Chapter 29
The Future of Teacher Education: Evidence, Competence or Wisdom?

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29.1 Introduction: The Fear of Being Left Behind

In recent years policymakers and politicians have become increasingly interested in teacher education. In England, for example, the government has published a policy framework for school education—a paper with the interesting title "The Importance of Teaching"[1]—which not only sets out the parameters for a significant transformation of state funded school education but also contains specific proposals for the education of teachers. In Scotland the government has recently commissioned a review of Scottish teacher education. This report, with the title "Teaching Scotland's Future",[2] also makes very specific recommendations about teacher education and about the further professional development of teachers. In addition, discussions about teacher education are increasingly being influenced by developments at European level, particularly in the context of the Lisbon strategy which, in 2000, set the aim of making the European Union into "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world",[3] and the Bologna Process, aimed at the creation of a European Higher Education Area, a process that was inaugurated in 1999. In the wake of the 2005 OECD report on the state of teacher education—a report called *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*[4]—

[1] http://www.education.gov.uk/b0068570/the-importance-of-teaching/. Retrieved 27 Feb 2011.
[2] http://www.reviewofteachereducationinscotland.org.uk/teachingscotlandsfuture/index.asp. Retrieved 27 Feb 2011.
[3] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm. Retrieved 27 Feb 2011.
[4] www.oecd/edu/teacherpolicy. Retrieved 27 Feb 2011.

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the European Commission produced a document in 2007 called *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education*[5] which proposed "shared reflection about actions that can be taken at Member State level and how the European Union might support these". As part of this process the European Commission also produced a set of "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications".[6] While none of these documents have any legal power in themselves, they do tend to exert a strong influence on policy development within the member states of the European Union—a point to which I will return below.

One could see the attention from policymakers and politicians for teacher education as a good thing. One could see it as the expression of a real concern for the quality of education at all levels and as recognition of the fact that the quality of teacher education is an important element in the overall picture. But one could also read it more negatively by observing that now that governments in many countries have established a strong grip on schools through a combination of curriculum prescription, testing, inspection, measurement and league tables, they are now turning their attention to teacher education in order to establish total control over the educational system. Much of course depends on how, in concrete situations, discourse and policy will unfold or have unfolded already. In this regard it is interesting, for example, that whereas in the English situation teaching is being depicted as a *skill* that can be picked up in practice (with the implication that teacher education can be shifted from universities to training schools), the Scottish discussion positions teaching as a *profession* which, for that very reason, requires proper teacher education, both with regard to teacher preparation and with regard to further professional development. While there are, therefore, still important differences 'on the ground', we are, at the very same time, seeing an increasing *convergence* in discourse and policy with regard to teaching which, in turn, is leading to a convergence in discourse and policy with regard to teacher education. The main concept that seems to be emerging in all of this is the notion of *competence* (see, for example Crick 2008; Mulder et al. 2007). Competence is an interesting notion for at least two reasons. Firstly, as mentioned, the notion of competence has a certain rhetorical appeal—after all, who would want to argue that teachers should *not* be competent? Second, the idea of competence focuses the discussion on the question what teachers should be able to *do* rather than that it only pays attention to what teachers need to *know*. One could say, therefore, that the idea of 'competence' is more practical and, in a sense, also more holistic in that it seems to encompass knowledge, skills and action as an integrated way, rather than to see action as, say, the application of knowledge or the implementation of skills. Whether this is indeed so also depends on the particular approach to and conception of competence one favours. Mulder et al. (2007) show, for example that within the literature on competence there are three distinctive traditions, the behaviourist, the

[5] http://ec.europa.eu/education/com392_en.pdf. Retrieved 27 Feb 2011.

[6] http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/principles_en.pdf. Retrieved 27 Feb 2011.

generic and the cognitive, that put different emphases on the 'mix' between action, cognition and values. While some definitions of competence are very brief and succinct—such as Eraut's definition of competence as "(t)he ability to perform the tasks and roles required to the expected standards" (Eraut 2003, p. 117, cited in Mulder et al. 2007)—other definitions, such as, for example, Deakin Crick's definition of competence as "a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world, in a particular domain" (Crick 2008, p. 313), become so broad that it may be difficult to see what is not included in the idea of competence.

