Proposal for a Symposium
on
Esthetics as a Tacit Dimension of Education

Beside the kind of research in pedagogy which is founded in governmental theories, cognitive sciences and psychometrics, there is another strong movement in pedagogy that models processes of Bildung and education by referring to anthropological, cultural and esthetical theories (cp. Mollenhauer & Wulf 1996, Liebau 1992, Zirfas 2007, Kraus 2008, Steinnes 2012; „Rat für kulturelle Bildung“ 2012 et al.). In these approaches it is recognized that not only well-articulated and -intended, but also non-discursive communication and interaction play a major role in the processes of learning and Bildung. Instead of focusing only on well-directed pedagogical impulses, the heterogeneous contextual influences on human behaviour as well as corporal, spatial and material aspects of learning settings etc. get in sight. In these contexts, sustainable pedagogy, creativity and innovation are rather attributed to practices than to (new) schedules, models, plans, techniques etc. In terms of literacy (on a first glance) also unfamiliar phenomena and concepts get in sight. This is e.g. the case, when the bodily origin of experiences and insights is emphasized, by taking over e.g. a phenomenological perspective (Meyer-Drawe 1996, Herczeg & Winkler 2004, Friesen 2009 et al.): According to the phenomenological approach “learning retreats into darkness” (Meyer-Drawe 2004). Anyway, learning is figured out here as a responsive process between world and self, as embodiment, mimesis, multimodal transformation, displacement etc.

In our symposium we will work out some of the implications of educational settings, which take the impacts of its heterogeneous contexts into account.

In order to figure tacit dimensions of pedagogy out, there is a special need to reflect on practices and to find inventive ways for an empirical exploration of them (Wulf 2004, Althans et al. 2007, Nentwig-Gesemann 2001, Herbert 2011, Bergstedt 2012, Kraus 2012; network “Tacit Dimensions in Pedagogy” et al.).
Exploring the Tacit Dimensions of Competences

Keywords:
Scientifically based school development, art-based learning, tacit dimensions

General Description:
Since 2000 worldwide national curriculum reforms have led to fundamental changes in the educational system. The ultimate aim of education has been redefined as the acquisition of competences rather than that of knowledge. As a consequence, the attainment of subject knowledge for its own sake has been superseded by the acquisition of useful skills for everyday life. (Böhle et al. 2004) Competences are understood as facilitating active, open-minded, exploratory, dialogical and empathetic approaches to particular challenges in society, school and private life. The most important competence in this respect is the ability and willingness to learn from the own personal experiences. According to this educational goal, especially the approaches to learning become a central theme of the classes in school. Anyway, „[…] the How of learning retreats into darkness“ (Meyer-Drawe 2004: 90), and in classes of up to 30 pupils the heterogeneity of the pupils regarding their horizons of experiences is hidden to a great deal. Therefore, competence development is a big challenge for a single teacher.

E.g. Böhle et al. (2004) work out the parallels between developing competences and artistic practice; that is to say: developing competences that facilitate active, open-minded, exploratory, dialogical and empathetic responses to varied but specific challenges is comparable to art practice. I will stress that in art-based practicing/learning tacit dimensions of learning and teaching can be made explicit. This insight is the ground for the concept of “art-based learning”, which is operationalized in the school subject “The Art of Sustainability”. This school subject in 2011 has won the price „Werkstatt N“ („Workshop N“) by the Council for Sustainable Development of the German Government and in 2012 has been an „Official Project of the UN-Decade Education for a Sustainable Development” of UNESCO.

Methods/Methodology/Expected Outcomes:
In my presentation I unfold the concept of the school subject “The Art of Sustainability”. In this context I will point out some aspects of the role of tacit dimensions of pedagogy and show how these aspects can be explored.

Presentation: Exploring the Tacit Dimensions of Competences
The concept of competence nowadays plays a central role in all the actual European as well as worldwide educational theories and their diverse applications, especially in school, in teacher
education etc. It marks a worldwide paradigm shift, in which matters of educational policy, socioeconomic affordances, governmental theories and metrical research meet. The common ground of these approaches is the definition of competences according to the PISA-survey as “[...] the sum of available or learnable abilities and skills as well as the willingness of a student to solve arising problems and to act responsibly and critically concerning the solution.” Referring to this definition of Franz Weinert (2001, p.7) Eckart Liebau (2003, p.424) states: „A competence is the result of competence – one is enabled to do something by feeling responsible for it.“ - In other words: In order to become competent one must already be competent. Thus, a competence does not only reveal the right „how to do“ of something, it is rather characterized by self-reference.

It is quite evident that in the concept of a self-referential structure of competences the pedagogical approaches to education are more or less faded away.

In my presentation I will first point out some aspects of this deconstruction of the approach of pedagogy by the predominant concept of competence. In the second part of my presentation I make a proposal how to reconstruct pedagogy by focusing on the preverbal, preconscious and tacit dimensions of the development of all kinds, not at last of the experiential knowledge.

In general, pedagogy aims at developing the emancipatory potential of the “responses” of each individual to the different questions of life. Pedagogy should enable the individual to get awareness of such questions, making him/her capable of working out a range of possible answers as well as reflecting these answers in terms of effecting a situation for the benefit of the social community, for society and environment as well as for her/his own happiness (see Kraus 2010). A pedagogical relation of an adult to a child or to a young (or aged) person is supposed to be carried out by the love for the initiatives of this person. Pedagogical love embraces difference as its basic principle as well as the demand of a completely unselfish and also highly reflexive attention to the needs of the child or young (or aged) person in terms of reaching the aim of pedagogy. There is no human development without the efforts of pedagogues or adults to focus on the needs of children and other dependent humans, focusing on the aim of an optimal emancipation.

