

3rd workshop: The ‘Educational Journey’ (Towne) and ‘Bildungsreise’ (von Goethe) – Learning Mobility in Diverse Cultural and Natural Geographies

Discussants: Prof. Dr. Rose Ylimaki (Northern Arizona) and Prof. Dr. Anja Kraus (Stockholm)

Time

December 1st 2022, online

- 4pm – 5:30pm (Central European Time)
- 45’ presentation
- 45’ for dialogue

Exposé

‘Educational journey’ and ‘Bildungsreise’ provide for an idea about holistic personal development. These concepts allow us to raise the historically evolved idea of increasing self-awareness, of a learning to cope with life challenges, and a tuning of long-standing aspirations. This is thought to be done in commonly recognized cultural and natural geographies.

Tracing back to Ancient history, the idea of a physical, geographical and cultural mobility and mental flexibility was highlighted in a time when the earliest universities were about to be founded in Europe, attracting many researchers from abroad. In the ‘times of explorations’, there were no organized trips or cruises. Later, deriving from the enthusiasm for secular general education and for (foremost classical) culture, in the 17th century, the custom of a traditional ‘Grand Tour’ through Europe became a regular feature of aristocratic education. The earliest U.S. idea of an educational journey was adapted around 1635 in Boston Latin Schools whereby sons of elite families were prepared for college with readings in the classics. In the mid-1800s, it was extended to a Grand Tour to Europe. However, educative travelling has been explained from different language perspectives.

Near the end of the Civil War (1861-1865), Laura Towne (1825-1901) journeyed from the North of the US to the South. Towne was a well-situated middle-class white woman who became a respected teacher of formerly enslaved children in South Carolina. In a journal, she documented her physical, cultural, and holistic personal development. She actively participated in the agricultural way of life in the South, got to know water as a means of life; the journey opened her eyes for the people, the children she met. She learnt how to talk and how to build up social relationships and bonding in the community, etc. Returning back home, she brought social knowledge to a society in need of change. The ‘Italian Journey’ of Johann W. von Goethe (1749-1832) became an outstanding example for a bildungsreise. In Europe of the 18th century, a bildungsreise has been normally reserved for an already well-educated literate male with good financial resources, who is expected to travel far away from home, visiting foreign countries, learning other languages and other cultures’ manners and political contexts. The aim of a bildungsreise is to return home in a refined way, following up the tradition of family traits and fulfilling the social expectations and responsibilities that are bound to the (upper, politically responsible) social class to which the traveler supposedly belongs.

Modelling the idea of education and bildung within the glocalised world, the idea of an educational journey can be connected to equal personality development in the classroom.

Anja Kraus is a professor of Arts and Culture Education at the Stockholm University, Sweden. Her research interests are corporeality in educational contexts; phenomenological, ethnographical and theoretical research on practices; transcultural learning, pedagogical terminologies in different languages, questions within pedagogical anthropology.

Rose Ylimaki is a professor and the Del and Jewell Lewis Endowed Chair in Education and Leadership at Northern Arizona University. Her research interests are phenomenological studies of educational leadership and policy; comparative, international studies of education and leadership; and education theorizing as it informs curriculum studies and educational leadership.

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