The Rough Ground
Narrative explorations of vocational Bildung and wisdom in practice

Tyson Ruhi

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Abstract
This compilation thesis, consisting of five articles, focuses on narrative explorations of vocational Bildung and wisdom in practice. It is an explicitly practical and empirical approach to what, for the most part, tends to be limited to philosophical discussions. This is motivated by the relative lack of systematic knowledge about how to enact wisdom in practice and afford vocational Bildung to those engaged in vocational education and training (VET). The absence of such knowledge makes it more difficult to develop VET practice and curricula and also leads to significant parts of the internal goods of practice to remain tacit, personal and local when they need to become articulated and shared. The aim of the five articles has been to explore how Bildung and practical wisdom can enrich our understanding of vocational practice and didactics on a theoretical, methodological and practical level. Conceptually the thesis draws extensively from narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly 1995, 2000), reflective practice (Schön 1983, 1987), Aristotelian philosophy regarding practical wisdom (Aristotle 2009, Nussbaum 1990), MacIntyre’s concept of a practice (2011) and the Bildung-tradition (Rittelmayr 2012) to create a coherent framework for the inquiry termed vocational Bildung didactics (VBD). It is located in the phronetic social science paradigm articulated by Flyvbjerg (2001) where the main aim for research is to enrich practice rather than generate theory. The methodology for this kind of inquiry is the collection of narrative cases focusing on unusually rich/successful/wise cases of a practice, what Flyvbjerg (2001) terms extreme and paradigmatic cases. On a conceptual level the inquiry has resulted in the framework of VBD that provides the structure for engaging in this kind of research. It has also resulted in some further conceptualizations driven by the interpretation of cases, in particular a differentiation between vocational and cultural practices. On a methodological level it has resulted in a kind of double didactical method: the case narratives function as articulations of practical knowledge regarding vocational Bildung and practical wisdom but also as the didactical tools for teaching this. On a practical level the inquiry has resulted in suggestions for curriculum-development as well as ways in which the case narratives can be used to enrich the understanding of practitioners.

Keywords: Vocational education, Bildung, Practical wisdom, Narrative, Practice, Didactics.

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Key-words: Vocational education, Bildung, Practical wisdom, Narrative, Practice, Didactics
List of articles


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Abstract ...................................................................................................................... v
List of articles .............................................................................................................. vi
Contents ..................................................................................................................... vii

1 Introduction: The rough ground or the swampy lowland ......................................... 11
  1.1 Bildung and phronesis: a brief introduction .......................................................... 13
  1.2 Background: Bildung and vocational education .................................................... 13
  1.3 Contextualizing the inquiry ................................................................................. 14
  1.4 Aim and research questions ............................................................................... 17
  1.5 Outline of the research process .......................................................................... 20
  1.6 Outline of the empirical studies ......................................................................... 23
  1.7 Normative basis of inquiry: human flourishing .................................................... 24
  1.8 Structure of thesis and notes on the writing ....................................................... 25

2 Previous research .................................................................................................. 27
  2.1 Philosophical, theoretical and methodological research ...................................... 27
    2.1.1 Choosing the main concepts ......................................................................... 27
    2.1.2 Vocational Bildung ......................................................................................... 30
    2.1.3 Vocational phronesis .................................................................................... 31
    2.1.4 Practical knowledge and narrative inquiry .................................................... 32
    2.1.5 Practical knowledge, didactics, curriculum and PCK .................................... 36
  2.2 Use of narrative approaches in practice ............................................................... 41
  2.3 Mapping the framework of VBD onto previous research ...................................... 42
  2.4 At the boundaries of previous research: what has been left out? ....................... 44
  2.5 The rough ground in journals .......................................................................... 45
    2.5.1 Vocations and Learning & Journal of Vocational Education and Training ...... 46
    2.5.2 Reflective Practice & Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice .............. 47
    2.5.3 Summary .................................................................................................... 49
  2.6 The search: deliberations, databases, terms and limits ........................................ 50

3 Conceptual framework ......................................................................................... 52
  3.1 VBD as conceptual framework in the articles ....................................................... 53
  3.2 Bildung and phronesis ......................................................................................... 54
    3.2.1 The vocational perspective on Bildung and phronesis ................................. 59
    3.2.2 Understanding Bildung and phronesis as sensitizing concepts ................. 60
3.3 Imagination .......................................................................................................................... 61
  3.3.1 Imagination in Pragmatism and Aristotelianism .............................................................. 63
  3.3.2 The relationship between art and practical wisdom .......................................................... 65
  3.3.3 Schiller’s aesthetic view of morality .................................................................................. 66
3.4 Didactics, practical knowledge and practice ........................................................................... 68
3.5 MacIntyre and the concepts of tradition and practice ............................................................... 71
  3.5.1 Traditions ......................................................................................................................... 71
  3.5.2 Practices ......................................................................................................................... 72
  3.5.3 Flourishing, professional ethics and practices ..................................................................... 75
4 Research context and methodology ...................................................................................... 77
  4.1 Phronetic social science ....................................................................................................... 77
  4.2 Outlining a phronetic educational science ............................................................................ 79
  4.3 Theorizing in phronetic educational science ......................................................................... 81
  4.4 The abductive process and selecting cases .......................................................................... 83
  4.5 Research design in VBD: Case narratives .......................................................................... 86
  4.6 Varieties of case narrative .................................................................................................. 87
  4.7 Interviews and written assignments .................................................................................... 91
  4.8 Interpreting the case narratives .......................................................................................... 93
  4.9 Validity and reliability ....................................................................................................... 94
  4.10 Research ethics ................................................................................................................ 96
5 Article summaries ................................................................................................................. 98
  5.1 The didactics of vocational Bildung: How stories matter in VET research .............................. 98
  5.2 Pedagogical imagination and practical wisdom .................................................................... 99
  5.3 What is excellence in practice? ........................................................................................... 100
  5.4 What would Humboldt say: A case of general Bildung in vocational education? .............. 101
  5.5 When expectations clash: Vocational education at the intersection of workplace and school. 102
  5.6 Some reflections on MacIntyre’s practice-concept in relation to the articles ......................... 103
6 Discussion and conclusion .................................................................................................. 105
  6.1 Reflections on the research questions ................................................................................ 105
    6.1.1 The concepts needed for VBD as framework and method ........................................... 105
    6.1.2 Case narratives as contributions to research and practice ........................................... 106
    6.1.3 Explorations of practices rich in Bildung and phronesis .............................................. 107
  6.2 Reflections on the aim ....................................................................................................... 108
  6.3 Consequences from choice of theory and method ............................................................... 110
  6.4 Limitations ....................................................................................................................... 112
  6.5 Suggestions for further research ....................................................................................... 113
  6.6 Concluding thoughts ........................................................................................................ 115
Sammanfattning ................................................................................................................... 117
Inledning .............................................................................................................................. 117
Fallstudier ............................................................................................................................. 117
Begreppsmålsverk ............................................................................................................... 118
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENASTE</td>
<td>European Network for Academic Steiner Teacher Education</td>
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<td>PCK</td>
<td>Pedagogical content knowledge</td>
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<td>VBD</td>
<td>Vocational Bildung didactics</td>
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<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational education and training</td>
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1 Introduction: The rough ground or the swampy lowland

In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground where practitioners can make effective use of research-based theory and technique, and there is a swampy lowland where situations are confusing “messes” incapable of technical solution. The difficulty is that the problems of the high ground, however great their technical interest, are often relatively unimportant to clients or to the larger society, while in the swamp are the problems of greatest human concern. Shall the practitioner stay on the high, hard ground where he can practice rigorously, as he understands rigor, but where he is constrained to deal with problems of relatively little social importance? Or shall he descend to the swamp where he can engage the most important and challenging problems if he is willing to forsake technical rigor? (Schön, 1983, p. 42, my emphasis)

This introductory quote from Schön illustrates two of the major differences in the present approach from that of other empirical approaches to practical knowledge. First, it calls attention to the need for engaging with the swampy lowlands of practice (hence the image of a swamp on the cover). Second, the swampy lowland is considered here in those moments when it was characterized by unusual wisdom and richness (hence the image is of a flowering swamp rather than just a stinky morass). The main title is taken from Dunne’s (1993) oft referenced Back to the rough ground which sounds better as a title than Schön’s the swampy lowland and both refer to the same issue regarding practical knowledge.

In his work Educating the reflective practitioner, Schön (1987) discusses some of the challenges in teaching design-like occupations (eg. architecture, psychoanalysis and teaching). His work there mostly engages with what might be termed the craft-like aspects of these occupations, ie. the combination of skills, knowledge and perception required to “get it” as he terms it. He makes clear that what he is not explicitly engaging with is the study of how a reflective practitioner also comes to develop: “wisdom in response to ethical dilemmas (1987, p.xiii).” This area of vocational education is, broadly speaking, what I will be discussing in the thesis with the help of a series of case narratives. On the topic of case narratives Shulman wrote in 1987 (2004, p. 232):
One of the frustrations of teaching as an occupation and profession is its extensive individual and collective amnesia, the consistency with which the best creations of its practitioners are lost to both contemporary and future peers. Unlike fields such as architecture (which preserves its creations in both plans and edifices), law (which builds a case literature of opinions and interpretations), medicine (with its records and case studies), and even unlike chess, bridge, or ballet (with their traditions of preserving both memorable games and choreographed performances through inventive forms of notation and recording), teaching is conducted without an audience of peers. It is devoid of a history of practice.

… We have concluded from our research with teachers … that the potentially codifiable knowledge that can be gleaned from the wisdom of practice1 is extensive. … A major portion of the research agenda for the next decade will be to collect, collate, and interpret the practical knowledge of teachers for the purpose of establishing a case literature …

This inquiry is meant to contribute to that effort and to do so with four points of emphasis:

1. A specific kind of didactically relevant practical knowledge namely: vocational Bildung2 and vocational phronesis.
2. Narrative articulations through interviews and written assignments rather than forms of participant observation.
3. A focus on unusually rich and successful cases.
4. A vocational emphasis that includes teaching in primary and secondary school settings but goes beyond that to include other vocational education and practices.

The approach has the potential to bring research and practice closer together since the narratives in combination with the process of asking practitioners to articulate them point in two directions: towards systematic research and towards teacher education through sharing and reflecting on such stories.

The rest of this chapter is concerned with first providing some elaborations on the problems and issues introduced above. It then moves on to a consideration of aim, research questions as well as some outlines that act as guides to the main body of text.

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1 Shulman’s formulation “wisdom of practice” is not exactly the same as Aristotle’s “practical wisdom.” This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3. Suffice it to say that except for those passages which are explicitly concerned with Shulman my use of the term wisdom is always as part of the Aristotelian framework.

2 Bildung is capitalized throughout because nouns in German are written with a capital letter. As such it does not represent a valuation of Bildung over phronesis/practical wisdom or the vocational and didactical.
1.1 Bildung and phronesis: a brief introduction

Since neither Bildung nor phronesis are every-day concepts I will begin with a very brief introduction to them here. Bildung is an educational concept common in continental Europe that has a significant overlap with the tradition of liberal education. However, Bildung contains a stronger emphasis on character development, self-cultivation and personal autonomy (Klafki 2000). It also has a link to biographical research where a person’s Bildung-path is, at least in part, equivalent to their educational biography with a focus on memorable events (Rittelmeyer 2012). This makes Bildung easier to reformulate as a question to participants in research since it is tantamount to asking questions such as: tell me about a significant event during your vocational education.

Phronesis is a concept taken from Aristotle usually translated as practical wisdom or prudence (Aristotle 2009). He distinguishes between two forms of practical knowledge, phronesis and techne, where techne is craft-like and has extrinsic goals, the goal of carpentry being good furniture and the goal of subject teaching being proficient students. Practical wisdom differs here in that its goals are intrinsic (something it shares with Bildung) and ethical, the goal of wise deliberation and action being, in the end, human flourishing (see further below, 1.7).

These two aspects of education, both of which are considered extensively in philosophy but have seen limited application in empirical studies, are the concern of the present inquiry. They are discussed further in chapters 2 and 3.

1.2 Background: Bildung and vocational education

In a general sense the personal background of this inquiry has two relevant strands. One is the experience of an enacted Steiner (Waldorf)-educational curriculum in primary and secondary school, in particular its inclusion of aesthetic-practical subjects as a core aspect of Bildung. The other is my subsequent apprenticeship as bookbinder where I was afforded extensive experiences of vocational Bildung. I was lucky enough to encounter these educational actions in a way that I found profoundly enriching. As a consequence it was always sad to meet fellow craftspeople and people with other vocational backgrounds who didn’t share a similar experience of being afforded Bildung as part of their vocational education and training (VET). It is hardly surprising then, that the approach here circles back to this theme of vocational Bildung-affordances and

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3 Steiner or Waldorf education is an approach originating with the Austrian philosopher and social reformer Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). In the following I will simply write Steiner education.
4 Bildung is considered “afforded” throughout because it cannot be given to someone without their participation. More on this in chapter 3.
the issue of how we can work to improve vocational education practice. In particular, how we can get to the point where we can make the vocational Bildungs-affordances of an educational practice public and shared.

Another, more immediate background is my licentiate thesis (Tyson 2015a) _Vocational Bildung in action_. It consists of the extensive documentation and interpretation of the vocational education biography of craftsman Wolfgang B., my former teacher, who is master of bookbinding, gilding and engraving. In it, the concept of vocational Bildung in action was developed and enriched by the case study and parts of the case were also the basis for two articles. One (Tyson 2014) concerned itself with aesthetic Bildung in vocational education using Schiller (2010 [1795]) as philosophical lens. The other (Tyson 2015b) was concerned with the development of vocational excellence understood as the combination of virtue and good judgment using Aristotle’s concepts of techne and phronesis to explore and interpret narratives from the case.

In finishing the licentiate work a number of questions had presented themselves. The conceptual structure needed more work and refinement and there were questions regarding the possibility of scaling (expanding) the inquiry both for research and practical purposes. Finally, the case still contained narratives in need of more extensive analysis, indicated in the conclusion to the licentiate and explored here in two of the articles included in the thesis (Tyson 2016c, forthcoming). With this very brief look at the licentiate work the point has been to indicate the debt that the present inquiry owes to it. Without the conceptual foundation laid there and the explorative case developed, the further research undertaken here would have exceeded my capacity.

1.3 Contextualizing the inquiry

In the initial characterization of the inquiry and its aim, the issue was situated in a research context drawing on Schön (1983, 1987) and Shulman (2004 [1987]). To what extent are their views still relevant? What specific contribution does this inquiry make in a contemporary research context? To clarify this, here is a brief consideration of, in order, the contemporary research context, the contemporary educational context and the contemporary vocational context. Before turning to these a brief summary of the approach argued for here, vocational Bildung didactics (VBD), is warranted. It is a way of considering case narratives of vocational Bildung and phronesis as articulations of practical knowledge. By emphasizing didactics in the description, attention is called to the need for the case narratives to be told in a didactically relevant way (focusing on descriptions of actions).

In contemporary research there has been some explicit connections made between Bildung and didactics, eg. Bildungsgangdidaktik (Meyer 2009; Terhart 2009; Trautmann 2004), but, it seems, without including a methodology of case narratives as a way of conducting empirical inquiry. The closest example I
have found of the present approach is a biographical study by Gessler (1988) where he interviewed former students at the Hibernia school in the Ruhr-area of Germany about their lives after school. The Hibernia school is a Steiner school that developed out of the apprenticeship training at the Hibernia chemistry plants in the 1960s and where an integrated curriculum of general and vocational Bildung was attempted. It was studied in the late 1970s and 80s (cf. Edding et al. 1985; Fintelmann 1985, 1990, 1992; Rist & Schneider 1979). Gessler’s interviews can be read as case narratives from a didactical point of view and they were clearly focused on the Bildung-affordances of the Hibernia curriculum. It served as the most immediate template for the biographical case study of Wolfgang B. Within philosophy there is a larger number of works engaging with the concept of vocational Bildung (mostly without reference to didactics), eg. Brater et al. (1988), Kutscha (2003, 2008), Obermann (2013), Rauner & Bremer (2004) and Volanen (2012). These are considered further in chapter 2.

Phronesis has become an important concept in some discussions on vocational practice, especially in the fields of medicine and education (eg. Bondi et al. 2011; Kinsella & Pitmann 2012; Sockett 2012). There are also some articles arguing for the narrative character of phronesis (eg. Gallagher 2013; Noel 1999a). Furthermore, Nussbaum (1990) has explicitly argued for a narrative education of the moral imagination and practical wisdom. However, her argument is not about vocational phronesis but rather a more general kind of practical wisdom that can be enriched through study of fiction. During a literature review, no empirical case studies involving phronesis where there is an explicit didactical or curriculum approach were found (see further in section 2.1.3).

Methodologically a focus on case narratives as an articulation of practical knowledge has been carried forward since Shulman’s and Schön’s writing in the 1980s. It is still practiced in the case-based curriculum at Harvard. Several casebooks have been published in the context of pedagogical content knowledge (eg. Shulman & Colbert 1987, 1988; Shulman & Kepner 1999; Shulman et al. 2002), although, it seems, without any explicit focus on phronesis or Bildung. Several works in the field of narrative inquiry have also aimed at investigating the practical knowledge of teachers (eg. Clandinin & Connelly 1995; Schubert & Ayers 1992). Given that cases are a common form of teacher education aiming at reflective practice (in the form of eg. critical incidents, further in section 2.2) it can be surmised that a large group of case narratives that would fit well in the present context remains unpublished. Also, the explicit focus in VBD on cases that were unusually enriching, wise or successful is less common when they are used in higher education to foster critical reflection. The connection between case narratives as articulations of (didactically relevant) practical knowledge and a systematic exploration of excellence in vocational practice seems rare.

This also speaks to the contemporary educational context. It is one of the strengths of this approach, further considered in the discussion (section 6.1.2),
that it can serve a double function. First, as part of a didactics course in teacher education (or initiation into a vocational practice in the case of an apprentice) and second, as a research activity since the case narratives collected can be used both for education and for research. There is no simple way of systematically finding out the degree to which didactics courses at higher education institutions have incorporated work with case narratives of Bildung and phronesis. However, it seems that few if any of those engaged in such courses have taken the opportunity to view their work as a potential part of a systematic exploration of practice (see further in section 2.2). There is also a significant amount of unwise practice, of masters who mistreat their apprentices, of nurses and doctors who ignore the suffering of patients or who feel unequipped to handle it, of teachers who are ill-prepared to deal with conflicts arising between students, or themselves and students, or between colleagues or teachers and parents. In all of these fields as well as others, didactically relevant case narratives of Bildung and phronesis can enrich practice and also undermine destructive practice by providing those entangled in it with a view to what is possible. In this sense these narratives are needed as a form of empowerment.

Finally, the contemporary vocational context has presented itself as perhaps the most contested. There are voices raised which question the meaningfulness of even considering vocations or occupations as a coherent unity in future economies. They tend to argue for far-reaching modularization of VET courses and curricula (cf. Ertl 2002). Such perspectives can make it seem largely outdated to be interested in vocational Bildung. Bildung itself, more than phronesis, has also been critiqued as an antiquated or at least problematic concept (eg. Masschelein & Ricken 2003; Thompson 2005). Furthermore, MacIntyre (2011) has argued that the internal goods and virtues of (vocational) practices are being eroded in modern society by a focus on external rewards (money, fame, etc.). However, these issues and objections can also be seen as highlighting the value of vocational Bildung didactics. One of the problems inherent in much of the philosophical discussion on vocational Bildung and phronesis is that it works with ideals rather than enacted practices. It is easy to criticize such talk as being detached from vocational reality and overly romantic. Thus a focus on actual practices that are (or were) rich in Bildung-affordances and practical wisdom enable two things at once. First, they provide practitioners in similar vocational contexts with powerful cases of what the internal goods and virtues could be for their practice. This is important since there are countless examples of practices that lack virtue and largely work against the flourishing of those participating in them. Second, as the number of cases grows it becomes possible to think systematically, on the basis of experience rather than philosophical theory, about the construction of future vocations and how to afford Bildung and promote phronesis among practitioners. Vocational Bildung didactics as a way of accessing and systematically exploring what the best of our vocational practices have offered allows for a concerted effort to aim for this going forward in the hope that even richer practices can develop as a result.
The main issue then, that this inquiry has grappled with and explored, is to synthesize a number of disparate philosophical, theoretical and methodological approaches in order to deal with the following problem: how can we systematically increase Bildung and phronesis in vocational practices? This brings me to the aim and research questions.

1.4 Aim and research questions

A common factor throughout the articles is the explorative character of the inquiry and the aim and research questions need to reflect this. It has unfolded in three parallel ways:

1. As a theoretical exploration of how Bildung and phronesis can contribute to vocational practices and vocational didactics as practical knowledge. Included in this is the development of a conceptual framework for VBD.
2. As a primarily methodological exploration of the potential use of case narratives both in research and in development of practice.
3. As an empirical exploration, through case narratives, of vocational practices rich in Bildung and practical wisdom.

The main aim of this inquiry can then be formulated as:

To explore how Bildung and phronesis can enrich our understanding of vocational practice and didactics on a theoretical, methodological and practical level. The term “understanding” is meant in a phronetic sense and thus contains within itself the various ways in which practical knowledge is discussed in chapter 3 as well as the way phronetic social science is discussed in chapter 4.

From this, the following research questions can be formulated:

1. What are the concepts needed for a coherent framework of vocational Bildung didactics and what are its main methodological features?
2. How can the use of case narratives to articulate vocational Bildung and vocational phronesis contribute to both research and practice?
3. What kind of potential results does an empirical exploration of vocational practices rich in Bildung and practical wisdom suggest?

Four of the articles (Tyson 2016a-c, forthcoming) address all three research questions. One article (Tyson 2016d) contributes to the first and second research questions but not significantly to the third. Important to note is that the term empirical is used strictly to denote the collecting of case narratives. The results are then described as theoretical, methodological and practical. This
means that the further conceptual contributions to the basic core of VBD made in some of the articles are seen as practical results (of a conceptual nature) stemming from the third research question when categorizing the articles and in the discussion in chapter 6. The distinction also returns in the form of epistemic, methodological and practical theorizing in chapter 4.

Having presented the general aim and research questions I will now discuss the more specific aims and questions that were pursued in the various articles in order to clarify how the general ones encompass the more particular aims and questions of the articles. Since, with two exceptions (Tyson 2016c, forthcoming), none of the articles have explicitly articulated aims and research questions they have been reconstructed.

To begin with, the articles are: Tyson (2016a), *The didactics of vocational Bildung: How stories matter in VET research.*

Tyson (2016b), *Pedagogical imagination and practical wisdom: The role of success-narratives in teacher education and professional development.*

Tyson (forthcoming), *What is excellence in practice? Empirical explorations of vocational Bildung and practical wisdom through case narratives.*

Tyson (2016c), *What would Humboldt say: A case of general Bildung in vocational education?*

Tyson (2016d), *When expectations clash: Vocational education at the intersection of workplace and school.*

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<th>Article</th>
<th>Aim/s</th>
<th>Research question/s</th>
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<td><em>The didactics of vocational Bildung.</em></td>
<td>To explore how narratives of vocational Bildung experiences are relevant to VET research in didactics.</td>
<td>What kinds of Bildung-related practical knowledge, relevant for research and practice, can be articulated through case narratives?</td>
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<td><em>Pedagogical imagination and practical wisdom.</em></td>
<td>First, exploring how narratives of practically wise (phronetic) action can contribute to teacher education and professional development. Second, advancing a pedagogical perspective on moral imagination.</td>
<td>What does a conceptual combination of phronesis and pedagogical imagination afford an interpretation of case narratives about successful conflict resolution?</td>
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\(^5\) The reasons for this order are discussed further in chapter 3.
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<th>What is excellence in practice?</th>
<th>To situate the practical knowledge of Bildung and phronesis gained from case narratives in MacIntyre’s concept of a practice and then to explore some of the consequences.</th>
<th>What kind of interpretations are afforded by a reading of cases as expressions of practices and how do these interpretations contribute to VET research and practice?</th>
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<td>What would Humboldt say?</td>
<td>“First to discuss, question and expand upon the concept of vocational or special Bildung as it relates to general Bildung and vocationalism⁶ ... second to consider the curriculum pattern suggested by the case and the potential inherent in further, comparative studies (2016c, p. 232f.).”</td>
<td>What patterns for VET curricula can be abstracted from the exploration of a case narrative of an experienced curriculum and how does it differentiate a mostly philosophical understanding of vocational Bildung?</td>
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<tr>
<td>When expectations clash.</td>
<td>To contribute to the issue of authentic skill training in school-based VET from a vocational Bildung perspective. (Vocational Bildung is not a conceptualization used explicitly in the article but the emphasis on social and cultural development, as well as authenticity in experiencing skill training, makes this a reasonable interpretation and locates it in the context of the thesis as a whole.)</td>
<td>What patterns for VET curricula can be abstracted from the exploration of a case narrative of an enacted curriculum engaging in developmental work?</td>
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⁶ Vocationalism is the translation of the German beruflichkeit and was described in Tyson (2016c, p. 233, drawing on Kutscha 2008) as arising from the matrix of “work and vocation, Bildung and culture.”
These aims and questions represent the basis for the more general aims and questions presented initially. Having considered these different aims and questions the next section will provide a look at how they were pursued in the articles, i.e. the research process.

1.5 Outline of the research process

The scientific context of the study is phronetic social science as it has been described by Flyvbjerg and Schram (Flyvbjerg 2001; Schram 2012). Phronetic refers to the same phronesis that is part of the conceptual structure of VBD. Schram (2012, p. 19) writes:

Phronetic social science … is centrally about producing research that has relevance to decisions about what can and should be done, and also how to do it. It differs from either philosophical or scientific knowledge (epistemé) and from technical knowledge or know-how (techné). In contrast to the first, it is practice-focused; in other words, it is not just about what is true, but also about what it would be good to do in given circumstances. It differs from technical knowledge in that it is concerned with evaluating and prescribing goals as well as with selecting means.

The initial process of theorizing a conceptual framework resulted in the licentiate thesis *Vocational Bildung in action* (Tyson 2015a). Two conceptual elements in the framework have been brought over to this inquiry and developed further: vocational Bildung and the Aristotelian techne/phronesis. Practical knowledge as narratively articulated was introduced there and has been further theorized (Tyson 2016a, b). The formula “Bildung in action” has been replaced by a broader didactical approach, hence vocational Bildung didactics. The conceptual framework has also received some further additions in pedagogical imagination, (Tyson 2016b) and MacIntyre’s concept of a practice, (Tyson forthcoming).

All five articles have dealt with the methodological question of the kinds of case narratives relevant to research in the field. Similarly, all articles deal with the various forms and aims of inquiry suggested by the conceptual framework and the enacted case studies but especially Tyson (2016a). Of the five articles, one (Tyson 2016b) is more directly oriented towards the question of how the conceptual framework can be used in teacher education. Two (Tyson 2016c, d) deal more with the potential contribution of VBD to curriculum-design in VET as well as outlining potentially fruitful fields of further empirical research.

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7 In the following I will be writing about narratively articulated practical knowledge and practical knowledge as narratively articulated synonymously.
The fifth article (Tyson forthcoming), discusses some additional consequences from including MacIntyre’s concept of a practice in an interpretation of several case narratives.

It is important to bear in mind that the application of the framework to teacher education can simultaneously serve the purpose of developing practical knowledge and that of doing research (depending on the resulting stories). Likewise, having teachers tell stories of vocational Bildung can result in narratives that simultaneously feed back into practice and drive scholarly inquiry. This is a kind of double methodological contribution that I will return to in the discussion (chapter 6).

To clarify the links between the thesis text and the articles here is a more schematic outline. It has been structured to take into account the main conceptual elements (theory), modes of interpretation (methodology) and potential contributions (results). These categories have been considered in relation to each article. This is meant to help orient the reader on how the big picture drawn in the following chapters is reflected in the articles.

Main conceptual elements (chapter 3):
- Vocational Bildung
- Vocational Phronesis
- Pedagogical imagination
- Didactics as practical knowledge
- Practical knowledge as narratively articulated
- MacIntyre’s understanding of practice

Aims of interpretation (chapter 4):
- Epistemic theorizing
- Methodological theorizing
- Practical theorizing

Potential contributions to research and practice (chapter 6):
1. Conceptual development (meaning additions to the basic conceptual framework of VBD).
2. Documentation of the educational potential of tasks, vocational curricula, environments and subjects.
3. Feedback into practice where clusters of exemplary case narratives on a theme advance the state of practice.
4. Survey and development of practices or “practice fields” allowing for deeper analysis of how vocational and theoretical environments afford vocational Bildung and phronesis.
5. Direct contributions to the repertoire of vocational practitioners and teachers as well as to teacher education and professional development practice.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Conceptual elements developed</th>
<th>Modes of interpretation</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tyson (2016a), <em>The didactics of vocational Bildung.</em></td>
<td>Vocational Bildung, practical knowledge as narratively articulated, didactics as practical knowledge.</td>
<td>Epistemic, methodological and practical theorizing.</td>
<td>In an abbreviated sense, all those listed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyson (2016b), <em>Pedagogical imagination and practical wisdom.</em></td>
<td>Pedagogical imagination, vocational phronesis and practical knowledge as narratively articulated.</td>
<td>Epistemic, methodological and practical theorizing.</td>
<td>Conceptual development but also feedback into practice, survey of “practice field” and contribution to repertoire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyson (forthcoming), <em>What is excellence in practice?</em></td>
<td>MacIntyre’s understanding of practice.</td>
<td>Epistemic and practical theorizing.</td>
<td>Conceptual refinement as well as enhancing the focus with which the cases can be categorized and compared. Survey and development of practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyson (2016d), <em>When expectations clash.</em></td>
<td>None (although in the context of the thesis it provides an important example of vocational Bildung didactics in the form of a narratively articulated curriculum study).</td>
<td>Practical theorizing aiming at pattern recognition (and in thesis context, methodological theorizing regarding how narrative cases can contribute to curriculum development).</td>
<td>Documentation of educational potential of a vocational curriculum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.6 Outline of the empirical studies

The first case, already mentioned, is the vocational education biography of Wolfgang B. It was presented extensively in the licentiate (Tyson 2015a) and is drawn on here, to various degrees, in four of the five articles (Tyson 2016a, c, d, forthcoming). The second case was conducted in the context of a revamped Steiner school fritids' teacher education program where I was given the opportunity to design its curriculum through my work at the Waldorf University College in Stockholm. Because the program is in-service, i.e. the majority of the participants already work at fritids and their education is part-time; it was possible to design the curriculum to include extensive workplace-based tasks. One of the first opportunities was in connection with a course in conflict resolution based on Rosenberg’s Non-violent communication method (Rosenberg 2003). The task was to engage in or observe a successful act of conflict resolution based on the ideas expressed by Rosenberg and to write a didactically relevant case narrative of the events (cf. appendix 1 for the written assignment). Several of these case narratives were discussed in Tyson (2016b).

The third and fourth case studies were made as part of university-based didactics courses at teacher education programs. They have both been done several times as the courses returned each semester resulting in revisions to how the written assignments were formulated (appendix 2 and 3 contain the most recent versions). One of the programs is taken by vocational practitioners wanting a certificate to teach at the Swedish upper secondary level and the participants represent all kinds of vocational tracks such as construction, cooking, hairdressing, floristry, etc. The task there was oriented towards the writing of didactically relevant case narratives of vocational Bildung experiences by the participants. The other program is specifically aimed at care-giving professions (nurses, enrolled nurses, midwives, etc.) wishing to get a teacher certificate for the Swedish upper secondary level (where there is a track for care-taking). The task was oriented towards writing a didactically relevant case narrative of vocational phronesis in their work. Narrative cases from both studies are part of Tyson (forthcoming) and from that focusing on vocational phronesis cases also in Tyson (2016a).

The case presented in Tyson (2016d) is that of an educational initiative where students from a Steiner school in southern Germany have been engaged in the construction of a clinic and other facilities in a rural area of Romania. It was mainly analyzed as a pattern for vocational curricula. Finally, a case narrative from an older case study consisting of interviews with a couple of crafts teachers at a Steiner school was also used in Tyson (2016a). This case study

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8 Fritids can be roughly translated as after school care in grades 1-4 in Sweden.
9 Mostly in the various vocational tracks in Swedish upper secondary schools but also in adult education at a corresponding level.
originally aimed at documenting some of their work with students who experienced various problems in school ranging from social issues to learning disabilities. It turned out that several of the narratives documented could be understood as articulations of didactically relevant practical knowledge and as such usefully included in the present inquiry.

One general issue with the various case narratives from these studies is their removal from the vocational context to which they refer, i.e., they appear self-contained even though they are articulated against a tacit background of vocational practice. The discussion in chapter 6 returns to this, considering some of the limitations that it causes. However, it is important to bear in mind throughout that there are questions that this removal tacitly underemphasizes such as variation across vocations regarding the affordance of Bildung and potential for phronesis.

