

# The Learning Society from the Perspective of Governmentality

JAN MASSCHELEIN, MAARTEN SIMONS, ULRICH BRÖCKLING & LUDWIG PONGRATZ

In this issue we present recent studies that investigate different educational ideas and programmes—ideas and programmes of enlightenment, creativity, participation, inclusion, learning, critique—from the perspective of ‘governmentality’. This perspective was opened up by the later Foucault. Considering educational ideas and programmes from the perspective of governmentality implies their analysis and description as an element in the government of people. The studies which are presented here look at ideas and programmes (of education) as being part of the history of the ways in which human beings conduct and govern themselves and others in the light of specific truth games. They assume that there is an intrinsic relation between the intellectual and practical educational technologies on the one hand and the way in which political power is wielded in our societies as well as the way in which we govern ourselves on the other hand. In this way these studies also indicate how educational practice and educational theory (and science) have played and do play a constitutive role in practices of subjectivation which are crucial to our actual ‘learning societies’—as societies which address us to become lifelong learning citizens. They thus want to contribute to a critique which is no longer referring to the practice of a legislating subject passing judgement on a deficient reality, but is rather a matter of ‘making facile gestures difficult’ (Foucault).

Educational research from the perspective of governmentality has been carried out in the Anglo Saxon world since the beginning of the 1990s. More recently a range of investigations have been set up in the continental context. Both lines of research are present in the list of authors who were invited to contribute to this issue, although the more recent continental research prevails. We believe that the issue allows us to appreciate the richness and fruitfulness of the perspective of governmentality for research in education and we thank the *Journal of Educational Philosophy and Theory* and especially Michael Peters for offering this opportunity.

Copyright of Educational Philosophy & Theory is the property of Blackwell Publishing Limited and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.