Making the Lisbon strategy happen
A new phase of lifelong learning discourse in European policy?

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Andreas Nordin
School of Education
Växjö University, Sweden
andreas.nordin@vxu.se

ABSTRACT European educational policy on lifelong learning has undergone great changes during the last three decades to become a highly complex phenomenon with several internal and external actors involved. The discourse of lifelong learning has undergone great changes, from its initial engagement when it was a matter of social and humanitarian issues as outlined in the early documents of UNESCO, to emphasising lifelong learning as a moral and individual obligation in a more competitive and market-oriented language. In a European context this language of competition to a large extent derives from the vocabulary set out by the Lisbon strategy where competition is a key theme. A policy trajectory that has taken the discourse from an initial phase of great social visions to a second phase focusing on the need for self-regulated and morally responsible citizens. Recent research on the topic indicates that we are now standing at the threshold of a discursive shift where action instead of visions is at stake. Against this background I would like to ask if there is evidence enough to suggest that European policy on lifelong learning is now experiencing a discursive shift into what could be described as a new phase? And if so, how could such a shift be described and what are the implications at an individual level? I take my theoretical point of departure in Habermas`s theory of communicative action using as analytic tools his concept of system and life-world as representations of different rationalities. I use critical discourse analysis as a methodological framework in order to understand how the rationalities bound to the concepts of system and life-world become visible through different actors and actions in the policy discourse of lifelong learning. A number of research reports and policy documents on lifelong learning recently published within the European Union have been read and analysed. The analysis of the empirical material points to a direction where it is relevant to speak about a new “phase” of lifelong-learning discourse emerging in European policy, characterised by the urgent need for implementation. In this paper a tentative conceptual framework is presented as to how this new, action-oriented “phase” can be understood. The policy trajectory of lifelong learning is not to be understood here as a linear development where one phase follows another in a well-defined manner. Instead it is seen as an ongoing discursive struggle where different concepts over time replace each other as fundamental for the discourse and its actors in the new phase represented by concepts such as “crisis” and “implementation”.

Keywords: European Union, lifelong learning, policy, discourse
Introduction

During the last decades intensity has increased when it comes to educational reforms. Parallel to this development there has been an intensified co-ordination of national education policy initiated by trans-national policy actors such as the OECD and the European Union (EU) with a strong economical emphasis (Lawn & Lingard 2002). At the same time the policy documents themselves have become more and more complex sites of discursive struggle. Today the official policy document contains fragments and remnants from a multitude of actors, national as well as international, from politics as well as the market, which all compete for space, legitimacy and power. In this struggle dominating discourses are formatted and constituted by specific ideas and concepts, which are continuously changing in time. These discourses affect human action directly and indirectly through the possibilities of these discourses and their restraints. The building blocks of a specific discourse are not neutral entities but ideological impregnated by different interests trying to set the discursive agenda. As human beings we are born into these discursive structures, our life-world is shaped by the opportunities and restrictions communicated within them. Discourse then becomes regulative in relation to our lives. Despite this, human beings always have the possibility to act irrationally in relation to what is taken for granted in a specific discourse. “Resistance is then seen as the breaking of conventions, of stable discursive practices” (Wodak 2002, s. 3)

Within the European Union (EU) education is put forward as a meta-narrative (Jauhiainien & Ahlo-Malmelin (2004) on how to cope with the internal and external challenges caused by globalisation and increased competition from the emerging economies in Asia and South America. To handle the situation Europe’s citizens need to be constantly learning throughout their lives in formal, informal and non-formal foras. The concept of “lifelong education”, later replaced by “lifelong learning”, has been used as a guiding principle since the early 1970s in international education policy, not least within the EU where lifelong learning has come to embrace education and labour-market research as well as social politics. The Commission defines lifelong learning as “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective” (European Commission 2001, s 9).