1.7 Normative basis of inquiry: human flourishing

Human flourishing as an aim of education is taken as axiomatic for the inquiry. It is not an uncommon perspective in educational and social scientific philosophy (cf., e.g., Biesta 2015; Campbell 2013; Curren 2008; Heron & Reason 1997; Hinchliffe 2004; Laszlo et al. 2012), given that the human being is generally considered to be an end and not simply a means to something else. It is also a perspective that is necessary for a coherent inquiry into those aspects of educational practice that are concerned with Bildung and phronesis. They are both concepts that share a value-intrinsic perspective on the human being.

Human flourishing as an educational aim is coherent not only with the conceptual foundation of the inquiry but also its methodology and basis in phronetic social science (Flyvbjerg 2001). At the center of the approach when it comes to collecting case narratives is an emphasis on experiences that were unusually enriching, successful, wise or excellent (choice of term depends somewhat on context, cf. chapter 4 and appendix 1-3). The emphasis on vocational Bildung leads to asking about memorable experiences and the emphasis on vocational phronesis leads to asking about ethically wise actions. By taking this approach it also becomes a point that human flourishing is left without any further definition or characterization instead that which is described in the cases as enriching experiences becomes the content of flourishing. This allows for an empirical approach to flourishing, not as an abstract ideal but as an aim of practice. This in turn is consistent with one of the central arguments regarding the value of collecting case narratives of vocational Bildung and phronesis. This is, briefly put, that these narratives can serve as an articulation of previously tacit practice and thereby as a point of reflection for further, more systematic development. From the point of view of practitioners, case narratives of the kind of Bildung and phronesis afforded by their vocational practice, when it is at its best, can serve both as powerful arguments in the confrontation with deficits as
well as articulations of the internal goods or virtues (cf. chapter 3 on MacIntyre) of that practice. It is especially important to consider that what appears like abstract ideals of vocational practice in more philosophical writing receives an entirely different character when the case narratives are about already enacted\(^\text{10}\) practice.

It should be noted that Bildung is not a concept that always relates to human flourishing in a straightforward way. Learning how to drive and getting a driver’s license can be an intense Bildung experience if it provides one with an expanded autonomy and increases one’s sense of being able to choose work. Bildung and the human flourishing resulting from it thus need to be understood in the context in which they occur.

1.8 Structure of thesis and notes on the writing

After this introductory chapter, the thesis begins by situating the inquiry in previous research (chapter 2). Included in this is also the argument for where the boundaries are drawn in relation to previous research and philosophy as well as an outline of how I have proceeded to find relevant studies (ie. databases used as well as methods and key-words for searches). In chapter 3 the main concepts of VBD: vocational Bildung, vocational phronesis, pedagogical imagination, practical knowledge and MacIntyre’s concept of a practice are discussed. Chapter 4 turns to the larger theoretical research context: phronetic social science as well as the methodology of working with case narratives. It also deals with research ethics. Chapter 5 consists of article summaries. The thesis then concludes with a discussion in chapter 6.

Finally, a few general remarks to help in the understanding of the thesis. First, a stylistic consideration. The thesis text is written with frequent references to the first-person singular, not always a common feature of academic texts. There are two reasons for this: one is that it conforms to the style sometimes employed in narrative inquiry (cf. eg. Clandinin & Connelly 2000 who’s book consistently refers to “we”), and the other is that it conforms to the style of the articles.

Second, an issue that has arisen with regularity during presentations and the article review process is connected with the eclecticism of my approach. One friend compared it to putting the steering wheel of a tractor onto a Fiat car. With this he meant that those familiar with life history research might find much that they are acquainted with but also significant omissions and a lack of analysis (as they expect analysis to be). Similarly, those familiar with research

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\(^{10}\) The term enact/ed is used throughout to emphasize that practical knowledge is action-oriented and that case narratives, concepts and dispositions are part of these actions, in effect become enacted in various ways.
into vocational education and training find themselves both on known grounds and in unknown territory. This is also the case when it comes to my use of some educational philosophy, especially Aristotelian approaches. The combination of these different perspectives easily leads to misunderstandings and so, more than anything, I ask readers to suspend judgment at times when I seem to (or do) overlook an issue or deal with it too briefly. It is my hope that the totality of the arguments will alleviate such concerns.

Third, given the number of concepts that are involved in VBD as framework and methodology, something needs to be said about a few of the expressions used to avoid confusion. Mainly this pertains to the unwieldy formula “didactically relevant practical knowledge as narratively articulated.” This way of writing highlights that the theoretical concept of practical knowledge is at the center of attention. In writing “didactically relevant” the point is to be clear that there are forms of narratively articulated practical knowledge that are not didactically relevant. Consequently, when the discussion is more general, the didactical aspect will be left out. Because the formula is so cumbersome, and because the focus here is on didactically relevant practical knowledge, it is often substituted with “practical-didactical knowledge.” Generally speaking the term “narratively articulated” can be assumed throughout when the discussion turns to practical knowledge since the entire inquiry is about ways in which practical knowledge can be expressed in case narratives.
2 Previous research

Several areas of previous research have been important for the present inquiry. As stated in section 1.4, the issue has not been to create a hitherto non-existent framework but to bring together elements that have not been considered all together before. This chapter begins with a more extensive review of those elements uniting what in the articles has been treated in a piecemeal fashion and adding some further depth that wasn’t possible to accommodate in that format. This is then synthesized in a chart showing an outline of the contributions that various authors have made to parts of the conceptual and methodological framework. It then moves on to further deepen the argument for why the approach of VBD represents a novelty in research by reviewing the articles published in four relevant journals since 2000. Finally the chapter wraps up with a brief look at the principles followed in searching for relevant scholarship.

2.1 Philosophical, theoretical and methodological research

In this section a review of the literature and scholarship that constitutes the basis for the development of VBD is presented. Philosophy, educational theory and methodology will be treated together because this makes it possible to discuss the way narratively articulated practical knowledge functions as a bridge between the conceptual framework and the methodology of VBD. Elsewhere, in chapters 3 and 4, these will be treated apart.

2.1.1 Choosing the main concepts

Because the inquiry began as part of a research school in vocational subject didactics the issue of skill or capability was more of a focus than were conventional school subjects. This contributed to the choice of techne and phronesis as the main concepts used to distinguish forms of practical knowledge rather than eg. pedagogical content knowledge or teacher lore (Shubert & Ayers 1992; Shulman 2004). In the scholarly conversations on vocational skill education some alternatives to the Aristotelian perspective have been suggested (Hinchliffe 2002; Lum 2003; Winch 2012) where one of the early drafts of Tyson (2015b) contained a more extensive comparative discussion. But this took the focus
away from the case and turned more philosophical than was motivated. Other contributions that were introduced in the theorizing process were those of Ryle (1949) in distinguishing between knowing how and knowing that, Dreyfus & Dreyfus (1986) on expertise and Polanyi (2009, 1962) on tacit knowledge. Although relevant to the general understanding of practical knowledge, their conceptualizations did not link up as easily with an interest in vocational Bildung and phronesis on the one hand and didactics as practical knowledge on the other. Here, Aristotle’s way of approaching the matter emerged as the most rewarding.

My interest in Bildung as part of vocational education reaches farther back than the inquiry. But writing in English posed the question if it was worth introducing an obscure and more or less untranslatable concept at the center of it. Liberal education does have significant overlap with Bildung but two issues kept me from it. First, it doesn’t have the same strong biographical connection that Bildung does. This connection functions as the bridge between Bildung as sensitizing concept and as “folk” concept in asking about important/memorable events in a persons’ vocational biography. Second, there is a significant amount of German research in vocational Bildung that is highly relevant to the inquiry (2.1.2) whereas research into liberal education and vocational education seems much more limited. With (1994) and Tribe (1999) are the two main exceptions I have found that incorporate empirical research, although it stands to be reasoned that a less narrow search in which characteristics of liberal education were used rather than the exact term would turn up more studies of relevance. A further reason, one might argue, is that this contributes to the general value of making some research and philosophy written in German but not translated into English more widely referenced. This line of argument is equally valid for the concept of didactics given the differences between a continental European understanding of it compared to an Anglo-American, didactics being in many ways similar to curriculum theory (cf. Westbury, et al. 2000). In the licentiate I chose to write about vocational Bildung in action to relate the inquiry to Schön’s reflection in action (1983, 1987) arguing that although this overlapped with didactics as concept it placed the focus more squarely on it as enacted practical knowledge. However, the present involvement of curriculum interpretations (Tyson 2016c, d) and the more general form of the conceptual framework has led me to return to didactics as a central concept. Didactics is understood here in the traditional sense of what is taught, how, when, to whom, in what context and why (Uljens 1997) because these descriptive terms work well as markers for narrative articulations of practical knowledge. These are also the kinds of questions used to orient people in their writing of didactically relevant case narratives (cf. appendix 1-3). This sets it apart somewhat from much of narrative inquiry in teacher studies where questions tend to be more open-ended (eg. Clandinin & Connelly 1995, 2000). The didactical emphasis is important because it sensitizes one to the prevalence of judgment-oriented statements in interviews with practitioners rather than the more didactically
relevant action-oriented ones. For example, in a recent thesis on the practical knowledge of academic supervisors (Lönn Svensson 2007) the extensive interviews with experienced supervisors on the topic of good supervision seem to result mainly in statements such as (p. 164, my translation):

[In supervising I use the] “sit by me”-method or the “apprenticeship”-method. So much of what one knows is … comparatively hard to bring to attention. It is so-called “tacit knowledge.” So “sit by me” is what I often use in practice. Because when I am writing together with PhD-students we often sit together and write sometimes, it depends.

This excerpt was chosen because it is so close to actually describing something didactically, giving one the impression that one knows what is going on in this supervision, “sit by me.” But at closer examination, what the supervisor is saying in this interview, is a combination of judgment (“it is so-called tacit knowledge”) that enacted can mean a whole lot of different things, together with statements regarding the supervisor’s action, to sit together and write, that do not actually describe what that action consists of. This is not a narrative description of practice/action as understood here but a mixture of allusions to action together with the experienced expert’s judgments formed in the course of years of work. To be clear, this is not an objection to that kind of query but it is important to distinguish it from an interest in articulated practical-didactical knowledge.

Another demarcation that has been intermittently clear to me is that through the practical orientation given by Aristotle the involvement of identity has been avoided as a sensitizing concept for the case narratives. This becomes important given the amount of research on vocational identity development (eg. Brown, et al. 2007; Chan 2015, 2014; Heggen 2008) and the prevalence of the concept in much of narrative inquiry, explicitly or implicitly (eg. Mishler 1999; Connelly & Clandinin 1995). Connelly & Clandinin in writing about teachers’ personal practical knowledge and of teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes come very close to the views on practical knowledge developed here but differ in precisely having a focus that includes and develops forms of identity. For example they write in summarizing a case study (Clandinin & Connelly 1995, p. 28):

In a detailed case study, Clandinin (1986) showed how Stephanie’s classroom practices were an expression of her image of classroom as home. We also showed how her Jewish life rhythms were expressed in classroom celebrations of all children’s special cultural and religious holidays. Likewise the professional knowledge landscape of Bay Street School, with its particular cycles and rhythms, influenced Stephanie’s everyday life as she took her own religious holidays at times that conflicted with specific cycles in the school year (Clandinin & Connelly 1986). She encouraged gardening units at school and used plants for
home and yard decoration. Often her school curriculum was a place to inquire into things of personal interest to her, and vice versa.

To properly understand the professional knowledge landscape, it is necessary to understand it narratively as a changing landscape with a history of its own.

Although the word identity isn’t an overt part of the description it seems to be one where elements of identity and Bildung mingle with each other. Stephanie’s religious identity features prominently and the narrative understanding of the professional knowledge landscape is conceived of as a landscape history. The description is one focusing on expression and experience. The main difference between Bildung and phronesis on the one hand and identity on the other is the explicit focus on human flourishing of the former whereas the latter is less explicitly normative. This is not meant to imply that research into vocational identity is less relevant, only that it is important to bear in mind that Bildung and identity are concepts that both relate to biography but in subtly different ways. Asking about didactically relevant case narratives of vocational Bildung is different than asking about didactically relevant narratives of vocational identity. The latter is surely important but is not part of the present inquiry.

2.1.2 Vocational Bildung

Vocational11 Bildung is a philosophical tradition reaching back at least to Kerschensteiner and others active at the beginning of the 20th century (Gonon 2002, 2009; Kerschensteiner 1912; Lange et al. 2001; Winch 2006). Throughout the 20th century it has been part of the German-speaking educational discussion and has also seen several attempts at enactment in schools, for example the Kollegstufe Nordrhein-Westfalen (Blankertz & Gruschka 1974) and the previously mentioned Hibernia school (Edding, et al. 1985; Fintelmann 1992, 1990, 1985; Rist & Schneider 1979).12 Other studies in the field are Brater et al. 1988, 1987, 1986, 1985; Corsten & Lempert 1997; Fucke 1996, 1981, 1977, 1976; Obermann 2013; Schmalenbach 2011; Volanen 2012. Although many of these contain extensive, more or less explicit, discussions on intended curricula and tasks (down to presentations of course descriptions and weekly schedules) as well as didactical theory there is little in the way of empirical study especially in case form as opposed to more generalizing inquiries. Thus, for example, Corsten & Lempert (1997) present a longitudinal study on vocations

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11 The terms vocational and vocation are, for the most part, used here in a sense that also includes occupational and occupation where oftentimes a distinction is made. Vocation then denotes a person’s calling but is hardly the term for a job one has, this being more of an occupation (cf. Billett 2011 for further discussion).

12 A more extensive treatment of this background can be found in Tyson (2015a), I have limited my discussion here to the most important aspects.
and morals (Beruf und Moral) where they have explored the moral development of apprentices in a select group of occupations over time. Such a study is clearly interested in the same kind of issues as the present one but from a different perspective. One exception is the previously mentioned study by Gessler (1988) on the biographical trajectories of former students at the Hibernia school and how the curriculum they experienced there influenced their further work and vocational education. The didactical relevance of this was discussed more extensively in the licentiate (Tyson 2015a) where one of these biographies was also translated and presented as a comparison to the case of Wolfgang B. Finally as mentioned, there is a relatively recent development in German didactics called Bildungsgangdidaktik. Terhart writes (2009, p. 202, my translation):

> The fundamental idea that this group [researchers on biographical processes of Bildung] has brought into the didactics of Bildung-theory is the “biographization” [Ger. Biographisierung] of the Bildung-problem.

It seems that, as of yet, this has not resulted in systematic collections of case narratives or a more explicit vocational perspective. Rather, the approach has mainly been interested in exploring the general Bildung experiences of youth in school and shortly thereafter. In summary, the connection between (vocational) Bildung, didactics and biographical research seems well established but without the inclusion of a philosophical perspective on practical knowledge that then leads to the view that case narratives can be understood as an articulation of such knowledge.

### 2.1.3 Vocational phronesis

Vocational phronesis has seen an extensive, mostly philosophical, discussion in recent years. It has been introduced as a way of accessing “the wisdom of practice” especially in education and health care (Bondi et al. 2011; Kemmis & Smith 2008; Kinsella & Pitman 2012; Lunenberg & Korthagen 2009). Thus there is a whole field of study called narrative medicine where phronesis figures explicitly or implicitly (Barnard et al. 2000; Charon 2006; Frank 2004; Gunaratnam & Oliviere 2009; Wittenberg-Lyles et al. 2010). I have not explored the connection to narrative medicine fully and wouldn’t be surprised to find additional work in the field even closer in kind to the present inquiry. Furthermore, both Green in reference to McLaughlin (2011, p. xi and throughout) and Higgins (2010, p. 396, note 10) have made explicit references to pedagogical phronesis. In particular, Green has indicated the overlap between phronesis and Bildung (2011, p. 121), something that is unique among the works reviewed here.

Given that phronesis is considered a species of practical knowledge by Aristotle (2009) there is also a close affinity between phronesis and narrative knowledge (Frank 2004; Gallagher 2013; Gillespie 1996; Noel 1999a; Nuss-
baum 1990; Pendelbury 1995; Thiele 2006). In a couple of recent studies Gade (2014, 2011) has developed a connection similar to the present one between phronesis, narratives and cases but focusing on children in primary school (i.e. without the vocational perspective). She also considers issues of curriculum from the point of view of practical knowledge (2014, p. 724f.). Finally, in moral philosophy there was once, it largely faded around 1650, a vibrant tradition called casuistry which argued moral standards based on cases rather than principles (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). During its heyday there were extensive collections of normative cases published and with a few modifications it can be viewed as a forerunner of the present inquiry. One major difference is that those cases were at least to a degree fictional whereas the cases considered in VBD need to be actual (disregarding for the moment the whole discussion about narrative truth, cf. chapter 4, especially section 4.8). This, it seems, is also the main difference between the present approach and the discussion on narrative and judgment in Thiele (2006). He synthesizes much of the discussion on narratives as a way of educating the moral imagination and practical wisdom.

There is little that will be said from a theoretical point of view in the following that he doesn’t say with more extensive references, save for the present interest in narratives from actual experience. I think this small difference might be the reason that he doesn’t end up arguing for systematic collections of such stories. Perhaps it feels less urgent to argue for systematic collections of literary narratives since they are somehow already “there.”

From this brief review it should be clear that contemporary research working with phronesis seems to be trending in a direction that largely overlaps with the present inquiry. The main addition here is perhaps the argument for a systematic empirical inquiry based on these, together with the addition of MacIntyre’s practice-concept. Other than this, it is mostly about bringing aspects to the fore which have remained somewhat in the background of previous work or making some connections that one or the other hasn’t made. This holds in particular for the connecting of vocational phronesis, case narratives and didactics with each other.

2.1.4 Practical knowledge and narrative inquiry

Having mentioned that phronesis is a species of practical knowledge (together with techne or craft-like practical knowledge), it makes sense here to move on to consider this aspect of previous research. Included in this is a more extensive discussion of narrative inquiry, a field of research from which VBD draws much both theoretically and methodologically but where there are also important contrasts.

Continuing the discussion first with regards to phronesis there are several recent philosophical works from the perspective of practical knowledge. There is Dunne’s (1993) *Back to the rough ground* which I drew from extensively in the initial stages (Tyson 2015a, b). There are also some discussions, for and against,
the use of phronesis and techne as ways of conceptualizing skill (Hinchliffe 2002; Lum 2003; Winch 2012). Although all of these were concerned with vocational skills in general it is not a reach to consider the specific relevance to didactics as practical skill. From an Aristotelian point of view, a teacher’s didactical skill consists in a craft-like part akin to a combination of content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman 2004) but also a part covered by phronesis (and by extension Bildung). This is one way in which the view taken here of didactics as practical knowledge is situated in a research context. Another is through Schön’s (1987) discussion of how professionals in design-like occupations have a large part of their practical knowledge in the form of a repertoire of cases (this is a focus of the discussion in Tyson 2016b). Both of these perspectives have drawn on the previously mentioned argument by other scholars that phronesis is a narrative kind of knowledge meaning that a) the phronetic aspect of the didactical actions of teachers needs largely to be narratively articulated in order to be studied and b) the repertoire of experts in practically wise action is a repertoire of narratives. Since Bildung is so close to biographical narratives and possible to express through them, that line of reasoning can be applied here as well. This discussion is continued in the next chapter when considering practical knowledge as the bridge between conceptual framework and methodology.

Moving on, there is an approach in educational research where the connection between biographical study and practical knowledge has been made repeatedly and that is narrative inquiry. My familiarity with it dates back to my undergraduate studies and bachelor’s research. It continued through the master’s thesis and the licentiate. The strongest connection at the time was with the work of Freeman (2007, 2003, 1999, 1997) and Bruner (2004, 1997, 1991). Especially the discussion of narrative integrity that Freeman engages in can be seen as a precursor to my interest in Bildung from a more scholarly perspective. This relationship is perhaps best formulated by Freeman in an article from 1997, Death, narrative integrity, and the radical challenge of self-understanding. A reading of Tolstoy’s Death of Ivan Illich. Ivan Illich is described by Tolstoy as a man who does what is expected of him, he has a career, a wife and child, etc. but without any meaning to it. He is an embodiment of social convention without any inner drive towards meaning. One day he has an accident, is injured and it gets progressively worse over the course of weeks until finally he dies. Only in his last moments is he able to reimagine his life and achieve a sense of meaning and coherence (integrity). Freeman suggests that a life well lived is the result of our creative capacity, not as linear as a novel but no less poetic in its complexity and potential beauty. He writes (1997, p. 388f):

What is meant by narrative integrity is not merely harmony of proportion or beauty of form but the soundness and depth of one’s ethical … commitments.

…
Only in the final moments of Illich’s life does this occur, the result being that “He sought his former accustomed fear of death and did not find it. ... In place of death there was light” ... He is redeemed. But what exactly happened in this final scene? How are we to make sense of this dramatic movement from “death” to “light?” What seems to have happened is that Illich, upon recognising and avowing the falsity of his previous self-understanding ... also recognises the poverty of his previous ethical commitments. This is the destructive moment of the process of rewriting the self ... Indeed the creative moment of rewriting the self is the dialectical counterpart to the destructive ... Notice in this context that self-understanding, as it occurs in the movement of rewriting the self, is always and inevitably an act of self-transcendence ... Notice, in addition, that “rightness” is not something to be seen but heard. ... It is precisely at this point that visual metaphors give way to auditory metaphors. Self-understanding thus comes to involve not only gazing over the heretofore concealed landscape of the past but listening to the call of those larger presences (be they gods or spirits or other such unnamable beings; we must each decide for ourselves) that call us forward, toward our unique station. Far from being suspended in the flux of moments, we are living a story in the making, one whose potential for truth and goodness is underwritten by what exists beyond us.

It is this particular perspective from narrative inquiry that has had the most lasting influence on me. In going back to the article I also noticed that Freeman (1997) draws on MacIntyre (cf. chapter 3) in the quoted argument. It is, perhaps, not a representative text in narrative inquiry but my intention has been to indicate the point where I have engaged with it. If the PhD work had begun in general pedagogical research rather than starting from a didactical point of view the inquiry would most probably have been more in line with this. Oriented towards Bildung, life-history and ethics, ie. everything here except the practical, the vocational and the elaborated understanding of a case.

Closer to the present inquiry from the same field is a series of studies from the past 40 years in connection with teacher stories (Connelly & Clandinin 1995; Clandinin & Connelly 1995, 2000; Gudmundsdottir 1991; Jalongo & Isenberg 1995; McEwan & Egan 1995; Miller 2005; Shubert & Ayers 1992; Witherell & Noddings 1991). These have focused on what has sometimes been called teacher’s personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly 2000) or teacher lore (Shubert & Ayers 1992) and have proceeded from empirical inquiries into teacher lives. This highlights an important distinction because, for the most part, their emphasis is on experience and the focus in VBD is on practical knowledge. Experience is the more encompassing concept containing as it does the whole spectrum from having experiences that are strung together into a biographical narrative through becoming experienced and skilled, in possession of practical knowledge. This warrants an epistemological digression.

The view of knowledge in this study proceeds from Heron & Reason’s participatory inquiry paradigm (1997). In it they delineate four kinds of
knowledge, the experiential, the presentational, the propositional and the practical. This differentiation is understood here within the framework of Aristotelian techne and phronesis, meaning that all these levels are represented in them. It is a way of clarifying the various elements that make up the practical knowledge of techne and phronesis. In their view, experiential knowledge is the basis for most or all other kinds of knowledge, the opposite of experience being speculation/second hand information. Building on experience is a form of knowledge that they call presentational, which is fundamentally an aesthetic arrangement of experience. Their argument is that experience itself tells us nothing about what is important, what to focus on, what patterns to attend to, etc. The judgment exercised in doing this is aesthetic and leads to various presentational forms of knowledge including, prominently, narrative or storied forms. This inclusion of an explicitly aesthetic level of knowledge also connects their epistemology with the discussion of the role of imagination in the next chapter.

Heron & Reason (1997) then go on to outline a propositional and a practical form of knowledge. Propositional knowledge is knowledge consisting of declarative statements such as: the speed of light is ca. 300 000 km/s. Practical knowledge, finally, contains within itself all other forms of knowledge together with extensive practice and familiarity with its object. This can be cognitive such as mathematics, materially oriented such as a craft or the disposition to act charitably as a virtue. The practical implications of this difference can be seen in the teacher stories collected in Clandinin & Connelly (1995, 2000) and Shubert & Ayers (1992), most of which are neither descriptions of a teacher’s actions (ie. didactical) nor of Bildung and/or phronesis. Instead, they end up being quotes summarizing an experienced teacher’s judgments; the trials and tribulations encountered in teaching practice and condensed references to a teacher’s experience. For example (Craig 1995, p. 91):

Tim realized that the meetings did not relate to his teaching. He described his feelings this way:

I felt most of my time was focused on group goals or school goals or some kind of common task [note the summarizing judgment of experiences rather than descriptions exemplifying how this judgment was reached]… not so much our teaching practices… there was not a lot of individual sharing about what was going on in my classroom or in my situation, about how I am thinking about teaching right now. (Conversation, August 3, 1991)

Likewise, Shubert & Ayers describe teacher lore as (1992, p.vii, my italics):

Perhaps the greatest potential of teacher lore resides in an oral tradition among teachers who exchange and reconstruct perspectives together. This reflection on experience, this reconceiving of the meaning and purpose of one’s life and contribution as teacher, is the essence of teacher lore.
A further subtle way experience differs from practical knowledge is that experience points to something in the past whereas practical knowledge implies a capacity to act that is also future-oriented. Obviously this capacity to act depends on experiences of the past and can thus be articulated as such but the point of difference is to what degree such a case narrative can then be turned around and made part of a repertoire for future action. To summarize, most studies with a narrative inquiry approach that I have come across seem not to distinguish between presentational and propositional statements within a narrative. There is a prevalence of propositional, generalizing, language in narrative inquiry studies both in interviews and in analyses/conclusions and seldom an overt interest in the presentational and experiential aspects (an exception being work with critical incidents, see further below 2.2).

Having said this, narrative inquiry is a vast field of research and it is far from unreasonable to think that some relevant studies have escaped the review-process. From a methodological perspective there are also major elements taken from the approach, especially in the biographical study of Wolfgang B. (discussed further in chapter 4). Finally, the distinction made above between experience and practical knowledge in narrative inquiry could also be made from the point of view of didactics. VBD could then be understood as a didactically oriented narrative inquiry.

2.1.5 Practical knowledge, didactics, curriculum and PCK

The relationship between didactics and practical knowledge was considered most extensively in Tyson (2016a). There the meaning of didactics was brought into close proximity to both the discussion on enacted and experienced curricula (Billett 2011) as well as Shulman’s (2004) concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). The aim is to locate the inquiry in a didactical/curriculum/PCK context and to demonstrate both affinities and dissimilarities. Because the inquiry as a whole has been guided by vocational Bildung and phronesis together with a practical knowledge perspective there is no attempt to make any comprehensive review of these fields. Especially the wide fields of didactical- and curriculum theory have been left largely to themselves since the point hasn’t been to cover everyone who might have argued theoretically or philosophically for this kind of knowledge but to get at the practical and empirical. The choice of philosophy nevertheless included is thus more of a testament to the actual process of theorizing VBD than any attempt to thereby “cover all bases.”

Didactics in the present inquiry is a way of conceptualizing practical knowledge relevant to teaching expressed narratively in terms of actions encompassing questions such as what, how, when, with whom and why (cf. Uljens 1997). This means that didactics as understood here includes what is sometimes separated out as method (Klafki 1995a, p. 18) but also matters of curriculum enactment and development. Such curriculum questions are prevalent in the
case of the educational biography of Wolfgang B. where his stories are embedded in the larger context of the vocational curricula and educational structures he experienced.

Although the approach is called vocational Bildung didactics this is more a semantic issue than one of serious differences with curriculum theory. In this I follow Klafki (1995b, p. 187f.) who writes that the differences between continental didaktik and Anglo-American curriculum theory can sometimes be overstated. However, it would clash with the focus on practical knowledge to call it vocational Bildung curriculum theory (or something similar). In effect, attention in this kind of inquiry is mainly on what is called the enacted and experienced curriculum (cf. Billett 2011). One could therefore conceivably call the inquiry: explorations of enacted and experienced vocational Bildung curricula. Especially since two of the articles (Tyson 2016c, d) are focused on the curriculum patterns possible to elicit from the cases.

Hirst (1993, p. 197) considers the matter of curriculum design in a way that echoes several of the aspects in VBD:

I now consider practical knowledge to be more fundamental than theoretical knowledge, the former being basic to any clear grasp of the proper significance of the latter. But my argument now is not merely for the priority of practical knowledge in education, but rather for the priority of personal development by initiation into a complex of specific, substantive social practices with all the knowledge, attitudes, feelings, virtues, skills, dispositions and relationships that that involves. It is those practices that can constitute a flourishing life that I now consider fundamental to education. What is more, the idea that a curriculum might be organised in terms of significant practices is thus not merely a contingent matter.

Here Hirst, in a revision of his earlier views, can at least be interpreted as arguing for something similar to the present approach in his combining of practical knowledge with the priority of personal development (Bildung). His continued remarks about an initiation into social practices including attitudes, virtues and dispositions that can constitute a flourishing life point directly to the section in chapter 3 where MacIntyre’s thoughts on traditions and practices will be discussed. Thus from a theoretical standpoint the argument by Hirst is a concise formulation of that which VBD is intended to contribute to.

Given the emphasis on human flourishing as the aim of inquiries into VBD it is worthwhile to consider an objection to this from the context of curriculum research. Young (2016)13 has also taken what can be viewed as a didactical approach to the what and why we should teach where he argues for what he calls

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13 The book is actually Young & Muller (2016) but the chapter (8) is written in first person singular and the text has circulated in various forms for several years under Young’s name.
“powerful knowledge.” Especially pertinent is the critique of White’s contention “that schools should promote human happiness and well-being (Young 2016, p. 107).” Young maintains that the problem with this is that it is true for almost all institutions and thus is rather blunt as a goal for schools in particular. I think Hirst’s argument that education is about initiation into practices that can constitute a flourishing life clarifies how human flourishing can be understood as an educational, didactical aim. Again, this leads over to the section in chapter 3 on MacIntyre and his concept of a practice as well as the results in Tyson (forthcoming).

Interestingly, Young’s view of powerful knowledge and how to make curricula according to it is also rather different than the one advanced here. It appears most explicit when he writes (2016, p. 111, italics in original): “It is context-independent knowledge … [that] I referred to earlier as powerful knowledge.” Given that Young does not differentiate between propositional, presentational and practical knowledge or between the craft-like (techne) and practical wisdom (phronesis) this is perhaps not surprising. Craft-like practical knowledge alone is not a sufficient argument for retaining context, especially given that technical manuals (at least in the crafts) are valuable precisely because they achieve what Young is arguing for. However, the inclusion of Bildung and phronesis as important aspects of a practice makes the demand for context-independent knowledge at best one-sided. Bildung and phronesis are irreducibly narrative kinds of practical knowledge.

Irrespective of these differences, Young’s general line of thinking offers an enrichment of what VBD is about. It is about articulating powerful knowledge in relation to that area of knowledge that is not first and foremost about the craft-like or the propositional. This is another way of arguing for the emphasis on unusually rich, successful, excellent, etc. cases. These are the cases that on a practical level can most empower practitioners. Although it should be clear that other kinds of narratives, of failure, of oppression, etc. can be empowering in a deeper sense, especially in certain contexts.

There is also a further and wider connection to didactical/curriculum scholarship, in particular didactical/curriculum philosophy, that of PCK. In a collection of essays called The wisdom of practice (2004) Shulman offers up a range of thoughts and research results that overlap with the present inquiry. In one of his most oft-read essays (ibid), Those who understand: knowledge growth in teaching, Shulman describes the knowledge of teachers as consisting of content knowledge, curricular knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. PCK has since seen a wide-ranging, sometimes critical, discussion (eg. Abell 2008; Berry et al. 2008; Ellis 2007). As mentioned previously, pedagogical content knowledge more or less overlaps with subject didactics, cf. Gudmundsdottir, et

The final source of the knowledge base [for teachers] is the least codified of all. It is the wisdom of practice itself, the maxims that guide (or provide reflective rationalizations for) the practices of able teachers. One of the more important tasks for the research community is to work with practitioners to develop codified representations of the practical pedagogical wisdom of able teachers. As indicated … much of the conception of teaching embodied in this paper is derived from collecting, examining, and beginning to codify the emerging wisdom of practice among both inexperienced and experienced teachers.

The portrait of Nancy with which this paper began is only one of the many descriptions and analyses of excellent teaching we have been collecting over the past few years.

