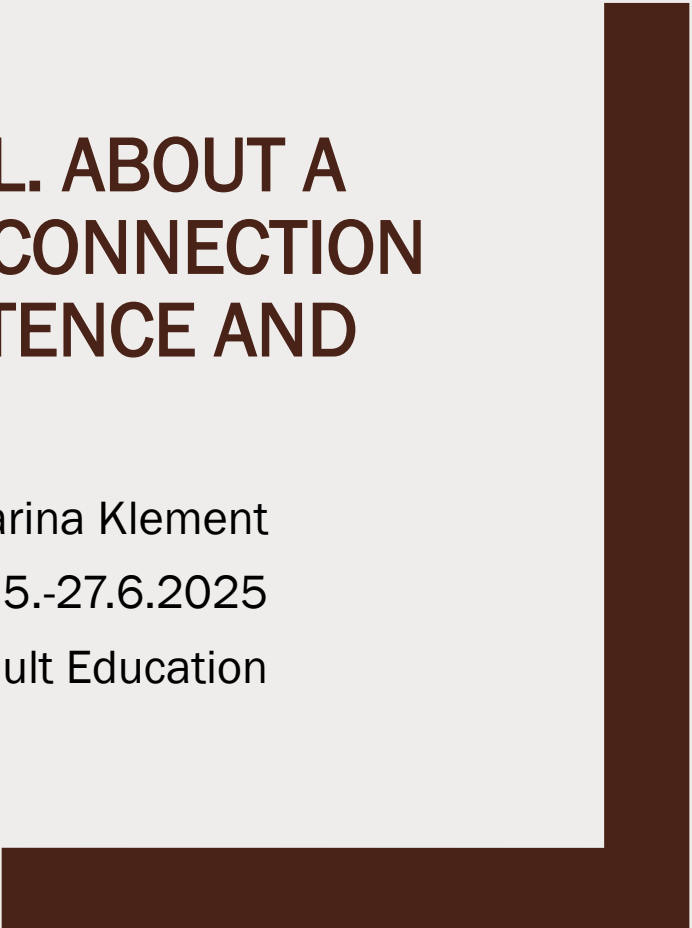


# ORIENTATION IN A TIME OF UPHEAVAL. ABOUT A DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL ORDER AND THE CONNECTION TO LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE, COMPETENCE AND EDUCATION.