What is worrying, therefore, is perhaps not so much the notion of competence itself—it is a notion with a certain appeal and some potential—but first and foremost the fact that the idea of competence is beginning to monopolise the discourse about teaching and teacher education. It is, therefore, first of all the convergence towards one particular way of thinking and talking about teaching and teacher education that we should be worried about. After all, if there is no alternative discourse, if a particular idea is simply seen as 'common sense', then there is a risk that it stops people from thinking at all. While, as mentioned, European documents about teaching and teacher education have no *legal* power—decisions about education remain firmly located at the level of the member states—they do have important *symbolic* and *rhetorical* power in that they often become a reference point that many want to orientate themselves towards, perhaps on the assumption that if they do not adjust themselves to it, they run the risk of being left behind. We can see a similar logic at work in the problematic impact that PISA (OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment) has had on education throughout Europe. What I have in mind here is not the fact that PISA is only interested in particular 'outcomes'—although there are important questions to be asked about that as well—but first of all the fact that PISA and similar systems create the illusion that a wide range of different educational practices *is* comparable and that, by implication, these practices therefore *ought to* be comparable. Out of a fear of being left behind, out of a fear of ending up at the bottom end of the league table, we can see schools and school systems transforming themselves into the definition of education that 'counts' in systems like PISA, the result of it being that more and more schools and school systems begin to become the same.

So this is what can happen when a particular discourse becomes hegemonic—that is, when a particular discourse begins to monopolise thinking and talking. It is not so much that the discourse has the power to change everything but rather that people begin to adjust their ways of doing and talking to such ideas. This then generates increased uniformity or, to put it form the other side, a reduction of diversity in educational thought and practice. The argument from biodiversity shows what is dangerous about such a development, as a reduction of diversity erodes the ability of a system to respond effectively and creatively to changes in the

environment. Also, the fact that the move towards uniformity is more often than not driven by fear, that is driven by a lack of courage to think and act differently and independently, makes such developments even more worrying, as we all know that fear is not a very good counsellor.

But it is not only the tendency towards uniformity that is problematic here. It is also that through the discourse about competence, about the competent teacher and about the competencies that teacher education should develop in teachers, that a very particular view about education is being repeated, promoted and being *multiplied*. This is often not how ideas about the competences that teachers need, are being presented. Such competences are often presented as general, as relatively open to different views about education, as relatively neutral with regard to such views, and also as relatively uncontested. They are, in other words, presented as 'common sense'. One thing that is important, therefore, is to open up this common sense by showing that it is possible to think *differently* about education and about what teachers should be able to do, at least in order to move away from an unreflected and unreflective common sense about education. But I also wish to argue that the particular common sense about education that is being multiplied is problematic in itself, because it has a tendency to promote what I would see as a rather uneducational way of thinking about education. And this is the deeper problem that needs to be addressed in order to have a better starting point for our discussion about the future of teacher education. Let me try to explain what I have in mind.

29.2 The 'Learnification' of Education

There are a number of places where we could start, but I invite you to have a brief look at the key competences enlisted in the document from the Directorate-General for education and Culture of the European Commission, called "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications".

> **Making it work: the key competences**
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> Teaching and education add to the economic and cultural aspects of the knowledge society and should therefore be seen in their societal context. Teachers should be able to:
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> **Work with others:** they work in a profession which should be based on the values of social inclusion and nurturing the potential of every learner. They need to have knowledge of human growth and development and demonstrate self-confidence when engaging with others. They need to be able to work with learners as individuals and support them to develop into fully participating and active members of society. They should also be able to work in ways which increase the collective intelligence of learners and co-operate and collaborate with colleagues to enhance their own learning and teaching.
>
> **Work with knowledge, technology and information:** they need to be able to work with a variety of types of knowledge. Their education and professional development should equip them to access, analyse, validate, reflect on and transmit knowledge, making effective use of technology where this is appropriate. Their pedagogic skills should allow them to build and manage learning environments and retain the intellectual freedom to make choices over