The portrait of Nancy that Shulman refers to is a portrait of an expert teacher of English literature. It warrants a closer examination since what he understands as wisdom of practice I would call techne, reserving terms such as practical pedagogical wisdom for issues of Bildung and phronesis. A few quotes from Shulman’s presentation of the portrait should make this clear (2004, p. 219-222):

A twenty-five-year veteran English teacher, Nancy, was the subject of a continuing study of experienced teachers … The class was nearing the end of the second week of a unit on Moby Dick. The observer had been well impressed with the depth of Nancy’s understanding of that novel and her skill as a pedagogue, as she documented how Nancy helped a group of California high school juniors grasp the many facets of that masterpiece. Nancy was a highly active teacher, whose classroom style employed substantial interaction … [the narrative goes on to describe what Nancy did in practice, how she controlled “the rhythm” in the classroom together with a conceptual framework that guided her “sequencing of material and formulation of questions.”] …

When the observer arrived at the classroom one morning, she found Nancy sitting at her desk as usual. But her morning greeting elicited no response from Nancy other than a grimace and motion toward the pad of paper on her desktop. “I have laryngitis this morning and will not be able to speak aloud,” said the note. …

Using a combination of handwritten notes and whispers, she divided the class into small groups by rows, a tactic she had used twice before during this unit. Each group was given a different character who has a prominent role in the first chapters of the novel, and each group was expected to answer a series of

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14 Cf. footnote 1 about the difference between Shulman’s conceptualization of the wisdom of practice and Aristotle’s phronesis.
questions about that character. … Once again the class had run smoothly, and
the subject matter had been treated with care. But the style had changed radically,
an utterly different teaching technology was employed, and still the students
were engaged, and learning appeared to occur.

Subsequently we were to see many more examples of Nancy’s flexible style…

Notice that not only is there a difference in what wisdom is taken to mean. The
difference extends to methods of investigation. When investigating the techne
aspects of teaching it seems to me that in-depth participant observation of expe-
rienced teachers is a well-chosen method (something that Schön (1987) also
uses in describing the teaching practice of architects, psychoanalysts and others).
On the way one might have the good luck of happening across incidents where
a teacher’s practical pedagogical/didactical knowledge of enacting Bildung
and/or phronesis becomes apparent. However, the comparative rareness of rich
and successful incidents of Bildung and phronesis coupled with the regular need
for descriptions of a teacher’s deliberation process makes autobiographical nar-
ratives (through writing or interviewing) more likely to elicit this kind of practical
knowledge than participant observation. Sockett (1987) had a similar cri-
tique of the same case (p. 211, italics in original):

What is so unsatisfactory about these descriptions of Nancy? Briefly, they repre-
sent an attempt to describe (dispassionately) Nancy’s technique and reduce her
wisdom, insight, and tacit understanding to knowledge-as-technique. … What
all this fails to describe, because the language is so limited, are Nancy’s moral vir-
tues as a teacher.

Sockett focuses on the language used to describe what Nancy does although I
am not so sure that an external observer could easily write differently (my con-
tention being that Bildung and phronesis narratives perhaps work best as first-
person stories). Shulman’s reply to this five years later (2004, p. 376) was that
Sockett and Fenstermacher (another prominent critic), both represent:

The moral wing of teacher education [who] are more comfortable playing the
role of astute critic than they are at conducting their own empirical research. But
I am confident that the research will come, and I am equally optimistic that this
research will also add significant new facets to our understanding of teaching.

Hopefully the inquiry conducted here represents such research and that any
differences with Shulman are understood more as an attempt at clarification
than as outright difference. To relativize the matter somewhat, I would have no
quarrel with someone wishing to describe the characterization of Nancy as a
teacher who is gebildet and where her expertise in teaching as a techne is a sig-
nificant part of her Bildung. This aspect of Bildung, of a teacher’s subject di-
dactical or pedagogical content knowledge as contribution to it, is in part the
theme of the narratives in vocational Bildung as they are articulated in the case studies done with students at the vocational teacher program. Because the focus has been more on phronesis in the only case study situated in a school environment (that of the after school care teachers, Tyson 2106b) it has not been especially theorized here in the context of regular classroom teaching which seems largely to be the setting of studies centered on PCK.

2.2 Use of narrative approaches in practice

This section is less extensive than the previous one and deals with the practical work done at various institutions where case narratives similar to the ones collected here are used. As already mentioned, the vast majority of this is probably not readily available being part of various courses emphasizing reflective practice and other related matters. One practical context that I have come across in searching for related research is work with critical incidents.

Critical incidents is a form of questioning wherein someone is asked to describe an unusually important experience of some kind making it similar in approach to that in the present inquiry of asking for unusually rich and/or successful narratives (Brookfield 1990; Browall et al. 2014; Orland-Barak & Yinson 2005; Rademacher et al. 2010). Brookfield (1990) has described his work with critical incidents in educating for critical reflection and awareness among adults. In Brookfield’s context critical incidents are used to explore assumptions among participants and to foster a critical reflection where these assumptions may be subject to change or transformation. One of his examples is analyzing assumptions about good practice in education where he describes how he usually asks participants to first write a description of an unusually successful educational event and after working with these descriptions in groups to repeat the process but choose an event that was unusually problematic. In effect, Brookfield’s approach would be central if the inquiry was more focused on exploring forms of teacher education and professional development empirically. As far as I can tell he has not suggested that the work he has done with critical incidents be viewed as a cumulative process of collecting narratives as expressions of practical knowledge. This seems to be the case also in a wider sense when considering some of the literature on working with narratives in higher education and professional development (Mattingly 1991; McDrury & Alterio 2002; Mezirow & Associates 1990; Moon 2010). The overlap in approach is still considerable and were the present inquiry to expand into a more systematic work in practice with teacher education and professional development the experience of these sources would need more extensive consideration.

Another practical, and deeply philosophical, context is the dialogue seminars held by Göranzon resulting in such publications as: Dialogue and technology, art and knowledge (Göranzon & Florin 1991), Skill, technology and Enlightenment, on practical philosophy (Göranzon 1995) and Dialogue, skill & tacit knowledge
(Göranzon, et al. 2006). The whole approach developed there is strongly Bildung-related and intent on exploring the complexity of practical knowledge and skill. But, since there is no focus on case narratives as units of articulated knowledge, they end up with somewhat different discussions. An example of this is a recent PhD thesis by El Gaidi (2007) that focuses on the vocational knowledge of teachers. There a series of case studies developed as part of dialogue seminars provide part of the foundation for discussing the practical knowledge of teachers against a context of Bildung and phronesis. A wide-ranging philosophical discussion is the result supported by the transcripts from the dialogue seminars. This amounts to a philosophical exploration of the nuances of a teacher’s practical knowledge. The absence of a didactical perspective on case narratives as units of articulated practical knowledge seems to stand in the way of suggestions regarding systematic collection of cases.

A further context where case narrative approaches turn up, often with a focus on especially rich and/or successful narratives, is in what might be termed progressive management literature (Boje 2014; Scharmer 2009; Senge et al. 2006). In reviewing some of this it is clear that the stories told, especially when considered as descriptions of wise practices, fit well within the present framework. However, once again, the literature I have looked at does not suggest any systematic work aiming at collecting and interpreting these narrative cases.

2.3 Mapping the framework of VBD onto previous research

The concepts and methodology described in the next chapters are all to be found in previous research on education although not in one place. Thus the main work has been to bring them together in a coherent way and to provide them with a deeper context. For example, the concept of moral imagination can be found discussed in relation to narrative knowledge in Nussbaum (1990) and in relation to phronesis in Wall (2003) and Noel (1999a, b) and again in Nussbaum (1990). No instance of any extensive overt discussion of it as pedagogical in the same sense as it is moral has been possible to identify. Likewise, no explicit discussion of moral imagination in relation to actual cases of moral action has been found using the search parameters described below (2.6). Although these connections and previous discussions are outlined in the preceding text, below is a more schematic overview. Only contemporary scholarship has been included because the aim is to show where it and VBD intersect. MacIntyre has also been excluded since he has not been integral to the development of the framework in a narrow sense, but to contextualizing it and giving it some depth. Authors that appear in more than one place have been written in bold letters.
A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that with all the perspectives that exist (also beyond the ones drawn on here) the present combination allows for some kinds of teacher/practitioner practical knowledge to surface and become articulate. These kinds (vocational Bildung and phronesis) would presumably be different if the context were tacit knowledge or identity formation or pedagogical content knowledge. And nothing prevents one from substituting Bildung and phronesis in the framework for other matters of practice that might be of interest.
2.4 At the boundaries of previous research: what has been left out?

In bringing this part to a close, it seems important to say something also about the various research contexts that have knowingly been left out of it. It is a truism that the more one comes to know something the more painfully aware one becomes of everything that one doesn’t know and this inquiry has been no exception. This section discusses those books and articles where issues are dealt with that clearly could be related to the present inquiry. The aim is especially to highlight those that have seemed most likely to be part of the repertoire of other scholars.

To begin with there has been no real engagement with Dewey other than in passing. Yet Schön, who’s work forms an important part of the article on pedagogical imagination (Tyson 2016b) as well as the thesis introduction, is heavily indebted to him. Furthermore, aspects of narrative inquiry also draw extensively on Dewey (eg. Clandinin & Connelly 2000). And Granger (2003) discusses Dewey’s debt to Romanticism, in particular Coleridge, who in turn read Schiller (cf. Kooy 2002). Chambliss (1991), Fesmire (2003) and Aastrup Rømer (2012) discuss Dewey’s concept of imagination and aesthetics in a way that has extensive overlap with much of what has been adopted here from Schiller. Løvlie & Standish (2003) discuss Dewey’s affinity to the concept of Bildung and, explicitly, the overlap between Dewey’s and Schiller’s aesthetic philosophies. Hager & Halliday (2009) consider Dewey and MacIntyre extensively. And so on. There is no other individual scholar that I have come across as often as Dewey and who has remained as marginal to the development of VBD. The reason for this is that the preceding discussion has aimed for depth. Although a consideration of Dewey would probably make the conceptual framework more accessible to scholars familiar with his work the extensive overlaps suggest that it would be more suitable to explore this on its own in a separate paper. That would give it the kind of emphasis it deserves and also the proper space.

Another “omission” is that of Lave & Wenger’s (1991) “communities of practice” research. It is a common frame of reference, especially in workplace learning research (Hager & Halliday 2009, p. 9), and represents a different take on the concept of practice than that of MacIntyre. Hager & Halliday’s comparison of the two practice concepts results in the argument that MacIntyre (ibid. p. 9): “gives us a better possibility for a normative account of practice than the situated cognitivists.” Since it is precisely the normative account that is at stake here, it has made sense to bypass the communities of practice research.

Another aspect that has been largely left out is reference to related work situated in other philosophical frameworks that there has not been time to explore more extensively. Thus there seems to be interesting connections to the British philosopher Oakeshott when it comes to Bildung, aesthetic and moral education as well as Aristotelianism (Løvlie & Standish 2002; Corey 2013 and Dunne 1993, respectively). Connections could also be made to the Italian late
Renaissance philosopher Vico and imagination (Iheoma 1993; MacIntyre 2011) and to Iris Murdoch, liberal education and human flourishing (Evans 2009) to name a few.

Schiller’s debt to Kant is a further issue that could be profitably discussed (cf. eg. Tauber 2006) and one where it would not be surprising if those more familiar with this particular area of philosophical history would find the account wanting. In preparing the discussion on phronetic social science that is coming in chapter 4 it also became clear through the use of Foucault that Flyvbjerg (2001) makes that there are interesting points of potential commonality that remain to be worked out.

2.5 The rough ground in journals

It can be difficult to get a sense about how common it is to find research focusing on practical knowledge and with an interest in preserving the particularity of it rather than retreating into abstract analysis and generalizations. Schön contended (1983, p. vii) that universities had a selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry. Regardless of the facticity of the statement then, how does it stand today? Given the difference between the rough ground as craft-like knowledge and as Bildung and phronesis this is an extensive theme. Schön himself remarked (as repeatedly quoted) that he was not saying much about (1987, p. xiii): “wisdom in response to ethical dilemmas of practice.” It is this part of the rough ground that is focused on here, leaving the craft-like perspectives aside. The aim is to examine this through a survey of all peer-reviewed articles (excluding book reviews, editorials, etc.) published in four relevant journals since 2000. The journals chosen are two from the VET field: Vocations and Learning and Journal of Vocational Education and Training, as well as two from fields immediately related to such inquiry: Reflective Practice and Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice.

In reviewing the article titles, abstracts and keywords the terms searched for were phronesis, practical knowledge, narrative, reflective practice (Schön) and imagination (Bildung and didactics are too infrequently used outside continental Europe to be of much use). If one or more of these occurred it warranted a closer look at the study. This means that the survey is limited to research engaged in empirical studies of practical knowledge that use this terminology, especially that of wisdom/phronesis since it is not unlikely that such issues could be explored using different concepts. It may well be then, that there is relevant research that, because it uses other key-terms (is couched in a different framework), would only appear relevant if I were in a position to read it as a whole. There has also been a search in each journal to quantify the occurrence of the terms above and to see if perhaps some articles were overlooked when scrolling through each journal issue.
2.5.1 Vocations and Learning & Journal of Vocational Education and Training

*Vocations and Learning* began publishing in 2008 with about 150 articles published in total at the beginning of 2016. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* began publishing in 1949 and between 2000 and 2016 has published about 530 peer-reviewed articles (the entire publication history was considered in searching for the terms below). The results were similar for both (I have excluded my own articles in the respective journals):

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<th>Narrative</th>
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<th>Phronesis</th>
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<td><em>VoL</em></td>
<td>39 hits</td>
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<td><em>JVET</em></td>
<td>119 hits</td>
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Among the articles the ones closest to the present inquiry seemed to be the following 10. Laginder & Stenøien (2011) use a biographical inquiry into the learning life stories of a group of craftspeople and folk-dancers, but the analysis is not focused on the practical. Chan (2015, 2014) takes a narrative approach to occupational identity (a not uncommon focus). Farrar & Trorey (2008) discuss expertise in stonewalling through an ethnographic study focusing mostly on the techne-aspect of practical knowledge. Brunton & Jeffrey (2010) use critical incidents to discuss communication management competencies, analyzing 202 critical incidents to develop propositional knowledge about these competencies. James (2010) and Hyland (2011) are the only two studies dealing explicitly with vocational morals but neither introduces a phronetic and practical perspective. Hyland suggests integrating mindfulness practices in VET and James, through interviews with construction workers develops “15 principles for engaging in the development of vocational morals (2010, p. 412).” Conway & Foskey (2015) perform a closely related inquiry from the point of view of appreciative inquiry where they conduct fourteen interviews with apprentices in order to identify factors that contribute to thriving at work. Canning (2011) uses students’ critical incidents to critique the role of reflective practice in Scottish teacher education. Hager & Johnsson (2009) discuss the learning of novice orchestra musicians in terms of going beyond skill and technique. Their empirical findings are used to discuss implications for various theories of workplace learning.

To summarize, empirical studies that employ terms related to those of vocational Bildung didactics are used to develop exclusively propositional modes of

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15 The number of articles have been rounded up or down to the nearest increment of 5 because in counting, two issues emerged: first, the journals made different categorizations of articles not limited to editorial, book review and original article and this made it difficult sometimes to decide what to count, second, I may have miscounted. Since the exact number of articles to date (1st March 2016) is not of any central importance it hasn’t been double-checked.
analysis and the presentational as well as practical form of knowledge are not explicitly present. It is perhaps not that much of a surprise that journals aimed at research in VET seldom have a focus on practical knowledge (at least expressed as such and not in other terms) given the wide scope of VET research and the infrequent use of narrative methods. I turn therefore to two journals where these matters are more in focus.

2.5.2 Reflective Practice & Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice

Reflective Practice, founded in 2000, is focused on studies related to its name and as such, could be expected to have many articles sensitive to the critique of Schön discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Including the first issue of 2016 the journal has published about 690 articles. Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice was founded in 1995. It has been included here because I have drawn on several articles from the journal in my work although Teaching and Teacher Education is also relevant for the same reason. The total number of articles from 2000 until today is about 570. Every article title from 2000 and onwards was considered and those that seemed relevant given a closer look. In addition the entire publication history of both journals was searched but sometimes with “narrative” or “wisdom” combined with another key-word because the single one was too imprecise in determining relevant studies. The results are in the table below:

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<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>7 hits</td>
<td>35 hits</td>
<td>78 hits</td>
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The result after more careful study of those articles that appeared relevant reduced the overall number to 20, seven from Reflective Practice and 13 from Teachers and teaching (Connelly & Clandinin, Narrative and education from 1995, would also be relevant but falls outside the timeframe). Of the seven articles, four (Griffin 2003; Moss et al. 2008; Paterson et al. 2006; Punzi 2015) use critical incidents and interviews to articulate practitioners’ experience but the aim was always to generalize from this, the excerpts presented being there to illustrate and exemplify. One (Vazir 2006) focuses on narratives of experience but, in reference to Clandinin and Connelly, as a way of articulating personal practical knowledge, there being no suggestion that the personal be made public.
or of a difference between experience-narratives and narratives as a way of articulating practical knowledge in the sense of action-descriptions. The two articles by Gade mentioned previously (2014, 2011), deal with praxis and phronesis as units of analysis and narrative as unit of analysis respectively. Taken together these two articles come closest to a perspective where practical knowledge of Bildung and phronesis in narrative form is interesting as such. Much of the reviewed research in Reflective Practice focuses on how to get one or several students to engage in it. Narratives are used in order to become aware of processes as a means for reflecting on them. This is an aspect of the present inquiry but not the defining one given the stress placed on narratives as articulations of practical knowledge and the potential for others to be enriched by them. In a sense, reflection and action are two ends of a spectrum where research on reflective practice mostly attends to one end whereas VBD attends more to the other.

Of the 13 articles in Teachers and Teaching, five deal with ethical issues. Campbell (2004) references an extensive interview and observation study in classrooms in order to elicit and discuss what, in the present context would be termed, teacher virtues (i.e., the praxis or doing towards which phronesis is oriented) such as trust, fairness and respect. A similar interest animates Tirri & Husu’s (2002) study where conflicts in the practice of virtues are discussed. Colnerud (2006) is concerned with formulating the next generation of research problems in the context of teacher ethics. The two questions raised as warranting more research regard the difficulty in being a morally good teacher and the moral responsibility connected with choice of content for education. Lunenberg & Korthagen (2009) discuss a triangular relationship between theory, practical wisdom and experience and touch on many of the same arguments as those advanced here regarding cases as a means for affording the development of phronesis in teacher education. Davis & Murphy (2016) report on a narrative inquiry study discussing a teacher’s enacted curriculum alongside a student with chronic illness. They point mainly to the strong element of play in this process.

Seven articles deal with practical and professional knowledge in various ways. Zanting et al. (2003) inquire into how student teachers elicit their mentor teachers’ practical knowledge reporting observations, conversations and deeper questioning as ways. They suggest ways in which their study can inform teacher education and further research. Savvidou (2010) has conducted a study in storytelling as part of professional development as a path to developing professional knowledge. Hedges (2012) writes of teachers’ funds of knowledge with an interest in how to make the richness of tacit knowledge more explicit and reports a study from two early childhood services settings where analysis of extensive fieldwork results in the identification of various sources or funds of teacher knowledge. Marlowe & Disney (2006) read and analyze a series of books by teacher Torey Hayden within the conceptual framework of teacher lore. They categorize Hayden’s strategies for classroom behavior management and go on to emphasize the role of altruism and student empowerment in Hayden’s stories. Black-Hawkins & Florian (2012) write of teachers’ craft knowledge and view it
as potentially playing an important role in research about how teachers enact policy, in their case focusing on the policy of inclusive education. The study is a combination of classroom observation and interviews focusing on what has gone well, analyzing this data in order to present a differentiated view on the practice of inclusive pedagogy. Whelan et al. (2001) work with stories of professional knowledge landscapes and in particular the telling and retelling, within the research group writing the article, of one teachers’ difficulty with a parent. Ben-Peretz (2002) presents a study on retired teachers and their reflections on learning from experience. Excerpts from interviews are given and discussed thematically.

Finally, a recent (2015) editorial by Kelchtermans entitled: Learning from ‘good examples of practice’ has been included where he contrasts this with the more common: examples of good practice or even best practice. The argument being that a good example of practice is not a new norm but (p. 364):

Rather the examples talk to the audience as colleagues and fellow-professionals inviting them to think along (using the understandings and insights offered) to link the presented experiences and knowledge to their own professional context and situation.

Lunenberg & Korthagen (2009) provide a largely overlapping framework for that part of the present inquiry aiming at teacher education and professional development. Kelchtermans argument about learning from good examples of practice, although he makes it explicitly clear that these do not necessarily have to be success stories (2015, p. 364), is similar to the perspective advanced here on how to design good narrative cases (cf. chapter 4). Other than this the articles on ethical issues do not aim at articulating particulars of practice as a form of practical knowledge and the articles on practical knowledge do not distinguish between different forms of this. Black-Hawkins & Florian (2012), for example, write of teachers’ craft knowledge and include in it both the craft-like and practice wisdom. Practice and practical wisdom are hard to keep apart in some of these and similar inquiries and practice wisdom or wisdom of practice sometimes cover an artful and experienced enaction of a teachers craft-like knowledge as discussed previously.

2.5.3 Summary

Returning to the initial discussion, the contention by Schön (1983, p. vii) regarding the selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry by universities can be extended. Bearing in mind the caveats about the difficulty of locating relevant studies that might use other terms for similar issues, then this review of journal studies indicates that there is this kind of selective inattention to the Bildung and phronesis of practitioners from a practical knowledge perspective. This, it seems, is a consequence of the combination of:
1. The selective inattention that Schön criticized originally regarding practical competence and professional artistry. Few of the articles use case narratives as they are used in his studies (Schön 1987) or as argued for here.

2. The narrative-biographical character of Bildung and phronesis (whereas the rough ground as craft-like practical knowledge can be inquired into through participant observation, filming, etc.).

3. The lack of distinction between experience (which invites the inquiry to focus on the personal and individual) and practical knowledge (which invites the inquiry to focus on that which can be shared and compared), especially in the field of narrative inquiry.

Although all of the concepts in this inquiry have been articulated by others, this particular combination of them and the resulting line of argument seems rare.

Another possible form of selective inattention lies in the tradition of article writing and narrative presentations. Few of the articles contain self-enclosed case narratives, instead reporting bits and pieces to illustrate general points. Thus the case narratives are not allowed to stand on their own as sources of knowledge and this is at the center of the present argument, we cannot replace the narrative but need to let it remain comparatively extensive if it is to be a form of practical knowledge. Perhaps article writing as a format educates scholars away from the approach advocated here.

2.6 The search: deliberations, databases, terms and limits

The work of finding prior scholarship relevant to the inquiry can be largely divided into three categories.

First, cross-referencing, ie. looking at the references in relevant books and articles and through them finding further ones to consider. Included in this is also the sometimes surprisingly effective logarithm that Amazon uses when one orders books to suggest other, related, writing.

Second, I have used three different databases as the main sources for searches: Google scholar, Academic Search Premier and Eric together with the regular Google search engine. In these I have crosschecked the central conceptual terms of the inquiry going through most combinations of Bildung + “vocational Bildung” + “Berufliche Bildung” + didactics/didaktik + “practical knowledge” + narrative + phronesis + imagination + “moral imagination” + “reflective practice.” These searches have been complemented with specific terms of relevance such as “pedagogical content knowledge,” “critical incidents” and Schön (as well as other scholars). With Google scholar the number of results from simple
searches such as phronesis + didactics is often in the thousands warranting the inclusion of more key-terms but thereby, perhaps, missing some relevant inquiries. I have also done similar searches within specific journals, for example using the search terms Schiller, imagination and phronesis/practical wisdom in the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*.

Third, I have also received helpful suggestions from colleagues, through inquiries sent to knowledgeable scholars, and in the process of presenting parts of the inquiry at conferences and seminars.

In sifting through the huge volumes of scholarship dealing with aspects of the inquiry some kind of decision has to be made as to what research to consider and what to ignore. I have been more restrictive in considering theoretical and philosophical work because in the context of phronesis and Bildung such writing is far more voluminous than empirical studies. The main way of limiting the inquiry here has been the inclusion of vocational education as a qualifying term because theoretical writing seldom relates to this. The other way of tracing this boundary has been to focus on articles and books where more than two of the key concepts of the inquiry are present such as Pendlebury (1995) or where two of them stand out as unusually well developed in relation to the questions pursued, such as in Noel (1999a, b). Empirical studies in the traditional VET field on these topics are few and there has been no need to make decisions on what to include or exclude here. The exception being teacher-studies within the field of narrative inquiry (eg. Clandinin & Connelly 1995, 2000) and teacher lore (Shubert & Ayers 1992) as well as studies in pedagogical content knowledge (eg. Gudmundsdottir, et al. 2000; Shulman 2004) and critical incidents (Brookfield 1990). Here I have tried to be aware of the main works of the respective field and to make sure to compare the perspectives with the present inquiry. From the works reviewed it seems that the overlap is often considerable but tends to miss at least one part of the cluster: unusual success, practical knowledge, didactics, phronesis, Bildung, systematic gathering of narratives. One aspect of these studies which has, for the most part, been left aside is the re-analysis of published teacher narratives (eg. Shubert & Ayers 1992; Clandinin & Connelly 1995) and casebooks (eg. Shulman, et al. 2002). As can be seen from the previous discussion on pedagogical content knowledge sometimes stories appear in such studies that would fit just as well within the present conceptual framework. Likewise, there has been no attempt to look up auto/biographical literature where one can assume that relevant stories could be found from time to time. The reason for this is mostly a matter of such work being time-consuming.
3 Conceptual framework

It is through hearing stories about wicked stepmothers, lost children, good but misguided kings, wolves that suckle twin boys, youngest sons that receive no inheritance but must make their own way in the world and eldest sons who waste their inheritance on riotous living and go into exile to live with the swine, that children learn or mis-learn both what a child and what a parent is, what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born and what the ways of the world are. Deprive children of stories and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words. Hence there is no way to give us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources. Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things. Vico was right and so was Joyce. And so too of course is that moral tradition from heroic society to its medieval heirs according to which the telling of stories has a key part in educating us into the virtues (MacIntyre, 2011 [1981], p. 251).

This opening quote from MacIntyre illustrates the overall direction I have taken in developing the conceptual framework of vocational Bildung didactics (VBD). It has an emphasis on stories and one might paraphrase part of it as: deprive adults of case narratives related to Bildung and phronesis and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words. VBD is fundamentally about collecting a stock of stories, giving them an extensive and critical conceptual context and interpreting them systematically. It also indicates one of the areas where the inquiry is affiliated with the Romantic Movement of the 19th century, that of collecting stories. It was the Romantic Movement that sparked the systematic interest in gathering folk-tales and folk songs (cf. eg. Safranski 2007). And if that interest was primarily directed toward the preservation of something ancient and at risk of disappearing the present interest is in stories describing especially innovative/enriching forms of practice that, unless preserved, are easily forgotten leading to a lack of progress. Another aspect where the inquiry has had the early German Romantic Movement as a source is in the conceptualization of Bildung and imagination; this is discussed further in the relevant sections.

The focus here is on the main concepts that have been outlined in the articles and that together constitute the (provisional) framework of vocational Bildung didactics. The aim is to provide them with added depth and context as well as presenting them together in a coherent relation to each other. This is
done through the traditions and practices (MacIntyre 2011, further explained below, 2.4) in which they receive their context. Taken together this can be termed the theoretical framework of VBD.

VBD is made up of vocational Bildung and vocational phronesis (practical wisdom) as sensitizing concepts. Pedagogical imagination and didactically relevant practical knowledge as narratively articulated represent more of a theoretical basis for the framework. Briefly put, vocational Bildung encompasses those aspects of a vocational education that go beyond skills and knowledge to cover matters such as character development, ethics, aesthetic sensibilities and more. Practical wisdom focuses specifically on ethical action in vocational contexts. Pedagogical imagination is at the center of how practical knowledge is understood, as the capacity with which we formulate case narratives as well as make sense of them and (potentially) reinterpret them into further action and research. It also functions as the conceptual bridge between the two most important aspects of Bildung and phronesis: the moral and the aesthetic. Practical didactical knowledge is a way of considering those parts of teaching that are enacted and that require practice for proficiency. This conceptualization has a dual function being both theoretical and methodological where the methodological side of it continues in the discussion on case narratives (in chapter 4 on method).

The chapter begins with an outline of how the concepts were considered in the articles pointing out those aspects that were left in need of further depth and/or internal coherence. It then moves on to discuss, in order, vocational Bildung, vocational phronesis, pedagogical imagination and practical-didactical knowledge. After that the concept of a practice, having been used throughout in a naïve fashion is given its context through MacIntyre. This also introduces the idea of a tradition, which clarifies the two philosophical pillars of the inquiry: Aristotelianism and early German Romanticism. Aristotelianism also serves, together with pragmatism, as the basis for the scientific and methodological context of the inquiry. Aristotelianism through the phronetic approach to social science and pragmatism through the abductive method. These matters are considered further in chapter 4.

3.1 VBD as conceptual framework in the articles

The process of writing the articles was also the process of theorizing the conceptual framework of VBD, which means that there are expressions and conceptualizations in them that have since been changed. Mainly this has led to a reduction in the use of “narratively articulated” as well as an emphasis on case narratives as the methodological component rather than part of the conceptual structure. This can be even more confusing because one part of the inquiry process has been to explore the main concepts of VBD resulting in the theorizing of further concepts. These are the conceptualization of a field of practice (Tyson
the differentiation between expansive and intensive Bildung (Tyson 2016c) and between vocational and cultural practice (Tyson forthcoming). They have been saved for the article summaries and ensuing discussion. The focus of the articles isn’t exclusively on conceptual theorizing but also on contributions to practice as well as methodological theorizing. This last aspect is largely about characterizing what a case narrative is and how it is a contribution to, and an expression of, didactically relevant practical knowledge. The elaboration of this, as mentioned above, follows in chapter 4 on research design and methodology.

In ordering the articles the one entitled: *The didactics of vocational Bildung: How stories matter in VET research* (Tyson 2016a) can be considered first because in it the attempt was made to delineate a number of different ways in which the approach of VBD could provide relevant new knowledge. In it the concepts of vocational Bildung, didactics and practical knowledge are considered most extensively. Following this one can go on to look at *Pedagogical imagination and practical wisdom: The role of success narratives in teacher education and professional development* (Tyson 2016b) where the complimentary concepts of pedagogical imagination and phronesis/practical wisdom were outlined most extensively. These two together present the basic framework of VBD. Next, the article *What is excellence in practice? Empirical explorations of vocational Bildung and practical wisdom through case narratives* (Tyson forthcoming) adds a significant element to the conceptual framework, namely MacIntyre’s concept of “a practice,” a term left somewhat undertheorized in the previous articles. Finally, *What would Humboldt say: A case of general Bildung in vocational education?* (Tyson 2016c) can be added as an elaboration of how vocational Bildung is understood. However, both that article and the one entitled: *When expectations clash: Vocational education at the intersection of workplace and school* (Tyson 2016d) are more about conceptual and practical results and thus their involvement here is sparing. The rest of this chapter is concerned with providing a context to these concepts and, in particular, coherence given that concepts such as Bildung and phronesis stem from different traditions.

### 3.2 Bildung and phronesis

As mentioned above, Bildung and phronesis were not possible to consider together in any of the articles (other than in brief mentions) owing to matters of space. The exception being the article on MacIntyre (Tyson forthcoming) but there without actually going into matters of how they relate to each other. In the following I am concerned with three issues. First, providing some further context to Bildung and phronesis, which could not be done in the articles. Second, explaining how Bildung and phronesis can be part of the same conceptual framework and how they overlap. Third, providing a link between Bildung and
pedagogical imagination given that this link was only established between phronesis and pedagogical imagination in Tyson (2016b).

Bildung, beyond being a synonym for education in general, is a concept that literally could be translated as formation or making-an-image-of, Bild being the German and Swedish word for image or picture. Thus in these languages there is a confluence of forming something (bilda in Swedish) and “imageing” (for more extensive treatments of the concept cf. Klafki 2000; Rittelmeyer 2012). This explains some of the close ties that Bildung has with biographical development given that it connects with the formation of one’s biography through education. There are large parts of the concept of Bildung connected to aesthetic Bildung (Schiller 2010) and to the development of character and autonomy (Klafki 2000). In the context of understanding the relationship between Bildung and phronesis, the moral aspects of Bildung occupy the center of attention. It is possible to speak of someone as obildad (Sw.) or ungebildet (Ge.) implying not necessarily (but possibly) a lack of education but almost certainly a somewhat barbaric and uncouth character with a lack of refinement and morals. Klafki (2000, p. 96f. italics in original) summarizes this in a similar manner:

It should be clear … that [the classical understanding of] Bildung meant above all the awakening of self-determined moral responsibility, a readiness for moral action, and the capacity for moral action. Kant, Pestalozzi, Fichte and Hegel showed complete agreement on this score. And even interpretations of Herder, Goethe, Humboldt, or Froebel that describe their concept of Bildung as being one-sidedly aesthetic, or even aestheticizing, miss the mark.

Finally, the view of Bildung developed here is expressly Romantic and this is in large part owing to how it connects with pedagogical imagination. In the quote from Klafki above he references both Enlightenment and Romantic philosophers. It is common to consider many of the thinkers on Bildung like Kant, Schiller, Goethe, Hegel and Humboldt as neo-humanists (Løvlie 2002) emphasizing their debt to classical thought. The early Romantic view of Bildung shares much with them and can briefly be characterized by the following (Beiser 2004, p. 28-31):

1. It is a markedly aesthetic view drawing on the previous work of Schiller and Goethe and giving the aesthetic aspects even more prominence.
2. The role of human freedom in the process of Bildung is placed at the center emphasizing that any education can only afford experiences of Bildung never force them.
3. Furthermore, the Romantics emphasized love as the center of their ethics and as the power which mediates between reason and sensibility.
4. Finally, as Beiser writes (2004, p. 31): “The romantic ideal of Bildung affirmed the value of unity with oneself, others and nature.”