Since the concept of lifelong education first was launched in the late 1960s the discourse has evolved and changed. Rubensson (1996) talks about the “first” and “the second generation” of international, lifelong-learning policy. He maintains that the first generation had a strong philanthropic emphasis concerned mainly with the empowerment of unprivileged groups, in order to create a more equal society. From this somewhat idealistic point of departure lifelong learning from the late 1980s became embedded in a more political and economical discourse. This shift also implied a shift in steering techniques from a strong reliance on the legislative state using its power in a fatherly way to a more individualistic approach using different kinds of “soft law” such as benchmarks, objectives and indicators. In the EU the Open method of Coordination (OMC) is used as such a technique. In the Lisbon strategy the OMC is defined as “means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals... a fully decentralised approach using variable forms of partnerships and designed to help Member States to develop their own policies progressively” (cited in European Council of Ministers, 2002, p. 10). Member states are encouraged to communicate and share experiences when working with the same questions to achieve policy coordination in order to “become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”. (European Council 2000).
Although great efforts to achieve the goals of the Lisbon strategy to become the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world before 2010 were made, a sense of disappointment became evident in connection with the planned mid-term review. In this paper four policy texts from this period have been examined to see if this sense of disappointment also affected the content of the discourse of lifelong learning in any significant way. So the Lisbon strategy is used as in the context as being enacted through the policy discourse of lifelong learning. From a pedagogical point of departure drawing, on Habermas’s theory of communicative action, my interest concerns the communicative conditions for the meaning-making process of the learning subject that I see as vital in any pedagogical practice, and if they are changed in any significant way?

Points of departure

I take my methodological point of departure in critical discourse analysis (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; Wodak 2002; Wodak & Krzyzanowski 2008) Here discourse is looked upon as social practice and the policy documents examined in this study as materialized expressions of such a practice and therefore also “sites of struggle in that they show traces of differing discourses and ideologies contending and struggling for dominance” (Wodak 2002, p. 11). In this examination of the learning conditions as communicated in European policy discourse about lifelong learning around 2004 and 2005 these ideologies are scrutinised in order to contribute to the awareness of the argumentation legitimising this discourse. Using the discourse historical approach (DHA) of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Wodak 2002) makes it possible to approach the question in hand as a continuum where the past is embraced in the interpretation of the present, in this text the development of the discourse of lifelong learning in European policy texts. In this text a dialectical relationship between discourse and the structural setting is assumed. As social-practice discourse at the same time constitutes and becomes constituted by the social structures in which it is embedded. Although discourses are not easily defined they can be examined by their constitutive elements. Over time different topics and strategies become constitutive for the existence of the discourse. Some elements evolve while others diminish in an ongoing and never-ending process of discursive construction and reconstruction. Thus, the complexity of a discourse is extensive and is not always fully apprehended, but still possible to examine from a critical discourse-analytical point of departure as expressions of discourse when looking at specific texts. In this paper four policy texts from different genres have been read and analysed, all published between 2004 and 2005 (Kok 2004; European Commission 2005, Barroso 2005a; 2005b). The CDA approach as used in this text is rooted in the critical tradition from the Frankfurt school and onwards as represented here by Habermas (1995). Habermas uses the terms system and life-world as interpretative concepts to be understood as different rationalities struggling for discursive legitimacy. Communication within a specific discourse is then viewed as a practice in the tension-field between system and life-world where system refers to needs of the state, such as organisations, while life-world refers to the inter-subjective practice of sense-making. These two aspects of reality are both needed in a coherent analysis of society that makes Habermas’s theory and the CDA approach compatible in their common attempt to achieve a coherent analytical approach.

In recent studies on lifelong learning in international policy, the work of Foucault, has often been used as a theoretical point of departure (cf Fejes & Nicoll 2008). These analyses have contributed to a widened understanding of the subtle steering mechanisms governing the construction of social identities. However, these studies often stop at the deconstructive step, thus missing the reconstructive ambition where alternative pictures or scenarios can be
presented and elaborated, which I think is an equally important scientific task, which also contributes to the societal relevance and validity of the results presented (Nowotny, Scott, & Gibbons (2001). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) argue for the need of such an reconstructive ambition as follows:

There is a compelling need for a critical theorisation and analysis of late modernity which can not illuminate the new world that is emerging but also show what unrealised alternative directions exist – how aspects of this new world which enhance human life can be accentuated, how aspects which are detrimental to it can be changed or mitigated. Thus the basic motivation for critical social science is to contribute to an awareness of what is, how it has become to be, and what it might become, on the basis of which people may be able to make and remake their lives. (p. 4)

While analysing the texts no clear boundary between theory and empiry has been made, instead they are working parallel in a dialectical relationship. The analysis has followed three steps where the first has been to identify the wider context constituted by the period around 2005 and the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy, the second, to analyse the specific themes and topics that characterized the discourse of lifelong learning during this period and finally interpretation; what might be called an inductive starting point.