> the delivery of education. Their confidence in the use of ICT should allow them to integrate it effectively into learning and teaching. They should be able to guide and support learners in the networks in which information can be found and built. They should have a good understanding of subject knowledge and view learning as a lifelong journey. Their practical and theoretical skills should also allow them to learn from their own experiences and match a wide range of teaching and learning strategies to the needs of learners.
>
> **Work with and in society:** they contribute to preparing learners to be globally responsible in their role as EU citizens. Teachers should be able to promote mobility and co-operation in Europe, and encourage intercultural respect and understanding. They should have an understanding of the balance between respecting and being aware of the diversity of learners' cultures and identifying common values. They also need to understand the factors that create social cohesion and exclusion in society and be aware of the ethical dimensions of the knowledge society. They should be able to work effectively with the local community, and with partners and stakeholders in education—parents, teacher education institutions, and representative groups. Their experience and expertise should also enable them to contribute to systems of quality assurance. Teachers' work in all these areas should be embedded in a professional continuum of lifelong learning which includes initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development, as they cannot be expected to possess all the necessary competences on completing their initial teacher education.[7]

There is, of course, a lot that can be said about this text, and I would say that documents like these do require careful and detailed critical analysis. For the purpose of my presentation I would like to make two observations. The first is that in this text school education is very much positioned as an instrument that needs to deliver all kinds of societal goods. Education needs to produce such things as social cohesion, social inclusion, a knowledge society, lifelong learning, a knowledge economy, EU citizens, intercultural respect and understanding, a sense of common values, and so on. In terms of its agenda this is a very functionalist view of education and a very functionalist view of what is core to what teachers need to be able to do. It paints a picture where society—and there is of course always the question who 'society' actually 'is'—sets the agenda, and where education is seen as an instrument for the delivery of this agenda. One can note that in this text the only 'intellectual freedom' granted to teachers is about *how* to 'deliver' this agenda, not about what it is that is supposed to be 'delivered'. (I put 'delivery' in quotation marks to highlight that it is a very unfortunate and unhelpful metaphor to talk about education in the first place.) This functionalist or instrumentalist view of education does not seem to consider the idea that education may have other interests—perhaps its own interests (I return to this below)—but predominantly thinks of the school as the institution that needs to solve 'other people's problems', to put it briefly.

My second observation concerns the fact that in this text education is predominantly described in terms of *learning*. We read that teachers are supposed to nurture the potential of every learner, that they need to be able to work with learners as individuals, that they should aim at increasing the collective intelligence of learners, that they should be able to build and manage learning environments, integrate ICT effectively into learning and teaching, provide guidance and support

[7]From http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/principles_en.pdf. Retrieved 27 Feb 2011.

to learners in information networks, and view learning as a lifelong journey. For me this document is another example of what in elsewhere (see particularly Biesta 2004, 2006) I have referred to as the rise of a 'new language of learning' in education. This rise is manifest in a number of 'translations' that have taken place in the language used in educational practice, educational policy and educational research. We can see it in the tendency to refer to students, pupils, children and even adults as learners. We can see it in the tendency to refer to teaching as the facilitation of learning or the management of learning environments. We can see it in the tendency to refer to schools as places for learning or as learning environments. And we can see it in the tendency no longer to speak about adult education but rather to talk about lifelong learning.

Now one could argue that there is no problem with this. Isn't it, after all, the purpose of education that children and students learn? Isn't it therefore not reasonable to think of the task of teachers as that of supporting such learning? And does not that mean that schools are and should be understood as learning environments or places of learning? Perhaps the quickest way to make my point is to say that for me the purpose of education is *not* that children and students learn, but that they learn *something* and that they do so with reference to particular *purposes*. A main problem with the language of learning is that it is a language of *process,* but not a language of content and purpose. Yet education is never just about learning, but is always about the learning of something for particular purposes. In addition I wish to argue that education is always about learning from someone. Whereas the language of learning is an *individualistic* language—learning is after all something you can do on your own—the language of education is a *relational* language, where there is always the idea of someone educating somebody else. The problem with the rise of the language of learning in education is therefore threefold: it is a language that makes it more difficult to ask questions about content; it is a language that makes it more difficult to ask questions of purpose; and it is a language that makes it more difficult to ask questions about the specific role and responsibility of the teacher in the educational relationship.