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All of these points can be found in the writings of especially Goethe and Schiller. Goethe (1999), as an example, wrote *The fairytale of the green snake and the beautiful Lily* as a direct commentary on Schiller’s *Aesthetic Letters* (Safranski 2009) and in it he declares (Goethe 1999, p.98): “love does not rule or dominate but it cultivates (Ge. *bildet*) and that is more!” What sets the early Romantic view apart from the neo-humanist one is the context that it is given. It is a context where imagination is placed at the center of both emotion and rationality.

The way Bildung is used here is also more practically oriented, as a sensitizing concept, imbued with the Romantic characteristics mentioned, in relation to the case narratives collected as empirical data. It is used in this sense to delineate the kind of practical knowledge that this type of inquiry focuses on: not primarily the craft-like kind by itself, i.e. not so much subject didactics or pedagogical content knowledge, but elements of a teachers’ practical knowledge that are entwined with these in part and sometimes stand on their own. The same holds for phronesis to which I turn next.

Phronesis is used in this study on four different levels which requires some initial clarification. It is used in the overarching sense of phronetic science (cf. chapter 4) where it is the social science foundation of the inquiry. It is used throughout as a central concept in understanding an aspect of practical knowledge (see below 3.4). It is used together with Bildung as a sensitizing concept in relation to the case narratives collected. Finally, it is also used as a “folk”-concept, practical wisdom, in order to roughly guide the writing tasks that are part of some of the case studies.

Phronesis as a sensitizing concept hearkens back to Aristotle (2009) and his distinction of three forms of knowledge: episteme (theoretical knowledge), 16 phronesis (practical wisdom) and techne (craft-like practical knowledge). Phronesis is the ability to make wise judgments about how to act in order to promote the good life in general. Thus phronesis is not a skill in the techne sense of having a craft skill, say being a skilled interviewer or theorizer in a scholarly context. Rather, it is the ability to make wise judgments about how to interview or theorize, what virtues (say patience or empathy) to bring into the situation and how, in order to promote human flourishing. Phronesis then, denotes practical wisdom in the sense of deliberating wisely about that which contributes to the well-being of a person, institution or group; in other words, flourishing. To clarify further, and this was a point of emphasis in Tyson (2016b), this can be understood as a spectrum having thoughtful deliberation at

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16 Not theoretical in the sense employed throughout this text but in the sense of contemplative truths (like geometry and philosophy). The practical in Aristotle’s view covers anything that is subject to change and particularity meaning that much propositional knowledge in natural and social science is part of various technai.
one end and immediate perception/discernment of a situation at the other (cf. Noel 1999a, b; Nussbaum 1990).

It is important to consider that just as Bildung can imply both education in general and connote the various values at the center of this inquiry so phronesis can mean practical wisdom in an Aristotelian sense but also something more general and diffuse today. For example Loughran (2006, p. 64) writes (and quotes):

Phronesis is theory with a small t, it is practical wisdom; it is knowledge of the particularities of a situation. It is knowledge of the concrete not the abstract. This practical knowledge is perceptual and "uses rules only as summaries and guides… [and requires] enough proper experience. For particulars only become familiar with experience, with a long process of perceiving, assessing situations, judging, choosing courses of action, and being confronted with their consequences. This generates a sort of insight that is altogether different from scientific knowledge (Kessels & Korthagen 2001, p. 27)."

This kind of characteristic conflates much of phronesis and techne. It also makes little distinction between rules and ideas. A rule is some regulative measure applied to practice (such as recipes) whereas an idea or concept of ethics could be say, the golden rule (treat thy neighbor…) or Kant’s categorical imperative or Levinas’ thoughts on the ethics of the Other. It also involves the term theory further complicating things considering the ambiguity of that term. Finally, phronesis is no longer understood from the explicitly ethical position that Aristotle takes but from a more general practical one. Similar characterizations of phronesis are made by Thomas (2010) and appear in some of the discussion about the wisdom of practice (Hager & Halliday 2009; Shulman 2004). This both confuses things and detracts from the sharpness of phronesis as sensitizing concept. It loses its capacity to indicate a certain kind of practical knowledge and at the same time it becomes unclear why the kind of knowledge described as phronesis is rare and important to articulate. Practical knowledge in general does not necessarily share this attribute. For instance, Wolfgang, during my apprenticeship, once told me about a fellow apprentice who mistakenly put dry glue-kernels in hot instead of cold water overnight in order to soften them quicker. This turned them into a hard cake, rather than a soft sponge-like thing suitable for heating to become glue. It took hours to hack out of the bucket. The moral being, don’t ever put glue-kernels in hot water to soak. Such narratives can just as easily be generalized in a handbook for basic bookbinding (and have been) if not for the way it sticks (!) in memory as a story. By aiming at practical knowledge in general it is easy to lose track of those aspects of it that are in fact very difficult to get at other than through narrative articulations namely those covered by Bildung and phronesis. This obscures matters. Thus, to be clear, techne can be articulated both narratively and propositionally whereas phronesis is mainly a narrative kind of knowing.
Aristotle writes of someone who is practically wise as a *phronimos* and, as noted above for the opposite case, it is possible (and not uncommon) to speak of someone who has a significant amount of Bildung as *gebildet* (Ge.) or *bildad* (Sw.). Thus the relationship of phronesis to the ethical aspect of Bildung discussed previously can be brought a step further here. Both Bildung and phronesis treat the human being as intrinsically valuable and aim for human flourishing, in the context of the inquiry flourishing in vocational practices. The viewpoint taken here is that *phronesis is the center of Bildung-oriented action* but that Bildung is a necessary concept given its wider biographical and educational character. Bildung, owing to its long history, contains educational perspectives that are not original to the concept of phronesis.

Furthermore, virtue in the Aristotelian sense of *arête* had the general meaning of excellence and Aristotle makes the case not just for moral excellences such as courage but intellectual excellences as well (Cooke & Carr 2014, p. 103ff.). These intellectual excellences or virtues, Cooke & Carr suggest “intellectual curiosity, concern for truth, academic integrity, scholarly rigor, open-mindedness” for teachers, are also part of the case narratives. This is reflected below in the move from moral imagination to pedagogical imagination. It needs to be borne in mind throughout especially since, if Cooke & Carr are right (ibid), MacIntyre himself holds a more strictly moral view on the virtues in relation to practices. It is thus likely that he would disagree with the perspective developed here on this issue. The point with this is that Bildung contains not only a core of moral virtue and phronesis but also the various intellectual or epistemic (Sockett 2012) virtues. This issue of intellectual virtues in relation to moral virtues has not been a distinct theme throughout the inquiry and so it could well be an important matter to explore in the future (cf. chapter 6).

Another distinction between phronesis and Bildung is that Bildung, as mentioned previously, can only be afforded, it is up to the learning individual what she does with this affordance. Phronesis on the other hand is enacted, in deliberation, communication, etc. This is, in part, a semantic distinction but one that might cause confusion when expressions such as affording Bildung or enacting Bildung-affordances are used. To afford someone an experience of Bildung requires phronesis, didactical skill, intellectual virtue and perhaps more. This is also a distinction that can be turned around, arguing that becoming a *phronimos* is entwined with becoming *gebildet*, meaning that many of the wider issues of Bildung are part of an education for phronesis.

There are differences that follow from these distinctions regarding categorization and method. Bildung works conceptually when considering full biographies where phronesis would seem somewhat out of place. Phronesis on the other hand is often more adequate as a concept when considering specific ethical issues. Methodologically, asking about Bildung is asking about what was important and memorable in life, a very open-ended question. Questions about phronesis can be more precise or specific, asking about conflict resolution, about how to deal with suffering, about wise educational interventions, etc. For
example, case narratives of suffering and how to alleviate it are narratives that
tend to articulate the phronesis of nurses and other health-care practitioners and
at the same time of the nurses’ existential Bildung (cf. Tyson 2016a, forthcoming, for examples). There is also a distinction to bear in mind in that cases of Bildung invariably describe some educational action or learning experience whereas cases of phronesis such as those of successful conflict resolution in Ty-
son (2016b) or those of the nurses mentioned can describe straightforward
ethical actions. These cases become didactical by being placed in a didactical
context whereas cases of Bildung carry this context with them from the start.
Thus from a methodological and didactical standpoint Bildung and phronesis
are not entirely interchangeable concepts.

3.2.1 The vocational perspective on Bildung and phronesis

Vocational Bildung is that part of a person’s Bildung achieved in vocational
contexts and through vocational tasks and education (cf. Tyson 2015a, 2016c).
Vocational here means any kind of work-related contents and processes includ-
ing academic vocational education. There is a blurry line of demarcation when
it comes to some academic education given that many countries have teacher
education as part of academic training and this is clearly vocational. However,
there are also disciplines such as philosophy where on the one hand one can
train to become a professional philosopher and on the other hand one can ma-
jor in philosophy without actually working professionally with it. This is a part
of academia where the vocational and the liberal are difficult to separate. The
issue warrants its own treatment but is not of any decisive importance for the
present inquiry although this would change if the empirical case studies turned
to matters of Bildung and phronesis within the academy (cf. Higgins 2010).
This would be the case if eg. university teachers were interviewed regarding
their Bildung experiences in the academy.

Vocational phronesis is part of what I have previously described as vocational
excellence (Tyson 2015b). It is the capacity to promote human flourishing
within the context of a vocation and as a teacher providing education for a vo-
cation. Included in vocational excellence are also the virtues needed to effect
this whereas the practical wisdom aspect is more about judgment and capacity
for wise deliberation and imagination.

The vocational perspective is an acknowledgement that Bildung and phron-
esis are enacted in and through a techne/occupation (and sometimes in explicit
opposition to it, cf. Tyson 2015b). The point is that a teacher’s pedagogical-
didactical knowledge and a practitioner’s skill are entwined with Bildung and
phronesis so that the general capacity for practical wisdom or Bildung is modi-
fied, mediated and colored by the vocation. This is also the main difference
between the present kind of inquiry and the arguments by, among others,
Nussbaum (1990) and Coles (1989) that fictional stories can enrich/educate the
moral imagination. Their writing is about those issues of moral conduct and
human virtue that aren’t first and foremost vocational but rather about life in a wider sense. There are also interesting overlaps such as Tolstoy’s *Death of Ivan Illich*, which is sometimes read in nursing education (Freeman 1997).

### 3.2.2 Understanding Bildung and phronesis as sensitizing concepts

Bildung and phronesis are the main sensitizing concepts in the framework of VBD. They function as such in that each one calls attention to a certain way of seeing and engaging with a case narrative (perhaps even more accurately a certain frame of imagination, see further below). Their capacity to function as such is perhaps the main result of the previous licentiate thesis where vocational Bildung and phronesis were extensively discussed throughout the thesis and were each was the topic of an article (Tyson 2014, 2015a, b). That work has meant that it has become possible here to be more concise in presenting the concepts. It has also meant that when dealing with the cases in the present inquiry, vocational Bildung and phronesis have been more a part of my preunderstanding making it possible to turn my attention to further aspects of the cases. This is considered further in chapter 4 when the abductive process is described.

One example of how vocational Bildung and phronesis function is in the way practical wisdom can sensitize us to cases describing moral actions. In reading through part of the literature on narrative inquiry in education this had two effects (in combination with the other concepts in the framework). First, of clarifying when, how and why much of this research is close to the present perspective but still different. Second, of highlighting when a perfectly good example of the kinds of case narratives that are of interest here appeared. Thus in Huber & Whelan (1995, p. 148) one can read the following as part of a longer study centered on an experienced teacher:

Karen brought the children back to the cozy corner and they shared *Frederick* (Lionni, 1967). This story tells of a mouse named Frederick. Frederick, however, is not like other mice as he does not prepare for winter in the same manner as they do.

When the other mice question Frederick about this, he tells them that he is gathering sun rays to warm the cold dark winter days; colors to brighten the grayness of winter; and words, as the winter days are long and many and the mice will run out of things to say. Before long the supplies gathered by the other mice have run out and they are reminded of the supplies Frederick has gathered. The mice remind Frederick of his supplies, which he shares with them. As Frederick spoke to the mice of the sun, they began to feel warmer; when Frederick talked of color, he helped the other mice see pictures of colors that they had painted in their minds; and when Frederick shared his words with them, he helped the other mice experience poetry.
After this story was shared, Karen and the children discussed what Frederick’s special gift was. Karen asked the children to spend some time thinking about what their special gifts were. The children talked in their groups and drew pictures of their gifts. Some of the children had time to begin writing in their memoir about their special gifts and why they chose to represent the gift that they did.

The gifts that the children represented are hung above the corridor of windows on one of the lengthwise walls of the classroom. After the gifts were hung, Karen and the children talked about what kind of a special message they should put below the pictures. Elsa suggested: “When We Live Together, Love Lives with Us.” The class voted unanimously that they wanted this message displayed below their gifts. (Field notes, September 9, 1991)

Through the sensitizing concept of phronesis this story emerges as a case narrative of didactically relevant practical knowledge in which the practical wisdom of a teacher is articulated. Clearly, this is an interpretation on my part, perhaps other readers find the story mostly sentimental or in any case hardly an expression of phronesis. But there is no way to objectively determine this. We can only make such case narratives public, present an initial outline of phronesis as a concept and then argue for our interpretations of the cases and accept that there will be disagreement sometimes, or even often. The point with developing Bildung and phronesis as sensitizing concepts is that through them the case narratives become situated as narratives of that specific kind.

3.3 Imagination

In developing the concept of pedagogical imagination (Tyson 2016b) as a central aspect of VBD, several aspects of the argument were left open. First, as one of the reviewers also pointed out regarding differences in moral philosophy, there is a need to make more explicit and clear how imagination as understood from the pragmatic point of view is compatible with an Aristotelian approach. This was considered somewhat in a footnote from a case narrative perspective but warrants further discussion regarding potential differences in understanding imagination. Second, although the connection between imagination and Bildung was not made in the article it is easy to locate it in the emphasis placed on it in aesthetic Bildung. However, this immediately leads over into the question of how the ethical and aesthetic relate to each other, something recognized by the early Romantics especially in their regard for Schiller’s aesthetic philosophy (Safranski 2007). This same issue, only briefly considered in the article, crops up from another point of view regarding the relationship between pedagogical and moral imagination. Third, an Aristotelian view on art as techne or craft-like (Eisner 2002) is not immediately compatible with an aesthetic understanding of moral imagination as the center of phronesis and needs to be addressed.
Before proceeding to these discussions a brief review of the distinction between moral and pedagogical imagination made in Tyson (2016b) is in order since it will not be discussed until the end of the section. It is stated in the article introduction that pedagogical imagination is not just to be understood as moral imagination in an educational context (ibid, p. 457). The ensuing text advances an argument that pedagogical imagination is also about translating general issues requiring phronesis into the vocational context of education. In the process this involves a significant part of the techne or craft-like knowledge of teaching which is another way of saying that pedagogical imagination is moral imagination imbued with didactical knowledge/skill and Bildung. Thus when writing about moral imagination I am considering matters of phronesis that are not immediately vocational and educational. Pedagogical imagination always implies a moral core but also the didactical and Bildung aspects.

Finally, since the Aristotelian approach to ethics strongly emphasizes virtues in addition to phronesis (Sockett 2012) it can be noted that VBD places comparatively little emphasis on discussing the virtues. The reason is simply that narratives of virtuous action do not promote that virtue but rather a practically wise perspective on the virtue. A virtue is enriched or strengthened by being enacted. A story about such action cannot strengthen the virtue, only the wisdom with which one imagines how to enact it. If one lacks that virtue no story will make up for it. A further differentiation can be made between basic virtues such as compassion, generosity, tact, etc. and the sometimes more complex moral imaginations that are articulated in case narratives of VBD (like the actions referring to Rosenberg’s non-violent communication in Tyson 2016b). A moral action depends equally on a person’s moral dispositions (virtues), i.e. capacity to act tactfully, etc. and on the capacity to imagine ways in which to enact these dispositions. And this is a matter of perception through moral ideas because without the idea, the name, certain aspects of the world remain clouded or invisible. The idea of forgiveness highlights some potential actions, as does the perhaps more complex idea articulated by Levinas regarding the Other (2005). Without his moral idea some ways to enact compassion, etc. are simply not available or at least become less clear.

17 As noted in Tyson (2016b) the concept of moral imagination also has its roots in the ideas of Steiner as expressed in The philosophy of freedom (Steiner 2013 [1918/1894]). This was outlined more extensively in Tyson (2015c) and the perspective Steiner developed has been quite influential on the way I have come to understand it. However, including a full section on this is not outright necessary for the immediate issues to be dealt with and makes the conceptual framework less concise and so it is limited here to a few references.
3.3.1 Imagination in Pragmatism and Aristotelianism

The concept of (pedagogical) imagination, developed in Tyson (2016b), holds much of the framework together theoretically. Following Schön (who uses the term interpretation) and who explicitly references Dewey’s pragmatic view (1987), imagination was characterized as a capacity to see “this” as “that.” In the context of the case narratives that are at the center of this inquiry it means on the one hand seeing a narrative as an instance of something, generally speaking Bildung or phronesis, and being able to see another situation as related to that case. This means understanding imagination as a capacity for interpretation; interpretation of a unique situation as something and interpretation of a concept (or a curriculum) in the process of enacting it. This initial view of imagination overlaps with how Nussbaum (1990, p. 75-82) describes Aristotle’s understanding of *phantasia* as the capacity in practical wisdom of seeing a situation as in need of some moral intervention. In other words, there is, to begin with, a basic agreement between at least a version of the pragmatic and Aristotelian understanding of imagination as a form of interpretive capacity.

Another perspective on imagination, that builds on the arguments in Nussbaum (1990), Heron & Reason (1997) and Steiner (2013) is that each case narrative is a) created with the help of imagination because it is the result of a process of forming a coherent image/narrative out of an episode or series of events and b) then becomes an image that in a sense hovers between particular situations and general propositions. On this level imagination is that capacity which mediates between the general and particular and without which the case narratives are mostly useless in action.

These are two different but compatible ways of describing how imagination works as part of practical knowledge. First as an interpretive capacity that can veer towards a kind of situational perception and second as the creative capacity to make case narratives and to move between the particular and the general. Nussbaum describes it in the following way in her discussion of phronesis in *Love’s knowledge* (1990, p. 95):

> Perception [a term including judgment and imagination in relation to a situation], we might say, is a process of loving conversation between rules and concrete responses, general conceptions and unique cases, in which the general articulates the particular and is in turn further articulated by it.

It summarizes a core part of understanding how the case narratives can function as a form of practical knowledge. As such it is integral to the theoretical framework of VBD because it provides the bridge between the sensitizing concepts of vocational Bildung and phronesis and the understanding of practical knowledge that leads over into the methodology of case narratives. It is also, as the article (2016b) highlights in its title, a concept that indicates the didactical relevance of VBD for teacher education and professional development thus spanning the
entire scope of the inquiry from conceptual framework, through methodology to didactical enactment in education.

There are two further remarks that need to be made regarding imagination, narratives and practical knowledge. First, an important distinction is that the narrative education of the moral imagination (Nussbaum 1990) works in two slightly different ways. The present inquiry and its focus on phronesis as a form of practical knowledge takes narratives as articulations of rich/wise practice and as contributors to that moral imagination which is attuned to questions of how to act wisely. There is a different sense that can be exemplified by a recent thesis (Holmberg 2007) in which a mother (and university professor) presents a narrative study of the palliative care and death of her son to cancer. Here issues of practical knowledge and questions of enacting phronesis appear somewhat inappropriate. It seems more likely that such narrative cases educate the moral imagination in a deeper sense by evoking compassion and intense existential reflection as well as (in that particular case) gratitude both toward the mother who made this experience public and to the palliative care unit which is described as the epitome of professionalism and empathy. Thus, although this distinction is not dwelt on much in the thesis, far from all wisdom (moral or pedagogical) can be expressed in terms of actions promoting flourishing. Tragedy, although not necessarily leading to a capacity for wiser action, can contribute to the depth of one’s moral imagination and existential Bildung. Existential Bildung is briefly suggested as a category in Tyson (2016a with reference to Claeson 2010) and is a potential field of continued research in VBD (see further in chapter 6). Perhaps tragedy is more relevant in developing a general existential Bildung whereas the focus here on the vocational means that unusual success/richness becomes more important.

Second, a word of caution is warranted. As Moon (2010, p. 75f.) notes, there are studies that show a reduced critical awareness when statements contrary to known fact are couched in narrative terms. There seems to be an inherent risk in the kind of participation that imagination requires. It means that systematic work in this field calls for a multiplicity of narrative cases that express Bildung and phronesis in contradictory ways. Such contradictions can assist in the development of a reflective imagination that strives to be aware of its inertia and tunnel vision. Furthermore, as Barfield remarks (1988, p. 145):

Imagination is not, as some poets have thought, simply synonymous with good. It may be either good or evil. As long as art remained primarily mimetic [ie. engaged in reproducing or copying nature], the evil which imagination could do was limited by nature. Again, as long as it was treated as an amusement, the evil which it could do was limited in scope. But in [the present] age … both the good and the evil latent in the working of imagination begin to appear unlimited.

We have already seen some historical results of this. The imaginative impulse of the Romantic Movement stoked the flames of national chauvinism and anti-
Semitism, especially in the latter half of the 19th century. It was also brought into the crude biologism of the late 19th century and helped give rise to the national-socialist biological racism (cf. eg. Safranski 2007). It might be even worse since one can argue that biologism itself was a result of taking the unfettered capitalism of the previous 100 years and imagining this to be inherent to nature, i.e. the survival of the fittest was not a phenomenon that was in any way ubiquitous in nature but rather taken from the social circumstances of England at the time and imagined as part of the natural order. Of more immediate concern and as an example among many, Wagner, the celebrated German composer, was virulently antisemitic suggesting that artistic imagination has no causal connection to moral imagination and action. This has two aspects to it. First, as outlined initially, it is a matter of clarifying how the aesthetic activity that is imagination, although in itself not moral, can become morally engaged. Second, Aristotle’s view of art and practical wisdom understands them as two distinctly different forms of knowledge and thus seems to be in contradiction to the kind of perspective developed thus far. The latter matter will be dealt with first.

3.3.2 The relationship between art and practical wisdom

Aristotle (2009) separates art (techne) and practical wisdom (phronesis) creating some questions about what the inclusion of imagination implies. Eisner (2002) for example, explicitly references this in his critique of views that education is a kind of phronesis rather than an art. However, Aristotle’s conception of art is fundamentally mimetic as Barfield wrote in the quote above, one which was current at the time and claimed that the artist’s task was to imitate nature. This goes a long way towards explaining why he locates art in techne (which translated means art or craft). Wall (2003), Noel (1999b) and Nussbaum (1990) have argued for an interpretation of phronesis that includes phantasia and where a poetic or aesthetic aspect is a central part to it. So at least from a contemporary point of view, Aristotle’s phronesis is not incompatible with an emphasis on imagination. Here, I am following Barfield (1988, explicitly), Schiller (2010, implicitly) and Coleridge (Barfield 2014) in the view that our capacity for moral creativity through imagination has changed since the days of Aristotle. The argument being that the common view 2000 years ago of art as imitating nature reflects a cognitive reality where imagination was more receptive than active. This appears to be changing, reflected in some of the views on imagination.

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18 I write contemporary here because as I have understood Aristotle and the whole concept of art at the time, it was primarily mimetic (as referred to in the quote from Barfield), i.e. it was understood that an artist was an imitator of nature. The kind of active imagination considered here brings it closer to an aesthetic activity than the Aristotelian phantasia seems to be. Since this is not a thesis aimed at discussing ways of interpreting Aristotle stretching the boundaries somewhat is warranted, but it is important to be clear that this is not necessarily an accurate source if one is looking for a portrayal of Aristotle’s original meaning.
developed from Schiller (2010 [1795]) onward. It doesn’t mean that aesthetic activity should be located in phronesis instead of techne. Rather the creative work of imagination extends into both, as moral imagination in phronesis and as practical or craft-like imagination in techne. Referring back to the initial characterization of pedagogical imagination it means that one can distinguish (conceptually, not necessarily in action) between a practical imagination dealing with subject didactics and a pedagogical imagination dealing with phronesis and Bildung in education. All of this doesn’t cancel out the classical mimetic view of art and imagination, it adds something to it. In this view artistic, ie. imagina-tive/aesthetic, activity calls something into being that was not present previously or reveals something about nature that was not previously known. The result then of Bildung and phronesis is art (or beauty as Schiller would call it), the result of a life lived well is a biography characterized by integrity and coherence, a moral artwork.

3.3.3 Schiller’s aesthetic view of morality

The further issue of how morality relates to imagination as an aesthetic/artistic activity considering the previous objections begins with Schiller (2010). His aesthetic philosophy was an extensive part of the licentiate study (Tyson 2014, 2015a) and does not require a full repetition here. The central contribution to the present issue is Schiller’s characterization of aesthetic activity as play. He writes (2010, p. 60, my translation):

Everything that is neither subjectively nor objectively [meaning ideally or conceptually] accidental and yet that is not externally or internally imposed of necessity can be qualified with the word play.

The former refers to the need for a game or a work of art to be subjectively and conceptually meaningful, the latter that this meaning is not forced upon the game/work but given to it freely. This understanding of aesthetic activity implies three things. First, imagination, play and aesthetic activity are more or less synonymous although when used together can indicate different aspects of, or qualities in, an activity (a differentiation made from one point of view in Tyson 2016b, p. 459f.). Second, art is the result of such activity and it is this that underpins the statement above that the result of Bildung and phronesis is art/beauty. It is also the express view of Schiller who in one sentence brings beauty (the result of aesthetic activity) together with morality and indicates a bridge to the virtue-ethics of Aristotle (Schiller 2006, p. 32, my translation, italics in original):

The greatest perfection of character in a human being is moral beauty and this only comes about when duty has become [second] nature in her.
Third, playing always requires the active participation of those involved. Similarly, an aesthetic experience, be it in the appreciation of an artwork, of nature or in reading a case narrative of Bildung, is always predicated on the aesthetic activity that a person brings to the encounter. Depending on personal dispositions and situational context it may be more or less difficult to engage aesthetically (ie. playfully) with an object or situation but the point being made is that aesthetic experience can only be afforded (as with Bildung). In the end it always depends on the participant. This, as Schiller’s letters (2010) imply with their full title: Letters on the aesthetic education of Man, means that the relation between imagination (aesthetic activity) and morality is an educational issue. Schiller, following Kant (who was an immediate and fundamental influence on his work), recognized that morality had its source in ideas or ideals. But he also emphasized that the practical and particular had to be accounted equal weight arriving at a similar conclusion as Aristotle but on a different route. Thus he is not primarily saying that all we need is more arts in education and everything will be fine. His argument (and here he seems to overlap with Nussbaum 1990) can be read to mean that Wagner was badly educated in that his imagination was not afforded enough opportunities to engage with issues (or as it is termed here, case narratives) of morality. Less optimistically it could mean that Wagner’s education was fine, he just chose not to learn (become gebildet) from these affordances and instead seized the perverted idea that individuals can and should be subsumed in various collectives with his rich imagination. In effect, generalizations carrying moral connotations, which more or less all generalizations about groups of people do, contain an inherent immorality.

An example of a moral ideal in Schiller’s sense might be the United Nations declaration of human rights. This is also where I have found myself in the starkest disagreement with MacIntyre. In After Virtue he writes (2011, p. 83f. italics in original):

> In the United Nations declaration on human rights of 1949 what has since become the normal UN practice of not giving good reasons for any assertions whatsoever is followed with great rigor. And the latest defender of such rights, Ronald Dworkin … concedes that the existence of such rights cannot be demonstrated, but remarks on this point simply that it does not follow from the factor that a statement cannot be demonstrated that it is not true … Which is true, but could equally be used to defend claims about unicorns and witches.

The argument here is that unicorns and witches are presumably not so much a semantic issue but one of going out and looking for them (and agreeing on the criteria for what a unicorn or witch is). This is in contrast to postulating the moral idea of human rights, which is more like creating a unicorn (imagining it) and then appealing to others that this creation carries moral weight. A moral idea needs at one time or other to be articulated by someone but once grasped it can carry universal appeal, such as the immorality of murder or theft (Cooke &
However, as the history of the moral idea of universal human rights illustrates, it is a long road from conceiving it to enacting it. Furthermore, the history of antisemitism, to take the example of Wagner, has provided us with a strong case that immoral ideas can also appear evident to large numbers of people (to this day).

From this perspective we have a collective responsibility not only to uphold the general principles that we agree are basic to the society we want to live in, but also to articulate how these principles are enacted in practices with unusual excellence. Given that the present argument about morality is one that holds equally for pedagogy this is another way of saying that cases of unusually rich and wise pedagogy can be systematically collected, published and discussed as a way of making this collective responsibility more reflective and active for further change.

A consequence of this is that novel moral and pedagogical ideas can be made available both through intense philosophical activity (such as the previously referred to ideas of Levinas concerning the Other) and through research on emerging practice. The latter way of doing this is to consider case narratives of unusually rich practice and to reflect on how these can become transparent to new moral and pedagogical ideas that are developing or evolving but as yet only barely articulated in more abstract propositional terms. In terms of case study research this is a form of pattern recognition although perhaps recognition is a misleading term since one is not exactly recognizing the pattern in the sense that we recognize someone we already know but in the sense that we suddenly become aware of an underlying structure that we were previously unaware of. I have attempted to do this in Tyson (2016d) by taking the case of a social development project from a school in Germany and arguing that it holds the pattern of a novel kind of integrated vocational curriculum.19

### 3.4 Didactics, practical knowledge and practice

Compared to the way in which didactics, practical knowledge and practice have been considered in the articles there are three aspects in need of elaboration. One is the wider context of didactical research, which was the topic in chapter 2, section 2.1.4. The second is to make a clear distinction between practical knowledge and practice as they are understood throughout, especially since this distinction is not explicitly made in the articles until Tyson (forthcoming). The third is a concise review of the different ways that practical knowledge is understood in the inquiry.

19 It would perhaps be a fruitful inquiry to consider cases from the recent reception of refugees in Europe where the unprecedented engagement of people in a time of peace might well harbor seeds of new moral intuitions or new forms of enacting old ones.
What is the difference between practical knowledge and a practice? As understood here the main difference is that a practitioner has practical knowledge, which enables her to participate in a practice. This explains why the case narratives are applicable as articulations of both. As expressions of practical knowledge they are more oriented towards a practitioner perspective and as expressions of a practice more of a kind of mapping (cf. Tyson forthcoming). This latter aspect is why I wrote of exploring a “field of practice” in Tyson (2016a, b). However, on a more general level it is about articulating a tacit dimension, the excellences of a practice, allowing us to gain a more reflective and public access to ways in which human flourishing is promoted (cf. below 3.5.3 and Tyson forthcoming). Another way of clarifying the distinction is that we do not teach a practice, we initiate someone into it as MacIntyre (2011) puts it. We do teach or coach practical knowledge (Schön 1987). There is a tension here in that practical knowledge can be reduced to skills and thereby extensively divorced from any larger practice context. A vocational practice is something that requires a fair amount of education (formal or informal) to be initiated into because it includes its own history, culture, and excellences/virtues. VBD is a way of aiding in what could be called the co-articulation of practical knowledge and practices, of instances where practical knowledge is taught or expressed in a way that is not separated from a practice but rather contains the possible richness of that practice.

To be clear, practice can also mean the activity of practicing repeatedly in order to become proficient. To avoid confusion here this kind of practicing has been referred to explicitly in the sense outlined. A further use of the word practice common in English is in the sense of “in practice” meaning enacting something. “In practice” we do this or that. To avoid confusion I have written “in action” instead of “in practice.”

Next is the matter of outlining the various ways in which practical knowledge is used throughout. To begin with, the case narratives at the center of attention in VBD are narratives of actions in a wide sense and these become distinct as practical knowledge (as something more than experience), for two reasons: 1) because they are told in a didactically relevant way, with sufficient detail, etc. 2) because the perspective brought to the inquiry by the scholar is one that asks for certain kinds of stories told in certain ways (cf. appendix 1-3). Also, it is important to be clear that case narratives do not contribute directly to the part of practical knowledge that is dependent on practice in the sense of repeated action to become proficient. A person may read any number of good cases regarding didactics or the virtues and increase her capacity for neither. The cases have been considered as a form or element of practical knowledge in the articles in the following ways and note that all of these require imagination as developed in the previous section:
1. As articulations where they make previously tacit aspects of action available for reflection, this presupposes some skill/ability/capacity that can be enriched through the case (Tyson 2016b).

2. As contributions to the repertoire of cases that a practitioner has and draws from in engaging in actions in situations similar to that of the case (Tyson 2016a, b).

3. Related to this, as patterns for the construction of curricula and tasks. These are still a form of repertoire only not geared towards immediate social action (Tyson 2016c, d).

4. As enrichment of a person’s moral and pedagogical imagination which in turn is a central part of being excellent in a vocational practice. Virtuosity is not limited to the ability of enacting a skill or virtue but mastery implies the capacity to imagine what is not already present, i.e. to go beyond the given (Tyson 2016a, b).

