

sellschaftlichen Erwartungen an das Lebenslange Lernen trotz widriger Bedingungen für die Umsetzung hoch sind und andererseits durchaus Anknüpfungspunkte für die Verbesserung dieser Bedingungen vorhanden wären, wozu aber eine gezielt bildungspolitische Strategie erforderlich ist.

Insgesamt ist das Buch empfehlenswert, wenn es in einen konkreten Studienplan passt. Unabhängig davon ist auf jeden Fall das Kapitel 3 gehaltvoll, präsentiert es doch eine präzise Konfrontation der Rhetorik mit der Realität Lebenslangen Lernens im deutschen Bildungssystem.

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Oliver, Esther

Research and Development in Adult Education

Fields and Trends

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The Spanish colleague Esther Oliver is the one opening the series of “Study Guides in Adult Education” coordinated by Regina Egetenmeyer, geared towards students and researchers in adult education, with the aim of offering them study supports in their attempts of qualifying for the European adult education. The European dimension of approaching the topics in adult and continuing education is the innovative aspect of this series, initiated by the colleagues from the University of Duisburg-Essen, coordinating also the European Master in Adult Education. In fact, the book was written by Oliver during her stay and work in Essen as visiting professor, being developed in a progressive manner and validated within the teaching to the master students. As the author states, “this study guide has been designed to provide students with an overview of current research in the fields of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, placing special emphasis

on the European dimension in many of the projects. (...) At the same time, it aims to introduce readers to the main EU-research guidelines and to explain the relationship between European policies on education and Lifelong Learning and the development of AE research” (p. 9).

Especially in the last ten years, the field of adult and continuing education (ACE) within the European Union has had increasingly more in common and has grown closer. This is due to the well-known EU program “E&T 2010”, and its more specific policy documents, “Memorandum“ (2000) and “Action Plan“ (2007), increasingly functioning as „guidelines“ of educational policy, as well as its support programmes dedicated directly to continuing education (Leonardo, Grundtvig) or with appropriate relevance in the field of continuing education (e.g. Framework Programme – FP, European Social Fund). These programmes have promoted a more intense integration through their structural specifications (partnerships, European dimension at work) and have enhanced the cooperation among providers, researchers, and practitioners. Moreover, the system of a common statistic (Benchmarks) captures continuously more aspects of further education (see Eurostat) and is increasingly influential on specific target corridors for structuring activities in this field of education, but also in supporting with reliable data the research, and the comparison between the individual member states in mastering more and more similar problems (migration, poverty, unemployment, ageing etc.). In the first two chapters, these aspects are introduced as a background for understanding the factors which influence the trends within the researching ACE, but also as support mechanisms that have fostered the research work. The above mentioned policy documents have stressed also the increasing need for research work to feed into better evidence-based policy making, and to provide a common understanding of ACE.

To provide readers with deeper insights into the problematic of needing ameliorative

research inputs and solutions, the author has grouped them into four research fields: migration; inclusion, access and participation; professionalization, assessment and counselling; learning in the workplace. Each of them is discussed in a separate chapter, more or less using the same “grid”: presenting the topic, the main related issues, and the way they were concretely addressed in different European projects, with different methodological (research) tools, described as good practice examples. However, the projects described are more development projects than research projects, and this aspect might lead the students to an unclear understanding of what it really means to do research work. Even the projects have a research part (mainly for identifying the state of the art, the common needs and gaps), in very few cases the partnership really carried out a proper research, as usually this activity is not specifically financed in the main programmes addressing the ACE field, Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci. Unfortunately, in the dedicated research program (FP 5, 6, 7), there are just very few projects addressing specifically the ACE field. Also, the results of most of the projects presented as good practice examples, even if they might have come out with innovative products, were less (to be) placed into the theoretic/scientific debate, but more developmental concrete, practical outcomes.

The last chapter offers the students even more valuable orientation resources while mapping the field of ACE, introducing important international organizations, networks, scientific journals, but also relevant topics and books inside and outside the European borders.

All learning resources of this study are presented in a well articulated didactical manner, structured with keywords, digressions, examples, exercises and tasks, links and further readings, annotated bibliography, making the text clear and easy to follow, in an active way, even for a beginner in professionalizing in the field of ACE. As the author mentions, the book should be seen as a “dynamic document, the study requiring

ongoing revision and expansion (...), the material being arranged to be updated on an ongoing basis, to include the most recent research developments in different countries and international debates with respect to ACE research” (p. 9).

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