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Basic concepts of the educational science sub-discipline of adult education

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In this study, a conceptual system is outlined for the educational science sub-discipline of adult education. Adults' attending instruction or not attending instruction is conceptually specified. Focusing as it does on a cardinal event of adult education, this represents a first step toward a system for the educational science sub-discipline of adult education. Attending instruction is mainly understood as action, and non-attending instruction as behavior. Instruction is a system of educational actions in which the teacher orients a subject to the educand in order to change his or her psychic dispositions.

If we examine questions of adults' attending or not attending instruction, we find numerous concepts in the relevant literature that are meant to describe this event. These include concepts like

participation, taking part, further education and formal learning processes (Schneider 2004). The lack of uniformity in its basic concepts characterises the immaturity of educational science, in this case, of its sub-discipline of adult education. The maturity of a discipline manifests itself, among other things, in the rigor of its conceptual system, as is clear from the example of the long-established natural science discipline of physics.

Below, a conceptual system will be presented for designating the event of adults' attending or not attending instruction. Besides creating unambiguous concepts, this conceptual system has the function of helping arrive at theory groups, on the basis of the higher-order concepts obtained, with which to explain adults' attending or not attending instruction.

I will start by clarifying the concept of the adult: I define the concept of 'adult' by drawing on the juristic understanding of adulthood. First, juristic norms are dominant norms, and second, the juristic definition is, in comparison with the anthropological definition (Stroß 1994), operational. In the German legal system, persons who are legally of age are adults. This involves acquiring the right to vote, complete professional and testamentary rights, the right to marry, legal responsibility for one's actions and military service obligations. A generally applicable definition cannot, however, indicate what adulthood means in a particular legal system. Therefore, I call persons 'adult' if they are regarded as adults in their respective legal system. Because the age-related determination of adulthood depends on the respective legal system, calendar age is not used here to define the concept of 'adult'.

I specify instruction with the higher-level concept of 'differentia specifica'. I will draw on definitions by prominent educational scientists: Both Herbart (1806, 35) and Brezinka (1992, 222) regard instruction as education. Sünkel (1996, 40), in contrast, defines the concept of 'instruction' as a situation whose chief purpose is

learning. In both definitions, the function of instruction is found in learning, because education also aims to change psychic dispositions. The definitions differ, however, in the higher level concepts of the concept of 'instruction'. While Herbart (1806, 35; Brezinka 1992, 222) understands the concept of education as the higher level concept to that of instruction, for Sünkel it is the concept of situation. The precise difference between the definitions can be worked out from the meanings of the higher level concepts: Brezinka (1990, 95) defines education as action guided by the intention to create psychic dispositions in a person or to improve already existing ones. The concept of situation refers to the totality of external conditions of acting and experiencing. Thus instruction is a form of acting in the one definition and the external condition of acting in the other. If both meanings were combined into a single definition, the concept would be ambiguous.

Scientific concepts, however, are distinguished by their precision. Thus the question arises of whether the concept of 'instruction' refers to the action or to the external condition. To answer this question, I will examine the everyday use of the word 'instruction': we speak of instruction, of participation in instruction or of attending instruction. These forms of expression show that instruction is not an action, since an action is neither attended nor participated in. In addition, it is not the concept of instruction, but rather that of instructing which refers to a behaviour or an action. For this reason, instructing and not instruction should be understood as education, thus as action. What is the 'differentia specifica' of the concept of 'instructing'? Viewed generally, education can be specified through the intention or the means to the intention, but not through the effect, since the concept of education is not a product concept. Therefore, we should ask whether what is specific about instructing is the type of intention or the way the attempt is made to achieve this intention. Expressed more concretely: is instructing characterised by the fact that specific psychic dispositions are changed, or by the fact that psychic dispositions are

changed in a particular manner? The specific intention cannot be the distinguishing characteristic of the type, since none of the ‘agogical’ aim categories, such as cognitive, psycho-motor and affective, would not be acquired through instructing. For this reason, the specific aspect of instructing should be sought in the manner in which the intention is realised. The definition of the concept of ‘instruction’ given by Herbart and the etymology could help here. Herbart (1806, 35) understands instruction to mean “everything that someone makes the object of the pupil’s attention”. The English word ‘instruct’ comes from the Latin ‘struere’, meaning to build, thus ‘instruct’ is related to the notion ‘to build on’. The German word for instruction (‘Unterricht’) includes the word ‘richten’, which means to aim at, focus or ‘... bring into a specific direction or position, coordinate with something, guide toward something ...’ (Drosdowski 1989, 593). The component word ‘unter’ means, among other things, ‘between’ (Drosdowski 1989, 772).

Before the background of these word origins, I develop the following definition of ‘instructing’. By the concept of ‘instructing’, I mean the orientation of the subject to the pupil with the aim of changing the pupil’s psychic dispositions. The classificatory concept of non-instructing, which I still cannot assign to a specific concept and which is likewise understood under the concept of education, refers to the orientation of a not yet understood subject to the pupil in order to change his or her psychic dispositions. If the situation refers to the condition of action, it is logically implausible to use ‘instruction’ as the condition of instructing. It is provisionally assumed that instruction is characterised by the system of actions involved in instructing. It is possible to attend instruction. Below I consider the instruction that occurs in institutions, not private instruction.