5. As direct contribution to the practical knowledge that is phronesis because phronesis is narratively organized. A phronimos or practically wise person doesn’t have to be able to express that capacity as narratives but being able to do so can hardly detract from it (Tyson 2016b).

6. As direct contribution to Bildung-related practical-didactical knowledge because Bildung is biographical and the biographical is also narratively organized (Tyson 2016a).

Two of these (3 and 6) are directly practical-didactical kinds of knowledge. The other four are not necessarily didactical but can become so when enacted in educational contexts. Again, case narratives of phronesis and Bildung both mostly require more than themselves for practical action. Phronesis requires the relevant virtues to be present. Bildung requires didactical skill to be enacted and the case narratives support this, describing the actions of teachers as well as the Bildung-affordances they enabled. All of this points to the complexity of discussing practical knowledge, a complexity that increases when MacIntyre’s concept of a practice is added.

Another characteristic of this focus on practical knowledge related to educational contexts is the impermanence of it. Little can be claimed as more than interim (eg. Schön 1983; Dunne 1993). It changes as we grow with it, as culture changes, as new forms arise, and so on. Although the emphasis in the present study has not been on cultural, social and interpretive differences with regards to Bildung and phronesis it needs to be acknowledged and underscored that the practical character of such case narratives excludes any kind of universal narrative type. All case narratives are local and particular but not so much that what counts as wise in one context cannot be evaluated and contrasted with what counts as wise in another.
3.5 MacIntyre and the concepts of tradition and practice

3.5.1 Traditions

In *After Virtue* (2011 [1981]), MacIntyre argues that our moral narratives and ideas about the good life are always situated within a tradition. Not in the conservative sense of traditionalism but in the sense of having a particular history and context differing from other histories and contexts. Thus in MacIntyre’s view, as expressed in the initial quotation for the chapter, a tradition is a grand narrative within which some forms of action and reflection are made available while others are made less obviously possible. MacIntyre mostly writes of the differences between the older tradition of virtue-ethics and that which emerged with the Enlightenment in which the aim was to base ethical philosophy on rational principles. His concept of tradition is adopted in the following, arguing that the present work rests on three traditions: the Romantic, the Aristotelian and that of Bildung.

Schiller, Goethe and Novalis to various degrees represent the Romantic tradition. This initial grouping is not first and foremost historically correct, Schiller and Goethe for example, were not in any straightforward way part of the early Romantic period in Germany but rather skeptical of its proponents (cf. Safranski 2007). It is more that their writing is interpreted through a Romantic lens. The second, Aristotelian, tradition connects to the phronesis/techne distinction (Dunne 1993). It also includes an interest in cases where it draws on the practice of casuistry (Jonsen & Toulmin 1988). This tradition, in a wider sense, is also connected to pragmatism and critical perspectives on modernity especially as discussed by Schön (1983, 1987, 1991) regarding reflective practice.

The third tradition is Bildung (Rittelmeyer 2012). It could be argued that Bildung is the educational aspect concerned with intrinsic values of several traditions. Thus paideia was the Greek educational ideal of character education. There are the seven liberal arts of the Middle Ages that formed the basis for liberal education. The Christian tradition has a concept of Bildung as becoming an image of the divine. The Enlightenment developed a more secular view of Bildung that focused on autonomy and general education. The Romantic Movement took up the views of Goethe and Schiller to advance a view of Bildung that was aesthetic and biographical. There is no reason to object against viewing Bildung as an aspect of several traditions. However, precisely owing to this diversity it can be argued that Bildung might also be understood as a tradition in itself, one where the grand narrative is explicitly educational. This means that the tradition of Bildung emphasizes the central role of education for the development of the human being as such. This is also, it seems reasonable to think, why many prominent philosophers of Bildung, from Plato to Humboldt.
(cf. Tyson 2016c) have contrasted Bildung with vocational education calling the latter instrumental and only interested in extrinsic values meaning that it treats the human being as a means to something else. In any case, as considered further in the next section, Bildung in this study is understood more as an element of practices than as a tradition, which is why there is no further discussion of it as a tradition here.

At this point a critical question beckons. Where do we draw the line between one tradition and another? Is there an Aristotelian tradition and a (singular) Romantic? The concept seems a lot tidier than any attempt to outline an actual tradition, at least any attempt on my part. For instance, is Christianity one tradition or are there at least four: Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Gnostic/heretic. The title: *Virtues and practices in the Christian tradition* (Murphy et al. 2003) suggests the former. So in the grand narrative of Christianity there are several competing versions. Similarly then, it is particular versions of Romanticism, Aristotelianism and Bildung that are considered here, versions represented by all those authors which are referenced. Since the aim isn’t to provide a comprehensive discussion of the traditions but to consider how aspects of them come together to form a coherent framework for vocational Bildung didactics the partial and particular way in which they have been engaged with seems warranted.

In the preceding discussion of Bildung and phronesis there has been no attempt to differentiate between them as elements of two traditions and as aspects of *practices* in MacIntyre’s sense of the term. It is time then to consider that concept more extensively.

### 3.5.2 Practices

MacIntyre prefaces his discussion on traditions with a characterization of practice\(^\text{20}\) (2011, p. 218f.):

> By “a practice” I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. Tic-tac-toe is not an example of a practice in this sense, nor is throwing a football with skill;

\(^{20}\) In the previous discussion on traditions and even more so in this one on practices I have limited myself to those aspects of the concepts that are immediately relevant to the inquiry at hand. A more philosophical work would have to consider MacIntyre’s concept of a practice at least somewhat in relation to Wittgenstein, Heidegger and others as well as the critique that he has received (cf. Knight 2008 and Cooke & Carr 2014 for such a discussion).
but the game of football is, and so is chess. Bricklaying is not a practice; architecture is.21 Planting turnips is not a practice; farming is. So are the enquiries of physics, chemistry and biology, and so is the work of the historian, and so are painting and music.

This understanding of practice, where a tradition is constituted by a coherence of many practices, is basic to the present inquiry. MacIntyre makes some further points about the characteristics of practices that are also of immediate relevance.

First, he states that practices have goods internal and external to them. External goods are most often things like money, fame and power, which are amoral goods. In contrast to this, goods internal to a practice are connected to virtues; in the crafts, virtues of honesty, care, frugality, etc. are intimately tied to excellence in that practice. Inquiry into case narratives of Bildung and phronesis in vocational practice and vocational education practice is inquiry into cases of excellence in this sense.

Second, MacIntyre distinguishes between practices, which are constituted by a community, and the institutions that are formed around that practice. Institutions have a tendency to prioritize rules and external goods rather than the internal goods and excellences that are the core of practices. At the same time a practice is difficult to maintain without an institution. This means that there is an inherent tension between practice and institution where an institution has a tendency over time to corrupt the practice it is set to maintain. School is a paradigmatic example of this. Primary education as an initiation into basic social practices such as reading and writing as well as to the formation (Bildung) of oneself is, for the most part, institutionalized in schools. These institutions however, create rules (tests, scores, grades) and motivate students not by the internal excellence of the educational practice that is Bildung and the ability to participate in society, but rather by achieving high scores, grades, etc. This is emphasized in order to clarify the extensive overlap of VBD with MacIntyre’s perspective on practices. VBD is a way of systematically articulating the internal goods of a practice as they are being enacted and to have them feed back into that practice in order to counteract the corruptive influence of institutions. As elements of practices Bildung and phronesis are:

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21 This particular point can be contested, depending on what the occupation of bricklayer entails (and, it seems, MacIntyre’s understanding of practice would include all occupations that require some sort of training extending over a larger period of time than say, a month). I assume MacIntyre is thinking of the most basic activity of laying bricks and of course a lot of people outside of professional bricklayers have engaged in this activity from time to time. However, contrasting bricklaying with architecture is perhaps not the most well-chosen comparison, it is not equivalent to the following one of planting turnips to farming, perhaps bricklaying to masonry or something similar would do better. This matter is considered in more detail in What is excellence in practice? (Tyson forthcoming).
1. Mostly tacit and in need of narrative articulation.

2. Because of this tacitness, inherently unreflective, personal and difficult to evolve, ie. inherently conservative in a (slightly) negative or limiting sense.

Given this one might even question if there are any practices of Bildung and phronesis. Perhaps there is mostly a philosophical tradition coupled with isolated instances of enacted Bildung or enacted phronesis. A practice would need to have its own established rules, cases of excellence, training, etc. and it is difficult to argue against someone claiming that neither Bildung nor phronesis qualify. It makes no difference to the general aim of this study where one’s judgment falls regarding this, in any case the aim is to contribute to the systematic enrichment of Bildung and phronesis as part of the practices that constitute various vocations. This seems to be MacIntyre’s own view, given that he considers teaching not to be a practice as such but rather a part of any practice (Dunne 2003). It is similar to how a virtue such as patience is not only a virtue in the general sense but rather the patience of a craftsperson, a politician, a parent, etc. (cf. Cooke & Carr 2014; Higgins 2010, for an extended discussion). The basic argument here is that thinking in terms of either affirming the unity of virtues or affirming their vocational multiplicity ignores both empirical cases and the the capacity of our imagination to move between these extremes.

MacIntyre’s understanding of practice admittedly leaves the concept somewhat unclear as to where the boundaries of a practice are to be drawn. Echoing the previous questions about traditions, is chemistry really a practice or are there many practices of chemistry and in that case what is part of one chemistry practice and how do we know what to exclude? However, in the context of empirical studies in VBD the concept can be brought close to the case narratives where each narrative points to one or more practices, say, conflict resolution with children in after school care in Sweden (discussed in Tyson 2016b). This is a good example because one might well argue that after school care in Sweden is being developed into a practice with its own education, its own curricula, excellence and vocationalism, etc. One might also argue that conflict resolution as such has become a practice in society with several established schools (such as non-violent communication). Such a narrative can thus be interpreted from the point of view of at least two distinct practices, my interpretations in the article being from that of after school care. Viewed from this perspective Bildung and phronesis are to be understood as both elements of all educational practices and as, potentially (and in disagreement with MacIntyre), practices in themselves (this is discussed in further detail in Tyson forthcoming).

The point thus far is to call attention to Bildung and phronesis as MacIntyrean aspects of practice in education and the possibility of articulating that practice through case narratives. Such case narratives serve the same purpose for the practice-elements of Bildung and phronesis as various books, tools, materials
and manuals serve for the practice of a craft such as bookbinding. Narratives
then, are a way of making practice visible, allowing us to see ourselves and our
enaction of Bildung and phronesis. For the most part the inquiry at large and in
the various articles is more about such practices of Bildung than about the tra-
dition of Bildung. An exception is What would Humboldt say: a case of general
Bildung in vocational education? (Tyson 2016c) where the tradition of Bildung
as articulated by Humboldt is also discussed.

3.5.3 Flourishing, professional ethics and practices

The question of what a profession means to its practitioners, often overlooked, is
in fact central to professional ethics. Following Williams we have suggested that
any conception of professional ethics that excludes from its view the role of work
in the practitioner’s own quest to lead a flourishing life is not truly or fully an
ethics of professional life, but rather belongs to a narrower field we have called
moral professionalism. If we can recover an expanded conception of ethics, one
capacious enough to encompass self-cultivation and self-interest, then it follows
that our understanding of applied ethics can and must be similarly expanded.
Higgins (2010, p. 237, italics in original)

This opening quote shows how close to contemporary debate about MacIntyre
the present focus on the interrelationship between phronesis and Bildung is. It
is precisely such an expanded conception of ethics on which the premise of this
inquiry rests, that Bildung is part of what Higgins calls a professional ethics and
in many ways covers what this expanded conception is about.

MacIntyre develops an extended discussion on flourishing in relation to
practice considering the goods internal to each practice and participation in a
practice as participation also in the aim of supporting the development of these
goods, ie. supporting flourishing. Bildung and phronesis function conceptually
as a way of highlighting certain such goods that tend to become obscured when
VET is considered and, in combination with didactics, to make it clear that
these goods are also potentially part of what education can afford. Higgins goes
on to note that (2010, p. 245):

A true practice is not entirely a world in itself but communicates with the rest of
society. It has the power to teach all of us something new about what is worth
striving for and about the forms of excellence.

This suggests that when an outstanding practitioner – Muhammad Ali for
example – becomes a cultural hero, two things are going on. It is not only that
we contemplate Ali as an example of greatness in boxing, but also that we have
begun to learn from greatness in boxing something new about greatness in gen-
eral. We extend, concretize, and reanimate our notions of human flourishing.
Without the generativity of practices, we would inhabit a shrunken and gray

75
moral universe with only a couple of known things worth striving for and these
existing not as palpable purposes but as prosaic ideals. Practice, MacIntyre
teaches us is the poetry of the moral life.

This way of considering human flourishing as the aim of any practice clarifies
and expands on the potentials of VBD. First, as discussed regarding imagina-
tion, case narratives from practices hold the potential for just this kind of exten-
sion, concretization and reanimation. Second, to the extent that one is critical
of contemporary VET and working life, these are part of larger grand narratives
(perhaps of liberal market economics) and alternatives can only really emerge,
within or outside of this, that are part of other narratives. Research that makes
no effort to find the unusually rich tends to confirm the norms of a culture and
society. It is part of the potential of VBD to offer narrative alternatives to what
we are accustomed to. Third, Higgins makes a distinction here between the
prosaic and the poetic which is perfectly in line with that made by Barfield and
which could be said forms the basis for the present emphasis on narratives of
success, richness, praiseworthiness, etc. Briefly, Barfield (2010, 4th ed. [1928])
makes an extended argument that the poetic is where we create new metaphors,
poetic practice being thus where we create new ways of conceiving excellence.
Prosaic is something that any metaphor has a tendency to become with time as
it is used repeatedly. In poetry a prosaic metaphor is experienced as a cliché. In
a practice, becoming prosaic means that a once poetic action has now estab-
lished itself as a norm. Such norms of action may also be experienced as clichés
over time and they need to be continuously refreshed by new poetic practice if
any practice is to evolve.
The notion of phronetic social science is briefly identified as the research context in three of the articles (Tyson 2016c, d, forthcoming). A further reference was deleted from Tyson (2016a) for reasons of space. To begin with then, this chapter will discuss phronetic social science more in-depth. It then moves on to consider the process of theorizing VBD and thus articulating the methodological basis of these inquiries as a whole. The core of the chapter is a section on case narratives as the central methodological design in VBD. It then concludes with a consideration of various specific issues related to working with such case narratives and a discussion on research ethics.

There are different views regarding the scope of methodology in relation to theory, not least when it comes to case study research (Thomas 2010, 2011). Without getting into any detailed argument, the approach here is that the theory in chapter 3 provides a framework for understanding the cases as well as a bridge into relevant ways of conducting research. The methodology begins with phronetic social science as the basis for the aims of this research activity and continues with an outline of different ways of theorizing and introduces abduction to describe the process. It concludes with a discussion of cases and case narratives as the basis for the abductive theorizing process and the methodological aspects involved in collecting them.

4.1 Phronetic social science

The research context\(^{22}\) of the study is phronetic social science made more specific as phronetic educational science (Flyvbjerg 2001; Flyvbjerg et al. 2012). To characterize it Flyvbjerg writes (2001, p. 167):

> The goal of the phronetic approach becomes one of contributing to society’s capacity for value-rational deliberation and action. The contribution may be a

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\(^{22}\) Research context is different from the previously discussed philosophical context of Romanticism and Aristotelianism in that it locates the inquiry in a particular practice of social science and from this derives its design and methodology. Of course, there are significant overlaps between this and the previous chapters and phronetic social science is, by its name no less, part of an Aristotelian approach.
combination of concrete empirical analyses and practical philosophical considerations; “fieldwork in philosophy” as Pierre Bourdieu calls it.

This description accurately summarizes the present inquiry, with its focus on systematically documenting wise practice, and its mix of empirical work documenting cases, together with considerations from philosophy. Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 162) also identifies MacIntyre as part of this phronetic perspective which strengthens the coherence between conceptual framework and social scientific approach.

Looking back at the preceding discussion of phronesis it is of central importance that phronesis is not a species of theoretical knowledge but of practical knowledge, meaning that, like techne, it requires practice in the sense of repeated action and experience. In the phronetic approaches this has led to a view that social science cannot primarily be concerned with generating theory but is more about enriching actions and exploring practices in a way that contributes to practical wisdom. Schram gives a brief account in the introductory chapter of Flyvbjerg et al. (2012, p. 17ff.):

By virtue of its distinctively human subject matter, social scientists are inevitably people who offer interpretations of other people’s interpretations. And the people being studied always have the potential to include the social scientist’s interpretations in theirs, creating an ever-changing subject matter and requiring a dialogic relationship between the people doing the studying and the people being studied.

…

We suggest four inter-related reasons for promoting phronetic social science …:
1. Given the dynamic nature of human interaction in the social world, social inquiry is best practiced when it does not seek general laws of action that can be used to predict courses of action, but instead offers a critical assessment of values, norms and structures of power … Social inquiry is better when it is linked to questions of the good life, that is, to questions of what we ought to do.
2. While the social world is dynamic, social research is best seen as dialogical. Social inquiry is not a species of theoretical reason but of practical reason. …
3. As the study of dynamic social life, dialogical social inquiry is best practiced when we give up traditional notions of objectivity and truth and put aside the fact-value distinction. Instead, we should emphasize a contextual notion of truth that is pluralistic and culture-bound, further necessitating involvement with those we study.
4. Dialogical social inquiry into a dynamic and changing social world provides a basis for emphasizing that interpretation is itself a practice of power, one that if conducted publicly and in ways that engage the public can also challenge power and inform efforts to promote social change.

…
Phronetic social science, therefore, is centrally about producing research that has relevance to decisions about what can and should be done and also how to do it.

In effect, there can be three (not necessarily separate) general aims of research according to this: to generate theory, to enrich practical wisdom and to develop techne. These distinctions become important when considering the kinds of theorizing engaged in, but before moving on to this question there is a need to consider what differences there might be between a phronetic social science in general and a phronetic educational science in particular.

4.2 Outlining a phronetic educational science

In Flyvbjerg’s initial work on phronetic social science, *Making social science matter* (2001) the issues discussed are largely political and about power relationships. As a consequence he writes (p. 162):

> What identifies a work in social science as a work of phronetic social science is … [that] it focuses social analysis on praxis in answering … (1) Where are we going? (2) Who gains, and who loses, by which mechanisms of power? (3) Is it desirable? (4) What should be done?

These questions are clearly possible to ask with regards to various kinds of educational inquiries. However, at least the first two are not immediately applicable to the kind of Bildung and phronesis oriented inquiries engaged in here. Instead the questions asked could be phrased as:

1. Where do we *want* to go? Answer: a didactical practice richer in Bildung-affordances and phronesis.23
2. By what means can we achieve this? Answer: in part through case narratives of enacted and experienced vocational Bildung and phronesis.
3. Is it desirable? Answer: to the degree that one agrees that (vocational) Bildung and phronesis are important and relevant to those in VET.
4. What should be done? Answer: clarify what vocational Bildung didactics is and how it works, do more such research, encourage more action.

The main difference lies in the more critical approach that may well be necessary in social and political studies compared to the kind of didactical studies

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23 Understood as a practical question in the sense that pinning down our present trajectory is less relevant than it is to offer practical knowledge for practitioners to use in order to transform, change, enlighten or enrich their practices.
suggested here. This is reflected in the concluding remarks from a collection of phronetic case studies, that some of the actions taken by researchers in phronetic social science are to (Flyvbjerg et. al. 2012, p. 290):

1. actively identify dubious practices within policy and social action;
2. undermine these practices through problematization; and
3. constructively help to develop new and better practices.

The present study reverses the order of these steps and only makes the third one explicit. Because the focus is on articulating unusually rich and successful vocational Bildung didactical case narratives it begins with trying to constructively help developing existing practices.24 But at the same time as the number and quality of such case narratives grows, they can also begin to problematize aspects of practices that are, perhaps not dubious but impoverishing, both undermining them by showing the possibility of other ways of acting and identifying them in the first place.

There exists, then, a certain tension between this kind of optimistic didactical perspective and the kinds of critical social and political perspectives hitherto gathered under the name of phronetic research. Such tension is not there to be resolved but to awaken one’s attention to issues in one’s research that tend to be ignored or recede into the background. In the present inquiry questions such as: “where are we going?” could well have been raised given the many critical voices that are heard. About the troubling aspects of modularization in VET (eg. Ertl 2002), instrumentalization of education in general (eg. Biesta 2010), the issues that globalization brings to matters of VET and higher education (eg. Lauder 2011; Spring 2008) and problematic political influence on educational systems (eg. Lundahl et al. 2010). Similarly, questions of who gains and who loses are possible to ask and are definitely relevant given the uneasy connotations of terms such as employability, lifelong learning and entrepreneurship (to pick three out of several), as they are used by eg. UNESCO (2005) on the one hand and OECD (2010) on the other. The main reason not to pursue these matters further is that they are notoriously difficult to really answer, especially without an extensive inquiry that would go beyond the bounds of this one. “Where are we going?” is a question that warrants caveats about time frame, context and perspective. It is too easy to engage in sweeping critique of neo-liberal educational policy as if there were some monolithic entity bringing this policy to bear on all of us. The questions are easier to ask within the context of specific case studies but given that the cases here are intended to represent what someone has experienced or enacted that was unusually enriching or successful within the framework of Bildung and phronesis it is not as necessary to immediately adopt

24 Note that the term practice in the quote is not used in an explicitly MacIntyrean sense whereas my answer does.
a critical perspective. This is not to say that such a perspective is unnecessary only that it is not the first and foremost issue to look at here. Having considered the phronetic approach the next matter to discuss is the process of theorizing because it represents a step towards discussing research design and method.

4.3 Theorizing in phronetic educational science

In the articles a number of different interpretive aims are represented. Pattern recognition (Tyson 2016c, d), conceptual development (Tyson 2016a-c, forthcoming), methodological development (Tyson 2016a, b) and practical development, ie. enrichment of educational and vocational practice in various ways (Tyson 2016a-d, forthcoming). A way of bringing these different aims together proceeds from a discussion by Swedberg. In *Theorizing in sociology and social science: turning to the context of discovery* (2012), he argues that there has been too much of a focus on theory and too little attention paid to the process of developing theory: theorizing. Theorizing, he writes, is a process where “anything goes,” where imagination, intuition, inspiration, and art play a distinct role. At the center of the argument is the contention that theorizing is a skill, a form of practical knowledge (2012, p. 33) in which researchers need training. In a sense it is the skill of good research since it is through theorizing that a scholar finds interesting problems worth inquiring into and it is through theorizing that she constructs relevant research designs and methods to do this. Swedberg writes (2012, p. 17, 19, 21):

> The general goal of theorizing is to come up with a new idea or what Peirce famously calls abduction.
>
> The centrality of abduction to Peirce’s theory of how an inquiry should be conducted does not mean that science should consist of fantasy and imagination. A theory, Peirce insisted, has its origin in an abduction but must be testable as well. And it must be tested.
>
> One of the rational qualities of a scientific concept is that it makes it possible for some phenomena to be clearly identified as belonging to a general category. A second rational quality of the scientific concept has to do with its important role in the scientific enterprise as a whole. To cite Carl Hempel: “to be scientifically useful a concept must lend itself to the formulation of general laws or theoretical principles which reflect uniformities in the subject matter under study, and which thus provide a basis for explanation, prediction, and generally to scientific understanding.”

In these and other parts of his article he seems to argue for a restrictive view on what constitutes a theory similar to how Flyvbjerg approaches it (2001, p. 38f.).
Flyvbjerg writes (ibid, p. 39): “the difference between predictive theory and nonpredictive theory is so consequential that it would be better not to use the same term to denote the two.” However, Shulman (2004, p.116-119) develops a more differentiated view on theory referring to Merton’s concept of theories of the middle range and to a function of theory that Glass calls heuristic where theories can take the form of extended metaphors or limited formal models. Such theories are provisional and context-dependent. The conceptual framework argued for here fits this heuristic view of theory, which is why the term “theory” is used interchangeably with “framework” throughout.

With Swedberg’s focus on the more traditional aim for social science of generating testable theory it is necessary to modify his argument to fit a phronetic approach. The phronetic approach uses many of the same arguments as Swedberg does, drawing on Peirce and abduction for instance (Thomas 2010), and emphasizing imagination, inspiration, art, etc. in the process of research. In other words, Swedberg’s description of the process of theorizing remains central to this inquiry but the aim of generating theory (in the narrow sense of the word) has been abandoned in favor of the phronetic perspective. The present work has been, for the most part, about theorizing vocational Bildung and phronesis from a narrative, practical and didactical perspective. Of the three aims of theorizing outlined initially, theory, phronesis and techne, it is the phronetic aim that the theorizing process has been concerned with throughout. It can be distinguished as having three orientations. First, the work with concepts and conceptual structures will be called **epistemic theorizing**. Chapter 3 is mainly the result of this kind of theorizing. But also some of the results such as the distinction between cultural and vocational practices in Tyson (forthcoming) and the pattern recognition discussed in Tyson (2016c, d). The aim of this epistemic theorizing is not to generate theory in the restrictive sense that Swedberg and Flyvbjerg understand it but to increase understanding, ie. the wisdom part of practical wisdom. Second, the extensive discussions in Tyson (2016a, b) on narratives and cases could be understood as instances of **methodological theorizing**. In the articles this tends to serve two functions: a) supporting epistemic theorizing and b) supporting various suggestions for developing practice. It is thus both about increasing wisdom and the practical, ie. the whole of phronesis. The main work of methodological theorizing, to outline a coherent methodology of case narratives, is presented here and in the discussion. Third, when the process has focused more on making use of VBD as framework in order to interpret the case narratives it can be termed **practical theorizing**. Here the aim is to suggest how the case narratives can contribute to the enrichment of vocational Bildung and phronesis in practice. Having distinguished between the different aims that the theorizing process has had in the articles a brief outline of the method in this process is warranted.

As Swedberg writes in the quote above, he considers the process of theorizing to be fundamentally abductive. This, in its most basic form, is a compromise between deduction and induction (Atkinson & Delamont 2005, p. 833) where
an inquiry moves back and forth between these two. However, the original proposition by Peirce on the role of abduction is more complex (Thomas 2010). The issue is connected to the discussion above regarding the role of theory. With Peirce abduction was, as Thomas quotes (ibid, p. 576), an: “inference to the best explanation.” This is the first step in generating a kind of tentative theory that is followed by a deductive process and systematic data collection in order to verify the original, abductively generated, concepts (ibid, p. 577). Thomas, who writes from an explicit phronetic perspective, suggests here that theory in this sense should not be the aim of abduction but that the aim should be phronesis.25 Given the understanding developed in the previous chapters of phronesis and that outlined above on phronetic educational science it should be possible to say something more specific about phronetic abduction. Practical wisdom is, as noted, about both a general idea (wisdom) and a particular context (practical). The case narratives are situated in between these two. They point to various ideas (wisdom, Bildung) while still being cases of the (perceived) enactment of them. They also point to a particular context but, as narratives, already represent an interpretation of that context where a judgment has been made regarding what to select for presentation and how. In effect, wisdom and Bildung are already actively shaping the case narrative from within. This echoes the discussion of the role of imagination as a mediator between general idea and concrete practice and imagination thus plays a significant role in the abductive process. A phronetic abductive process should be able to expand our understanding of the wisdom and Bildung in the cases through increased conceptual depth and context and through a comparison of cases where they can begin to illustrate the variety of ways in which Bildung and phronesis can be enacted in practice.

4.4 The abductive process and selecting cases

The discussion above on abductive (epistemic, methodological and practical) theorizing warrants a more specific outline of how this has proceeded in the five articles. What will be discussed here is the actual research process and not some of the more formal aspects of case study research and interpreting case narrative. These follow in sections 4.5-4.8. For all articles vocational Bildung and phronesis were the main sensitizing concepts in that they explained what the cases were about. This means that they allowed recognition of the common theme of the

25 It is important to note that I disagreed with Thomas’ characterization of phronesis (as noted in section 3.2). He writes of it as “practical knowledge, craft knowledge, with a twist of judgment squeezed in to the mix (2010, p. 578),” which is at least a simplification. But for the purpose of the argument regarding abduction this seems to be mostly an issue of what we call this kind of knowledge.
cases including guidance in deciding which cases represented the most relevant and potentially enriching expressions of Bildung and phronesis. The only way to make this selection process fully transparent would be to include every case narrative collected in an appendix. But this is hardly necessary since one of the main methodological points in VBD is focusing on cases that appear unusually rich (several such cases remain to be considered in the future). The cases that have been selected were chosen for their capacity to illuminate a particular issue in relation to Bildung and phronesis, one that depended on the questions dealt with in each article. At worst this potential for illumination has gone unrecognized in some of the unpublished cases in relation to the specific direction the inquiry has taken in the various articles, making their argument less effective.

Another common feature in the writing of all the articles (except Tyson forthcoming, owing to its recent submission date) has been the development resulting from the requirement of major revisions. This aspect of the theorizing process is not considered here in any detail, but the reviewer comments have been central for revisiting and improving the articles. What is described below could be considered the core that remained throughout in each article. Significant improvements regarding presentation, argument and coherence have resulted from the revisions.

In *The didactics of vocational Bildung* (Tyson 2016a) the abductive theorizing process began with the idea that the various cases could be discussed in relation to the time-span they covered: episodes, whole biographies and something in-between. This proved to be unfruitful, contributing little in the way of new insight. However, in the process of writing and going back and forth between the cases and thinking about them it became increasingly clear how confused I was about their various contributions. This then became the main focus of the article, to outline the various ways in which VBD could make meaningful contributions to research and practice. As a result there was a renewed look at the available cases. This, in turn, led to switching out one (from my own apprenticeship recounted in the licentiate (Tyson 2015a, p. 23)) for another, Greta, that was better at highlighting some of the potential contributions of VBD.

*Pedagogical imagination and practical wisdom* (Tyson 2016b) was first presented as a paper at ECER 2015. In it the abductive process proceeded from the need to theorize around the first group of cases expressing thematic variations on successful conflict resolution. Immediately preceding it was a presentation for ENASTE which was about integrating phronesis and moral imagination (Tyson 2015c). From this, there grew a recognition that pedagogical imagination could be developed as a conceptual foundation for how practical knowledge is understood in the general inquiry. It was a lucky turn that the initial work on the article prompted a rereading of Schön’s writing (1987) where his discussion about the *repertoire* of expert practitioners was re-encountered. This was key for the continued process of theorizing and paved the way for the suggestion that the group of narratives discussed could be understood as a field of practice.
The other aspect of the article was working out what VBD could contribute to teacher education and professional development. Exploring these issues resulted in the initiative for making the approach part of didactics courses for practitioners. These then contributed to the continued theorizing process with an influx of new case narratives and some initial results regarding the use of VBD as a didactical method in teacher education. It was found rewarding enough by the teachers responsible for the two courses in question that they made it part of the curriculum going forward. At the end of 2016 this has resulted in a total of three rounds with vocational teacher students and two rounds with nursing teacher students. The written summaries of the case writing tasks handed out and included in appendix 1-3 are therefore simultaneously an instrument for doing VBD research and the basic didactical tool for using VBD as part of teacher education.

What would Humboldt say? (Tyson 2016c) began with an inquiry that predated the two preceding articles since its general aim had been suggested as potential further research in the licentiate. Because it seemed so given, the matters discussed in the other articles were prioritized. But, when I finally turned to consider the issue of general Bildung as an aspect of the vocational education biography of Mr B. difficulties similar to those described above were encountered. It simply didn’t result in anything particularly interesting and it was difficult to situate in contemporary VET research. Similar to how Schön’s conceptualization of a repertoire was key to the inquiry for Pedagogical imagination here it was Kutscha’s (2008) discussion of vocationalism that allowed for a more fruitful understanding of the case. It was also aided by the process of reframing Humboldt’s general and special Bildung. They were first reformulated as expansive and intensive and then the return to the case showed two kinds of expansive Bildung. Thus the result was a further conceptualization of vocational Bildung.

In When expectations clash (Tyson 2016d) the process began with the case narrative. That case together with some of the general conclusions about what it suggested for VET curricula were part of a report written back 2006. A major element of the abductive process was placing the case in a research context and then sharpening the analysis. The former involved explaining what kind of problem the case could be a contribution to solving (schools as sites of VET). The latter was about clarifying the kind of curriculum-pattern suggested by the case and the potential for systematic research that came from this. This highlights a common theme regarding the abductive process for all the articles: how to provide a context for the cases that moves them beyond being simply good stories to becoming cases of articulated practical knowledge and practice.

Finally, perhaps the best example of this abductive theorizing process can be found in What is excellence in practice? (Tyson forthcoming). The initial problem grew from the work of integrating MacIntyre’s concept of a practice into the conceptual framework. This revealed a lack of clarity regarding Bildung and phronesis as practices or elements of practices (including lack of a distinction
between practice and practical knowledge). It then prompted a renewed look at some of the case narratives based on the idea that this was more of an empirical issue than a philosophical one. Initially the return to the cases confused the matter even more but finally resulted in a distinction between vocational and cultural practices, i.e. a conceptual contribution. This, in turn, suggested further ways in which the case narratives collected in VBD could contribute to research and practice and opened the path to revisiting a part of the case of Wolfgang B. That resulted in the argument that research into case narratives as articulations of excellence in practice is an important potential aspect or element of VBD.