Carina Klement

Conference „The Future of Education“, 25.-27.6.2025

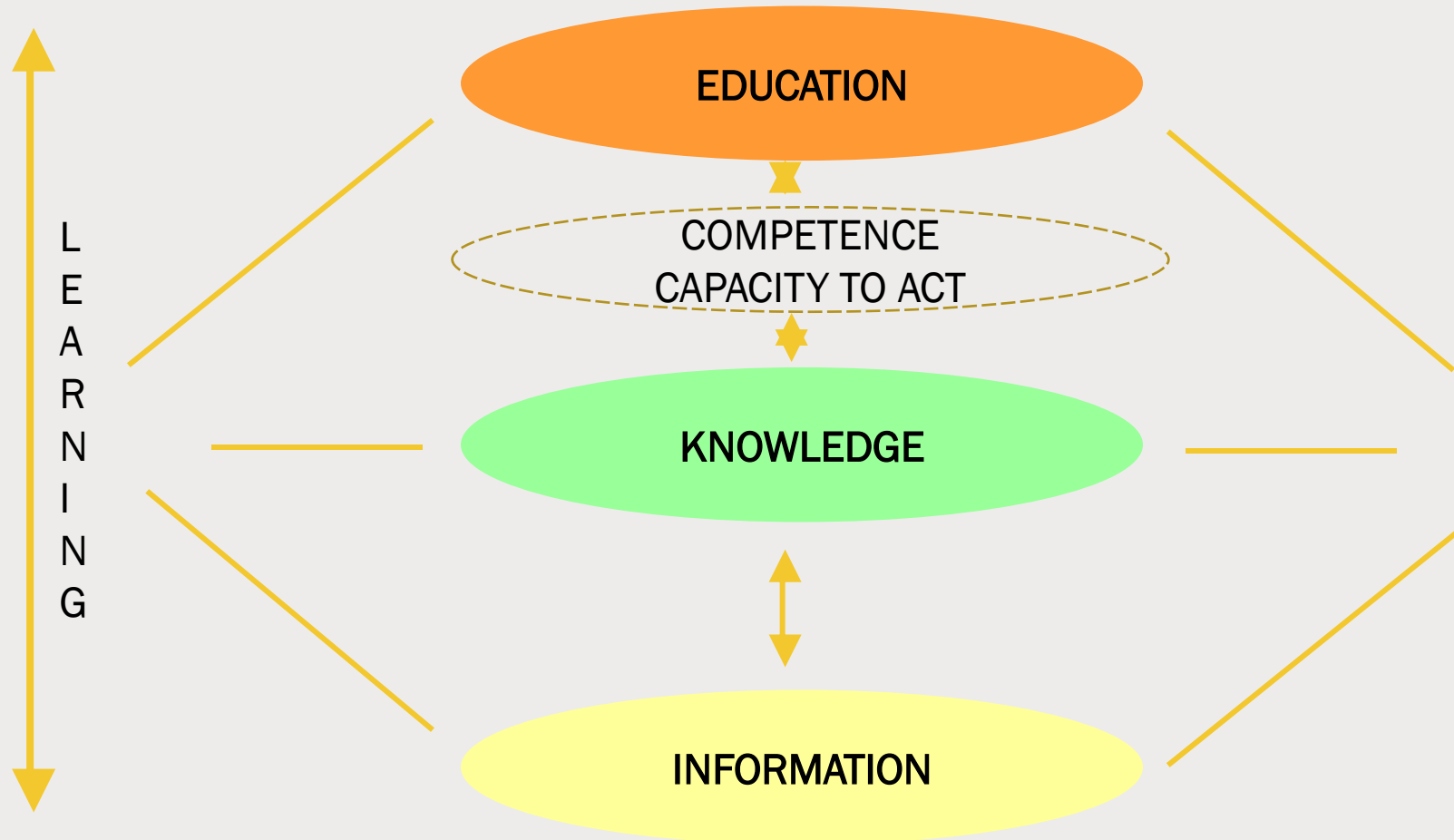
Online Session, Room B: Adult Education



# Overview

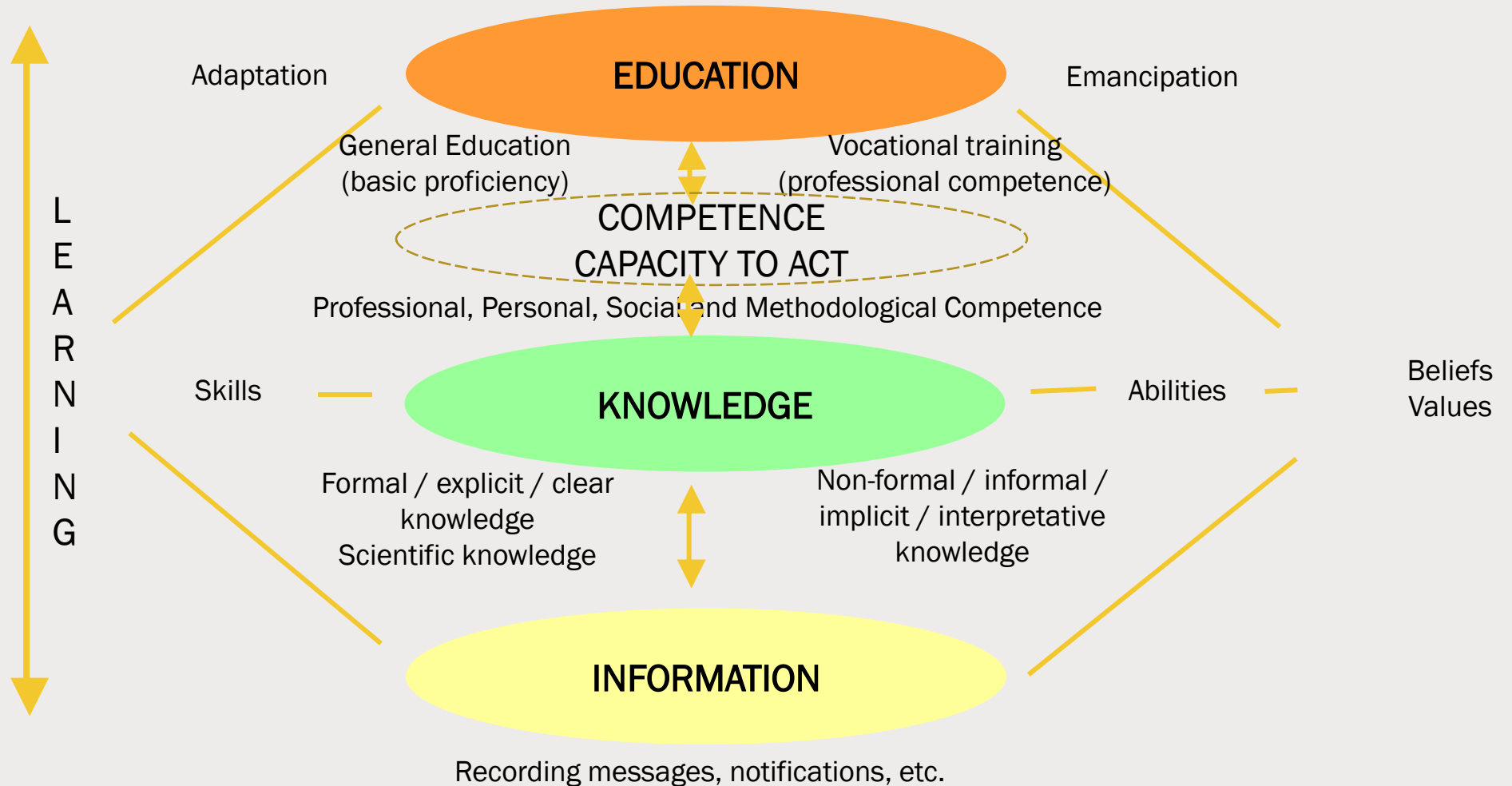
- On the concepts of Information, Knowledge and Education
- Portrait of Oskar Negt
- Competence Model and Key Qualifications according to Negt
- Where are we heading?

