

Peer Review

Review of: "Learning Schools and the Learning Discourse in Education Policy"

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The paper presents an interesting overview of how learning, as an important notion in educational policy, has been reconfigured from the end of the 1900s to today. The paper points to displacements in the notion, showing its connections to research and some transnational policy documents. The argument offered is overarching, probably holding plausible for Western countries. In some passages, as a reader, I would like to see more nuances in how the generalizations presented emerged from an analysis of the discourse of education. Probably because the argument made is painted with a quite “thick brush,” more details would make the analysis more compelling. For example, it seems that the strategy for making the case on the meanings of the notion of learning is selecting key researchers whose work achieves some type of discursive impact (Hargreaves in the 1990s, Hattie in the 2000s, and Biesta in the 2010s). It is less evident what the logic is for the transnational policy documents that are mentioned. Probably making clear in general terms what the analysis consists of can help. Also, the jump into learning outside of school and into “organizational learning” may need more justification regarding its connection and significance for education. Finally, even though there may be a sense of navigation of the term learning with the same meanings everywhere, one can argue that as notions are taken into national contexts, they acquire particular flavors and meanings. A strategy to address this could be to keep the example of how such turns of learning in policy were actually adopted in Denmark since the 1990s. That is, consistently use one case to show that the general argument holds as notions of learning changed in one place. That would also strengthen the point that is made at the end concerning the Danish educational reform of 2014. Being acquainted with the scholarship of Palle Rasmussen, I am sure that he has the expertise to back up the overall thesis and provide more detail to an argumentative structure that works quite well. This would definitely enrich the paper and make it a stronger contribution.

Having said this, it is my appreciation that the discussion of the different meanings of “learning” in shaping the directions of education is a timely and important discussion of relevance for educational sciences to understand the transformation in the context of education. The paper invites scholars from different fields of educational research to find connections on the implications of such changes on their own research subjects. For example, this paper may serve as a background to locate changes in the notions of “mathematics education” in the curricular transformation during the period addressed in the paper.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.