To summarize, these brief outlines demonstrate the explorative character of the inquiry. Each article can be understood as a response to a particular problem that emerged during the process of research or as a response to some interesting potential for further theorizing that suggested itself. That precisely these problems and potentials would occupy my attention is interesting looking back at the process. It seems the problems have been mostly connected to weaknesses and inconsistencies in the conceptual part of the inquiry whereas the potentials for further theorizing stemmed from the cases. *A clash of expectations* and *What would Humboldt say* belong almost exclusively in the latter category, dealing as they do with potentially interesting inquiry suggested by their respective cases. *The didactics of vocational Bildung* belongs mainly in the first category as it deals mostly with bringing some order into an increasingly incoherent inquiry. The remaining two are concerned with both problems and potentials. The sequence is especially interesting in *What is excellence in practice* where the initial issue was dealing with a conceptual problem. The result of that work was a surprising addition to how a practice could potentially be understood that ended up producing further results. At this stage, the concepts in the framework have all been extensively worked-through but there is nothing that prevents new problems from emerging, especially if new themes present themselves in further cases which necessitate an expansion of it.

**4.5 Research design in VBD: Case narratives**

We do not learn from experience; we learn by thinking about our experience. A case takes the raw material or first-order experience and renders it narratively into a second-order experience. A case is the re-collected, re-told, re-experienced and re-reflecting version of a direct experience. The process of remembering, retelling, reliving and reflecting is the process of learning from experience. (Shulman 2004, p. 474)

This quote from Shulman stands as a paradigmatic summary of what a case narrative is understood as in the following. It becomes didactical by shifting away from evaluative descriptions of experience towards descriptions of actions
and contexts (including experienced curricula and other structural affordances). This doesn’t mean that a teacher’s or practitioner’s interpretations are out of place or that descriptions of deliberations and judgments are not relevant, but they can only function didactically when narratives of actions are included.

Whereas in the articles there has been no effort to distinguish between narrative and story or to use the term case narrative in a sense different from both, this more elaborate context supports such a distinction. I would reserve the term story for those written or spoken case narratives that relate episodes in a teacher’s/practitioner’s life. Thus not all case narratives are stories, for instance the case narrative in *When expectations clash* (Tyson 2016d) about a developmental initiative in Romania is not a story in this sense but more of a report. Stories understood in this way are a subspecies in the more general field of case narratives that can be concerned with VBD. The point with introducing this differentiation and of writing case narratives rather than just generally referring to narratives is that narrative as understood here points to the perspective in chapter 3 developed by MacIntyre (2011) when he writes of traditions as grand narratives within which our ethical actions are performed. Narrative in this more comprehensive way is an expression of a history, which can include discursive elements to a much greater extent than a story. Thus the thesis contents as a whole can be understood as a kind of narrative in this sense.

### 4.6 Varieties of case narrative

There are three predominant case study forms that this research has taken: extreme/deviant cases, paradigmatic cases and epistemic cases (Tyson 2016a lists two more, critical and maximum variation cases but the narratives have not actually been framed as such in the interpretations thus far). The first two terms are taken from Flyvbjerg (2001) and the third is my adoption and reformulation of case studies aiming at conceptual development and enrichment, what could also be termed philosophical case studies given the prevalence of such cases in some philosophical writing. To be clear, the extreme/deviant case is the basic case form and the paradigmatic as well as epistemic case forms are sometimes contained in it. Shulman (2004, p. 207, italics in original) adds to this by identifying three types of educational cases:

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26 Another term here would perhaps be preferable, such as critical rather than extreme/deviant but Flyvbjerg (2001) uses the term critical case for something different and it seems odd to invent another term for what Flyvbjerg has already characterized.

27 Both Flyvbjerg (2001) and Larson (2009) also talk of black-swan cases which question previously taken for granted assumptions. The kinds of narratives that emerge from VBD can be assumed to function as black swans to one’s personal capacity for imagining pedagogical action but thus far no theory in educational studies has been identified that these narratives would falsify in any conclusive sense.

87
Prototypes exemplify theoretical principles. Precedents capture and communicate principles of practice or maxims. Parables convey norms or values.

What in this study is called epistemic cases corresponds, it seems, to Shulman’s prototype-cases but somewhat more differentiated. The extreme and paradigmatic cases do not immediately correspond to precedents and parables, rather these two seem to be related to the contents of the cases more than the case design or form. For the most part cases of enacted Bildung and phronesis are parables in the sense Shulman understands it and they also communicate principles of practice. It returns us to one of the main arguments of this inquiry, that general conceptual principles of practice alone are information-poor and that cases are needed to advance the practical knowledge of teachers.

A unifying feature is the emphasis placed on choosing cases which are unusually rich, wise and/or successful. As discussed briefly in chapter 3, Barfield (2010) makes a fruitful distinction between the poetic and the prosaic and this is a way of differentiating how a poetic case can be articulated. It appears to be one of the more distinct contrasts with other, similar, work in narrative inquiry such as teacher lore and pedagogical content knowledge where no such emphasis is made or, in the case of Shulman (2004, p. 469, 481), rather the opposite, in that teachers are asked about matters causing them problems or surprises. This is no argument against such inquiry on principle, there is much to be learnt in the context of teacher education, not least dealing with unsolved problems, errors and failures, but there are a couple of practical reasons why a different approach is part of the core of VBD.

1. The emphasis on unusually poetic (rich, wise and/or successful) narratives maximizes the chance of the narrative being an extreme/deviant one in a way that is practically relevant, ie. relevant for further practical action.
2. Bildung and phronesis are not found so much in the average routine of daily life as in its exceptional peaks (including those that happen daily or once a week and perhaps do not appear as such unless actively thought about thusly). This is an epistemological issue, phronesis develops through exposure to good examples/role models, not because we produce more and more tales of average or outright bad examples/role models. There is an exception here in failure as part of phronesis but this is an exception not the main part of becoming practically wise. Also the role of tragedy, as mentioned earlier (3.3.1), is not taken into account here.

Shulman (2004, p. 213f.) remarks in an endnote that there are:

Some potential disadvantages of cases as sources of teacher knowledge. Kahne- man, Slovic, and Tversky (1982) have pointed out the potentially misleading
They refer to the memorable quality of vivid cases as a significant source of bias in reasoning. Both availability and representativeness are characteristics of cases that make them readily retrieved from memory; they also bias the decision maker’s estimate of the frequency of their occurrence. The important test of a case is its contrast with other cases and its examination in the light of principles. Such disciplined evaluation of cases can temper the inappropriate inferences that might be drawn from cases without diminishing their other virtues.

These remarks, similar to those of Moon (2010, discussed in 3.3.1) regarding narrative, highlight the importance of combining extreme/deviant cases with a focus on unusually rich and successful practice. The deviancy of a case distances it from representativeness and the unusual richness (coupled with the already discussed focus on practical knowledge as future-oriented) turns some of the bias into a strength rather than weakness. However, there still remains a need for contrasting extreme cases and a temperance of conclusions drawn. A more extensive discussion regarding the potential problems of working with narratives can be found in Tyson (2016a, p. 364f.).

It follows from all this that the extreme/deviant case is information rich because it says something about a practice that doesn’t simply corroborate what we expect, ie. it is not a representative case. Regarding Bildung and phronesis this is about pushing the boundaries of what we can conceive of as affording human flourishing in VET. If we are looking at, for example, conflict resolution the point is not to establish how most of us act but rather to explore how we act when we do it with unusual practical wisdom. By establishing this as a baseline, by gathering case narratives that are extreme in the positive sense, the practice being articulated is one that can feed back into action. This feedback can occur in a way that educates action towards greater wisdom creating the opportunity for further articulations that are richer in wisdom than previous ones.

Extreme/deviant cases can go on to become epistemic cases when the deviant character of the case can be used to drive epistemic theorizing. The philosophy of vocational Bildung and phronesis needs such deviant cases in order to correct, expand and construct conceptual frameworks. Thinking alone, without any empirical influx, one rarely has the imagination to conceive of the many ways in which the conceptual can be enacted. Finally, it is also possible that some extreme/deviant cases may turn out to be paradigmatic cases that, as Flyvbjerg writes (2001, p. 79): “develop a metaphor or establish a school for the domain which the case concerns.” He goes on to note that it is difficult to say exactly how one goes about recognizing a paradigmatic case and quotes a conversation with Dreyfus who referenced Heidegger in saying one recognizes a paradigm because it shines. Here it might be equally relevant to say that one recognizes it because of its unusual poetry (Barfield 2010; Higgins 2010). Of the various case narratives gathered thus far there are three that fit this:
1. The educational biography of Wolfgang B., which already after the first interview gave this impression of shining and poetry long before it was clear what kind of case it was.

2. The pocket mirror referenced in Tyson (2015c, 2016b) which was the first one read from that group of cases and which immediately called forth the same luminous and poetic impression.


This hardly proves anything else than that these narratives were paradigmatic for me in theorizing the inquiry. Only time will tell if they appear paradigmatic to others as well.

Ways of practically ensuring a greater propensity for getting extreme/deviant case data are plentiful. Some have been previously mentioned, such as principles like searching for people to interview with high degrees of formal vocational education (Wolfgang B. for example, is a threefold craftmaster) or unusually diverse qualifications such as being a master carpenter and a university professor (cf. Tyson 2015a). The case studies in the present inquiry have not proceeded from the active choice of whom to question since they have been directed to random groups of people who happen to be taking teacher education courses. Instead the questions have been formulated in terms of asking for unusually rich/memorable/successful events, the assumption being that almost everyone will remember at least one relevant vocational Bildung experience or, over the course of a month will have seen or engaged in at least one unusually wise action. Appendix 1-3 contain the written materials handed out to participants in the case studies in order to guide them regarding what to narrate and how (the latest versions have been used). From a practical point of view these guides are comparatively open, Shulman (2004, p. 468) offers a more elaborate description of cases as consisting of three acts and it may well be that a description such as that would be profitable in future case writing handouts.

There is a methodological advantage with combining inquiries into unusually qualified/wise practitioners and inquiries into peak experiences in groups of practitioners with no pre-determined qualifications. It can be argued that the narratives of Bildung and wisdom told by unusually qualified practitioners are most relevant to others who are disposed to achieve unusual excellence in their vocational field and thus of less use in a more general sense. At least it cannot simply be assumed that this is irrelevant. The addition of narratives from larger groups of practitioners is a way of checking this somewhat. In any case this possible limitation with regards to conclusions needs to be taken into account although it seems difficult to prove or disprove.
4.7 Interviews and written assignments

The two methods employed in collecting cases have been interviews and written assignments. Since the interview process was discussed extensively in the licentiate and the present inquiry is founded mainly on written assignments the latter will be focused on here. A more in-depth review of interviewing, including an extensive discussion on the selection of relevant parts of the interview data can be found in Tyson (2015a).

Of the case studies discussed in the articles four out of six are based on written work by groups of participants or, in one case, reports. This posed its own set of problems and advantages compared to interviewing. A strength of having participants write their narratives rather than interviewing is the comparative ease with which the written narratives can be presented in their entirety whereas interviews almost always need editing. This makes reanalysis by other scholars of the same data that much easier and is especially important in a research context such as this where there are many ways of approaching the same case narrative. Another aspect that makes written assignments valuable is the simplicity with which they can be given to larger numbers of people. Interviewing takes time, especially in the transcription and editing parts, whereas presenting the task to a group of thirty people has been possible in 30-45 minutes and results in finished stories. Although interviewing allows for richer stories as the conversation unfolds, writing one’s own makes it more apparent to reflection than speaking it, at least potentially affording participants a clearer view to what they want to say. Perhaps less obvious, written assignments are easier to work with from an ethical point of view because over the course of long interviews it is more likely that the conversation comes to include matters that are not meant for publication and which need to be edited out but which still exist as data on the recordings etc. In written assignments, such editing is more often than not done by the writer before the story is submitted. Of course, if there is space for it during education students can be assigned the task of interviewing as well, but this is a far more extensive task to give than writing. They can also read each other’s written narratives and give feedback that might lead to the narratives being reworked and provided with more relevant detail.

There are drawbacks to written cases as well. Assignments are easy to give if the case narrative is limited to a single event or series of events whereas larger educational biographies are difficult to ask for, given the extensive scope of these (the case of Wolfgang B. covers close to thirty pages in the licentiate). The case narratives are presented as finished products and it is often difficult to go back and ask the writers for more information or detail. Finally, not everyone is proficient in writing their own story whereas almost everyone is capable of telling a story within the framework of a conversation in which the listener assists in the creation of the narrative.

Another issue, one similar to how biographical interviewing is best conceived of as a collaborative story-making (Huberman 1995), is the impact of example-
narratives in order to help participants understand what a Bildung or phronesis case narrative is. In most of the case studies a brief summary of VBD was handed out to participants together with narrative examples (cf. appendix 2 and 3) and although the aim was to include different case narratives in order to illustrate the breadth of possibility it can hardly be avoided that these will shape what is written by others. Having reviewed about sixty narratives from these case studies it is clear that a few are very close topically and/or in their form to the examples given, but that many also diverge in various ways. Thus it is not so much a theoretical issue of principle as it is a practical one of awareness on the part of the researcher and in the design of presenting writing assignments. It seems reasonable to think that relying only on written assignments limits the variation of case narratives (especially their form) compared to strategically chosen interviews with experienced and wise practitioners. Such interviews are probably especially relevant if one is interested in exploring the various ways in which Bildung and phronesis can be articulated as case narratives.

Determining what counts as wise or gebildet tends to raise questions in forums where this research has been presented. In the first phase of collecting the case narratives this is self-selecting, ie. the one who is providing the narrative decides. As researcher and practitioner one might not agree with a person’s selection but that is beside the point. The next phase is less straightforward since it involves a selection among case narratives deciding which ones to consider for further interpretation and publication. That selection is a matter of the researcher’s own skill and phronesis, something that is difficult for someone else to evaluate since there is seldom space for a presentation of all available narratives. Regarding the articles included in this thesis the issue is not especially troubling because the cases have been used to drive exploration. On the other hand, when it comes to some of the more ambitious aims suggested, such as articulating practice fields or cultural practices or publishing collections of cases, it seems doubtful that such work can or should be done by one scholar alone. The wiser course would probably be to engage in it collaboratively, with a number of scholars representing different perspectives joining in the review of all available narrative cases and in the selection of those deemed relevant for publication.

There is also, finally, a practical issue to consider, the translation of the case narratives from Swedish into English. This is no different than that faced in the licentiate regarding the translation of my conversations with Wolfgang B. In effect, the translations need to be understood as a form of editing and interpreting, adding a further layer to the interpretation process. In translating the texts there has been some active editing, especially where there was faulty grammar or other formal issues. Where colloquialisms and concepts that have no equivalent in English occur this has been indicated, in brackets for the most part, suggesting alternate interpretations.
4.8 Interpreting the case narratives

Interpreting case narratives as practical-didactical knowledge of Bildung and phronesis requires some consideration. To begin with narratives are seldom viewed as this. Riessman, for example, in outlining narrative methods, does not include narrative articulations of practical knowledge (2008, p. 8f.) in her review of what narratives can do. In discussing forms of narrative analysis she writes about thematic interpretations, structural analysis, dialogic analysis and visual analysis but there is no mention in any of this of practical knowledge. The present interpretations fall, generally speaking, in the thematic category, where the focus is exclusively on the contents of stories (Riessman 2008, p. 53). The aim of them is to either increase understanding of vocational Bildung and phronesis (epistemic theorizing aiming at increased wisdom) or to increase phronesis, either from a practitioner standpoint or a scholarly standpoint (methodological and practical theorizing).

An issue that can appear confusing is the truth-value of the case narratives. It is generally agreed among scholars in narrative inquiry that the stories told cannot naively be taken to represent actual events (Clandinin & Connelly 2000; Moon 2010; Roth 2005). From one perspective this is not an issue at all since the practical knowledge orientation is not really concerned with what happened but rather with the pragmatic potential of the case narrative for further action. This criterion covers cases as contributions to curriculum development and to the repertoire of practitioners as well as the articulation of excellence in practice. However, there are also claims made to the effect that these case narratives can be used to articulate “practice fields” and to develop knowledge regarding the Bildung-affordances of vocational tasks. Such claims do require that the cases are relatively truthful in the sense of corresponding to events with all the issues that arrive as part of this. The most direct approach to dealing with this is to have a significant number of cases, for example about the same kind of task. If these cases share similarities then the individual veracity of each becomes less a factor. Single cases are still important in order to point research in interesting directions, to suggest lines of further inquiry.

It is also important to bear in mind throughout, that although the contents of the cases told point to an event or life that has largely occurred, the meaning of them is reestablished in future practice. Thus in a strange sense, this kind of research cannot be about establishing “the facts” or surfacing a practice in the sense that we then know what is being enacted in some context. In writing of mapping “practice fields” (Tyson 2016b) the impression is easily created that I thereby imply that through the case narratives an existent field emerges that is now laid out for all to see. It is more complicated than that. Because the narratives are asked in the context of unusual success they do not relate to “business as usual” but rather to the fringes of what it is possible to imagine and enact within a context. In mapping a “practice field” it is not about mapping a real landscape but rather an imaginary one, where each story is akin to a description
of an unusually beautiful shop or fountain that enriches a shopkeeper’s or architect’s imagination. It is a very lively map so to speak, a map that keeps on changing with every new addition so that the path that seemed well trodden the day before can suddenly appear to take new turns, lead into new places, a road can become paved with new stones or overgrown, etc. Thus this kind of narrative research requires a certain mental mobility because there can be no results that aren’t provisional.

Moon is the only one writing about narrative inquiry, among those reviewed, who includes an extended discussion on that which remains unspoken in a story or even unspeakable. She writes (2010, p. 49):

It seems that the unspoken represents a shape of story before it is interpreted as language and that this is represented in the feeling that we “know” something before language is attached to it. I feel that in many areas of academia there is too much assumption that we can put all worthwhile knowledge into words. In a study like this, such remarks need to be taken seriously, both with regard to the documentation of cases and their interpretation. Not every person who is wise or gebildet is able to put this into words. Not every aspect of Bildung and phronesis is possible to articulate so that it becomes practically relevant. As noted in the introduction, experiences that are possible to articulate narratively are easily forgotten if this is not done in proximity to the experience time-wise, this is especially the case when detailed descriptions of actions are required. There is, presumably, always far more of a person’s Bildung and phronesis that must remain tacit compared to what can be told. Because it could have been expressed once but now has become more of a tacit element in one’s Bildung, because it is too sensitive to be articulated, because it is something that one can do but not yet express or because it is not possible in the first place to express in words. There is also a difference between being able to point to a process using words and to actually describe that process as a series of actions. The first is much easier because it only requires remembering the problem or interruption together with the conclusions and judgments.

4.9 Validity and reliability

The preceding discussion has touched repeatedly on issues of validity, or meaningfulness as Taylor & Bogdan call it (1998, p. 9), but a focused and explicit discussion makes the matter more transparent. Riessman (2008, p. 184) argues that narrative research has two levels of validity, in the sense of truth or trustworthiness, to consider. There are two stories told: the one told by the case narrators and the one told by the researcher. As previously mentioned, the main problem with the former tends to be the veracity of the narrative, ie. if the research participant is remembering correctly or perhaps is even lying. The lack of
context that often accompanies shorter case narratives is also a distorting factor. This is significantly mitigated by the practical, phronetic orientation of the inquiry where it is less about what the narratives represent in relation to actual occurrences and more about what they can contribute going forward. On the positive side, and unusual compared to many narrative studies, it is imperative that the cases are presented as comprehensively as possible. Their capacity to contribute practical knowledge is rapidly diminished if they are summarized or even reduced to that which appears essential for the purpose of brevity.

The validity of the interpretations made throughout is a different matter. Riessman (2008, p. 189) stresses coherence as a significant element in the validity of narrative research but this is difficult to fully demonstrate. Throughout the text an effort has been made to indicate how the theoretical framework of VBD is coherent with the choice of social scientific paradigm and the methodology of case narratives. The interpretations of the narratives in the articles fall into two categories. Patterns and themes. The validity of the former hinges on the transparency of the cases to the patterns argued for (cf. Tyson 2016c, d). The validity of the latter is an issue of considering the phronetic contribution of the various concepts developed, suggestions for practitioners and educational practice, etc. (similar points are made in a more comprehensive philosophical context by Guba & Lincoln 2005). In effect, the phronetic perspective does not aim for a testable theory as proof of valid conceptualizations but rather for a more pragmatic reflection on the potential enrichment to wisdom that they might bring. As Flyvbjerg stresses repeatedly, case studies are not about generalization (external validity) but about pragmatic validity which, in turn, depends on the type of case (Flyvbjerg 2001, 2006; Riessman 2008, p. 194). Here extreme, epistemic and paradigmatic ones. Their validity depends on the design (unusual success etc.) and the ways of achieving this. Flyvbjerg’s stance is strict, Bassey for example (1999) considers “fuzzy generalization” a valid approach to case study research, but it has seemed prudent to abstain from using the term, especially since none of the interpretations made in the articles really require it.

Reliability or dependability (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p. 24) is less often a topic in narrative studies. As Greenwood & Levin (2005, p. 54) remark with regards to action research both validity and reliability are measured against the value that the subjects involved in the research see in acting on its results. This is a view far from the traditional understanding of reliability as the measure of how reliably another scholar can replicate the results of someone’s research (Thomas 2011, p. 63). Although the inquiries conducted here are not exactly forms of action research, the argument ties in to that made with regards to validity. It can be considered reliable if it contributes to the practical wisdom of scholars and practitioners in action. From a phronetic perspective it thus becomes doubly important to engage in presentations and conversations and one of the main reasons for conducting the inquiry as a series of articles has been to check this aspect of it. The review process can be seen as an extended conversation aiming at sharpening the validity and reliability of the research. Couched
in more phronetic terms one could perhaps say deepening the meaningfulness, coherence and practical wisdom of the case interpretations.

4.10 Research ethics

Standard research practice in narrative inquiry has been observed. This means that subjects of the study be informed of its purpose and their part in it, their right to withdraw at any time (at least during the process of data collection), their agreement to participate, that they are treated with confidentiality and that research data is only used for purposes of research (cf. Clandinin & Connelly 2000). These are also the requirements of the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet 2011). All studies in which participants have written case narratives have been organized so that the participants were told of the study and its aims and given clear information about their right to refuse participation (this right was also exercised a few times). This was given in both written and spoken form for all but one of the case studies (after school care), the exception being because it was not initially meant as a case study within the thesis framework. Personal spoken permission was asked for, and given, after the fact of their assignments to include some of the narratives in articles and the thesis.

The issue of anonymity in narrative inquiry is discussed in Clandinin & Connelly (2000, p. 174f.) given the many problems that can arise when participants want their names to be published with the research or when they initially do but realize in the process that perhaps they don’t. There are also special considerations to be taken when an inquiry includes children and youth. They emphasize attention to the way that the landscape of inquiry has a tendency to shift in the process of research. The case narratives here have, when necessary, been treated to remove personal references and other significant indicators have been anonymized when necessary (for the most part already by the participants). However, the central case of Wolfgang B. has not been anonymized thusly, as discussed briefly in the licentiate (Tyson 2015a, p. 72). This has to do with a combination of the case lacking sensitive information or context (especially since he is retired and it is focused on events that lie more than 40 years in the past) and the need to discuss the fact that we share a long professional relationship. Introducing this enhanced the difficulty of anonymizing given that it removed the possibility of fictionalizing several elements of his context. It was also taken into consideration that not anonymizing his case makes it easier for other scholars to build on it which, in the context of German post-WWII reconstruction and general VET-culture seemed relevant. Nevertheless, this adds a caveat to research done with participants that one shares a long history with and more or less prevents such inquiry from focusing on matters where its publication could be injurious to others now living. The exception presumably being when whatever knowledge arrived at in the process is deemed more important than potential injury.
When the participants in the main case studies at the university didactics courses were asked permission for the use of their writings it was emphasized that these kinds of didactically relevant stories should not be ambiguous with regards to the appropriateness of making them public. In effect they should be such that they can freely be published in research contexts as well as in teacher education and professional development settings. Given the focus on unusual success this approach is made easier. It is still on the researcher’s judgment to consider what impact a story might have if published and if it is wise to publish it. This is especially important to bear in mind when the participants in the stories are children and/or suffering from illness. In the end the point is that this kind of inquiry, especially when the narratives are written by participants rather than constructed out of longer interviews in which a variety of data is present, should risk little harm and contribute significant enrichment to participants and research.

Finally, it is of ethical importance that these narratives be made publicly available even though, as a method in teacher education and professional development, it is entirely possible to conduct such work in closed settings. The further advancement of Bildung and phronesis as elements of practices in a way that is public can hardly happen without such sharing.
5 Article summaries

This chapter contains the summaries of the five articles in which the core of the thesis research has been presented. Apart from these five articles, elements of the research has also been presented in Tyson (2015c) as *Imagination at the center of moral action: Developing a deeper understanding of how to educate for teacher excellence*. Furthermore, there are two pieces in Swedish, one in the *Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training* (Tyson 2016e) and one appearing in a forthcoming anthology on VET. The first is called *Yrkesutbildning eller yrkesbildning: vad lär vi oss egentligen? En introduktion till empirisk yrkesbildningsdidaktik* [Vocational education or vocational Bildung: What do we actually learn? An introduction to empirical vocational Bildung didactics]. The second is called *Yrkesbildningsdidaktik* [vocational Bildung didactics].

5.1 The didactics of vocational Bildung: How stories matter in VET research

This article represents a first attempt to synthesize and discuss the various ways that case narratives (here synonymous with stories) can contribute empirically to VET research. This was done through an extended discussion on the concepts of vocational Bildung and narratively articulated practical knowledge especially as it relates to didactics. Following this conceptual work a group of three narrative cases were introduced. *The Cube* from the biographical case of Wolfgang B., a brief case narrative from an older study of craft teachers’ pedagogical interventions and finally, a story from a recent study where nursing teaching-students were tasked with writing about incidents of practical wisdom in their work. By considering the variations of emphasis and perspectives that the cases afford it was concluded that at least five different kinds of contributions to VET research could potentially be made from such research: enriching knowledge of vocational tasks; conceptual development and critical reflection;28

28 This contribution has since been re-thought. Conceptual development in the article was understood as the cases acting as black swans for one’s current understanding of a topic thus changing what one could imagine. This is still relevant but throughout the thesis text conceptual development is understood as the contribution of new concepts such as that of a field of practice (this
advancement of practice (in the sense of action, ie. practitioner oriented); development of “practice fields” and the articulation of patterns of vocational Bildung-affordances. In making these distinctions the article aimed at contributing to the ability for systematic research in the field articulated by VBD.

5.2 Pedagogical imagination and practical wisdom: The role of success-narratives in teacher education and professional development

The article introduces the question of education as, in part, an inherently moral or ethical activity and develops an Aristotelian perspective on this with a focus on phronesis. The aim was to develop a pedagogical perspective on moral imagination and to make a case for how narratives of teaching in action can contribute to teachers’ pedagogical imagination.

Initially, a narrative taken from a multiple case study involving teachers in an in-service educational program for after school care (Sw. fritids) was introduced. The task they were given was to write brief, didactically relevant, stories of successful conflict resolution at their workplace. The narrative, called *The pocket mirror*, told a short story about resolving the conflict arising because a boy had taken a girl’s pocket mirror. Based on this story the concept of pedagogical imagination was developed through some of Schön’s arguments in *Educating the reflective practitioner* (1987). In particular it was considered how this kind of narrative could contribute to a teachers’ repertoire of cases. The richer such repertoires are, the more varied a practitioner’s response to novel situations can be. This is because through imagination a practitioner is able to see a new situation as related to a previous one. And also to move between recognition on the one hand and reformulation on the other, using a previous case and reimagining it to fit the new situation. The main argument of the article was that by articulating and documenting narratives, such as the one introduced at the beginning, it is possible to enrich the repertoire of teachers other than the narrator and to make this kind of practical knowledge available to public reflection and development. By introducing three further narratives from the same vocational context, two dealing with conflict resolution arising from play activities of children and one dealing with problems arising from the need to wear appropriate clothes outside, the attempt was then made to demonstrate how this kind of study can be undertaken. It was also argued that there is a potential here for

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contribution was not entirely recognized at the time of writing the article and is thus added here). The contribution to critical reflection I would categorize as part of the advancement of practice.

29 This contribution has since been expanded through the work done in Tyson (forthcoming) where it is discussed as a way of making vocational and cultural practices articulate and open to reflection, critique and systematic development.
mapping out “practice fields” in various VET contexts, the narratives indicating that there are “practice fields” relating to the above-mentioned activities. I wrote (Tyson 2016b, p. 468):

Each of these “practice fields” holds the potential to develop its own cluster of significant vocational narrative knowledge since the stories from the study represent courses of action that can be enriched through variation.

The article concluded with some suggestions for further research (cf. chapter 6). It also suggested that teacher education programs need to take seriously the education of the participants’ pedagogical imagination and that this, until further research demonstrates otherwise, can be assumed to include practice in various artistic activities as well as focused reflection on the connection between the aesthetic and the moral.

5.3 What is excellence in practice? Empirical explorations of vocational Bildung and practical wisdom through case narratives.

In this article I have begun dealing with a question that only became fully apparent during the later stages of working on the thesis as MacIntyre was made part of its conceptual framework. It was also an effect of the growing number of narrative cases that created a need to bring more clarity into what practices were actually articulated in them.

The article introduces VBD and MacIntyre’s concept of a practice. It then goes on to take a comparative look at the case narratives gathered and to discuss the extent to which they belong to a general practice of Bildung or phronesis and the extent to which they belong to more specific practices such as conflict resolution and how these relate to Bildung and phronesis. By doing this light is shed on what the case narratives are about, making their interpretation and categorization easier, something that is a prerequisite for a systematic approach. In particular, the concept of a practice is differentiated into that of vocational practices (within which most of the narrative cases fit) and cultural practices which are broader ones in which a number of vocational practices are embedded. This was exemplified by the educational biography of Wolfgang B. which contains several case narratives about his initiation into what I suggest is the cultural practice of crafts in which all the various vocational craft practices such as bookbinding, carpentry, masonry, printing, etc. are embedded. The article concludes with a discussion of what a systematic exploration of cultural practices could imply stating (p. 17): “it seems to me that the various vocational practices draw much of their excellence and dynamics from the cultural practice in which they are situated.” From this the question was raised what it means for
comparatively new vocational practices such as management, what cultural practice is this embedded in if any? Do these new vocational practices need to construct or find cultural practices to be part of? It was also suggested, finally, that (p. 18):

Through the lens of vocational and cultural practice narrative cases focusing on vocational Bildung and phronesis invite a systematic scholarly inquiry in order to achieve a more extensive description of particular vocational practices and the cultural practice/s that they are embedded in. … It could begin to connect the threads through which contemporary and emerging cultural practices draw on traditions or create new ones in order to enrich themselves and develop further. … As it stands, it seems excellences in both cultural and vocational practices develop tacitly and therefore are difficult to both critique and defend against various corruptive influences from policy measures and external goods. In conclusion then, social science, especially biographical inquiry, has the potential to investigate what diverse practitioners are practicing with unusual excellence and to bring these inquiries together in order to make larger trends and developments public and open to reflection. Such studies could be a powerful contribution to the development of vocational education and practice in society.

5.4 What would Humboldt say: A case of general Bildung in vocational education?

What would Humboldt say pursued a question raised at the end of the licentiate thesis regarding elements of general Bildung in the biographical case of Wolfgang B. Proceeding from a discussion of Humboldt’s ideas on general and special Bildung coupled with some current discussions about vocationalism (Ge. Beruflichkeit) the article went on to discuss aspects of the case relevant to these matters. The method was similar to that applied in the final article, A clash of expectations (Tyson 2016d), in that it outlined the issue at stake and then considered how patterns in the case can provide insight into novel ways of constructing VET curricula.

In discussing the concept of Bildung as Humboldt laid it out, the article was the only one dealing immediately with part of the tradition of Bildung. Humboldt conceived of Bildung as general in the sense that there are certain subjects which serve no special or vocational purpose but rather the general Bildung of human faculties. His point of view was that of a classical scholar and he tended to give weight to those subjects. The concept of vocationalism was introduced because an important and relevant issue in contemporary debates about VET is how to construct vocations/occupations and the educational curricula designed for them. Vocational Bildung is part of this debate and thus the argument made initially was that cases such as that of Wolfgang B. can serve to move the debate
on from theoretical issues and over to more empirical ones. In order to do this, Humboldt’s concepts of general and special Bildung were reformulated as expansive and intensive/concentrated Bildung. This allows for a less dichotomizing discussion of Bildung and VET. For the purpose of the article, only issues of expansive Bildung were considered as they appeared in the case. Intensive or concentrated Bildung, i.e., Bildung through extended practice of a skill and similar matters, was not discussed in the article but have been previously considered in the licentiate (Tyson 2015a). In presenting the case those parts of it where it could be determined that elements of an expansive form of Bildung occurred were included. This covered such matters as vocational teachers going beyond the narrow skill training they were engaged in to include wider perspectives drawn from history, science, and culture. It also covered points at which the curriculum that Mr. B. experienced during his apprenticeship and later at the Ecole Estienne in Paris could be said to be an expansive one.

