

Introduction

The many meanings of disciplinary struggles in education

Anja Heikkinen, Jenni Pätäri & Gabriele Molzberger

Background

In the call for papers for the Tampere conference, authors were invited to discuss disciplinary struggles in education through following questions:

Are educational practices necessarily also disciplinary despite their overt commitment to empowerment and emancipation, and how have the conceptions about discipline transformed historically and in different contexts? While justification of educational practices is increasingly based on authorized knowledge about education, how has the ownership and power of educational knowledge transformed historically and in different contexts?

Is education a genuine academic subject (science) with its distinctive categories, concepts and theories or just application of conceptual and theoretical tools from other disciplines? How have struggles on educational knowledge contributed to the diversification of educational discipline into sub-fields or even new disciplines? Consequently, how have struggles on conceptions of education and educational knowledge influenced diversification of educational professionals and institutions? Has the human-centered fixation of educational science to certain disciplines – such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, economy – also contributed to environmental, economic and social crisis, which endanger the continuity of human life itself?

Our approach to the topic of this book builds on the conceptualization of discipline and struggles in education from three intermingled perspectives: of educational practice, of disciplinarization of educational knowledge, of institutionalization and professionalization of education. The use of the word education in English language shows well its reference both to activities and practices and to their conceptualization, theories and research. Most other languages, however, emphasize the progress from pedagogy – which refers both to practice and ideas guiding the practice – into educational science, which is separate from educational practice and politics. Discipline is a core concept in education in different ways. From a Foucauldian perspective, discipline can be understood as methods (techniques) of subtle coercion and control of (bodily) operations and behaviour of humans, subsuming them to rules and regulations, which reflect and construct hegemonic social order and power relations. Discipline as “the use of hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination” (Foucault, 1995, p. 170) can well be identified both in educational practice and knowledge production. While discipline in Foucauldian sense is not equal with moralizing power or training, it nevertheless is typically morally justified. (Foucault, 1995, pp. 217–218.) Alternatively, autonomy as a core concept in education – both as practice and theory – suggests another interpretation of discipline. Following Kantian thinking, the progress to individual and collective autonomy entails the development of self-discipline, guided by universal moral principles. Additionally, the status of autonomous educational science – in relation to practice and to other sciences –, can be considered as an outcome of individually and collectively self-disciplined intellectual exercise. (Kant, 1870; Weber, 1991.)

Discipline is unquestionably present in all educational everyday practice, sedimented in pedagogical knowledge. Teachers need to maintain discipline in the classrooms, adults need to discipline themselves to learn new languages, and pedagogues impose discipline to individuals and social groups in direct and indirect ways. When ever in modern, meritocratic societies an educational problem is discussed, the voices and votes for more discipline can be certain of approval. In Europe, before the establishment of educational science, discipline in pedagogical practices and knowledge was highly influenced by theological and philosophical ideas. Philosophers, such as Locke, Rousseau and Kant, paved

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the way for the shaping of humans through education towards enlightened life and individual and societal perfection. Since then educational practice has been labelled by struggles between liberation and constriction of humans and societies. In the context of this book, educational practices are questioned and major differences in the contexts and meanings of discipline in different times, regions and areas of social reality are sought.

