

The Wider Benefits of Negotiations: Austrian Perspective on Educational Leadership as a 'Power Game' for Trade Unions

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Abstract : This paper explores the relationships between the basic learning processes of leading trade union workers and their methods for coping with the changes in the life-courses of societies today. It will discuss the fragile discourse on lifelong learning in trade unions and the 'production of self-techniques' to get in touch with the new economic forms. On the basis of an empirical project, different processes of the socialization of leading trade union workers will be analysed to discover the consequences of the lifelong learning discourse. The results show what competences they need to develop for the 'wider benefits of negotiations'. The main challenge remains to make visible how deeply intertwined trade union learning and education are with development in an ongoing dynamic economic process, rather than a quick-fix injection of skills and information. There is a complex relationship existing between the three 'partners', work, learning and society forming. The author suggests that contemporary trade unions could be trendsetters who make their own learning agendas by drawing less on formal education and more on informal and non-formal learning contexts. This is in parallel with growing political and scientific consciousness of the need to arrive at new educational/vocational policies and practices.

Keywords : trade union workers, educational leadership, learning societies, social acting

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