The results of the article were threefold. First, the Humboldt-related interpretation of general/expansive Bildung allowed for an empirical inquiry into variations on VET curricula and the patterns they suggest. Second, it argued that this kind of empirical biographical study is needed in order to find out what VET has the potential of contributing to participants beyond the obvious skills. We thus need more case studies similar to that of Wolfgang B. Third, it was also suggested that cases like the one discussed can be a direct contribution to the practical imagination of those constructing vocational curricula or teaching vocational skills.

5.5 When expectations clash: Vocational education at the intersection of workplace and school

This study used a single case narrative to explore the potential of school-based VET in upper secondary school. It proceeded from a generally recognized issue with school-based VET, which is often viewed as being less valuable than actual work experience or workplace-based training. This in turn rests, in part, on the perception that it lacks opportunities for authentic work-related experiences, that it is mostly simulation and theory. This issue of authenticity was considered briefly in light of the biographical case of Wolfgang B. arguing that the question isn’t really about schools vs. workplaces but rather about meaningful vs. meaningless training. The problem schools face can then be understood in terms of a lack of meaningful outlets for the training done there. The argument presented through the case is that some school-based VET-programs could be reframed as sites for cultural and social developmental work, providing them with a unique source of authenticity and, at the same time, creating an innovative form of VET curriculum that is equipped to deal with some of the pressing issues of our time.
The case described, a developmental project in Masloc, Romania, was initiated by a teacher at a Steiner school in southern Germany. The description was based on personal interviews as well as published articles and pamphlets. The project started in 1992 as an initiative to help a Romanian medical doctor build a clinic. The teacher responsible has then spent the better part of two decades and more, repeatedly traveling to the village Masloc to work with students from his school on the clinic, and later, when that was finished, other buildings in the vicinity. The students painted, laid bricks, dug fields, planted trees, laid pathways, etc. during their visits. They also spent time at home in Germany staging plays and other activities to collect money in order to finance parts of the project. However, most of the materials used were donations from companies, some 140 at the end of 1999.

The analysis of the case aimed at pattern recognition, specifically a curriculum pattern of potential relevance to some VET programs. This pattern was described as one of doing social and cultural developmental work in a way that contained extensive and meaningful VET-tasks (in this case building-related). The conclusion was that such integrated programs could solve part of the authenticity issue plaguing school-based VET and at the same time turn some such VET programs into models for developmental work in society. Or, as I wrote (Tyson 2016d, p. 59, italics in original): “the general pattern consists in directing part of the educational activity of a school outwards into projects of social and cultural development.” Such projects would also contribute to another perceived weakness of both vocational programs and apprenticeships, the lack of civic education, given that they are explicitly oriented towards activities that support this.

5.6 Some reflections on MacIntyre’s practice-concept in relation to the articles

Since the articles were largely written before the practice-concept as MacIntyre has argued for it was introduced into the framework, a brief reflection on what it means for them seems to be in place.

In The didactics of vocational Bildung five ways that research in VBD can contribute are outlined: enriching knowledge of vocational tasks; conceptual development and critical reflection; advancement of practice; development of “practice fields” and the articulation of patterns of vocational Bildung-affordances. Here a brief discussion of the concept of a practice could have contributed to a clearer distinction between the practitioner-oriented contributions and the more direct scholarly contributions. But this depends on the differentiated concept of a practice that has emerged in What is excellence in practice? Before that, the concept was too general to really function as an interpretive lens.
In Pedagogical imagination the idea of a “practice field” would have received a conceptual context that it was possible to explore further in What is excellence in practice (forthcoming). But, apart from some brief references it is doubtful if that aspect would have been possible to work into the article for reasons of space. The article What is excellence in practice can be viewed as the direct continuation of Pedagogical imagination from this perspective.

In What would Humboldt say the concept could have expanded on the meaning given to the terms general/extensive and special/intensive Bildung. Initiation into a cultural practice would be the aim of general/extensive Bildung and into a vocational practice that of vocational Bildung. The embeddedness of the vocational in the cultural (when this is the case) explains why Humboldt was, in part, wrong in claiming that special Bildung makes the general impure and vice versa. Furthermore, the distinction made in the article between a vocational form of general Bildung and vocational general Bildung would be possible to rephrase so that the latter overlaps with the cultural practice of crafts and the former, perhaps, with some elements of Bildung as the aim of educational practice. However, this last issue would need extensive discussion. What would Humboldt say is the article that probably would have benefited the most from including the perspective on practice that MacIntyre affords. Perhaps even to the degree that it could be extensively revised as What would MacIntyre say? But that would remove it from the context in which it is situated where general and vocational Bildung are discussed.

In A clash of expectations the tension described there between authentic practice in workplaces and inauthentic in schools could have been embedded in MacIntyre’s discussion of internal and external goods. The difficulty for schools as institutions could be described here as a) inherently having the tendency to corrupt their own internal goods, b) at the same time trying to teach a vocational practice who’s internal goods are different than those normally possible to achieve in a school-setting, especially work-tasks that are perceived as meaningful beyond the context of the school, and c) also competing with the external goods of the various occupations that the schools are training for. The argument in the article is not especially weakened without this context but an inclusion of it would make the article more integrated into the inquiry as a whole and it would place it in a more conceptually saturated context.

To summarize, the concept of a practice as adopted from MacIntyre and further differentiated, can provide valuable perspective to the arguments in the articles. Particularly those that aim at results from VBD that are not directly oriented towards enriching the actions of practitioners.
6 Discussion and conclusion

The time has come to consider the results of the inquiry. Have the aims and research questions been adequately fulfilled? What are the general and specific conclusions that can be drawn? What are the limitations that need to be taken into account? The chapter is structured so that it begins with the most specific, the research questions and then gradually expands to consider aims and conclusions. After this there follows a section on consequences from choice of theory and method together with the limitations that were not covered in the previous sections. The chapter ends with a consideration on further research and some concluding thoughts.

6.1 Reflections on the research questions

6.1.1 The concepts needed for VBD as framework and method

The first question has been discussed throughout chapters 3 and 4. The conceptual framework of VBD consists of vocational Bildung and phronesis as sensitizing concepts in relation to the various case narratives collected. Pedagogical imagination, didactically relevant practical knowledge (techne and phronesis) as narratively articulated and MacIntyre’s practice-concept form the theoretical basis of VBD. They also function as the bridge over to the methodology of case narratives. These together with the emphasis on unusually poetic (rich or successful) cases constitute the main methodological features. They are embedded in a phronetic context where the aim of social scientific research is practical wisdom rather than theory. The main contribution of the thesis in relation to the articles is at least threefold.

First, in conceptual distinction. Sensitizing, theoretical and methodological concepts in the framework were not identified consistently and coherently in the articles. This reduced the transparency of the argument, especially across the articles, and also made it difficult to follow the shift from theoretical outline to methodological considerations.

Second, in conceptual refinement. This was the case in particular with the formula: “didactically relevant practical knowledge as narratively articulated.” Throughout the articles there are any number of variations on what, exactly, is narratively articulated up to, and including, narratively articulated vocational
Bildung didactics (in Tyson 2016a). This conceptual refinement can be considered a consequence of the former distinguishing process since it forced a more stringent separation between different parts of the framework.

Third, in conceptual coherence. Distinction and refinement both contribute to this. But it is also a result of synthesizing the various discussions on previous research and concepts spread out across the articles. This can be understood as the scholarly coherence of the framework. Its coherence has also been tested in relation to practitioners who are introduced to brief versions of it. In several of the case studies a basic presentation was made (cf. appendix 2 and 3) and a clear result is that a majority of the practitioners asked to provide case narratives from their experience found it intuitive, relevant and were able to write case narratives that related to the outlined concepts without therefore becoming stereotypical. This conclusion is based primarily on the narratives themselves and partly on evaluations by students of the courses. This has also resulted in narratives from the initial case studies being included in the presentations for the next group of studies in order to better clarify through examples what the various concepts mean.

This first research question, it needs to be emphasized, is open to further amendment. Additional case studies might well give reasons for changing or expanding the framework and almost certainly to giving it more nuance and complexity.

6.1.2 Case narratives as contributions to research and practice

The first aspect of this is that case narratives serve a double methodological purpose. The research contributions outlined in the articles include conceptual development, the documentation of “practice fields” and recognition of novel curriculum patterns. The contributions to practice in the sense of direct action, both vocational and didactical (didactical denoting the practice of teaching a vocational practice) are first and foremost located in the enrichment they can bring to a practitioner’s repertoire. Case narratives can also contribute to practice in the MacIntyrean sense by providing practitioners with a way of making part of their personal tacit knowledge explicit and public. This opens it to shared reflective study and provides practitioners with alternative views on the virtues and goods of their practice. As mentioned in the introduction such alternatives could be powerful narrative tools for both resistance against less ideal vocational cultures and for imaginative development of practice.

The double methodological function of the case narratives extends to several of the ways in which they can be collected. In the case studies conducted as a part of courses in vocational didactics and conflict resolution they are a contribution to the practitioners tasked with articulating their wisdom and Bildung. At the same time they represent an efficient way of gathering relevant research data. With some imagination this can be extended in several directions. Apprentices can be given the task of interviewing a respected master about their
vocational education and Bildung. Teacher students can be tasked with interviewing experienced teachers about their vocational phronesis. And so on. A significant part of doing research in VBD can be combined with teaching didactics and education courses. As discussed in chapter 2, working with narrative approaches in higher education is in itself hardly novel and many of these have already refined the ways in which they introduce such tasks to students and how they go about promoting deeper learning and reflection. Thus, the novelty here resides not so much with the approach in general but in the focus on didactical-practical knowledge in combination with the explicit interest in Bildung and phronesis and in unusually poetic cases.

6.1.3 Explorations of practices rich in Bildung and phronesis

There are two ways in which these explorations have yielded results. The first is more immediately practical in that the articles have explored contributions to the design of vocational tasks, curricula, environments and subjects. Vocational tasks are part of several case narratives from the study of Wolfgang B. and were discussed in Tyson (2016a, c). Contributions to the design of vocational curricula were the expressed aim of Tyson (2016c, d). The contribution to environments and subjects that a vocational practice rich in Bildung and phronesis can make is only indicated here as a further field of exploration. For example, a case narrative could be constructed around the way a vocational subject is taught. This would then presumably have to consist of more than stories including a description of the subject curriculum.

The second result of the empirical explorations is the further theorizing of conceptual distinctions that can aid in continued research into VBD. There have been four such distinctions made in the articles. Three were indicated in section 3.1. The conceptualization of a field of practice (Tyson 2016b), the differentiation between expansive and intensive vocational Bildung (Tyson 2016c) and between vocational and cultural practice (Tyson forthcoming). A fourth can be added, as discussed in Tyson (2016a, p. 372) drawing on Claeson (2010): existential Bildung. It was considered there as a potential conceptual contribution, especially if understood as a kind of vocational existential Bildung. As a sensitizing concept it would open for targeted questions regarding the various ways in which different vocational practices can afford existential Bildung experiences. Presumably practices dealing with the illness and death of people are rich in this but are there also existential Bildung experiences in the crafts, in management, in education, and are they similar or vocationally specific to some degree?

The differentiation discussed in Tyson (2016c) between expansive and intensive vocational Bildung was further qualified to distinguish between elements of general Bildung in VET and vocational general Bildung. Apart from its use as a conceptual tool in the construction of VET curricula it can function as a sensitizing concept in the study of larger educational biographies. One
biography cannot say much about the potential value of it as such and perhaps it is difficult to actively find relevant cases. Or they might prove empirically poor with regards to results. Furthermore, as indicated in the review at the end of chapter 5, combining it with the concepts of a vocational and a cultural practice situates general Bildung in VET in a cultural practice whereas vocational general Bildung can be understood as part of a vocational practice. This allows for more detailed study of their interaction.

The addition of MacIntyre’s practice-concept and the differentiation of it into vocational and cultural practice has the potential to expand the kinds of cases that are relevant to the inquiry, as was argued in Tyson (forthcoming). A part of the case of Wolfgang B. that had previously been difficult to really interpret within the framework became a paradigmatic case of the interaction between vocational and cultural practices. It seems to me that this result of the inquiry holds real potential in arguing for a way of systematically exploring excellence in practices for the purpose of reflective development. Such research could also increase our understanding of the circumstances and environments that have been conducive to such excellence. Perhaps it would allow us to distinguish between unique aspects that are difficult to repeat as well as other aspects that can be more systematically supported. At the same time each case together with the basic ideas of a vocational and cultural practice, represents a source of imagination for practitioners in their work (both for immediate action and the creation of curricula and learning environments). This concludes the review of the research questions and I can now move on to the aim from which they were derived.

6.2 Reflections on the aim

The main issue these inquiries have grappled with and explored was described in the introduction as the synthesis of some hitherto disparate philosophical, theoretical and methodological approaches. The problem that this synthesis was meant to deal with was: how can we systematically increase Bildung and phronesis in vocational practices?

From this the aim was described as: to explore how Bildung and phronesis can enrich our understanding of vocational practice and didactics on a theoretical, methodological and practical level.

The review of the research questions and how they have been explored in the articles and enriched further in the thesis text answers some of this. Two general questions can now be added that are more directly related to the overall aim of the thesis:

1. Has the argument on the lack of research with an explicit attention to narrative articulations of practical knowledge and practice relating to Bildung and phronesis been convincing?
2. Has an agreement on the need for systematic documentation of such knowledge followed from this and the various perspectives developed?

If both of these can be answered affirmatively then the results of this inquiry can be considered a first attempt at conceptual and empirical work.

In chapter 2, the various sources drawn on in developing the framework of VBD were discussed. One part of that discussion was the argument that although all the main conceptual parts of the theory and methodology that constitute VBD are present in previous research, they are seldom present together. This, coupled with a significant proportion of the relevant literature being philosophical or theoretical to the exclusion of empirical work, has meant that although similar research has been suggested, there seems not to be any systematic effort to both create a framework for it and to commence the collecting and publishing of resulting cases.

Has it then been demonstrated that there is a need for systematic inquiry into narrative cases that focus explicitly on vocational Bildung and phronesis as practical-didactical knowledge and with an emphasis on the poetic? This can be considered from at least four perspectives. The first is based in the phronetic approach outlined at the beginning of chapter 4. If the aim of research is to increase phronesis rather than generate (predictive) theory, then it lends credence, in a very general sense, to the need for this kind of systematic inquiry. From a more traditional theory-generation standpoint it is perhaps difficult to view the problem and aim of the inquiry as genuine. It might appear too practice oriented, too normative and its conceptual framework too philosophical. This should be obvious already in the choice of words when formulating the problem. How can we systematically increase Bildung and phronesis rather than more neutral terms like measure or observe. It is difficult to really argue against such objections to the inquiry since they rest on a different conception of what social science is about. They are, in a sense, axiomatic and taken as evident in much the same way that the aim of phronetic social science, to contribute to our practical wisdom, is axiomatic. Just like Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometry stem from different axioms and give rise to different possible geometries this is the case here. There is no reason to invalidate more traditional approaches to social science and I am hesitant to bring in the arguments made by Flyvbjerg (2001) and Thomas (2010, who refers extensively to MacIntyre’s *After Virtue*) against them. The important thing is not to forget one’s tacitly assumed axiomatic grounds for validity and then proceed to universalize the resulting judgments. This means that if we take the phronetic approach to social science as axiomatic (for the purpose of this inquiry and not necessarily social science as a whole) then increasing Bildung and phronesis in vocational practices is coherent with it.

The second argument for why systematic inquiry is needed is the extent to which Bildung and phronesis overlap with the larger discussion in VET regarding key-qualifications, lifelong learning, employability, developing vocational
ethics, etc. This has been referred to briefly in some of the articles (Tyson 2016a, c, d) but not considered more extensively. The most extensive discussion was in Tyson (2016c) regarding Bildung and vocationalism as a way of understanding how Bildung can be relevant in VET discussions. The conclusion there was that these kinds of cases, when placed in the context of eg. lifelong learning or vocational ethics, allow for different analyses than those hitherto made in VET research. The problem brought up in the introduction regarding the erosion of vocational practices is perhaps the most important reason for why this systematic inquiry is relevant in VET research. MacIntyre’s contention that practices are always being eroded by the institutions that give them continuity, if taken seriously, could be partially addressed by this kind of inquiry (cf. Tyson forthcoming).

The third reason is in its contribution to teacher education and professional development as outlined in Tyson (2016b). By focusing squarely on the Bildung and phronesis of teachers and taking a practical-didactical perspective on it, there is a potential in the approach to significantly contribute to teacher education programs and professional development work. This could be augmented by public casebooks but even the simple act of writing and reflecting on one’s own vocational Bildung and phronesis that was introduced in the case studies at a university were highly appreciated according to the student evaluations I know of.

The fourth, and perhaps strongest, case I can make for this inquiry is also the one that requires the most work to follow up on and that is the potential for systematic explorations of Bildung and phronesis practices through case narratives. If this were to prove practicable it could represent a significant and powerful way of advancing education in areas that have hitherto proven very difficult to change and develop or even to speak about in concrete terms given their general tacitness.

6.3 Consequences from choice of theory and method

Looking back on the process of inquiry, the consequences of situating it in a didactical and practical context appear to have been the prerequisite for how the research data were understood and interpreted. Because the conceptual framework was not present as an articulated educational research theory but rather existed as fragments in various books and articles, this approach was a matter of remaining sensitive to the context described above and to try and theorize how the various contributions by philosophers and social science researchers deemed relevant could be integrated. The conceptual framework developed is meant to focus attention on specific characteristics of case narratives (and on the concept of a case narrative) to the exclusion of others. This unavoidably obscures other matters as well as the more open-ended approach characteristic of narrative inquiry in general. Furthermore, the explicit aim of looking for the poetic rather
than the prosaic or the unresolved tragic already leads the initial inquiry in a particular direction. This approach needs to be complemented when the inquiry is placed in a larger context of Bildung and phronesis-related practical knowledge.

As discussed throughout, and with special emphasis in 4.9 regarding validity and reliability, the consequence of a phronetic approach coupled with case narrative research, is the absence of traditional views about these. This has caused few problems because the aim has never been to generalize from the cases. In other words, more than a consequence of methodological choices this represents a choice of paradigms: the phronetic (Flyvbjerg 2001) and participatory (Heron & Reason 1997). The present inquiry demonstrates how that choice determines what methods, ideas, knowledge, etc. make sense in such a paradigm context compared to others. Guba & Lincoln (2005, p. 196) identify two major clusters: critical theories and constructivisms; neither of which, for the most part, share the participatory and phronetic focus on practical knowledge. However, nothing prevents an interpretation of the cases from such perspectives as well and one can assume that, if done wisely, this could result in new understanding not afforded by the paradigms adopted here.

Another consequence of the inquiry being oriented towards practical knowledge is the relative unimportance of issues normally associated with biographical studies regarding the veracity of a person’s claims about their experience. In particular, Bildung-related questions, where someone in hindsight claims to have developed this or that, become tricky if the issue is to determine if this actually is so. Although it proceeds from a basic gesture of trust vis-á-vis those sharing their experiences, the focus on what these have to offer us in the way of furthering practical knowledge means that there is a limit to how important it is to determine what actually happened. Obviously there are facts that do determine the meaningfulness of interpretations. If Mr. B. simply made up the entire story about Begabtenförderung discussed in Tyson (2016c) it doesn’t make as much sense to consider it as part of a pattern for curriculum development. The limited number of cases available at the present stage of inquiry increases this vulnerability because the Bildung-affordances described by one person in relation to a particular vocational task may well be deluded, but if there are two dozen similar descriptions independent of each other this is far less likely.

A related issue is the problem raised regarding single cases and their distorting effects on judgment. It is very difficult to imagine alternatives in the face of strong convincing cases and thus a responsibility for researchers in the field of VBD is to aim at presenting cases of poetic practice dealing with the same or similar problems in significantly different ways. This is a problem that the inquiry suffers from at the present because there are just not enough cases yet to afford such an approach.

Although I have argued that this case narrative approach is particularly well suited to study Bildung and phronesis as practical-didactical knowledge nothing
precludes searching out unusually wise and tactful teachers and doing participant observation and filmed studies. It seems reasonable to assume that teachers unusually skilled in tactfulness or some other virtue might exhibit particularities of action and judgment that cannot be articulated with any ease in a narrative. Perhaps this methodological divide is also to a degree a divide between studying phronesis and virtuous action. The former being a narrative kind of knowledge whereas the latter is a matter of excellent action.

6.4 Limitations

Given the explorative character of the inquiry, the main limitation may well turn out to be that some of the potentials suggested of VBD cannot be realized. The case studies conducted contain some limitations as well. One is the relevance of what could be termed epistemic environments to the kinds of case narratives told. With epistemic environment conceptual contexts like Rosenberg’s non-violent communication or Steiner’s Waldorf-pedagogy are meant. But also such contexts as various institutional cultures or the practice context of a particular vocational group. There are differences here in terms of history, size and intensity that need attention and where perhaps certain kinds of Bildung and phronesis would emerge as more prevalent given certain epistemic environments. There are not enough case narratives to say anything more specific, but it does suggest an interesting approach to the evaluation of what an epistemic environment potentially can foster in terms of Bildung and phronesis from an empirical point of view.

The issue of epistemic environments is important to bear in mind also because the case narratives are not constructed free of context and it may be that this epistemic context is more central than it has been made to seem here. Perhaps the stories about successful conflict resolution in Tyson (2016b) appear not so much wise as unwise or simply incomprehensible to some without the developed framework of non-violent communication. This would be obvious if there were a lot of technical terms or if some everyday terms had taken on new and specific meaning in a given context. But even if this is not the case prior experience can perhaps lead to surprisingly divergent interpretations. That line of inquiry has not been pursued further here but one can note that for the purpose of collecting stories a comparatively sparse description of the conceptual framework of VBD is possible (cf. appendix 2 and 3). If the case narratives are then meant to be used in collective reflection within teacher education courses or professional development my assumption is that a more extensive treatment of the framework can assist in bridging some of the differences arising from lack of shared contexts.

Of course the influence of material environments and the interplay of epistemic and material cultures are also important, as are socio-economic factors. Steiner schools, for example, are known for their attention to materials and
color and for their unconventional architecture. But, making this a strong point of emphasis risks burying the case narratives in too much context. Time, or studies aiming at elaborating on these issues, will perhaps tell how important each one is.

Another limitation that holds for most qualitative studies but that is somewhat ambiguous here is that of generalizability (cf. 4.9). How far can the conclusions be drawn? To the extent that the argument has been made for cases as mediators between the general and the particular through imagination, for them as containing various patterns and as articulations of practical knowledge this limitation is largely irrelevant. However, the more far-reaching arguments about systematic documentation and analysis and about mapping “practice fields” are subject to the caveat that only a significantly larger number of case studies can be sure to determine if, and then how and to what extent, this is actually possible.

6.5 Suggestions for further research

Given the explorative character of the inquiry the potential for further research is extensive. First and foremost, there is a need for more case narratives of vocational Bildung and phronesis. Especially paradigmatic narratives, which are comparatively hard to come by. The diversity of narrative forms that can articulate practical knowledge of Bildung and phronesis means that there are numerous opportunities to conduct extensive studies and to group narratives in categories in order to provide substance and variation within each category. Here the work in Tyson (2016a) of sorting out ways in which VBD can contribute to research and practice only represents a beginning.

Further research can be conducted in the form of case studies of enacted curricula (as in Tyson 2016c, d), in the form of more vocational education biographies and as part of didactics courses for teachers or in professional development. I have not explored the potential in having apprentices interview their teachers as part of assignments in vocational schools, or of focus group interviews with a small selection of eg. retired teachers in order to support a conversation where memory is assisted through partaking in each others’ stories. Another such inquiry is suggested by the thesis on the practical knowledge of supervisors (Lönn Svensson 2007), referred to in section 2.1.1. Proceeding from the basic framework of VBD the aim could be to collect narrative cases of unusually wise and successful supervision, including examples of especially skilled text-comments. It seems to me that the researchers’ imagination is the limit here as to how this kind of study can be designed and enacted.

There is also work to do, both conceptual and empirical, in elaborating on the suggestion that it might be possible to establish so-called “practice fields” and to consider what it means to aim for poetic practice when what is normally covered in MacIntyre’s framework includes a lot of prosaic practice. MacIntyre
writes about the excellences one can pursue within a practice but this is not the same as aiming to articulate an entire aspect, Bildung and phronesis, of a practice from a wholly poetic standpoint. Another matter to perhaps consider is the interplay between intellectual and moral virtues in the case studies (as mentioned in chapter 3). This is a matter both of conceptually working out the possible difference and exploring the potential of this for understanding the cases in a more differentiated way. Perhaps this would also contribute to more specific questions for practitioners. As discussed in chapter 2 there are also several paths left open in working out the conceptual framework, in particular the various connections to Dewey and the pragmatic tradition.

In the articles, beyond the possibilities already stated, there were some further suggestions. In *When expectations clash* the need for comparative analysis was stressed (2016d, p. 61):

Do they suggest similar patterns or different ones? Are there examples of work done outside of the general area of construction and gardening that could serve as templates for curricula in other vocational fields? Are there cases already situated in vocational programs and what could they contribute to an understanding of the potentials and difficulties of creating curricula aimed at social and cultural development? Are there similar cases to be found in contexts of workplace-based education or apprenticeships? What do they suggest?

In *The didactics of vocational Bildung* it was suggested that case narratives could be a way of evaluating curricula, environments and practices, in effect, to measure them although the measurement is almost entirely qualitative. Suggesting that development can be measured through narrative is not novel in itself (e.g. CDRA 2001) but using it in a pedagogical context may be. The issue, in any case, are the many ensuing questions. These are questions such as how many narratives are needed, who participates, over what time-span and what other measurements need to be included as complements. Perhaps a school is able to produce a significant number of relevant narratives while at the same time having a high number of drop-outs and teachers on long term sick leave, what does that suggest?

In *What is excellence in practice* the question of what practices can be identified in the case studies was raised. It was suggested that not only are there some practices that are difficult to categorize other than as the practice of phronesis or Bildung but also that there are some specific practices that overlap with phronesis. One such practice seems to be conflict resolution. Others might be management and leadership which suggests that a fertile field of future research might be to collect narratives of successful management and leadership practice from people in different positions. Another, potentially rich field of study, aims at articulating the internal goods of practices which are especially vulnerable to corruption from external goods. Two examples would be banking and politics in which the external goods of money and power play a central role. How do
unusually wise practitioners deal with this? What are their ideal cases and biographies? Such questions might create a powerful set of narratives to include in educational activities for those who are to be initiated into such practices.

More than anything though, there is a need for extensive collecting and publishing of case narratives. If the study has been at all convincing it should be clear that our systematic, public, knowledge of these practices is limited at best. Given the amount of work already being done at various teacher education centers where narrative methods are employed this may not be such a long step to take. Selecting and editing such collections demands its own kind of practical wisdom and I hope this initial, and in many ways limited, study can contribute to the reflective enrichment of other scholars’ imagination.

6.6 Concluding thoughts

It is tempting to conclude with some statement to the effect that the world today, perhaps more than ever, is in desperate need of more practical wisdom and Bildung. However I have, over the course of several years now, become increasingly uncomfortable with approaches that feel they can only motivate their own perspectives by emphasizing the almost crushing amount of trouble we are in (especially if we go on disregarding the perspective advocated for). If anything, the study rather demonstrates the presence of practical wisdom and Bildung among us. It also indicates that there is space for an inquiry concerned with them in precisely the academic institutions that Schön was critical of (referenced at the end of chapter 2). He wrote that they tend to emphasize (1983, p. vii, italics in original): “a particular epistemology, a view of knowledge that fosters selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry.” At least the study indicates that they do not force it. What is meant here is not first and foremost the Educational Department at the University of Stockholm (that would be too provincial a way to conclude). More so, it relates to the various journals that have published articles on pedagogical imagination, case narratives of Bildung, etc. And also all the previous research on which it has been possible to draw, much of it appearing in just the last ten years and several of these scholars have been generous with their time and interest when contacted. It appears that there is, and has been for some time, a movement towards what Barfield and Freeman, independent of each other, have called a poetic science (Barfield 2010, p. 135ff.; Freeman 2007, p. 141f.). Concluding the thesis with poetry in the more literal sense therefore seems fitting, and this will

30 Including the licentiate and affiliated articles, they are: *Vocations and Learning, Research on Steiner Education (RoSE), Interchange, Reflective Practice, Journal of Vocational Education and Training, International Journal on Research in Vocational Education and Training and Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training.*
be done in two steps. First, quoting a single line from a correspondence between Paul Celan and Nelly Sachs in order to discuss again, but in other words, what imagination means in the context of this inquiry and beyond. Second, with a poem by Rilke that can be read as a comment on, or reply to, this.

_All words are refugees (or asylum seekers)_
_Alle Worte sind Flüchtlinge_

Letters between Sachs and Celan (quoted in Olsson 2004, p. 46).

This can mean so many different things:

That we are like new countries and earth for the words (stories) to take root in (alternatively that we are like refugee or internment-camps for them…).

That our words (stories) are chased out across the world and make their homes in a diaspora of relationships that are maintained, ie. enriched, by the intensity of distance (alternatively thrown out into a growing night of solitude…).

That all mouths are strangers, ready or not to receive these refugees…

_We are only mouth. Who sings the distant heart that dwells whole (or unhurt) within all things? Its great pulse lives in us divided into lesser beats. And its great pain, like its great joy, is too great for us. So we always tear ourselves away again and are only mouth. But suddenly the great heartbeat breaks (or enters) into us invisibly and we cry out -, and then are being, change and countenance._

Rilke (In Kühlewind 1985, p. 13, with minor alterations by me.)

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Sammanfattning

Inledning

1. Vilka begrepp behövs till ett koherent ramverk för yrkesbildningsdidaktik och vad är dess huvudsakliga metodologiska kännetecken?
2. Hur kan användandet av fallberättelser för att artikulera yrkesbildning och yresfronesis bidra till forskning och praktik?
3. Vilka möjliga resultat kan ett empiriskt utforsknings av yrkespraktiker rika på bildning och praktisk klokhet ge?

Fallstudierna
Forskningsarbetet bygger på ett flertal fallstudier. Den första (Tyson 2014, 2015a, b, 2016a, c, forthcoming) är en ingående studie om hantverksmästare Wolfgang B. och hans yresutbildningsbiografi som först publicerades i en separat licentiatavhandling (Tyson 2015a). Den nästföljande studien bygger på en skriftlig uppgift till studenter på ett fritidslärarprogram som, utgående från

Begreppsramverk

Yrkesbildning kan förstås som de bildningserfarenheter som uppstår i ett yrkesutövande och i en yrkesutbildning. Bildning har här en bred betydelse som omfattar kunskapsdjup och bredd, karaktärsdaning, estetisk bildning, mm. (Rittelmeyer 2012). I kortsumt, de erfarenheter som förblivit betydelsefulla för den biografiska utvecklingen. Tack vare att bildning är så nära förbundet med det biografiska (bildningsromaner och bildningsbiografier är goda exempel på detta) så går det att göra fallstudier av yrkesbildning genom att helt enkelt be människor berätta om sådant som var minnesvärt och biografiskt avgörande i deras yrkesutbildningar. Sådana berättelser är för det mesta bildningsberättelser.


Didaktik som det tredje begreppet i yrkesbildningsdidaktik bottnar i den vanliga didaktiska förståelsen av en undervisnings vad, när, hur, varför och med vem (Uljens 1997). Här är det ett sätt att uppmärksamma vikten av att fallberättelserna är konkreta och införlipningar av ett händelseförlopp eller en konversation som är tillräckligt detaljerad för att en läsare ska kunna använda...
berättelsen som utgångspunkt för det egna handlandet. Denna didaktikförståelse är kombinerad med två av ramverkets andra begrepp, narrativt artikulerad praktisk kunskap och pedagogisk fantasi.


Han argumenterar för att praktiker som fotboll, arkitektur, jordbruk eller vård har interna värden (internal goods) eller dygder, det som gör praktiken meningfull och berikande (som leder till välbehinande och lycka). Bildning och fronesis fångar väsentliga delar (tex. yrkesetik) av det som i utövandet av en praktik träder fram som dess interna värden vilket gör att fallberättelser fungerar som ett sätt att artikulera en praktiks värden så som de utövas (i berättarens ögon) snarare än som mer abstrakta filosofiska skildringar av olika praktik-ideal.

Metodologiskt ramverk


Den centrala enheten i yrkesbildningsdidaktiska studier är extrema och paradigmatiska fallberättelser (Flyvbjerg 2001, 2006). Extrema fallberättelser är sådana som fokuserar på det som är avvikande och i yrkesbildningsdidaktiska

En fallberättelse kan i yrkesbildningsdidaktiska sammanhang vara allt från kortare berättelser om händelser (Tyson 2016b) till hela yrkesutbildningsbiografier (Tyson 2015a). De kan också vara tex. rapporterande skildringar av en arbetsprocess på en skola (Tyson 2016d). De kan samlas in genom skriftliga uppgifter till studenter, genom intervjuer och även andra sätt att dokumentera historier. Eftersom det är berättelsen som är kunskapsenheten så är det särskilt viktigt att presentera fallen i så hel form som möjligt och att avstå från sammanfattningar och representativa citat.