While knowledge production in educational sciences increasingly shape educational practices and form the objects of which they speak, its contribution to discipline in education is crucial. Educational practices put people under surveillance instead of merely liberating and empowering them and aim at changing behaviour and attitudes so that the people fit into the mainstream society, excluding the unfit at the same time. They entangle with transnational, national and departmental politics and controlling efforts to distinguish themselves from other (educational) disciplines. As branches of knowledge, educational disciplines have an inherent connection to control and to submission to rules in educational practice. Following Susan Narotzky (2007), the emergence of educational disciplines with their distinctive concepts can be interpreted as political programmes, conditioning knowledge production socially and materially. Educational disciplines have intellectual, social and institutional structures. They have a recognized name, a community of researchers and academic institutions (e.g. university departments, academic journals, research associations), shared concepts and traditions, systems for training experts as well as producing knowledge and communicating findings. Educational disciplines provide a framework for transfer of educational knowledge, they shape education and structure professional lives through training, certification, rewarding and hiring. They differ in how they are structured, how they communicate and how they establish identities, coherence and boundaries with other (educational) disciplines. (Post, 2009; Osborne, 2015; Sugimoto & Weingart, 2014; Stichweh, 1994.) The emergence of educational disciplines at European Universities is commonly attributed to the institutionalization of education as part of the formation of modern societies during the 19th century. However, their autonomous status has always been controversial, because of their eclectic use of concepts, theories and methodologies from other disciplines. (E.g. Harney et al., 1997; Rinne et al., 2000.) During the 20th century educational discipline has differentiated into

subdisciplines and subsections. The struggles on what counts as education and educational knowledge are crucial for the ongoing diversification of education into sub-fields or even new disciplines.

The formation of institutions and professions of education are fundamentally dependent on the struggles on their recognition and justification through academic knowledge production and reproduction. Thus, the diversification of professionals can imply that conceptions about education fundamentally differ and even contradict each other. What kinds of conceptions of discipline are connected to the emergence of pedagogical institutions and professions? If professions are still relevant (Beaton, 2010), the concept of discipline relates to mandatory responsibility and authorized licence to act as an educator. The antidote and remedy against individual failure and social grievances is commonly attributed to pedagogical professionals and educators. If the concept of education is dominated by the transnational economist policy discourse, does this imply that educational institutions and professionals primarily must respond to externally posed request to produce talented workforce for the globally competitive industries? While the dominant transnational New Public Management-policies exclusively focus on research and practices, which promote economic efficiency and competitiveness, the institutions and professionals are disciplined to search for legitimation for their disciplining practices and pedagogical interventions. Efficiency as the moral maxim promise salvation from the dialectical thinking and ambivalences of educational processes (Biesta, 2007; Bellmann, 2012).

The institutionalization of education through the 20th century can be read as a history of struggles about disciplinarization. After the World War II, emancipatory movements were criticizing institutionalization about the over-regulation of pedagogical practice. The ideal of learning as a personal, unhindered and unrestricted participation in meaningful environments was promoted by critical pedagogues, such as Ivan Illich (1972) or Paulo Freire (1973). The institutionalization of education was conceived both as a means of 'colonization of the life-world', and as a claim for equality of opportunity, vital for social integration (Habermas, 1981, 1998). However, the analysis of Bourdieu and Passeron (1974) on the relative autonomy of the education system, revealed at the latest the disguised manipulative character of educational institutions, which resist any self-reflective transformation of the habitus of the students.

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In the 21st century, the shift to governance in education show no decrease in disciplinary impacts of education either in pedagogical practice, in science or in institutional and professional settings. Around the world, universities may be the most striking examples for the disciplinary character of societal institutions and their loss of autonomy. While anti-academist discourse has for long accompanied the success story of the expansion of universities (Engelmeier & Felsch, 2017), it also enforces tendencies to de-institutionalize higher education. These contradictions and ambivalences by speaking about und doing research on discipline are to be investigated.

The categorization of the disciplinary struggles in education into practices, science and institutions and professions, can all be problematized from the perspective of cultural evolution, and its current phase, contributing to a geographical era of the Anthropocene. When the different meanings of education are placed in the wider context of societal and environmental change, the power-critical framework of Foucault's genealogy might provide new horizons. (Foucault 1980a, b, 1995.) The major shifts in the 'planetary order', such as climate change and destruction of the biosphere, challenge the human- and society-centred foundation of all areas of educational practice and science. It can be questioned, whether the human-centered fixation of education to certain disciplines – such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, and economics – has also contributed to the current environmental, economic and social crisis, which endangers the continuity of human life itself. The revisioning of education from a planetary perspective, which embeds humans and human realities in the wider existential framework of human and nonhuman entities, might lead into sublation of the dualistic meanings of discipline in education. Instead of turning to brain sciences and digital technology as solutions to the human-created crises, cross-disciplinary questioning of the human-centred heritage of education might promote sublation of the previous dichotomies and oppositions of discipline and autonomy.