The critical ambition of CDA Wodak (2002) is described in the following way:

The differences between scientific theories and critical theories lie along three dimensions, following the Frankfurt school (see Anthonissen, 2001 for a discussion). Firstly, they differ in their aim or goal, and therefore also in the way they can be used. Scientific theories aim at successful manipulation of the external world: they have ‘instrumental use’. Critical theories aim at making ‘agents’ aware of hidden coercion, thereby freeing them from that coercion and putting them in a position to determine where their true interests lie. Secondly, critical and scientific theories differ in their ‘cognitive’ structure. Scientific theories are ‘objectifying’ in that one can distinguish between the theory and the objects to which the theory refers. The theory is not part of the object domain which it describes. A critical theory, on the other hand, is ‘reflective’ in that it is always itself a part of the object-domain it describes. Such theories are in part about themselves. Thirdly, critical and scientific theories differ in the kind of evidence which would determine whether or not they are acceptable. Thus, these theories require different kinds of confirmation. (Wodak 2002, p. 21)

Critical ambition has to do with what Habermas (1995) calls an emancipatory knowledge-interest. This awareness is supposed to contribute to the lifelong learning process in which people continuously make and remake their lives.

Re-launching the new Lisbon strategy

As a complement to the mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy planned in 2005 the European Parliament gave the Commission the task of appointing an independent delegation in order to perform a complementary report. The group called “The high level group” led by the former prime minister of Holland, Wim Kok, therefore published a report in November 2004 in which they heavily criticised the work done by the member states so far to fulfil the Lisbon strategy signed in Lisbon 2000. Lack of coordination of national policies, a much too diverse and contradictory European agenda, and lack of political implementation were put forward as the main reasons for the common failure.

Member states and the European Commission must re-double their efforts to make change happen. Far more emphasis must be placed on involving European social partners and engaging
Europe’s citizens with the case of change. Greater focus is required to build understanding of why Lisbon is relevant to every person in every household in Europe. (Kok 2004, p. 7)

The Open method of coordination (OMC) used to govern national policy, especially in areas such as education, where the legislative power of the EU is very limited, had not given the required results. By using “soft law” such as goals, objectives and guidelines such as the steering principle OMC was supposed to mobilize voluntary forces in the work of coordinating European policy.

According to ‘liberal’ approaches to policy making, member states are of ‘equal status’ in the process of policy learning. This is most clearly reflected in the equal voting power for member states in the EU. But some policy learning and transfer process may depart from the ideal of equality of member states. Asymmetry in the resources and size of member states may be expressed as asymmetry in political power and influence policy formulation and exportation accordingly. (Lange & Alexiadou 2007, p. 331)

**From confidence to crisis**

When EU launched the original Lisbon strategy 2000 there was a sense of confidence and optimism. Despite increased global competition the challenges ahead were manageable and the possibility "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world" (European Council 2000, p. 2) seemed good.

The Union is experiencing its best macro-economic outlook for a generation /…/ The forthcoming enlargement will create new opportunities for growth and employment. The Union possesses a generally well-educated workforce as well as social protection systems able to provide, beyond their intrinsic value, the stable framework required for managing the structural changes involved in moving towards a knowledge-based society. Growth and job creation have resumed. (European Council 2000, p. 2).

After just four years Kok (2004) points out that the Lisbon strategy has failed to create economic growth and that the gap between the EU and the US and Asia has increased instead of diminished. India and China are also mentioned as important global competitors, and so the EU runs the risk of losing its position within the global market if drastic action is not taken. The Commission then also expresses great concern about the current situation, when it comes to internal growth as well as increased competition on a global scale.

On current trends, the potential growth of the European economy will halve over the coming decades and reach just over 1% per year. Europe’s performance has diverged from that of our competitors in other parts of the world. Their productivity has grown faster and they have invested more in research and development. We have yet to put in place the structures needed to anticipate and manage better the changes in our economy and society. And we still need a vision for society which can integrate both the ageing and the young, particularly for the development of our workforce, where current dynamics cast a shadow over both long-term growth and social cohesion. (European Commission 2005, p. 4),

About the time of the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy rhetoric changed in European policy and the sense of being in a critical situation became more explicit (Robertson (2008). A picture of a Europe in decline starts to appear in different settings. In 2005 José Manuel Barroso held a speech about the new role of the university in which he said that despite all the positive things that were happening in Europe the overall feeling was a sense of restlessness.