**Artikelsammanfattningar**

**Yrkesbildningsdidaktik: Berättelser betydelse för yrkedspestagogisk forskning**

Kuben från Wolfgang B:s yrkesutbildningsbiografi (även diskuterad i Tyson 2016e), en kortare berättelse från den tidigare nämnda hantverkslärarstudien och slutligen en av berättelserna från vårdlärarstudien. Genom en granskning av variationen i perspektiv som berättelserna erbjudde kunde slutsatsen dras att åtminstone fem olika sorters bidrag till yrkespedagogik är möjliga: ett berikande av kunskapen om yrkesuppgifter; begränsning och kritisk reflektion; praktikutveckling i handlingssanterad bemärkelse; utvecklingen av praktikfält och artikulationen av mönster för yrkesbildningsmöjligheter. Genom dessa distinktioner så bidrar artikeln till kunskapen om hur systematisk forskning på det yrkesbildningsdidaktiska fältet kan genomföras.

Pedagogisk fantasi och praktisk klokhet: framgångsberättelserns roll i lärarutbildning och professionsutveckling


Vad är förträfflighet (excellence) i praktiken? Empiriska undersökningar av yrkesbildning och praktisk klokhet genom fallberättelser

I artikeln (Tyson forthcoming) påbörjades ett arbete med att diskutera frågor som visade sig i slutfaserna av forskningsarbetet genom introduktionen av MacIntyres (2011) praktikbegrepp i ramverket. Den var också ett resultat av att mängden fallstudier vuxit, något som skapade ett behov av att få klarhet i vilka praktiker som faktiskt artikulerades genom dem.

Artikeln introducerar yrkesbildningsdidaktik och MacIntyres praktikbegrepp. Därefter görs en jämförande studie av de fallberättelser som samlats in med en diskussion som inledningsvis kretsar kring i vilken utsträckning de tillhör en allmän bildnings- eller fronesispraktik eller om de snarare tillhör mer specifika praktiker som exempelvis konfliktlösning i vilka element av bildning och fronesis återfinns. Härigenom belystes vad det är fallberättelserna handlar om vilket gjorde att både tolkning och kategorisering av dem underlättas, något som är en förutsättning för systematisk forskning. Framför allt så utvecklades en distinktion i praktikbegreppet mellan det som kallades en yrkespraktik (där de flesta berättelser passade) och det som kallades för en kulturell praktik inom vars ramar en större antal olika yrkespraktiker rymms. Det exemplifierades med Wolfgang B:s yrkesutbildningsbiografi i vilken flera sådana berättelser återfinns som handlar om hans invigning (som MacIntyre kallar det) i hantverkens kulturpraktik där alla olika yrkespraktiker på hantverksområdet finns med som såsom bokbindning, snickeri, krukmakeri, etc. Artikeln avslutas med en diskussion kring vad potentialen i en systematisk utforskning av kulturpraktiker i relation till yrkespraktiker kan innebära för yrkespedagogik.

Vad skulle Humboldt säga: Ett fall av allmänbildning i yrkesutbildning?

Artikeln (Tyson 2016c) tar upp en fråga som ställdes i den tidigare licentiatavhandlingen (Tyson 2015a) om inslagen av allmänbildning i Wolfgang B:s yrkesbiografi. Utgående från en diskussion kring Humboldts idéer om allmän och speciell bildning tillsammans med en mer samtida diskussion (Kutscha 2008) kring "yrkesmässighet" (Ty. Beruflichkeit) så görs en närmare granskning av biografin. Metoden liknar den som också användes i den sista artikeln (Tyson 2016d) genom att den beskriver problemet ifråga och därefter söker efter mönster i fallet som kan bidra med insikt i hur nya kursplaneformer kan utvecklas där en systematisk hänsyn tas till frågor om yrkesbildning.

Humboldt utvecklade ett allmänbildningsbegrepp där han menade att vissa (skol- och universitets) ämnen saknar en mer speciell eller yrkesmässig funktion, dvs. de är allmänna och tjänar därmed bildandet av människan som sådan. Hans perspektiv var en klassiskt utbildad filosof vilket bidrog till värdet han satte på dessa ämnen (språk, filosofi, historia). Begreppet yrkesmässighet intro-

Artikelnas resultat är trefaldigt. Först så möjliggör den Humboldt-relaterade tolkningen av allmän/expansiv bildning empiriska undersökningar av variation i yrkesutbildningskursplaner och de mönster som dessa erbjuder. Den utgör också ett argument för liknande empiriska studier i syfte att få djupare inblick i vad yrkesutbildningar kan bidra med bortom den mer uppenbara färdighetsträningen. Till sist så utgör den här sortens fall ett direkt bidrag till den pedagogiska fantasin för de vars uppgift det är att skriva yrkesutbildningskursplaner och bedriva yrkesundervisning.

När förväntningar krockar: yrkesutbildning i mötet mellan arbetsplats och skola

sen som ett exempel eller mönster för hur en del skolbaserade yrkesprogram kan rekontextualiseras som platser för kulturellt och socialt utvecklingsarbete, något som gör dem till en unik källa för autenticitet och samtidigt en innovativ form av yrkesutbildningsprogram utrustade för att möta en del av de mer allvarliga problem vi hanterar idag.

Fallet är ett tysk-rumänskt utvecklingsprojekt i Masloc, Rumänien där elever över ett par decennier varit involverade i perioder med att bygga upp en klinik och därtill hörande kringbyggnader. Eleverna som deltog ägnade tid åt att måla, mura, plantera, etc. vid sina besökar. Analysen av fallet föreslog att socialt och kulturellt utvecklingsarbete är en potential som många yrkesprogram har och att det skulle kunna bidra till att lösa delar av autenticitsproblemet som skolförlagd yrkesutbildning har samtidigt som det skulle förvandla yrkesprogrammen till föreömen för socialt utvecklingsarbete. Det allmänna mönstret består alltså i att rikta en del av utbildningsaktiviteten i en skola utåt i form av sociala och kulturella utvecklingsprojekt. Sådana projekt skulle också bidra till att stärka en annan svaghet som ofta diskuteras i relation till både yrkesprogram och lärlingsutbildningar, bristen på medborgerlig samhällsorienterad utbildning (civic education), eftersom de är explicit inriktade på just detta.

Resultat

Resultaten av de olika studierna faller under de tre forskningsfrågorna. Det har först handlat om att utveckla ett begreppsramverk för yrkesbildningsdidaktik som teori och metod, inbegripet en rad finare distinktioner genom kappan. Som ett praktikorienterat ramverk så är det provisoriskt och öppet för ytterligare justeringar och tillägg.

När det gäller fallberättelser som bidrag till både forskning och praktik så har det till en början handlat om att demonstrera hur de kan fungera som en dubbel metodbrygga. Dels som forskningsmetod och dels som undervisningsmetod. En rad andra forskningsbidrag identifierades och sammanfattades framför allt i Tyson (2016a). Praktikbidraget har hittills betraktats i termer av bidrag till repertoarer och som ett sätt för praktiker (subjekt) att göra tyst kunskap artikulerad vilket möjliggör reflektion och synliggörande av praktiker (objekt).

I utforskandet av yrkespraktiker rika på bildning och praktisk klokhed så har studierna bidragit med två huvudsakliga resultat. Ett mer direkt praktiskt som handlar om bidrag till utvecklandet av uppgifter, kursplaner, miljöer och ämnen. Det andra resultatet ligger i de begreppliga bidragen som utvecklats genom tolkningsarbetet: praktifiklätet i Tyson (2016b), differentieringen mellan expansiv och koncentrerad yrkesbildning (Tyson 2016c) och distinktionen mellan yrkespraktiker och kulturella praktiker (Tyson forthcoming). Differentieringen mellan expansiv och koncentrerad yrkesbildning fick också ett tillägg i form av allmänbildning i yrkesutbildning respektive yrkesallmänbildning som två sorters expansiv yrkesbildning representerade i fallet.
Målet med studien som helhet har varit att bidra till frågan om hur vi systematiskt kan utveckla/ökta inlaget av bildning och fronesis i yrkespraktiker. Det fick formen av ett syfte där det handlade om att utforska hur bildning och fronesis kan berika vår förståelse av yrkespraktik och didaktik på en teoretisk, metodologisk och praktisk nivå. Huvudresultatet av avhandlingsarbetet kan sammanfattas i att artikulerandet av ovanligt rika praktiker representerar ett viktigt bidrag till att synliggöra de aspekter av yrkesutbildning och yrkesutövande som är själva värdet med dem och som det samtidigt är svårt att utbilda för. Med andra ord, det öppnar för ett systematiskt arbete med yrkesbildningsdidaktik på yrkesutbildningsområdet.
Acknowledgements

Here undoubtedly lies the chief poetic energy: – in the force of imagination that pierces or exalts the solid fact, instead of floating among cloud-pictures.

George Eliot *Daniel Deronda* (1996 [1876], p. 315)

Although on the cover I am identified as the sole author of this thesis that is really only correct in the sense that a sculptor may have been responsible for holding the hammer and chisel, doing the carving, while other, more skilled artists participated with suggestions, critique and expertise. Even more than in my previous research work, I have experienced this as a collaborative effort in the best sense of the word. It starts with the anonymous reviewers of the articles. Thanks to them I was able to significantly rework and improve the texts, understanding my own argument better in the process. It goes on to include all the interesting and valuable conversations at conferences and elsewhere in the course of the past two years. It has culminated in two reading seminars, one in March and one in October 2016. In both I experienced a sense that the readers actually understood my inquiry better than I did myself in some ways. Rather than simply note the problems and inconsistencies in the text, they chose to reflect on ways in which these could become sources of development. Because of their suggestions and attempts at summarizing the most salient questions and results, I have been able to expand the inquiry as well as clarify it. So to my readers at the seminars: Klas Roth, Katarina Sipos, Camilla Thunborg and Ulf Olsson, I will always consider your readings a brilliant example of how to engage with the texts of other researchers. As such it has become part not just of my process of inquiry, but part of my academic vocational Bildung.

I am happy to say that my experience as a PhD student has been one where I have continuously interacted with people who embody many of the finest virtues of academic practice. Included here is the already mentioned collaborative and supportive attitude but also the capacity for genuine interest in inquiry. I have often marveled at how good my more experienced colleagues are at asking relevant questions of scholarship far away from their own fields of work. In particular, asking not in order to embarrass or expose someone but in order to further their inquiry. That is a virtue. And so my gratitude goes on to include my wonderful supervisors Lazaro Moreno Herrera and Maud Baumgarten, my previous supervisor during the licentiate, Inger Eriksson and also Viveca Lind-
berg for being, in a sense, the fairy godmother not only to this inquiry but to the research school in vocational subject didactics where it all began. It also extends to the whole VET research group of which I have been a part throughout. In an institutional context where lack of time tends to erode these kinds of academic virtues I have been privileged to have all of you as role models for how to read, to ask and to give advice. As MacIntyre puts it, a practice is something one is initiated into and my initiation into the practice of academic research owes much of its richness to the colleagues mentioned, as well as many others.

Another area of deep gratitude is connected to the practical side of the inquiry. First and foremost, to all the individuals who shared their stories without which this work would not exist. Furthermore, to the colleagues who enthusiastically agreed to make case narratives of Bildung and phronesis part of their didactics courses. Finally, to Caroline Bratt who, after some conversations about aspects of my previous licentiate work, asked me if I could perhaps write a new curriculum for the fritids-teacher program at the Waldorf University College. She encouraged me to take my research into consideration when writing the curriculum and this directly led to a case narrative approach as an integral part of it. Had this not happened, I would not have had the first group of cases regarding successful conflict resolution at the exact point in time, spring of 2015, when I was in the process of deciding how to proceed with the PhD after finishing the licentiate. Again, I am struck by how important the capacity to ask relevant questions is and how much I owe to those who have asked.

I am, of course, deeply thankful to friends and family, to co-participants in courses and to all my fellow PhD students with whom I have shared the process of inquiry. I am also thankful to professor Yuri Popkov for his generosity in allowing me to use his beautiful photo of the Altai swamp on the cover. The ongoing conversations with Wolfgang have, as always, been of greater value than I could ever express in words.

Lastly, during a presentation of my research at a seminar almost two years into it, Christian Helms Jørgensen, a visiting professor from Denmark, remarked to me that I seemed to be engaged in re-enchanting the world (of VET at least). This was the first time I had heard of such a phrase, as far as I can remember, and it immediately struck a chord. It remains perhaps the most concise example of the way another scholar has been more acutely perceptive of the actual aims of the inquiry than I have been myself. It has illuminated the ensuing path for which I will always be grateful. Here, at the very end of the inquiry process, I would perhaps say that a person who is wise or gebildet is a person who can afford the world its re-enchantment. Who is able to call on her imagination and make use of it to pierce or exalt the solid fact as Eliot writes.


131


Steiner, R. (2013[1894/1918]). *Die Philosophie der Freiheit.* Bad Liebenzell: Rudolf Steiner Ausgaben.


Tyson, R. (2016d). When expectations clash: Vocational education at the intersection of workplace and school. *Interchange, 47*(1), 51-63.


Appendices

Appendix 1

Note: Because the task was written in a larger context I have made some adjustments so that it can be understood as a self-contained task. Also, if the opportunity arises to repeat the task, narratives from the first round would be included as examples.

Writing about successful conflict resolution

The questions at the center of this task are how choice of words, judgments, and reflection are key to how we communicate with children and adults in our work. Especially how we as teachers can acquire tools and insights that allow us to systematically and attentively strive to develop our own communication. The basis for this is that our attention and skill in conversation and communication in a wider sense is something that we both can and should develop continuously.

As a preparation for this we have chosen a book by Marshall Rosenberg (2003): Life-enriching education that uses his non-violent communication method as a way of bringing these issues to attention. It represents one of many ways in which to work with these matters in a concrete and practical way.

During our first course session we will discuss those aspects in his book that are of special relevance to the questions above.

As preparation for the second session there are two tasks:

The first is to pay attention to what is described as value-judgments, i.e. the use of words like right, wrong, abnormal, normal, bad, good, etc. in one’s own communication. Not in order to decide what is right and wrong in one’s way of communicating but in order to raise reflective awareness regarding communication and what one may tend to take for granted.

The second task is to take Rosenberg’s writing as a basis for noticing what one finds to be an especially successful or rich communicative-process. Then to describe the chain of events as detailed and clear as possible in writing.

An example of this could be what a teacher-student told us about a teacher at a day-care to which the child of the student went. This was told during a conversation about non-violent communication.

In one of the day-care groups there was a boy who was considered difficult, especially by the parents of the other children, he would bite and fight and be generally disturbing and it was clear that this was becoming a quite negative situation. A teacher chose to gather the parents of the other children in a meeting and asked them to spend a week where they made an effort each day to speak to their children about various things that
this boy did which were nice. This led to the situation around him changing radically for the better with far less conflict and aggression.

In the context of non-violent communication it is an example of how a teacher, understanding the importance of communication, also develops an active educational intervention. One that didn’t consist in blaming someone but instead aimed at finding a practical way of making a whole group practice ways of perceiving something valuable or enriching (using Rosenberg’s language, what the boy did that met someone’s need rather than focusing on all the things he did that did not).

During the second session this written assignment will be reflected on together and in groups. The observational task will also be made part of these conversations and reflections.

Appendix 2

What is a vocational Bildung-didactical narrative?

A short introduction to vocational Bildung and didactical narratives

**Vocational Bildung**

Vocational Bildung represents those aspects of a vocational education that in various ways have led to Bildung experiences. Often this is tied to some of the strongest memories one has from one’s vocational education, things that a teacher did that have remained, intense experiences during skill-training, fields of knowledge that have been opened in contact with vocational contents, and so on. Bildung in vocational contexts at a minimum covers things like the development of vocational ethics, capabilities like patience or care, aesthetic aspects of the vocational education and a wide expanse of knowledge within the occupation as well as across related vocational fields. A more extensive discussion can be found in my licentiate: *Vocational Bildung in action*.

Questions one might ask oneself in relation to one’s vocational education where the answers tend to be Bildung-related are:

- What do I remember most clearly?
- What, looking back, appears to be the most salient?
- What do I remember of tasks, assignments, practice, etc. that made a strong impression then or later on, why?
- What surprised or awed me during my training?
- What in my training gave me ethical and moral questions, reflections and/or experiences?
- How did I experience beauty and similar aesthetic qualities in my training?
- Have I experienced any special vocational culture, tradition or spirituality? What has this meant for me?
Didactical narratives

Didactical narratives are stories of events that are comparatively detailed with regards to what occurred, how, why, etc. This is based on the understanding that the stories need to be detailed and long enough for a (vocational) teacher reading them to be potentially inspired by them in her or his own work. In other words, they need to be useful as sources of knowledge for didactical practice. In order to clarify this, here are three examples of vocational Bildung case narratives from the licentiate work and two from the first round of narrative work at the vocational teacher program. The first three narratives are all taken from the vocational education biography of craft-master Wolfgang B. He was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1935 and trained as a bookbinder after WWII. During the 1960s he completed his further training in Paris at the Ecole Estienne where he earned his master certificates as bookbinder, engraver and gilder. The first narrative is from his time as an apprentice in Stuttgart in the 50s and is about the way in which his vocational teachers taught. The second narrative is from his time in Paris and describes a way of educating that his gilding-teacher Raymond Mondage had. The third narrative concerns an episode from my own apprenticeship with Wolfgang and some reflections on the actions he describes.

"Punishment" at the vocational school

One part of the vocational school that Mr. B. remembers in detail was the way their teachers would "punish" those apprentices who were late to school three times, or, in his case, apparently didn't approach a course with sufficient enthusiasm.

There were punishments for being late, one got an extra task to complete and I was never late but Kausch said to me that there is a spring-house in Maulbronn with a fountain. I want a reconstruction from you, I guess he felt that I didn't find certain lessons necessary and I tried to avoid doing it and that wasn't possible and so I returned with the first sketch and he said that looks just like you do, a bit fuzzy around the edges, try taking that to a stoncutter. So I said: fine I'll take it to my uncle [who happened to be one], and he [the uncle] laughed so that it could be heard all over the neighborhood and I got really pissed and I went back brought measuring-tape, a compass and a ruler and measured it from the base to the top. Really, the experience of beauty and exactness it was so damn beautiful and then what does he do? He takes a needle-compass and goes through all the proportions and looks it up to compare with what he already has in a book [laughs].

The story then goes on to describe one of his fellow apprentices who received the task of making water-color sketches of three rings studded with precious stones. Another example from the study is a several pages long conversation centered on a task Wolfgang B. received from his father as a Christmas present. He got a rough iron cube and the task consisted in turning it into a perfect dice with the help of files and other tools. The conversation turns to all the various experiences he had, the patience he came to devel-
op, the elements of cultural history and physics relating to the task that he was taught, etc.

The vocational Bildung contents of the story center on the experience that Wolfgang relates, the deep impression it made on him, etc. It is one of the experiences in life that he returned to most often in conversations during my apprenticeship with him. The didactical aspects of the narrative are those where he describes what his teachers did, the kind of tasks they gave, the process that ensued and how he experienced all of this. Depending on the context a story like this might need a brief introduction such as: The vocational school was part of the apprenticeship, which lasted for three years. We spent four days each week at the firm we were apprenticed to and on Fridays we went to the vocational school to learn all kinds of things. In part some general subjects and in part our vocational teachers were in continuous contact with the masters in the firms and made sure that any gaps in our bookbinding training were filled at the school. We had a couple of amazing teachers at the vocational school, Baun and Kausch, who would go on excursions with us to libraries, vineyards, cloisters, etc. Here are a couple of stories that I remember most vividly from that time. And then the stories follow.

*Mondange*
This case narrative can be found in Tyson (2015b) and, for reasons of space, is therefore not included here.

Comment:
The story goes on with a longer example of when they were sent to an ivory carver and what happened as a consequence of that. Here the didactical aspect is in the description of how Mondange went about teaching, including a description of what he wanted to achieve when he interrupted his students during the gilding exercises. Even if the description of the back yards of the craftspeople isn’t really necessary for the didactics of the story it is still an important Bildung experience and also enriches the narrative. As long as there is time for it, it is always worth writing a more detailed and extensive narrative rather than aiming at brevity and effectiveness. It helps the reader to contextualize and remember.

*The calendars*
This case narrative can be found in Tyson (2015b) and, for reasons of space, is therefore not included here.

Comment:
The two earlier stories describe experiences that Wolfgang had of vocational education whereas *The calendars* describes didactical actions that he himself engaged in in order to afford me a vocational Bildung experience. In the form that it takes here it may lack enough detail regarding the actual work being done but this holds for all three of the stories that since they have emerged in the course of conversations there is a lot that remains as unfinished sentences or is tacitly implied. This is one of the strengths of
vocational Bildung narratives that are written down initially, it is easier to gain perspective on one's story from the outside this way and to fill in gaps, etc.

**Lunging**

The following story can be viewed as a variation on the one above about the calendars but enacted in an entirely different setting.

At the age of 22 I began study at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. There I took a course which contained “working with the young horse” and in this course there was one element that is called lunging. This part of the course had repeatedly been discussed theoretically but also through practical demonstration by the teacher. It seemed quite clear to me as a student and I found it simple, increasing my self-confidence in it. I had also done lunging with older, trained horses before, now it was just a matter of demonstrating the same skill with our young horses. The students went to gear the young horses in preparation for the demonstration. Focus was on placing oneself in relation to the horse in order to influence him or her through the smallest of signals, just by standing in front of, behind or next to the horse during the lunging. It did not go as planned. I thought I used all the commands we had learned in a correct way and that I was positioned correctly in relation to the horse. Time and time again the teacher tried to correct my positioning and I found my irritation growing. I followed the instructions of the teacher but still the intended result didn’t appear. The teacher let me go on a while longer on my own and then, towards the end of the lesson she entered the “circle of lunging” behind me and corrected my positioning by physically moving me into various positions. The result of the lunging now changed simply by my finding my position and my analytical view. The actions of the teacher gave me an “aha-experience.”

After this I have almost always had good results during lunging. By being ahead of the events and finding a correct positioning it is possible to influence a negative result, turning it into something that from my point of view is incredibly beautiful; the interaction between horse and human being. For me this can be compared to a gray rainy day and a beautiful sunset.

The didactical aspect of this story is the analysis that the teacher makes of the circumstances. One could ask oneself why she didn’t intervene and correct my positioning earlier if this was all that it took. Afterwards the teacher has told me that she didn’t view this as an alternative until I was mentally prepared to accept that knowledge. Before she intervened I retained a belief in that I was correct in my approach and I wasn’t open to her instructions. This was something she sensed. Her experience was that I needed to fail in order to become open to new instructions. Of course this surprised me since I had not experienced myself in this way in that situation and I also was a bit ashamed. That she managed to correctly judge when to intervene is extremely complex and difficult to analyze.

This experience is one that I have carried with me since then. To always engage with tasks with an open mind. And that working with horses demands that one is able to interpret the circumstances. There is nothing right or wrong but the demands of the situation at hand decide which actions that are suitable. In this case my previous tech-
nique in lunging worked with one horse but not with those that were used in that
course. I needed to analyze the situation in order to judge how to act. In this case the
horse gives me the context within which I need to find the right methods. The opposite,
that the horse somehow would comply to my strict and rigid framework for action,
is incorrect.

Making a mess
This case narrative can be found in Tyson (forthcoming) and, for reasons of space, is
therefore not included here.

Comment:
One of the didactical strengths in this narrative is how well it can function as the basis
for a conversation with a group of apprentices. Because it is rich in detail it surfaces how
the narrator worked as an apprentice, what he was thinking about and not thinking
about, etc. He remarks in a separate reflection that not everyone is lucky enough to
have such a good mentor as he was and this kind of narrative might serve to alleviate
such differences somewhat.

Appendix 3
Existential Bildung didactics: developing phronesis/practical wisdom in caring
contexts

Introduction
Meeting the suffering of care-takers/patients in a wise manner belongs to the more
difficult parts of working in medicine and even more in educating for such work. How
can we, as teachers of nurses and other care-professionals, contribute to the develop-
ment of this wisdom among our students? And parallel to this, how do we increase our
own wisdom so that we can pass it on in ways that are as holistic as possible?

Both of these questions can, in part, be dealt with through the introduction of existen-
tial Bildung-didactical narratives. Such a narrative is existential when it touches on
foundational life-experiences such as suffering and pain. It is Bildung-related when the
existential encounter has become biographically relevant, i.e. when one remembers that
specific event and finds it deeply important for the continued unfolding of one's life.
Finally, the narrative is didactical if one is able to describe what happened, what actions
were taken, why and similar details of the event. In other words, the narrative needs to
be comparatively detailed. Having existential Bildung can also be described as being a
teacher and care-giver rich in practical wisdom or phronesis. But rather than defining
practical wisdom/phronesis we can proceed from this biographical perspective since
practical wisdom and existential Bildung tend to coincide here.

In working with these kinds of narratives there is a possibility of reflecting on how
the biographical can become didactically relevant in care-giving education and how it
can contribute to the enrichment of one’s own wisdom, both in caring practice and in
care-giving educational practice. And, finally, also enriching the practical wisdom of students. This is why it is especially important that the stories are about what has been unusually successful/good/enriching. As the examples demonstrate, it is through such narratives that we gain access to the most extensive didactical knowledge. It is also of particular importance from an ethical point of view that we tell stories in which the people who feature in them do not solely appear to be problems or in situations characterized by their failure. It is also generally important to consider that these narratives should be possible to share publicly. There are other contexts where the value of narrating in the knowledge that what is said does not leave the room is equally important but from the present didactical and research oriented perspective it would be unfruitful. Of course it may well be that the richest existential Bildung experiences that one has had would suffer from being put into words or cannot be told. Hopefully we all have experiences to look back on that have remained in memory and that appear possible and worth telling.

What are the characteristics of such narratives?
An existential Bildung didactical narrative can take many forms. A major part of the kind of knowledge that is practical wisdom is not easy to tell because it consists of extensive practice without a lot of moments easy to remember. Here are five examples one of which is an example of how a narrative is not relevant as a Bildung didactical one. The first two are taken from a context of communication called non-violent communication (NVC). Not because I am especially eager to promote that particular method but because it is in that literature that I have found some examples that are close to existential questions about healing, pain and suffering and the narratives appear to me to be unusually wise. The three that follow are examples taken from the first round of doing this task, i.e. they were written by care teacher students who took the didactics course in the spring of 2016.

The first example (Rosenberg 2003, p. 124ff.) is a longer story from the psychotherapist Marshall Rosenberg’s work with non-violent communication that I view as a good example of existential Bildung and practical wisdom.

During my practice as a psychotherapist, I was once contacted by the parents of a 20-year-old woman under psychiatric care who, for several months, had been undergoing medication, hospitalization, and shock treatments. She had become mute three months before her parents contacted me. When they brought her to my office, she had to be assisted because, left to herself, she didn’t move.

In my office, she crouched in her chair, shaking, her eyes on the floor. Trying to connect empathetically with the feelings and needs being expressed through her nonverbal message, I said, “I’m sensing that you are frightened and would like to be sure that it’s safe to talk. Is that accurate?”

She showed no reaction, so I expressed my own feeling by saying, “I’m very concerned about you, and I’d like you to tell me if there’s something I could say or do to make you feel safer.” Still no response. For the next forty minutes, I continued to either reflect her feelings and needs or express my own [in the best
of worlds Rosenberg would include at least three-four examples of the variations of the sentences that he used. There was no visible response, nor even the slightest recognition that I was trying to communicate with her. Finally I expressed that I was tired, and that I wanted her to return the following day.

The next few days were like the first. I continued focusing my attention on her feelings and needs, sometimes verbally reflecting what I understood and sometimes doing so silently. From time to time I would express what was going on in myself [again a few examples would be great]. She sat shaking in her chair saying nothing.

On the fourth day, when she still didn’t respond, I reached over and held her hand. Not knowing whether my words were communicating my concern, I hoped the physical contact might do so more effectively. At first contact, her muscles tensed and she shrank further back into her chair. I was about to release her hand when I sensed a slight yielding, so I kept my hold; after a few moments I noticed a progressive relaxation on her part. I held her hand for several minutes while I talked to her as I had the first few days. Still she said nothing.

When she arrived the next day, she appeared even more tense than before, but there was one difference: she extended a clenched fist toward me while turning her face away from me. I was at first confused by the gesture, but then sensed she had something in her hand she wanted me to have. Taking her fist in my hand, I pried open her fingers. In her palm was a crumpled note with the following message: “Please help me say what’s inside.”

I was elated to receive this sign of her desire to communicate. After another hour of encouragement [again one would like to have some examples here of what Rosenberg said], she finally expressed a first sentence, slowly and fearfully. When I reflected back what I had heard her saying, she appeared relieved and then continued, slowly and fearfully, to talk.

Rosenberg finishes by quoting from a copy of a few diary-pages that she sent him a year later (I assume that he was given her permission to make them public) where she expresses her gratitude for his help in her becoming able to speak again and to experience “how wonderful it can be to share myself with other people.” This is a comparatively grand narrative that contains many levels, the concrete one regarding what Rosenberg did at various stages and the more extensive that stretches over many days. It can seem easy to simply reduce the story to some principles for wise action: To try to express what one experiences in the other without value-judgments and such. To be able to describe what one feels and needs without demanding. And so on. But the strength in a narrative such as this is that it also demonstrates how these principles are lived and enacted in a particular situation. It is precisely the concrete situation and the actions described that turn the narrative into a source of knowledge as a story because it provides our didactical imagination with something more than abstract principles, namely an example to reflect on and reinterpret. Worth noticing is the brief introduction where one is given the general context after which the story quickly moves over to present a series of events and their consequences.
One evening, in the psychiatric medicine unit, I was caring for a forty-year-old woman, Ann, who weighed three hundred fifty pounds. Her weight is relevant because several times a day – at least once during every shift – she would lie on the floor and scream and cuss out the staff. This caused a significant problem for the staff. Because they were unable to lift her up by themselves, they had to call the lift team each time they wanted to get her off the floor, and they worried that if they called the lift team every time Ann was on the floor that her behavior would be reinforced. So they adopted a strategy of ignoring Ann’s outbursts as best they could.

The evening I took care of Ann, however, she did not lie on the floor nor did she scream and yell. When the staff noticed that she had acted differently than usual, they reached first for an explanation that fit within their existing belief system, and they concluded that “the meds must be kicking in.” Of course, this was a logical conclusion to reach, within a perceptual framework in which medications are the privileged route to behavior change [here the author is inserting judgments about the staff instead of narrating and furthermore, a certain critique of medication seems to be part of the conclusion. None of these are, in principle, right or wrong, but they detract from the didactical relevance of the narrative because they involve other issues and risk annoying those who find medication relevant thereby increasing the difficulty of perceiving the didactical elements of the case].

But this time that wasn’t an accurate explanation. It wasn’t medication at all that changed Ann’s behavior, it was the way I talked with and connected with her. I entered Ann’s room mindful of the NVC core concepts that all human beings are always trying to meet their needs and that no matter how violent the behavior, it is possible to connect to a person’s heart through empathic communication. I encouraged Ann to express her feelings and I reflected back her unconscious needs. Because Ann felt nurtured and heard, she did not try and get her needs met by lying on the floor.

Here there is no description of what Sears actually did but instead she explains the ideas or principles that she enacted. This is something else and even if this kind of narrative can work well as a way of arguing for a method it is not didactical from a practical point of view. What did she do when she encouraged Ann? What feelings were expressed? What did she reflect back? What needs were unconscious? These questions would need
to be answered through a description of the event in order for the narrative to become didactical.

The next story is from a didactics course and is an excellent account of a dialogue between a nurse and a patient. I have included the entire narrative.

_Maj_
This case narrative can be found in Tyson (forthcoming) and, for reasons of space, is therefore not included here.

Comment:
This dialogue is a good example of when a story becomes really concretely didactical. Especially excellent are the parentheses where the reader receives some guidance to what the nurse is doing that is relevant. It can be worthwhile to briefly describe the reasons for why a narrative is a good example of practical wisdom and existential Bildung. In this case I would say that the nurse is wise in the way she asks questions throughout rather than making statements, giving solutions, and such, as well as in her self-conscious reflections on the conversations.

The next example is from an entirely different context than the nursing home, a surgery prep.

_The surgery-prep_
This case narrative can be found in Tyson (forthcoming) and, for reasons of space, is therefore not included here.

The final example is from yet another environment:

_The child_
This case narrative can be found in Tyson (forthcoming) and, for reasons of space, is therefore not included here.

I hope that these five examples have contributed to clarifying what an existential Bildung-didactical narrative can be. Among the narratives gathered thus far there are many other forms that these stories have taken and I would like to encourage everyone not to worry about “doing the wrong thing.” The important part is to tell a story and to tell it about something that has been enriching.

Literature