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Abstract

Integrating theoretical and working life studies in a societally progressive way

Media educators should, according to the conference call, reset themselves from teaching 'how the world is', to 'how to relate to a constantly changing world'. I begin my presentation by drawing on the influential Bildung concept of education. The Bildung concept initially referred to the social re-construction of the society (Bauer 2003). The Bildung concept of education was developed to enable relations to develop between an individual and a changing society. Several scholars have argued that the task of formal education is to provide conditions, in which an individual can establish new relationships between their private life and the world. Furthermore, formal education should enable and support the reflection of those convergences (Bauer 2003; Biesta 2013; Kivelä 2012.)

The Bildung concept therefore also suggests an agenda for education in a changing media world. I derive from the Bildung concept the media professional competence to:

1) position oneself in open-ended interaction

2) identify cultural meanings and discourses

3) open up those meanings and discourses in ways that enhance equality and public involvement, and

4) publicly act in a variety of roles that develop public discourse in constructive ways, based on reflective assessments of each situation.

The Bildung concept reflects the neo-humanist ideal of the 1700/1800 Europe. The concept is still relevant because it illustrates the kinds of social and societal objectives that were defined for modern education. Furthermore, the Bildung concept could be employed in teaching methods and learning assignments of media education. While trusting in the relevance of the powerful legacy of Bildung, my presentation proceeds to a more open agenda, and considers the practical ways we could use in general to bridge the theoretical and practical modules of higher media education in pedagogically meaningful ways.

I work at a research university that strongly emphasizes theoretical teaching and learning as well as democratic societal progress. The university will introduce new degrees that involve compulsory working life studies modules. In the midst of a thorough degree reform, there is a risk of a gap developing between theoretical courses and new working life and expertize courses. In the spirit of the Bildung concept, I perceive a two-fold solution consisting initially of an approach of integrative pedagogy (Tynjälä 2008) and, additionally, a digital pedagogical tool that supports both students and teachers. The integrative pedagogy approach infers that connectivity is built across the whole degree to illustrate the presence of generic and expert skills in all university studies, including the most theoretical units and modules. The pedagogical tool I will be planning this spring is a digital competence portfolio that supports students and teachers to identify and reflect upon the working life relevance of the whole degree. Furthermore, the digital tool supports students in reflecting upon their own developing competence to act in the labour market and society in responsible ways.

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