Nevertheless, the warning signals are there. Increasing global competition and Europe’s demographic squeeze mean ‘business as usual’ is not an option. In the field of higher education,
we can already see that universities in Europe attract fewer students and in particular fewer researchers from other countries than their US counterparts. (Barroso 2005a, p. 5)

He is worried about the ongoing draining of European researchers to America which also affects the attraction for foreign students. Such a development, Barroso claims, undermines a Europe built on "education, research and innovation as engines for sustainable growth" (Barroso 2005a, p. 3). During 2005 Barroso also held a speech at the "European Ideas Network" about the challenges that globalisation brings about. Europe has to open up, both when it comes to the internal processes of integration between member states and the rest of the world.

In order to be able to protect and promote freedom, security and prosperity, to deliver on the expectations of our citizens, we need to reap not forgo the benefits of globalization. We must engage and shape it in accordance with our values and principles. That means Europe must open up. It must open up internally, in relations between Member States and between its institutions and its citizens. It must open up even more to the world, during this period of rapid change. (Barroso, 2005b, p. 2)

Both Kok and Barroso draw a picture of a Europe in crisis. Drastic action has to be taken at all levels within the EU. Robertson (2008, p. 90) claims that: "A sense of crisis now permeated the European agenda demanding a new kind of imaginary and action". The contours of such a new imaginary was drawn by Barroso (2005b) in his speech at the "European Ideas Network" where he takes his point of departure in the new sense of a Europe in crisis. The keyword now is openness, an openness that Barroso says corresponds to our values and principles as Europeans and points towards the idea of one European identity. Talking about the importance of openness in a strictly economical way becomes problematic because it creates unnecessary confusion between the economic and the social project of Europe. The Kok report also mentions a common European ground and on three occasions he refers to the fictive group of "Europe's citizens" to underline the shared commitment as if there were such a thing as one European state. But the openness spoken of also includes a new approach towards the emerging economies of the world such as India and China and several countries in South America. These countries are not only threats, they are also potential markets for European products and services. The new imaginary of openness is twofold; it contains an internal openness between member states and an external openness between Europe and the rest of the world.

In order to reach a full implementation of the Lisbon strategy re-launched lifelong learning is put forward as the guiding principle for the European way of life. Barroso (2005a, p. 14) talks of lifelong learning as "sine qua non" for the implementation of the Lisbon strategy, which means that it is a vital fundament for the realisation of the strategy.

Standardisation and Simplification of European education policy

The policy initiatives taken after 2005 can then be seen in the light of this great awakening of a Europe in crisis. Several initiatives were taken in order to simplify the message communicated. In December 2006 a new action programme for lifelong learning was launched and the close connection to the discourse of the Lisbon strategy is explicated.

The overarching priority of the Lifelong Learning Programme is to reinforce the contribution made by education and training to achieving the Lisbon goal of making the EU the most competitive knowledge-based economy, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion. Every part of the programme will give priority to action
The concern is about reaching a greater convergency between national policies within the EU. At the same time eight key-competencies for lifelong learning are presented, competencies supposed to be key-competencies for “the European citizens” needed in the global competition. But at the same time simplifications of the learning process include only competencies that are well defined and easily measurable. A process of adoption built upon bureaucratic ideology that reduces the learning outcome to concern only a few and pre-defined competencies. Despite the ambition to embrace the whole life-course the lifelong learning agenda looks more like a checklist than an education programme for the whole lifespan. Here the Bologna Process has come to play an important role in the creation of a uniform European area of higher education in Europe (cf Fairclough & Wodak 2008). In this process Barroso (2005b) would like to see the Commission taking a more active part in the process of policy harmonization. It needs not only to formulate objectives and guidelines but also to take a more active part in the daily policy work of each member state and the follow-up work needed at a national level.

