



Call for Submissions

Der Pädagogische Blick

Journal of Research and Practice in Educational Professions



Special Issue on:

Professionalisation and professionalism in educational guidance *Contours in educational practice, science and theory*

Against the backdrop of current social challenges such as the shortage of skilled workers, multiculturalism, digitalisation and demographic change, as well as demands for recurring educational decisions across the lifespan, educational guidance has increasingly become the focus of educational policy and educational science over the last two to three decades (e.g. Gugitscher, 2016; Käßlinger, 2020; Schiersmann 2021). Strengthened in particular by two EU recommendations (2004, 2008), it is now on an equal footing with traditional counselling services in the context of lifelong learning and within the framework of lifelong guidance (Schlögl & Schröder 2016, p. 3 with reference to Schlögl & Irmer 2014, p. 64; Hooley 2015). Educational guidance encompasses a variety of measures "to enable citizens of all ages and at any point in their lives to recognise their skills, competences and interests, to make educational, vocational training and career decisions and to shape their own personal careers, whether in education, employment or other situations" (EU 2008, p. 2). At state level, educational guidance services are provided in the education system itself (school, vocational training, higher education, adult/further education), in the workplace and at transitions into the labour market (e.g. when starting a career or becoming unemployed) (Hooley, 2015) and are implemented by a large number of different providers (nfb, 2022). The growing importance and expansion of guidance structures is accompanied by questions regarding the professionalisation and professionalism of guidance practitioners (Schiersmann, 2021; 2022) and the quality of guidance processes (Schlögl & Schröder 2014; BIBB 2019). The often project-based and therefore temporary structure of guidance provision creates challenging and sometimes unsatisfactory conditions (Schiersmann 2022, p. 45; BIBB 2019). Against this backdrop, this special issue aims to highlight current developments and research activities on professionalisation, professionalism and quality in educational guidance and counselling and thus provide new impetus to the discourse.

Theoretical framework and rationale

Professionalisation is initially aimed at the question of "how the specific competence of a professional to act is to be acquired" (Dewe & Schwarz, 2011, p. 167). According to Nittel (2000, p. 61), it can be depicted as a) an individual process of professional maturation, b) as a collective project of bundling professional roles, c) as a process of scientification and d) as self-directed or externally controlled. Professionalism, on the other hand, refers to the specific competence to act in professional situations. It can be understood as "skilful professionalism" (Nittel, 2000, p. 70) and stands for "the quality of work performance in which knowledge and skills form the sources" (Dewe & Schwarz 2011, p. 169).

Aspects in need of professionalisation and professionalism (Dewe & Schwarz 2011) in educational guidance arise from, among other things

- confusing organisational structures and little cooperation between the advisory sciences (Thiel, 2023)
- a close link between educational counselling and participation in continuing education and the embedding of counselling in "support chains" (Käßlinger 2020, p. 170)
- different (quality) demands on professional advisory action due to the "embeddedness of advisory action in an organised practice" (Dewe & Schwarz 2011, p. 174; Schlögl & Schröder 2016), in institutional (Stanik, 2015), local and economic conditions as well as educational

- policy objectives (Fuchs, Fuchs & Hamann, 2017)
- the differentiation of different counselling formats and interventions in response to changing needs and requirements (Gieseke & Stimm 2015), which have so far "only been classified to a limited extent by research and theory development" (Gieseke & Stimm 2023, p. 35 with reference to Gieseke & Nittel 2016), but which touch on questions regarding the qualification of counsellors
- greater consideration of specific target groups, which is demanded and promoted by education policy, among others; these include, for example socially and educationally disadvantaged young people (Siller, 2018), the "educationally disadvantaged" (Bremer, Kleemann-Görling & Wagner, 2015) as well as those with low literacy levels and people with a generally assumed need for basic education in the context of work and employment (Bundesarbeitskreis Arbeit und Leben & Institut der Deutschen Wirtschaft, 2024; Huynh, Elsholz & Thomas, 2025), which raises questions about low-threshold access, extended counselling formats and the possible proximity to life and social counselling (Siller, 2018) and thus to possibly prescribed and deficit-connotative counselling prescribed and deficit-centred formats are raised.

Scope of the special edition

This special issue invites you to bring together perspectives on professionalisation and professionalism in educational guidance along the lifespan in educational practice, science and theory and to work out the contours.

Contributions can deal with the following questions:

- What (current) strategies and (disciplinary) positions for professionalisation and professionalism in educational guidance can be identified - also across national borders?
- Which theoretical approaches can be used to map "educational counselling competence"?
- How can this be developed - with didactic support - in initial, continuing and further training?
- To what extent is recourse made to (adult) educational approaches to counselling?
- What are the specific requirements for educational counsellors working with special target groups (socially and educationally disadvantaged young people and adults, migrants, unemployed people, older workers and people in the post-work phase) - also in the border area of social work? How can counselling professionalism be defined and mapped in these contexts, and how can it be justified and linked back to educational theory
- To what extent do organisational, institutional, (socio-) political, local and economic circumstances influence professional action in educational guidance and how can this be balanced and counteracted?

