

VET&Culture Network – call for papers

Valencia conference, Autumn 2024

Cultures of work and education:

Understandings and values of work taught and learned in adult and vocational education

Organizing committee:

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Dates: 2-4 October 2024

Location: Facultad de Filosofía y Ciencias de la Educación – Universitat de València

Av. Blasco Ibáñez, 30 – 46010 València (Spain) Deadlines:

- Submission of abstracts: 24th May 2024
- Acceptance of abstracts: 14th June 2024
- First draft of program end of June Abstracts:

Send abstracts to Julian Bell Sebastián Julian.Bell@uv.es AND Fernando Marhuenda Fluixá Fernando.Marhuenda@uv.es before May 24th.

Abstracts can consist of:

- Individual paper
- Symposium (collection of papers)
- Round Table (input and discussion round)

Abstracts of individual papers and round tables should have an extension between 500 and 1000 words and focus on the topic of the call and have an academic or scientific ground.

Abstracts of symposia should have an extension between 1000 and 2000 words and focus on the topic of the call and have an academic or scientific ground.

Cultures of work and education: Understandings and values of work taught and learned in adult and vocational education

In 2009, Weil, Koski and Mjelde published a volume entitled *Knowing Work: The Social Relations of Working and Knowing*. Work, often reduced to employment, is taken for granted when researching adult and vocational education and training. Adult life is closely linked to active life, meaning one is

able to produce, to work and to contribute to society, not only in terms of the services or products one provides, but also in terms of the economic contribution through taxes. Vocational and adult education has the aim to prepare specifically for qualified work, integrated citizens and a prosperous society. And vocational and adult education have specific understandings and values of work when looking at it from the perspective of teaching and learning.

Historical perspectives on work

Along the 20th century, as vocational education, adult education and further education and training evolved in different countries, they were closely linked to the industrialization process as well as to national economic policies where a qualified workforce was expected to play a role and given recognition in society accordingly, in terms of the ability for consumption as well as a social position within it. In the 20th century in industrialized societies, work was able to provide a collective identity, and vocational and adult education provided and assured the conditions to belong to a community of practice.

At the beginning of the 21st century, work is subject to profound changes, work relations are not as stable as they used to be (at least in Western/affluent countries) and a new culture is extending, that of the precariat, while the International Labour Office claims for 'decent' work. The collective dimension of work seems to be at stake, on a general basis and perhaps also at the occupational level, as occupations are nowadays related to sets of competences rather than knowledge. Modularization in the VET provision has contributed to this, and the so called 'gig' and 'platform' economy, which seem to fit better what Boltanski and Chiapello named 'the new spirit of capitalism'.

Current issues of cultures of work

Adult and vocational education and training, while educating adults and young adults, engage with them in addressing issues related to working life and preparation for working life, also for ongoing transitions along life, under the umbrella of the lifelong learning 'gospel'. Adult and vocational educators and trainers are also subject to these changes in work and working cultures: it may be often the case that most educators will have been raised in a culture of work appropriate for the second half of the 20th century while, perhaps, their trainees, apprentices, and students are experiencing different understandings and values of work in their life, like recent phenomena as the Great Resignation seem to point to, or the emphasis laid on entrepreneurship not only in working but often also in learning life.

Adult and vocational education, as parts of the education system, are subject to a crisis of legitimation as several other institutions that were developed along the ideals of Enlightenment and Modernity and that are now suffering the impact of the so-called liquid Modernity, their foundations being questioned and their procedures seeming ancient in relation to the fast exchange of information that contemporary societies seem to favor and that the new generations seem to prefer. Education and training, as professions engaged in caring for others, are subject to those pressures and the expectations of learners seem hard to satisfy within the institutional constraints of education, accreditation, and qualification systems.

VET & Culture conference

The 31st annual conference of the VET & Culture network wishes to engage in these debates, tackling how adult and vocational education are addressing work in its cultural dimension as part of the

content of what is being transmitted in adult and vocational education, or whether dominant policy discourses on competence development are hindering these dimensions which are then left to every individual, while identities are being shaped around several other life domains and while work loses the central role in adult identity that it has played in the past two centuries.

References

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