I now come to the event of attending instruction: The concept of action is, in my opinion, a possible higher level concept of attending. Behaviour refers to observable physical movements and changes of state in humans and animals. (Böhler 1978). It is a higher level

concept for the concepts of action and unintended experience (German: Widerfahrnis) (Kamlah 1973). To specify the concept of action, I refer to the sub-discipline of action logic developed by Wright. For Böhler (1978), the concept of action means goal-oriented doing as not merely the sum of physical motions and changes of state. To precisely define the concept of ‘action’, Lenk (1978) does not regard intentionality as sufficient, but rather what characterises action is a description of a mode of behaviour as intentional. The characteristic of an action is thus to be designated by the description of its wanting to bring about a specific event. “Instead ... of speaking simply of all actions as intentional, one should instead speak of statements and descriptions of action” (Davidson – K. Sch.). Actions can only be designated through their description/describability – thus it is a matter of semantics. ‘Action’ must, in contrast to behaviour, be a semantic concept whose designation contains linguistic elements (Lenk 1978, 283). Lenk’s notion (1978) points in a similar direction: actions are not absolute phenomena existing *sui generis*; they are rather interpretations and only graspable through interpretation. (Lenk, 1978) Nor is the describability of intentionality, however, a sufficient attribute of action, “... for an uncontrollable movement can correspond to my intentions even though one could not speak of an action. If I, for example, am unable to open a door on a train, but then through a sudden braking of the train am thrown against the door so that it opens, this corresponds to my intentions but is not an action” (von Kutschera 1980, 69). In addition to this, something has to be brought about which a person intends in order to be able to speak of an action. Marek (1978) also makes it clear that besides the describability of intentionality, thus of a mental aspect, an external moment, a behavioural aspect, is also innate to action. “The description of an event as an action is always complex, namely, insofar as intentions are linked to behaviour in the sense of physical movements and their causal consequences” (Marek 1978, 264). Lenk (1978, 281) does not agree with the view that action manifests itself in observable movements: “Failure to aid, even though one recognizes

the distress of a needy person, can under certain circumstances be understood as action – to what extent intentional failure to act is action is a problem ... – but not as an (observable) behaviour”. Von Kutschera (1980) defines the concept of action with a further attribute, the presence of choice. One can only speak of action if a person could have chosen not to act. The possibility of choice is, however, implicit in intentionality, since to form an intention means *eo ipso* that one decides not to choose the alternative, and this implies choice.

I define the concept of action before the background of the above-given definitions as follows: physical movements or changes of state in a person that are verbalised by the person as intentional. Characteristic of the concept of unintended experience is that a person verbalises effects as unintentional. The concept of unintended experience refers, in agreement with Böhler (1978, 183), to “unintended effects ... that cannot be expressed in terms of our intention”. The difference between the concept of action and that of unintended experience lies in the quality of the behaviour. An example will clarify the difference. The reason why a person smiles can be a perceived schema. The reason why a person writes a letter, consequently, can be a verbalised intention to please someone else and therefore a desire not to fail to write this letter. I understand the concept of unintended experience as referring to physical motions or changes of state of a person that are verbalised by the person as unintended.

Not yet systematically studied is whether an adult’s attending instruction is fundamentally intentional. Before turning to this question, I will show that ‘intentional’ versus ‘unintentional’ are not dichotomous variables. Connected with this is the difficulty in identifying intentional and unintentional behavioural processes in a person. Since in most cases action is a “complex action event” (Lenk 1980, 144), due to the limits of cognitive capacity, a person cannot be

aware of all parts of the action or “complex action event”. Action is, as Feather states (1982), not a result of discrete episodic events, but rather a continuous flow. Von Kutschera (1980, 85) also emphasises that the object of a person’s intention is not cognitively represented with maximal clarity. Most verbs used to describe actions are success verbs. The strived-for result of the action that is, for example, expressed with a specific success verb is in principle unknown to the person. If we chose to understand as an action the claim that a person wants to insult someone else, but not the insult itself, we would understand the word ‘action’ in a much narrower sense than in everyday language usage. In addition, mental representations, thus also aim-directing cognitions, change in rapid succession and have only a short duration (Sokolowski 1996). The state that underlies the striving for an aim, from intention to realisation, lasts longer, but is unconscious (Klinger 1996).

The unambiguous identification of a behaviour as intentional is furthermore made difficult by the interaction of automatic and conscious processes: “Automatic processes are modulated by intentions, while conversely, intentional actions do not necessarily have to be initiated by a directly preceding, consciously experienced act of intentional control” (Goschke 1996, 640). Even though it is difficult for a person to verbalise attending as an intentional or unintentional action, I assume that in general adults intentionally attend instruction. Since the specific instruction, as well as its results and the consequences of its results, are not as a rule repeated, the probability of an automatisisation of attending is low. It can likewise be assumed that attending instruction is not elicited exclusively by a need, since the person, for example, reflects on the complex situation of the specific instruction, the opportunity, the time, etc. Not just a low probability of the automatisisation of attending, but also the fact that attending is not exclusively conditioned by need (Sokolowski 1996) show that adults’ attending instruction occurs intentionally.

