


**SELECTED PRESENTATIONS**


**PROGRAMME**

The Final Oral Examination
For the Degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

(Educational Studies)

**MAREN ELFERT**

M. A., Freie Universität Berlin, 1992

Friday, February 5, 2016, 4:00 pm
Room 200, Graduate Student Centre
Latecomers will not be admitted


**EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

Chair:
Dr. Carl Leggo (Language and Literacy Education)

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. André Elias Mazawi, Research Supervisor (Educational Studies)
Dr. Kjell Rubenson, Research Supervisor (Educational Studies)
Dr. Jessica Wang (History)

University Examiners:
Dr. Peter Seixas (Curriculum Studies)
Dr. Hongxia Shan (Educational Studies)

External Examiner:
Dr. John Field
School of Education
University of Stirling
Stirling, Scotland
ABSTRACT

The scholarly literature has emphasized the strong humanistic tradition that characterizes the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This study, which draws on archival research and interviews, traces the origins, features and shifts of UNESCO's educational humanism from the creation of the organization in 1945 to the present day, with a particular focus on the concept of lifelong learning. I argue that the tensions between the humanistic worldview and the pressures placed on the organization by multifaceted changes in the political economy and the landscape of global governance in education have forced UNESCO to depart from its comprehensive lifelong learning approach, while still maintaining a claim of continuity.

Employing Gadamer’s (1975) concept of tradition and Bevir’s (1999; 2003) concepts of tradition and dilemma and neo-institutional theories that emphasize the role of ideology and social meanings in explaining changes in organizations, the study examines the shifts that UNESCO’s educational concepts and programs have undergone as changing actors continually renegotiated and reclaimed its humanistic tradition as a reaction to the dilemmas they faced. I argue that UNESCO’s humanistic tradition has been challenged by competing ideas, in particular the concept of human capital, which presented a dilemma for the organization, contributing to internal and external tensions. Each of the symbolic documents that are at the centre of this study – UNESCO’s constitution, Learning to be (aka the Faure report, 1972) and Learning: The treasure within (aka the Delors report, 1996) – are windows into the ideological struggles carried out at their time. They tell us a great deal not only about the beliefs and ideologies of the actors involved, but also about the “competing” ideologies with which they interacted. They further shed light on the shifting position of UNESCO in the system of international organizations and multilateral development.

At a time when the humanistic perspective of education has been crowded out by the increasing marketization of education and UNESCO faces a severe existential crisis, this study contributes to the understanding not only of the intellectual history of lifelong learning, but more broadly of the changes in educational multilateralism over the past 70 years.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Place of Birth: Hamburg, Germany
Academic Studies: M. A., Freie Universität Berlin, 1992
Current Position: Sessional Lecturer, UBC

GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Adult and International Education

Courses:
EDST 601A Doctoral Seminar (Theory) Instructors
EDST 601B Doctoral Seminar (Methodology) Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough
EDST 602A Doctoral Seminar Dr. André E. Mazawi
EDST 503 Historical and Philosophical Traditions of Adult Education Dr. Lesley Andrés
EDCP 541 Problems in Historical Understanding Dr. Shauna Butterwick
EDST 582 The Study of Educational Organizations Dr. Peter Seixas
EDCP 585A Advanced Doctoral Seminar in Qualitative Research Dr. André E. Mazawi
EDST 565F Pedagogy of the Oppressed Revis(it)ed: Freire, Illich, and Liberation Theology Dr. Lisa Loutzenheiser

AWARDS
Faculty of Education Graduate Award
SSHRC Doctoral Award, 2012-2014
Four Year Fellowships (FYF) for PhD Students
Coolie Verner Prize

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

