

Lecture - The Societal Unconscious. The Hidden Forms of Life Experience.

14th December, 16.00 h (Portuguese Time)

Henning Salling Olesen, Professor, former Rector for Roskilde University in Denmark. Honorary Doctor Tampere University. Founder of interdisciplinary doctoral school for lifelong learning and education research. Chair for European Society for Research in the Education of Adults 1998-2013. Founding member of the International Research Group for Psycho-societal Research. Advisory professor for doctoral studies at East China Normal University, Shanghai.

He has in his whole career integrated an interdisciplinary approach to education and learning – inspired by Antiauthoritarian Marxism and lately Psychodynamic interpretive methodology. Much of this research has focused on adult learning and adult learners using a life history methodology. He has been engaged in collaborative research with trade unions since 1970'es, and is still active in a critical discussion of lifelong learning policies. Among his latest publications is the book “The Societal Unconscious. Psychosocial Perspectives on Adult Learning” – Leiden/Boston, Brill/Sense 2018 – sponsored by ESREA.

Abstract

Learning processes do not move in straight lines, they are leap subjective reconstructions of the learners' world of life and future perspectives. New knowledge suddenly opens up a new possibility of action or a new figure of thought makes something clear that was previously incomprehensible. The process can be totally surprising but still obvious - afterwards. The same is true in many social processes, including some of the more basic ones: Revolutions often come like lightning from a clear sky - but appear completely logical and inevitable afterwards. The #metoo example is both a radical learning process and a social revolution. Based on the concept of "The societal Unconscious", the lecture will present a new understanding of the dynamics of learning processes and anchoring in life-historical experience - and draw some perspectives for adult education and lifelong learning.