This development could be seen as a shift from the principle of steering by soft regulations to a principle that might be called “hard governance”. The Commission is trying to get a firm grip of the elusive area of education where the EU has no legal authority. A pattern Lange & Alexiadou (2007) describe as being characteristic in areas where the EU has no or limited legal control such as the area of education. Altogether both the lifelong-learning key competencies and the intense process of European policy harmonization can be seen as expressions of simplification, a development towards more standardisation and predictability in order to meet the national and trans-national demand for control.

The contours of a new phase

The need for a coherent, normative discourse becomes ever more important in areas such as education where the EU authority is limited. Hartmann (2008) argues that this normative European discourse leavens all through with a strong imperialistic ideal visible in the erosion of national borders as well as in the creation of the “European citizen” and a common European identity. The feeling of shared values and principles are expressed in both the Kok report and the speeches of Mr Barroso. If we are to manage the crisis we are in we all have to engage in and take responsibility for our common project to become the most competitive, knowledge-based economy in the world. Hartmann (2008) uses the concept of “europeness” to capture the European efforts to achieve a more uniform population. A process where culture and tradition explicitly have to be subordinated to demands emanating from what Habermas (1995) calls a system. In order to be able to reach the goals of the Lisbon strategy Europeans have to feel more alike and thereby take responsible action or engage in a self-directed learning process, a process that despite the informal and non-formal aspects of
lifelong learning in principal goes through the classroom of the formal education system. The big initiatives such as the Bologna Process are also tied to the formal education system. The Bologna Process has become more and more inter-discursively connected to the EU agenda of higher education and for some years now the EU also has a representative on the board of the Bologna Process. Also the lifelong and life-wide learning process supposed to cover the entire lifespan has had to be subordinated to the need for uniformity. Simplicity is understood as meeting the needs of the system when it comes to be able to measure and compare economic success. It is a process of “marketisation” of education where you need to know in advance what the result will be so you do not invest in “meaningless learning”. The relationship between the student and the teacher equals the relationship between a buyer and a salesman (Gouthro 2002). We are willing to invest in education as long as the merchandise description informs us as of the learning outcome. It is the trans-national and national actors’ need for control rather than the communicative action of the individual that is the question when it comes to lifelong learning, a process that Habermas (1995) talks about as colonisation of the life-world. When the reason for the system intrudes into the area of the life-world it reduces the communicative capacity of the subject. Adoption becomes the main activity instead of the unrestrained communicative action where people seek the common good in an ongoing communicative process. This development becomes evermore disturbing in the light of the crisis-discourse emerging at the time for the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy. Parallel to the described processes of standardisation and simplification there has been a constant growing number of actors involved in the policy process, all of them trying to influence the process based on his or her specific agenda. These are EU offices, governments, the academy, lobbyists, voluntary organisations and market actors (Lawn & Lingard 2002). The number of policy documents has also increased during latter years. So, there has been a dramatic change in the European policy production that has to do with time and space.

Crisis as legitimating basis for Lifelong learning

Without being able to capture the whole picture I will try to make some tentative suggestions about how to understand what has happened within the European discourse of lifelong learning since the re-launched Lisbon-strategy. I will also try to point out what I see as some of the characteristic characteristics of the crisis-discourse which is emerging and which I discuss in terms of a new phase.

The shift is to some extent about a transfer of trust, away from the irresponsible subject and back to the member state. The rhetoric of the Kok report and the speeches of Mr Barroso call upon immediate action, there is no time for hesitation. In order to implement this policy, a firmer grip has to be taken by the Commission around the process of policy implementation. The objectives and goals of the Lisbon strategy must be realised now. This “new phase” of lifelong learning policy in the light of the re-launched Lisbon strategy is not to be regarded as something completely different from before, rather it can be seen as an aggravation of the “second generation” that affects the content as well as the structure of the discourse.

The image of a Europe in crisis forms the foundation of the new phase, a strategy that legitimises radical changes such as the immediate involvement of the Commission in the national process of implementing education policies and the reduction of the concept of lifelong learning to eight key-competencies. Instinctively everyone knows how to handle a crisis situation, there is no time for discussion, and action is all that matters. From a pedagogical point of departure several issues of great importance follow from this development. If pedagogy is understood as being foremost a dialogical process the need for immediate action becomes problematic because it implies that there is no time for discussion.
or reflection, the priority now has to be about action and implementation. These priorities have to be made by everyone in an act of solidarity towards the Lisbon objectives. So, the practice of adoption is seen here as the only relevant pedagogical practice, adoption to objectives set by the system. The image of a Europe in crisis calls for a pedagogic ideal where the self-directed learner is continuously involved in such a process of adoption.

