Educational Sciences in Germany: ‘Erziehungswissenschaft’ or ‘Bildungsforschung’ – competition or complementary approaches

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The establishment of ‘Pedagogy’ as a field of academia in Germany dates back to 1778, when Ernst Christian Trapp was appointed to the first professorial chair for Pedagogy at the University of Halle (Trapp 1780). In the major part of its history, the discipline was liberal arts oriented. The term ‘Erziehungswissenschaft’ however, was already used in the late 19th, early 20th century. In order to distinguish pedagogical practice from scientific approaches, the terms ‘Scientific Pedagogy’ and ‘Erziehungswissenschaft’ were used as synonyms (Horn 2014). This changed in the 1960s, when the usage of ‘Erziehungswissenschaft’ indicated the so called empirical turn in the field. A major expansion of professorial chairs took place, the majority of which with the denomination of ‘Erziehungswissenschaft’ (Koller et al. 2016). Another facet of an empirical turn can be observed since the 1990s, the beginning of the development of ‘Empirical Educational Research’ (Empirische Bildungsforschung). This, again, seems to be a success story; in the decade between 2000 and 2010, more than 100 chairs for ‘Empirische Bildungsforschung’ have been established (Aljets 2015). But is this really a success story, or what are its costs and balances? My statement will focus on this question, reporting on a symposium that took place about it in 2014 (Baumert und Tillmann 2016).

Literaturverzeichnis


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Educational Sciences in Switzerland: Dynamics of their Development and Change

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Through a short historical sketch of educational sciences (sciences de l’éducation, Bildungswissenschaften, Erziehungswissenschaft), we will illustrate fundamental mechanisms of the disciplinarisation of this disciplinary field and their consequences for the functioning of this latter. We will then give some main information concerning the current state of the field: institutional changes since 2000, domains of research (with particular reference to subject didactics), main thematic issues during the 20 past years, mechanisms of research « governance » in universities and funding institutions.

References

THE STATE WE NOW ARE IN? On transitions of educational research in a restructuring system of higher education and research.

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Educational research entered the academy in 1900 as a discipline – Pedagogik – in its own right. This discipline emanated from philosophy and expanded during large parts of the 20th century into the behavioral and social sciences and was given important functions in relation to major welfare state reforms. This disciplinary progress came to an end in the 1990s and educational research was turned into a field of study where Pedagogik and Didaktik were assumed to cooperate and compete with other social sciences under the heading of the new construct “Education Sciences”. This multi- or pluri-disciplinary or de-disciplinary turn at the end of millennium changed the preconditions for educational research in terms of the number of agents competing for funds and recognition, as well as in increased expectations of networking, publishing and reviewing research. It also meant an intensification in strategic educational research policies.

So, what is the current condition for educational research in Sweden? From the point of view of researchers in Pedagogik there is a shift towards increased competition for external research resources but also in terms of expected research collaboration in the current pluri-disciplinary field of study, where researchers with other disciplinary allegiances are increasing their interest in research on education issues. We also note an intensification in some specific research activities – in networking, in peer reviews, in publishing. In many ways this is a development that brings new opportunities, but also increasing risks for internal fragmentation as well as strategic over-adjustment in educational research relative to governing practices. What, then, are the main strategies to choose from and to cultivate?

Strategy one is playing the game in accordance with current rules, for instance for individual research programs to intensify work and adding research practices in relation to that.

Strategy two is working to change the rules of the game, for instance to develop an increased focus on knowledge production, that is, for collegial research collaboration in a changing educational landscape and to produce substantial research in dealing with such issues.
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Finding the future: The Chimera, the Lorelei’s Whispers & Notes on Finding Educational Research

Thomas S. Popkewitz

Social and educational research has made its responsibility as finding the future. This was in the 19th century and continues into the present. Three contemporary research examples in this search are: International students’ performance assessments that identify how nations can triumph to be world-class; school research to find pathways for “success for all” students; and teacher education research to bring the authentic, professional teacher into reality.

The salvation themes for finding the future are intoxicating. They lure as the sirens beckoning the mariners to the Lorelei and dazzle as the imaginary of the Chimera. Yet the promise of the future, no matter how enticing, has cautionary tales. Finding the paths for social improvement, paradoxically, stabilizes the present. The focus on method and process (the gold standard of research) turns the alchemists’ dream of change into the inevitability of certitude. And the utopic visions of correcting social wrongs excludes in the efforts to include.

While planning the future is important for the modern welfare state, what is to be done if the scientific intoxications of containing the future do not work? Where does the research community go? How might the problem of change be engaged that does not give up the hopes for the future? Ironically, one answer is a historical sociology of the present. Its warrant is the Enlightenment’s suspicion and doubt that went hand-in-hand with the idea of planning. The history of the present has no guarantees. Change is not in legislation. The assumptions (theoretically and methodologically) are to poke holes in the causalities of the present in order to make alternatives possible outside of what already is interned in existing frameworks.