



Call for Submissions:

Der Pädagogische Blick: Journal of Research and Practice in Educational Professions

Special Issue on: Vocational orientation as a challenge throughout the lifespan *Requirements and fields of action for educational professions*

Vocational orientation is a dynamic and interdisciplinary field that addresses the development and promotion of career paths through a variety of perspectives and methodological approaches. The Scientific Network for Vocational Orientation defines this field as the interaction between social structures, individual life courses and pedagogical practices in the design of vocational pathways. This special issue aims to examine VOCATIONAL ORIENTATION from the perspective of the pedagogical professions. In view of the profound societal challenges posed by technological, ecological, economic and social transformations, the critical reflection of pedagogical practices for shaping and accompanying vocational orientation processes is becoming increasingly urgent. These societal developments challenge educators to make a choice, to make a representative interpretation for the formation of a different life practice (Helsper, 2002).

Theoretical framework and rationale

Vocational orientation and decision-making processes are at the heart of understanding the interactions between the individual and society. They encompass social coordination and regulation through institutionalization and ritualization as well as the subjective practice of "life itself" (Helsper, 2002; Walther & Stauber 2013). These processes aim for a balance between the dual demands of individual development and societal expectations, a theme that is underpinned by theories of socialization and agency (Ecclestone et al., 2010; Shanahan & Hood, 2000) or transition theory (Oehme, 2013; Schäffter, 2014). Grüneberg (2024) currently integrates talent research (models, tests and methods of potential analysis) and career choice research in order to identify essential practical-theoretical requirements of career guidance.

Pedagogical support for such processes enables reflective learning and promotes critical agency on the part of individuals as well as the ability to question and change their own orientations. This is in line with Biesta's (2010) emphasis on the role of education in promoting "subjectivation" - the development of autonomous, critically reflective individuals who can navigate complex social structures. Brookfield (2017) also highlights the centrality of critical reflection in teaching and that such practices are crucial in supporting learners to develop self-awareness and adaptability in decision-making processes.

Scope of the special edition

This special issue invites contributions that examine vocational orientation and decision-making processes from pedagogical perspectives in different social and institutional contexts as well as diverse fields of action such as school, social work and adult education. The issue explicitly focuses on challenges along the entire lifespan. As Heinz (1999) emphasizes, educational transitions are not just institutional milestones, but critical phases of negotiation between individual aspirations and structural opportunities. Such transitions, also considered across countries, provide valuable insights into the role of vocational orientation in shaping careers.

Some of the questions that contributions can address are:

- How can pedagogical practices promote vocational orientation and decision-making processes in different contexts and phases of life?
- Which theoretical and conceptual models best capture the interactions between individual choice, social expectations and pedagogical guidance as the subject of vocational orientation?
- To what extent do vocational orientations help to promote inclusive practices and to what extent do they help to address gender and migration issues as well as socio-economic inequalities?
- To what extent do social challenges such as digital transformation, environmental crises and economic instability affect the role of educators in vocational orientation - and also their own vocational orientation?

Potential topics and focal points

Submitted contributions may include the following topics and orientations:

1. **Theoretical and conceptual foundations:** research into concepts that combine vocational orientation with pedagogical theories
2. **Empirical research:** Findings from studies on the effects of educational interventions on vocational orientation with a focus on different population groups and life stages.
3. **Practice-oriented contributions:** Case studies or reflective reports on innovative pedagogical strategies to support vocational orientation and decision-making processes.
4. **Lifelong learning and career development:** studies on career orientation across the lifespan. These can relate to the classic transition from school to work, but also to transitions in adulthood and later phases of life.
5. **Equality and inclusion:** Critical perspectives on how pedagogical approaches can reduce structural inequalities in vocational orientation and decision-making.

Relevance and significance

This issue aims to advance the discourse on career guidance by combining theoretical insights, empirical findings and practical applications. It aims to provide educators, researchers and policy makers with actionable insights into how pedagogical practices as well as structural conditions can support individuals in making career decisions in the midst of complex societal challenges.

The publisher expressly supports young scientists in the publication of empirically based results and/or theoretical basic ideas from qualification theses. Please register for consultation below!

Guidelines for submission

We invite original research articles, theoretical papers and practice-based reflections that contribute to the pedagogical understanding of vocational orientation and decision-making processes. Manuscripts should conform to the journal's guidelines and be between 6,000 and 8,000 words, including references.

Important dates

- Submission deadline for abstracts: 31.03.2025
- Deadline for submission of full manuscripts: 31.10.2025
- Release date: end of 2025

Due to the journal's transformation process, the submission deadline for complete articles may be shortened or extended accordingly if the quality (undergoing a double-blind process) and number of

contributions have been reached or not yet reached. We therefore recommend contacting the editor of the respective issue in good time (see below). Contributions that have already been accepted and positively evaluated will appear in the next issue as an additional contribution on the topic.

Literature

- Biesta, G. (2010). *Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, Politics, Democracy*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Brookfield, S. (2017). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*. Jossey-Bass.
- Ecclestone, K., Biesta, G., & Hughes, M. (2010). *Transitions and Learning Through the Lifecourse*. Routledge.
- Grüneberg, T. (2024): *Begabung und Studienwahl - Diversity of talent as a challenge in career and study choice and a fundamental issue in the promotion of gifted students*. Beltz.
- Heinz, W. R. (1999). *From Education to Work: Cross-National Perspectives*. Cambridge University Press.
- Helsper, W. (2002). *Teacher professionalism as an antinomic structure of action*. In M. Kraul, W. Marotzki & C. Schweppe (Eds.), *Biography and Profession*. Klinkhardt, 64-202.
- Oehme, A. (2013). *Dilemmas of vocational orientation*. In: Schröder, W. et al. (eds.): *Handbuch Übergänge*, Beltz, 632-650.
- Shanahan, M. J., & Hood, K. E. (2000). *Adolescents in changing social structures: Bounded agency in life course perspective*. *Advances in Life Course Research*, 5, 17-36.
- Schäffter, O. (2014). *Navigating through networked educational landscapes*. In: Felden, H. von et al. (eds.): *Thinking in transitions*. VS, 37-57.

Contact for Queries

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Your reference to the topic: *Concept and teaching in the Master's degree "Career Orientation" (90 ECTS) at the University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria: Module "Transition Management" (together with Dr. Bettina Thöne-Geyer) and "Future Occupational Fields". Research work and teaching development in the field of transdisciplinary continuing education research at the University for Continuing Education, Krems, Austria:* [Center for Transdisciplinary Continuing Education Research](#)