# On the concepts of information, knowledge and education

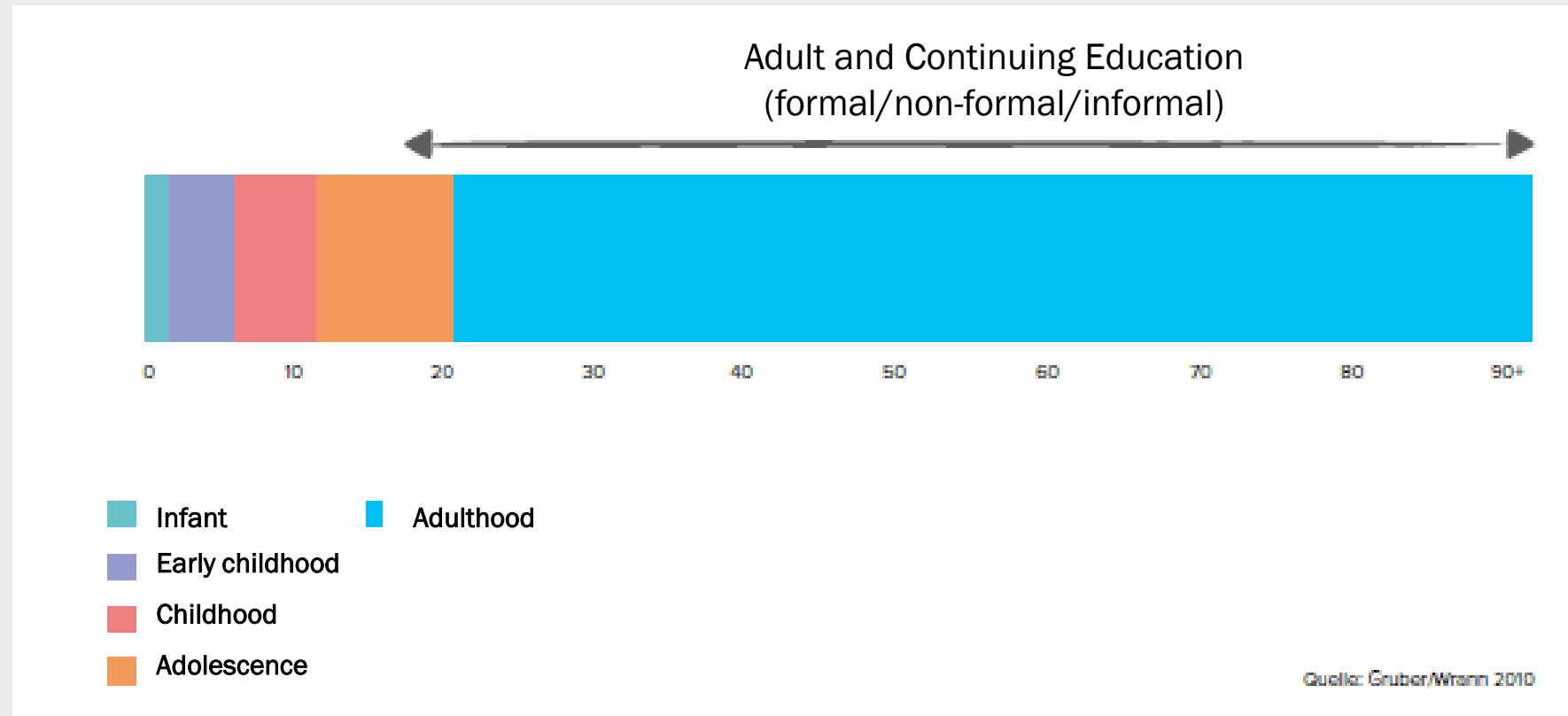


# On the concepts of information, knowledge and education

Education is Stockpiling (Negt); Alertness for ultimate questions (Hentig); Ability to judge (Kant)



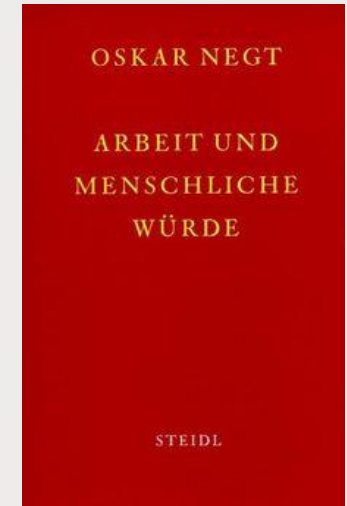
# Learning across the lifespan



# Oskar Negt

- A prominent social philosopher in the German-speaking world
- \*1.8.1934 in Königsberg (historical area: East Prussia);  
† 2 February 2024 in Hanover
- Comes from a family of workers and farmers
- 1962: Dissertation supervised by Adorno
- 1962-70: Assistant of Habermas at the University of Heidelberg and Frankfurt am Main
- From 1970: Chair of Sociology at the Technical University of Hanover until retirement (2002) [today: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz University of Hanover]
- Model of Social Competences & Exemplary Learning





What do people need to know in order to  
find their way in this world of upheaval?  
(Negt 2010)

# “Democracy is the only state-based social order that must be learned “

→All other forms have no learning pathos  
Authoritarian systems prevent these processes

If competences were learned or increased, people would participate more actively in social processes

- *A certain amount of knowledge must be available; knowledge as a starting point*
- *If you know the background and history, you can reflect better*
- *Strengthens judgmental ability*
- *Connections can be made*
- *Active participation in society*



# Exemplary experiential learning

- Should make connections ≠ Adding learning steps
- Relating back to your own life context
  - *Relationship between things and circumstances*
  - *Creating orienting connections*
- Learning ≠ Acquisition and retrieval of rapidly added information
- Education = development of independent thinking, stores of knowledge and judgmental ability
- What has been learned does not always have to be immediately retrievable > Storage

# The concept of competence according to Johannes Weinberg

–

Fundamental to Negt's learning concept in six key competencies

*„Competence refers to all skills, knowledge and ways of thinking that a person acquires and confirms in their life. Regardless of when, where and how skills are acquired, it is clear that they enable people to lead their lives in a self-determined and responsible manner. The concept of competence refers to those abilities that enable people to act in both familiar and unfamiliar situations“*

