

## Obituary for Andreas Fischer – 1955-2019



The Editors of the Journal of Social Science Education express their deepest condolences upon the death of its longstanding editor Professor Dr Andreas Fischer. Andreas died in Lüneburg, Germany, at the age of 64.

His early academic positions were at *Freie Universität Berlin* where he graduated in 1990 on a PhD thesis analysing the consumer policy of trade unions and worked as an assistant professor until 1997. Andreas Fischer qualified as a university lecturer in the discipline of business and economics education. Soon after his habilitation he was offered a chair of vocational, business and economics education and subject didactics of economics at Lüneburg University, Germany (*Leuphana University Lüneburg*) and subsequently built a strong research profile in environmental and sustainability education, vocational teacher education in the economic domain, socioeconomic education and experiential learning and life-world oriented learning (in German known as “Lebensweltorientierung”). Before his academic career, Andreas worked for a time as a teacher of economics, business administration and German at the *Oberstufenzentrum Banken und Versicherungen* in Berlin [Secondary College of Banks and Insuring Companies].

Andreas was a founding editor of the Journal of Social Science Education in 2002. He was deeply committed to the advancement of the journal and edited volumes on topics like constructivism, education standards, sustainability and heterogeneity in education.

Andreas Fischer founded and supported a lot of academic initiatives, for instance for environmental vocational education, for the transfer of knowledge in social science education (see [www.sowi-online.de](http://www.sowi-online.de), in German) or for the approach of socioeconomic education and recently for an Interdisciplinary Institute of Social Science Education.

He was one of the leading scholars in the research on socio-economic education. His engagement included a range of activities. Andreas Fischer contributed early to the conceptual debate on economic(s) versus socioeconomic education with the anthology *Ökonomische Bildung – Quo vadis?* [Economic education – quo vadis? 2006], including his chapters on economic education and sustainability education. Andreas was a co-founder of the *Association of Socioeconomic Education and Research* (ASEER, in German [GSÖBW](http://www.gsöbw.de)) and a very committed member of its executive body. Among his seminal contributions to socioeconomic education are the anthology *Sozioökonomische Bildung* [Socioeconomic education. 2014], and the co-authored volume *Was ist gute ökonomische Bildung? Leitfaden für den sozioökonomischen Unterricht* [What is good economic education? Compendium for socioeconomic teaching. 2019].

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Together with a team of Leuphana University Lüneburg, Andreas Fischer advanced the research on *Lebensweltorientierung* und *Situationsorientierung* (difficult to translate: experiential learning or life-world oriented learning, situational learning). He recently organised a workshop series and co-edited two volumes, *Der "fachdidaktische Code" der Lebenswelt- und / oder (?) Situationsorientierung* [The subject matter didactic code of life-world and / or (?) situational learning. 2017] and *Lebensweltorientierung und lebensweltorientierte Lernaufgaben* [Life-world orientation and life-world oriented learning tasks. 2019] and contributed among others an innovative chapter "'Lernaufgaben sollten schlecht-strukturiert sein.' Lebensweltorientierte Lernaufgaben aus wirtschaftspädagogischer Perspektive" [Learning tasks should be badly structured. Life-world oriented learning tasks from an economic education's perspective. 2019].

Andreas was a great, gifted and inspiring academic teacher, he really loved teaching future vocational teachers, was committed to their professional and personal development and cared about fostering their autonomous and critical thinking. He was one of the few professors who are able to teach economics and economic education by using means from theatre, dance, literature and performance. Andreas Fischer received several distinguished teaching awards. He also did research in the field of teacher education and published, for example, on fostering competences of future vocational teachers and making use of open educational resources for sustainability education of teachers. Recently, he edited a book together with his wife, Gabriela Hahn, and Harald Hantke titled *Neue Wege zur Kompetenzförderung zukünftiger Berufsschullehrerinnen und Berufsschullehrer* [New pathways of fostering competences of future vocational teachers. 2019].

Last but not least, Andreas Fischer also was a pioneer in research on environmental education and vocational education and sustainability education since the 1990s. He worked, for example, as a leading member of the *Gesellschaft für Berufliche Umweltbildung* (GBU, Society for Vocational Environmental Education). Andreas edited the GBU book series with volumes like *Umweltlernen im Unterricht zwischen Ökologie und Ökonomie* [Environmental learning in lessons between ecology and economy. 1995], *Berufliche Umweltbildung und Klimaschutz* [Environmental vocational education and climate protection. 1996], *Lernaktive Methoden in der beruflichen Umweltbildung* [Activating methods of learning in vocational environmental education. 1996], *Leitfaden für handlungsorientierte Umweltprojekte* [Compendium for action-oriented environmental projects. 1998] and authored a number of chapters in these anthologies. His contributions over a long and distinguished academic career have enabled sustainability education to become an important field of research in business and economics education which is widely recognised today. Among his key works in this field are the monograph *Wege zu einer nachhaltigen beruflichen Bildung – Theoretische Überlegungen* [Pathways to a sustainable vocational education – theoretical considerations. 1998] and the edited volumes *Herausforderung Nachhaltigkeit: Perspektivenwechsel in der Ausbildung von Wirtschaftslehrer/-innen* [The challenge of sustainability: change of perspective in educating economics teachers. 1999] and *Nachhaltigkeit, Wissensgesellschaft und lebenslanges Lernen* [Sustainability, knowledge society and lifelong learning. 2000]. In 2007 Andreas co-edited *Nachhaltigkeit und ökonomische Bildung* (sustainability and economic education) and contributed a chapter *Nachhaltiges Wirtschaften Lernen* [Learning sustainable economic acting]. He not only published on sustainable school development but also did a great work in networking schools for sustainable development.

Andreas is survived by his wife, Gabriela Hahn, who has lost a wonderful and loving husband.

We lose a very responsible, optimistic and open-minded colleague, a gifted, creative, innovative and successful scholar. Andreas was always aware of the social and political impact of his research and the respective responsibility reaching far beyond the narrow boundaries of university research and teaching. We will sadly miss him.

**Reinhold Hedtke**  
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