The chapters

The book is divided into three sections. The disciplinary character of education is discussed in the chapters of the first section of the book. The chapters in the

second section exemplify the justification of educational knowledge in processes of mutual transmission between theory and practice. The contributions of the third section problematize the aims and functions of educational practice and theory, which are critical for understanding the implications of disciplinary struggles in education for the future. Although the chapters focus on certain historical periods, forms and contexts of education, they provide insights, which are useful and relevant for a wider discussion in the eclectic and diverse theories and practices of education.

The first section Discipline in Education discusses education as a disciplinary activity and practice, targeting expectations to and applying findings from educational theories and research. It begins with a chapter by Leena Koski, who provides a critique of the history of (popular) adult education in Finland in the context of programmes of nation-building. She considers adult education as a disciplinary constituent in adapting “common people” to the changing capitalist economy, utilizing moral regulation based on Lutheran religion. According to the author, moral regulation has been shaped to control social groups to adjust into the transforming ethos of capitalist economy. The next chapter by Ivan Zamotkin poses questions to the reader about alternatives to the selection function of modern educational systems in meritocratic societies. He discusses typical definitions of discipline in education, characterized by submission to authorities. He asks about the possibility of anarchist concept of discipline, which would enable education as a transformative activity. The chapter of Henry-Yuan Wang analyses the shift in the self-definition of universities as educational institutions, using as an example the branding strategies of Finnish universities since the reform of 2010. Through a changing imaginary, the university is steered from a collaborative, locally responsible and societally transformative community towards a competitive, high standard and business-economic player in the global higher education markets.

In the section Justification of Educational Knowledge, discipline is considered as a mediator in struggles about powerful knowledge, extending also to development of institutions and professions. The first chapter by Anja Heikkinen, Jenni Pätäri and Sini Teräsahde analyses the history of disciplinisation of adult and vocational education in Finland, in relation to general education. They question the conventional interpretations about the emergence of disciplines and show how justification of knowledge concerning adult and vocational education

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happens through negotiations and struggles among networks of academic, political and economic actors. In the next chapter, Lais Oliveira Leite discusses the methodological justification of educational knowledge in the context of educational practices in Brazil. She provides a Foucauldian critique about the separation of researcher and the object of study in educational research, arguing that it hides the power relations between them and their knowledge production. In their chapter, Markus Weil and Balthasar Eugster analyze the struggle and discipline in the discourses of de-structuring of continuing and higher education. They ask, whether the blurring of boundaries between academic research and education and professional practices might offer options for thinking out of the box for both. The chapter of Tarna Kannisto problematises the popular generalizing notions of 'multicultural' in educational theory and practice. Rather implicitly she asks whether culture is always a disciplining concept, based on the hegemony of certain cultural groups. She suggests that individualist conceptions of culture, building on liberal political philosophy would provide more sound approach for culturally diverse educational encounters. In the last chapter of this section, Maija Hirvonen and Raija Pirttimaa show, based on a case study of experienced special education teachers, how the changing competence requirements implied by vocational education reforms have challenged their professional expertise and identity. Besides challenging the disciplinary basis of their professionalism, they seem to undermine the meaning of the experiential expertise of teachers themselves.

