weiß: Foreign languages à la mode. Trends in adult language acquisition based on the example of the VHS programme (pp. 45–48)

Learning foreign languages is a high-status activity in organised adult learning. Based on VHS (adult education centre) statistics, the author shows that foreign languages are an indispensable element of the VHS programme range; hardly any other area is in such constantly high demand, a demand which can also be seen in relation to income status. Now making up 30 percent of all courses, more than 40 percent of all lessons and almost 30 percent of all posts, languages have become one of the most important subjects at VHS centres. Among foreign languages, English remains by far the most dominant language, followed by Spanish, French and Italian. The increasing importance of “minor” languages is making itself felt, for example for Chinese and Japanese, in terms both of supply and demand. Altogether, however, it can be said that “minor” languages are still learned less often compared with the standard school languages.