*(Weinberg 1996, S. 213 zit.n. Negt 2010, S. 222).*

# Gesellschaftliche Kompetenzen & Schlüsselqualifikationen

1. **Identity Competence:** the battlefield for the ego - as the decisive reality-checking instance of the subject
2. **Technological Competence:** Understanding social effects and developing discernment
3. **Justice Competence:** sensitivity to experiences of dispossession, to justice and injustice, to equality and inequality
4. **Ecological Competence:** treating people, nature and the environment with care
5. **Economic Competence:** Careful use of material and intellectual resources - one's own labor as well as the social raw material
6. **Historical competence:** ability to remember and utopia

# Identity Competence: the battlefield for the ego - as the decisive reality-checking instance of the subject

- Identity is not simply given, but is acquired and changes in social processes
- Trying to keep identity in balance = requires high cognitive energy of an individual
  - *Gaining energy from successful balance work = the result of a rewarding learning process*
  - *Failure to cope can also lead to severe symptoms of personality disorders*
  - *Identity work is a sensitive battleground into old age (keyword: flexibility as the magic word for crisis solutions)*
- „The competence to deal with threatened and broken identities in an enlightened way is therefore one of the basic skills required for learning processes aimed at the future“ (S.223).

# Technological Competence: Understanding social effects and developing discernment

- We live in a world constituted by technology
- Central point: Creation of differentiation options
- This means not only technical qualifications in the sense of skills, but also knowledge of the social impact of technologies
- To understand complex effects down to social microstructures = own competence, as an ability to perceive technology as a social project acquired through the expansion of knowledge and practice.
- Today, technologies intervene very deeply in the context of our lives and touch on many problems, which is why it is necessary to be able to reassign technology to the subject-object relationship (p.225)
- We have to acquire technical knowledge and at the same time keep an eye on the social consequences → Differentiation is necessary for this

# Justice

## Competence:

sensitivity to experiences of dispossession, to justice and injustice, to equality and inequality

- „Educational work that endeavors to penetrate people's lives aims first and foremost to broaden awareness, which maintains the tension between the communication of objective information and the processing of subjective experiences“
- People must learn to distinguish between right and wrong; equality and inequality (i.e. develop a political awareness in this respect)
  - *It is necessary to know what rights you have, what is worth defending, what you have to stand up for so that democratic conditions do not turn into authoritarian ones*
- Virtue of justice = high educational goal

# Ecological Competence:

treating people,  
nature and the  
environment  
with care

- =Careful, considerate treatment of nature, people and things
- Ecological thinking, ecological awareness is an existential element of the modern world on which the preservation of the human species depends
- is necessary today in all learning processes that are intended to develop perspectives and show ways out
- also consists of acquiring the theoretical and practical means necessary to deal with people and things in a non-violent way.

**Economic Competence:**  
Careful use of material and intellectual resources - one's own labor as well as the social raw material

- Economic activity is a social project, made by people and therefore also determined by the interests of power and domination
- Bringing economics back to human purposes is a question of learning: children, of course, but adults must also understand that economic laws are not laws of nature
- People's living conditions depend on economic activity



# Historical competence: ability to remember and utopia

- Especially with accelerated technological growth, rapid revaluation and devaluation of things, people need to acquire something like historical competence, the ability to deal with time and temporal structures
- Historical competence consists of knowledge of the history of a social formation, its class structures, its laws of political development and one's own life history.
- One of the most threatening symptoms of our time is that we can speak of a chronic loss of memory (p.232)
- „However, the destruction of the ability to remember is absolutely ruinous for any emancipation movement” (S.233)

# Where are we heading?

## Image of Humanity Attitude

Tolerance, respect, equality, appreciation, inclusion, mindfulness, emancipation, empowerment, lifeworld orientation, ...

## Teaching

Participant orientation, needs orientation, exemplary experiential learning, variety of methods, coherent framework conditions, protected environment, ...

## Learning

Self-discipline, openness, open, low-threshold access, cross-sectoral, intergenerational

## Aims

Strengthen democracy, ability to act, judgemental ability, critical thinking, strengthen skills, space for reflection

## Content

Skills, specialist knowledge, political education

# Where are we heading?

- What do we assume when we talk about education?
- What do people need to know in order to find their way in a world of upheaval?
- What kind of world do we want to live in?



# THANK YOU!

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