The question remains about the forces behind this crisis-discourse. The Kok report gives us some answers; the high level group consisted of politicians and representatives from trade unions and the economic life and two professors of economy. This composition reflects the strong emphasis on economic growth and the labour market put forward in the Kok report and thus also in the intertextually-connected, re-launched Lisbon strategy. It is a discourse where lifelong learning becomes entirely “economized” and viewed only as a political instrument. Halford (2008) argues that the chapters in the Kok report dealing with social aspects can be regarded as remains of previous generations of policy documents, where the social aspects were more explicitly elaborated.

The “new phase” is to a large extent a radicalisation of what Rubensson (1996) labels “the second generation” of lifelong learning policy. Identity, education and social cohesion are all interpreted as to how they can contribute to the achievement of becoming the most competitive and knowledge-based economy in the world.

In the figure below I will try, somewhat tentatively, to show the shift into a new discursive phase by looking at its constitutive elements.

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**Reconstructive reflexions**

By using the term lifelong learning instead of education individual responsibility becomes intensified. This shift towards increased individual responsibility Rubensson (1996) is seen as characteristic for the second generation of lifelong-learning policy. Such a discourse puts great emphasis on the capacity of each learning subject while the role of the state becomes more of a supportive one, facilitating the self-directed learning process of its citizens. The issue of what Bourdieu calls “capital” becomes vital, social, cultural, intellectual as well as economical. This is a development that runs the risk of supporting the creation of in-and-out groups instead of erasing these as hoped for (Martin 2003). It is the capital of the individual that decides the real lifelong learning options for each individual despite the vision of a lifelong learning programme for all, not everyone has the capacity or the possibility to engage in formal learning throughout their lives.

The already strong economic emphasis of the lifelong learning agenda becomes increasingly problematic combined with the new crisis-discourse reducing the communicative potential of the discourse to a minimum. This is especially so since the concept of lifelong learning is supposed to cover the whole lifespan from the cradle to the grave, and learning in
informal, non-formal as well as formal settings. The lifelong-learning discourse in the new crisis context runs the risk of losing vital issues such as democracy, solidarity and citizenship along the road.

What I have tried to do in this text is to show how the “discursive context”, in which human beings are supposed to evolve, has changed in a problematic direction if a pedagogical point of departure is taken. The main difference lies in the new image elaborated in the policy document after 2005 of a Europe in crisis. As a result of the need for implementation several processes of bureaucratisation and simplification have started, aiming at better control of the processes of implementation of the member states.

Despite the problems discussed above I see no reason to eliminate the concept of lifelong learning per se. Instead it can be seen as a useful concept in trying to bring together the many facets of learning that are still quite undeveloped from a pedagogical point of departure. There are real possibilities for discursive resistance (Wodak 2002) and I think policy analysis will become an increasingly growing branch of educational research during the years to come and will contribute to such resistance.

As a concluding suggestion I think the German concept of “bildung” has a lot to offer as a starting point in trying to revitalise the lifelong-learning discussion (cf Gustavsson 2002). Using Habermas (1995) as my theoretical point of departure “bildung” can be discussed in communicative terms. For Habermas communication is a dialogical process in which people make and remake the world in which they live; people do things when they use language. By using the concepts of system and life-world Habermas emphasises that life has to have two components, system that relates to processes of adoption and life-world that links up to the possibility to influence one’s context. Both of these aspects are important when analysing society and our lives within it. “Bildung” has to do with the communicative relationship between people where specific discursive restraints are always present and which affect the communicative potential of the discourse. If the lifelong-learning discourse is to be taken seriously it needs to take hold of both of these aspects instead of its one-sided focus on adoption. There is a need for a process of re-socialisation of the lifelong-learning discourse introducing once again people of flesh and blood. Issues such as participation, democracy, citizenship and solidarity have to be reinforced. The pedagogical issues also need to be re-connected to the development of society as a whole not just reduced to being an instrument for economic wealth. These are questions of uttermost importance; especially in the light of the re-launched Lisbon strategy where time and space have become increasingly compromised leaving little or no time for debate and discussion.

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