I now come to the event of not attending. In contrast to attending, not attending occurs not only intentionally, but also non-intentionally. I will clarify intentional not attending using the following examples: a person X, along with a girlfriend, stands in front of an institution of further education and considers whether she should attend a presentation; she decides not to attend instruction, informs her girlfriend and returns home. Or another example: a person decides not to attend instruction Y and might therefore look for an alternative. In both cases, action clearly occurs, because the person expresses an ostensible intention and openly performs a motion toward a goal, specifically, that of not attending instruction or that of not attending instruction and of forming a further intention.

I will now consider non-intentional not attending. I distinguish between two forms. In the first case, non-intentional not attending results from a need as a state of deficiency in an organism which triggers specific behaviour directed at relieving this state of deficiency. A need for rest, for example, could be an unconscious reason for not attending instruction. In the second case, the adult cognitively represents the possibility of attending or of not attending instruction, but does not form the intention of not attending. This category implies two cases. First, there will be no intention after cognitively representing the possibility of attending or not attending. A stage preliminary to the intention could be a wish in the genesis of the action that the person could possibly have here. Second, a person forms an intention of attending instruction, but this intention does not elicit any goal-furthering modes of behaviour. Non-intentional not attending can *in both cases* be designated as unintended experience (*Widerfahrnis*), as the non-intended effect of the behaviour. I will not consider the case in which the adult does not cognitively represent the possibility of attending or of not attending instruction; in this case, there would be basically no behaviour, no physical motion or change in the person's state which can be explained.

I now come to the 'differentia specifica' of the concept of attending. The concept 'to attend' has etymologically the sense of 'to go to a place, to someone', but also of 'to direct one's attention toward someone or something'. In German, the related concept, 'besuchen', means to go to someone or something, and also to 'search harder for something'. 'To search' means to make an effort to find something. In connection with an adult's attending instruction, the concept of 'besuchen' means that the adult goes to a place of instruction. The concept of attending instruction is generally demarcated from the concept of attending places that do not primarily support the aim of learning.

Now the conceptual system that we have acquired will be specified for the cardinal andragogical processes of attending and not attending instruction, in that the definitions of the concepts of 'attending' or 'non-attending' and 'instruction' will be related to one another. By an adult's 'attending instruction' is understood the action of the person in seeking the system of actions in which a subject is oriented to the person in order to change his or her psychic dispositions. By 'not attending' is meant a behaviour including the sub-forms of action and unintended experience. Action in this case is characterised by the intention not to seek out the system of actions in which a subject is oriented to the person in order to change his or her psychic dispositions. This intention elicits specific modes of behaviour. Not attending as unintended experience means that the person has in fact formed the intention to attend instruction, but does not display modes of behaviour that would serve this intention and thereby does not attend instruction. Not attending as unintended experience means as well that the adult has not formed the intention to attend, but may have developed a wish to, or it could also mean that the adults has a need which is incompatible with attending instruction. In the following table, the higher level concepts of attending and not attending instruction are summarised.

Table 1: Higher level concepts of adults' attending and not attending instruction

Event	Characteristics		Higher level concept
Attending instruction	Intentional		Action
Not attending instruction	Intentional		Action
	Not intentional	Need which is incompatible with attending	Unintended experience
		Cognitively represented possibility of attending or not attending instruction	No intention, probably only wish
		Opposed intention which is not realised	Unintended experience

From this sketch, the following conclusion can be deduced. The question of whether an adult's attending or not attending instruction is action or unintended experience has fundamental theoretical consequences, since actions are to be explained differently than unintended experiences. This means that attending and not attending cannot be explained in all cases using action theory, but rather can also be explained in terms of a theory of unintended experience. Theory groups should be worked out for the explanation of not attending. Schneider (2004) has already done this for the concept of attending or not attending as action. Knowledge of these explanations provides a foundation for forming theoretically-based homogeneous groups of non-participants. These are needed in order to be able to develop methods which can aid in motivating adults to attend instruction.

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~~An assessment of the status of teachers and the teaching profession in Nigeria~~

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~~The study attempted to obtain empirical evidence on the status of teachers and the teaching profession in Nigeria. To undertake this study, 400 post primary school teachers were randomly drawn from 40 post primary schools in Midwestern Nigeria. The teacher's status questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. Results of the study indicated, among others, that teachers are not well financially remunerated and that they are looked down upon because of delay in payment of salaries and allowances, thereby having a loss of sense of belonging. This situation has resulted in the low esteem and status of the teachers and the teaching profession in the society. Findings also revealed that poor conditions of service, wider negative influences and teachers' negative personal and professional behaviour are critical factors responsible for teachers' low status. Some recommendations to enhance the image and status of the Nigerian teachers and the teaching profession were made.~~