However, pedagogy is not a mere given fact.

There is not only a continuous threat to and interference of the pedagogical love by diverse forms of distraction, violence, anonymity, artificiality, missing social bonds and sociability etc., causing fundamental doubts in education, even proclaiming the end of it (Postman 1996). It is also a central characteristic of pedagogy that it is confronted with manifold antinomies deriving from manifold contradictions and causing fields of tension. For example it is on the one hand directed to general principles, affordances and all kinds of frames, the pedagogical analysis of and answer to the initiatives and the needs of a child is on the other hand mere situational, temporary and transient.

This deficiency is unsurmountable and at the same time it is the strength of this discipline.

There are practical pedagogical, but no general solutions. Diligent professional didactical and pedagogical framings are supposed to bridge these gaps.

However, the antinomies of pedagogy and the atheoretical character of pedagogical love draw education back from theory, causing a precarious lack. Krassimir Stojanov (2004, p.80) points out the central conceptual deficit of pedagogy in terms of a strict differentiation between antinomies, paradoxes and dilemmata grasping their different normative potentials. This is important, because some types of its paradoxes may cause blockades of pedagogical acting
and processes of learning while others may contain dialectical potentials for development. I will come back to this by subsuming these questions under the tacit dimensions of pedagogy. The mostly general definition of competences in a kind of bold gesture fades out the antinomies and contradictions in the field of pedagogy. In Weinert's definition of competences not only a learnability of abilities and skills is presupposed, also the willingness and the responsibility of a student to solve challenging problems is simply taken for granted. A kind of clean, completely evident diagnosis and assessment of competences seems to be possible. The evaluation of the outputs is legitimated to more or less disrespect all the real circumstances of its constitution. The manifold and complex professional practices of pedagogues get reduced to a mere production of the right output of efforts. The mechanical understanding of competences is far away from the vitality of human relations and human development. I regard this as a scandal and I would like to discuss this with you.

My second hypothesis is that pedagogy can be reconstructed by focusing on its preverbal, preconscious and tacit dimensions. In the frame of body phenomenology it has been pointed out that „[…] the how of learning retreats into darkness.“ „Just what one wants to see stays invisible [scil. I add: for a direct observance], such as: the beginning of learning, its course, its dramaturgy.“ Strictly speaking, we are not able to observe a learning process or the acquisition of competences.“ (Meyer-Drawe 2008, p.90) Anyway, learning is understood in terms of responsive processes between the world and the self, as embodiment, mimesis, multimodal transformation, displacement etc. It evolves more over in a tacit and not so much in an explicit way. This insight goes along with the positions in pedagogy modelling processes of Bildung and education by referring to anthropological, cultural and esthetical theories (cp. Mollenhauer & Wulf 1996, Liebau 1992, Zirfas 2007, Kraus 2008, Steinnes 2012; „Rat für kulturelle Bildung“ 2012 et al.) recognizing the fact, that not only well-articulated and -intended, but also non-discursive communication and interaction play a major role in the processes of learning and Bildung. Instead of focusing only on well-directed pedagogical impulses, the heterogeneous contextual influences on human behaviour as well as corporal, spatial and material aspects of learning settings etc. get in sight. In these contexts, sustainable pedagogy, creativity and innovation are rather attributed to practices than to schedules, models, plans, techniques of learning and teaching etc. It is pointed out that in terms of literacy unfamiliar phenomena and concepts play the central role. This is e.g. the case, when the bodily origin of experiences and insights is emphasized (Meyer-Drawe 1996, Herczeg & Winkler 2004, Friesen 2009 et al.) Culture is then regarded as a consequence of a „formed up bodiliness“ and at the same time as a „forming of the body“ (cp. Schultheis 1998). In our acting cultural formations and their origins become visible, although only in parts. In his/her acting an individual is thus supposed to be engaged in an already existing ongoing of actions and processes. Rational, technical, or abstract and highly specialized forms of disciplinary knowledge are confronted with heterogenous, not always verbalized, elementary forms of everyday knowledge. A development of competence and learning has different forms. It is backed by the fact that there is a loving way of dealing with the ambiguities, antinomies and paradoxes etc. coming up in a pedagogical situation. One always has to take into account that knowledge is dependent on its interpretations. The order of the things (Foucault 1971) is not given, but set up, e.g. following certain historical and cultural orders (cp. Thyen & Martignon 2008) as well
as cognitive, bodily, social, situational, or inscenated orders and formats of knowledge (cp. Wulf & Zirfas). An experience-based pedagogy and didactics should focus on the different „ways of worldmaking“ (Goodman 2005) in order to make them visible, to see their practicability, to put them critically in question and to redefine them. This should not only be true for the orders of everyday and disciplinary knowledge, but also for the development of subjective perspectives, questions, opinions and abilities. A fostering of the ability of independent judgements and actions is based on a pedagogical attention in the field of social interactions and their cultural and social conditions as well as on adequate materials, time and space for learning. Then, competence is not only ´the sum of available or learnable (fixed) abilities and skills as well as the (presupposed) willingness of a student to solve arising problems and to act responsibly and critically concerning the solution´, but a common work on the measures of the judgements of different forms and formats of knowledge. My proposal is thus to redefine evaluation and assessment in terms of making the learning subjects aware of the interpretative frame of a certain form of evaluation and assessment as well as the use and practicability of certain forms and formats of knowledge. Pedagogy is then ciphered out as enabling the individual to unfold his/her abilities and formats of knowledge in front of other persons and as developing the feeling of responsibility for doing this. To develop this capacity dependent on age and on bodily and mental dispositions as well as sociocultural conditions causes pedagogical challenges.