All this is not to say that learning is a meaningless idea, or that learning has no place in education. But it is to highlight the fact that the language of learning is not an *educational* language so that when discussions about education become entirely framed in terms of learning, some of the most central educational questions and issues—about purpose, content and relationships—begin to disappear from the conversation and, subsequently, run the risk of beginning to disappear from the practice of education too. In my own work I have referred to this development as the 'learnification' of education (see Biesta 2010a). I have deliberately constructed an ugly word for this because, from the standpoint of education, I think that this is a very worrying trend. While, as mentioned, the idea of competence is therefore, in itself, not necessarily bad, I am concerned about the way in which it is multiplying a particular view about education through a particular language about education, the language of learning. This means that if we wish to say anything *educational* about teacher education, if, in other words, we wish to move beyond the language of

learning, we need to engage with a way of speaking and thinking that is more properly educational. Once we do this we may find—and this is what I will be arguing below—that the idea of competences becomes less attractive and less appropriate to think about teacher education and its future. Let me move, then, to the next step in my argument, which has to do with the nature of educational practices.

29.3 What Is Education for?

Let me begin with a brief anecdote. In Scotland experienced teachers have the opportunity to follow a specially designed master's programme in order to obtain a higher qualification. Teachers who have successfully gone through this programme can call themselves 'chartered teachers' (just like, for example, chartered accountants or chartered surveyors). One of the things that the teachers studying on this programme need to be able to do is show that through the conduct of small-scale inquiry projects they can *improve* their practice. I have supervised a number of these projects, and what I found interesting and remarkable is that while most of the teachers were able to provide evidence about the fact that they had been able to *change* their practice, they found it quite difficult to articulate why such changes would count as an *improvement* of their practice. Quite often they thought, at least initially, that a change in practice is automatically an improvement, until I showed them that each time a practice has changed we can still ask the question why such change is an improvement, that is, why that change is *desirable* change, why the changed situation is *better* than what existed before. There is only one way in which we can answer this question, and that is through engagement with the question what education is *for*, that is, the question about the purpose of education. It is, after all, only if we are able to articulate what it is we want to achieve, that we can judge whether a change in practice gets us closer to this or further away from it.

As I have already said, the language of learning is utterly unhelpful here, because if we just say that students should learn—or that teachers should support or promote students' learning (which is actually how the job of teachers is being described in some Scottish policy documents)—but do not specify what the learning is supposed to achieve or result in, we are actually saying nothing at all. This shows something particular about educational practices, namely that they are *teleological* practices—the Greek word 'telos' meaning aim or purpose—that is, practices that are *constituted* by certain aims, which means, that if you take the orientation towards aims away, you take the very thing that makes a practice into an educational practice away. In my work—particularly the book *Good education in an age of measurement* (Biesta 2010a)—I have therefore argued that if we want to move back from 'learning' to 'education' we need to engage explicitly with the question of purpose. I have referred to this as the question of good education in order to highlight that when we engage with the question of purpose in education we are always involved in value judgements, in judgements, that is, about what is educationally desirable.

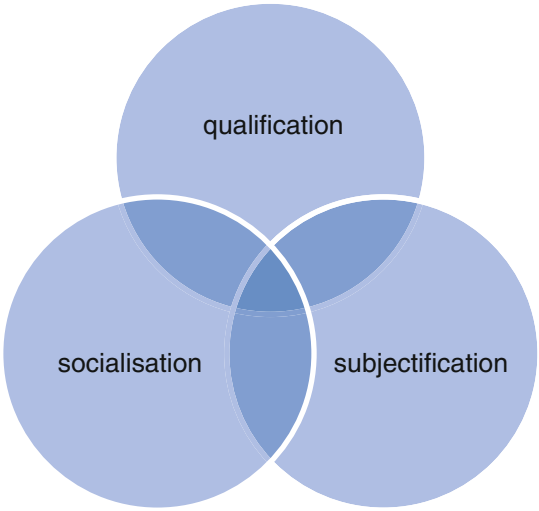
By arguing that there is a need to engage with the question of educational purpose, I am not trying to define what the purpose of education should be. But I do wish to