The third section problematises the previous disciplinary struggles in relation to Meanings and Functions of Education. Education as a science has developed in close connection to, if not founded on the basis of certain other disciplines. It can be asked, how these connections relate to the ethical, practical and theoretical potential of education to address the most vital challenges of its era. In the first chapter, Kari Väyrynen considers dialectical philosophy and ecological knowledge vital in developing appropriate foundations for the practice and theory of education, instead of such fashionable candidates as neuro-scientific, business-economic and digital technological theories and methodologies. Liberation from their disciplining techniques would require an alternative concept of discipline, as responsibility to reconciliation between the freedoms of "spirit" and "nature". The core of education should be historical understanding of human history and its

interaction with the natural environment. In the next chapter, Burkhard Vollmers with his colleagues discusses the history and potential of phenomenological psychology in developing vocational education for sustainability. They emphasise the need for concrete didactic solutions, which recognize the experiential, experimental, emotional and ethical aspects of occupational growth. The final chapter by Lorenz Lassnigg and Stefan Vogtenhüber criticizes the use of universalizing welfare regime- or varieties of capitalism- approaches in comparative research on education. Building on a concrete study on differences in financing adult education, they show the importance of contextual analysis of the power-mechanisms in participation and financing, for comprehension of the underlying factors of the observed differences. The chapter cautions against the hegemony of economist approaches also when studying economic aspects of education cross countries and cultures.

Concluding remarks

Education and discipline have a variety of meanings in and between linguistic and educational traditions and fields, of which this book focuses especially on adult, higher and vocational education. The uses of educational concepts and the meanings attributed to them vary with time, place and actors and the concepts consist of various temporal and semantic layers according to their various historical trajectories, contestation between related concepts and connection with socio-economic, institutional, ideological, theoretical and ecological change.

The conceptual, practical and ideological changes in education carry their history with them. Despite educational goals like democracy, social equality and emancipation, modern societies have not progressed towards these goals in linear but struggling with emerging constraints. For instance, in the pursuit of national integrity or high national culture through education, minorities tend to get excluded from the project of the nation-state (see Kananen, 2014). Following Reinhart Koselleck (2011, 16), we believe that historical or historicizing clarifications including understanding the contingency of historical change can lead to political clarity and transformation.

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Despite the wicked problems that go beyond the departmentalized and sectionalized organization of disciplines, it continues to govern academic education. Besides educational research and expertise, it reflects to policies and the ways in which states organize their political-economic, social and educational systems: like the academic disciplines, the nation-states are organized around ideas of territories and national boundaries, while markets, production and consumption are disconnected from the nature's capacity to recover. If policy-makers' major interest in the interdisciplinarity and the reconfiguration of academic disciplines and their autonomy relates primarily to academic capitalism and a paradigm of "innovations through ranking", it rather creates more hierarchies than broader, more comprehensive and complex understanding of reality. Decisions based on measurements rather than conceptualisations and understanding arrive at conflicting results on the nature of educational disciplines (cf. Sugimoto & Weingart, 2014) as well as on a human being.

While education is traditionally rooted in deep dualisms like nature-society (see Haila, 2000; Rudy & White, 2014), it is high time to overcome the binary opposition between the humankind and nature, and to address the power structures and imbalances among global economic order, countries, communities and nature. (Moore, 2017.) Planetary crises dissolve the constrained order of knowledge and require a holistic worldview in education instead of the dichotomies and divisions of modernity. However, the challenging of institutionalized education does not have to mean the end of educational disciplines. It rather requires to critically resolve the ways in which knowledge is produced, disseminated and taught, to practice socially and environmentally just education and research to contest the dominant human-centric structures, global behaviours and academic capitalism where economic growth parallels with development. The strive to overcome the binary relationships and make way for the diversity in thought, worldviews and values entangles with fostering the future of the distinctive educational disciplines and restoring their sense of autonomy. The search for more inclusive and collective ways of thinking can draw from their history and connection with local and indigenous knowledge. The local and contextualized histories of education might provide holistic examples of education, embedded in the local, relate them to community and moral values, and show the connection between culture, livelihood and environment. (See Heikkinen, 2017.)

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