Potential topics and focal points

Submitted contributions may include the following topics and orientations:

- Contributions to **professionalisation strategies** in educational counselling
- Theoretical and conceptual contributions** to the definition of professionalism in educational counselling along the lifespan
- Theoretical or empirical contributions** to the professional design of counselling processes in educational counselling, taking into account the above-mentioned
- Theoretical or empirical contributions** to the modelling of educational counselling competences and their development in the training and continuing education of educational counsellors
- Case studies or reflective accounts** of innovative pedagogical strategies and methods in educational counselling across the lifespan

Relevance and significance

This issue aims to advance the discourse on professional orientation and 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 welcome original research articles, theoretical papers and practice-based reflections that focus on professionalisation strategies in educational guidance and contribute to the (adult) pedagogical understanding of guidance processes and their quality. Manuscripts should conform to the journal's guidelines and be between 6,000 and 8,000 words in length, including references.

Contributions can be submitted in German or English.

Key dates

- Submission deadline for abstracts: possible until 31 July 2025
- Deadline for submission of full manuscripts: 24.12.2025
- Release date: 1st quarter of 2026

Due to ongoing journal transformations, the final submission deadline may be adjusted depending on the quality (peer-review process) and number of submissions. Early contact with the issue editor (see below) is recommended. Accepted and positively reviewed articles may be published in a subsequent issue as additional thematic contributions.

Literature

- Bremer, H., Kleemann-Göring, M., & Wagner, F. (2015). Continuing education and continuing education counselling for the "educationally disadvantaged". Results, experiences and theoretical categorisations from the scientific monitoring of practical projects in NRW. wbv.
- Federal Working Group Work and Life & Institute of German Business. (2024). Grundbildungscoach: Eine Weiterbildungsreihe für Multiplikatorinnen und Trainerinnen im Feld arbeitsorientierte Grundbildung [Handbook].
- Fuchs, P, Fuchs, S. & Hamann, S. (2017). Continuing education counselling. Variations in the implementation of a service offered by the Federal Employment Agency. *Journal of Continuing Education Research*, 40, pp. 321-338
- Gugitscher, K. (2016). A historical view of educational and career counselling in Austria. From welfare to individualised educational guidance to lifelong guidance and skills transfer. *Magazine erwachsenenbildung.at*, 29, 1-14.
- Hooley, T. (2015). The evidence base of lifelong counselling. A guide to key research findings for effective policy and practice. ELGPN.
- Huynh, H. N., Elsholz, U., & Thomas, M. (2025). The role of company training mentors in increasing participation in education from a subject-science perspective. In M. Käpplinger, B. Allespach, & J. Wienberg (Eds.), *Handbuch betriebliche Weiterbildung: Kritisch-emanzipatorische Ansätze in Theorie und Praxis* (pp. 505-516). Bund-Verlag.
- Käpplinger, B. (2020). Educational counselling in continuing education. In R. Arnold, A. Lipsmeier, & M. Rohs (Eds.), *Handbook of Vocational Education and Training* (3rd ed., pp. 163-173). Springer VS.
- Kolland, F., Gallistl, V., & Wanka, A. (2018). Educational counselling for older people: Basics, target groups, concepts. Kohlhammer.

- National Forum for Counselling in Education, Career and Employment (nfb). (2022). Lifelong educational and career counselling in Germany: Structures and services - facts and figures (3rd ed.).
- Council of the European Union. (2004). Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the development of policies, systems and practices in the field of lifelong guidance in Europe (document 9286/04).
- Council of the European Union. (2008). Draft Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on better integration of lifelong guidance in lifelong learning strategies (document 1503/08).
- Schiersmann, Ch. (2021). Counselling in the context of lifelong learning. wbv.
- Schiersmann, Ch. (2022). Continuing education counselling in the context of the National Continuing Education Strategy: Financial and structural aspects. Hessische Blätter für Volksbildung, 1, 44-53.
- Schlögl, P., & Schröder, F. (2014). Continuing education counselling: Defining, shaping and reflecting on quality. wbv.
- Schlögl, P., & Schröder, F. (2016). Professionalism in educational counselling: Everything simple or chaotic? Magazin erwachsenenbildung.at, 29, 2-9.
- Siller, G. (2018). Professional educational counselling. Needs and inequality-critical reorientation. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Stanik, T. (2015). Institutional provider contexts and regulation of counselling in continuing education. Journal of Continuing Education Research 38, pp. 197-211.

Contact for Queries

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Editor's background: Studies in educational science and psychology at the Ruprecht-Karls-University in Heidelberg, teaching on the topic of the advertised volume at the Universities of Duisburg-Essen, Bremen, Wuppertal and Krems/Austria, study visit to the USA for career and professional counselling, further training as a client-centred counsellor (GWG, Cologne) and psychodynamic coach (inscape, Cologne) as well as research on appropriation processes of professional development in situations of social upheaval.