make two points about how I think we should engage with the question of purpose. The first point is that educational practices, in my view, always serve more than one purpose—and do so at the very same time. The *multi-dimensionality of educational purpose* is precisely what makes education interesting. It is also, and this is my second point to which I will return below, the reason why a particular kind of judgement is needed in education. By saying that that question of educational purpose is multi-dimensional, I am trying to say that education 'functions' or 'works' in a number of different dimensions and that in each of these dimensions the question of purpose needs to be raised. In my own work I have suggested that we can distinguish three dimensions in which the question of purpose needs to be raised—or to put it in more simple language: I have suggested that educational processes and practices tend to function in three different domains. I have referred to these domains as *qualification*, *socialisation* and *subjectification* (see Biesta 2010a, and for a Swedish version Biesta 2011b; see also Biesta 2009). *Qualification* roughly has to do with the ways in which education qualifies people for doing things—in the broad sense of the word—by equipping them with knowledge, skills and dispositions. This is a very important dimension of school education and some would even argue that it is the only thing that should matter in schools. Education is, however, not only about knowledge, skills and dispositions but also has to do with the ways in which, through education, we become part of existing social, cultural and political practices and traditions. This is the *socialisation* dimension of education where, to put it in more general terms, the orientation is on the 'insertion' of newcomers into existing orders. Newcomers, here, can both be children and those who move from one country or one culture to another. We can also think here of the ways in which education introduces newcomers into particular professional orders and cultures. While some, as mentioned, take a very strict and narrow view of education and would argue that the only task of schools is to be concerned about knowledge and skills and dispositions—this is, for example, the view of education currently emerging in educational policy discourse in England—we can see that over the past decades the socialisation function has become an explicit dimension of discussions about what schools are for. We can see this specifically in the range of societal 'agendas' that have been added to the school curriculum, such as environmental education, citizenship education, social and moral education, sex education, and so on. The idea here is that education not only exerts a socialising force on children and students, but that it is actually desirable that education should do this.

Now while, again, some people would argue that these are the only two proper and legitimate dimensions that school education should be concerned about, I wish to argue that there is a third dimension in which education operates and should operate. This has to do with the way in which education impacts on the person. In the English language it is a bit of a struggle to find the right concept here, as I would argue that this dimension has to do with the subjectivity of the human person—a notion that probably works slightly better in the German language: 'Subjektivität' and 'Subjekt werden'—which is why I have referred to this dimension as the *subjectification* dimension of education. It is important to see that subjectification and socialisation are not the same—and one of the important challenges for

contemporary education is how we can actually articulate the distinction between the two (for more on this see Biesta 2006). Socialisation has to do with how we become part of existing orders, how we identify with such orders and thus obtain an identity; subjectification, on the other hand, is always about how we can exist 'outside' of such orders, so to speak. With a relatively 'old' but still crucially important concept, we can say that subjectification has to do with the question of human freedom—which, of course, then raises further questions about how we should understand human freedom (for my ideas on this see, again, Biesta 2006; and also Chap. 4 in Biesta 2010a; and for a discussion in Dutch Biesta 2011a).

To engage with the question of purpose in education, so I wish to suggest, requires that we engage with this question in relation to all three domains. It requires that we think about what we aim to achieve in relation to qualification, socialisation and subjectification. The reason why engagement with the question of purpose requires that we 'cover' all three domains, lies in the fact that anything we do in education potentially has 'impact' in any of these three domains. It is important to acknowledge that the three domains are *not separate*. I tend to depict them through a Venn diagram of three overlapping areas.



The overlap is important because on the one hand this indicates opportunities for *synergy*, whereas on the other hand it can also help us to see potential *conflict* between the different dimensions. An example of potential synergy is the way in which in vocational education the teaching of particular skills at same time functions as a way to socialise students into particular domains of work, into professional responsibility and the like. An example of potential conflict is that where a constant pressure on testing and exams, which is perhaps an effective way to drive up achievement in the domain of qualification, can have negative impact on the domain of subjectification if it teaches students that competition is always better than cooperation.

Given the possibility of synergy and of conflict, and given the fact that our educational activities almost always 'work' in the three domains at the very same time, looking at education through these dimensions begins to make visible something that in my view is absolutely central about the work of teachers, which is the need for making situated judgements about what is educationally desirable in relation to these three dimensions. What is central to the work of teachers is not simply that they set aims and implement them. Because education is multi-dimensional teachers constantly need to make judgements about how to balance the different dimensions; they need to set priorities—which can never be set in general but always need to be set in concrete situations with regard to concrete students—and they need to be able to handle tensions and conflict and, on the other hand, should be able to see possibilities for synergy. All this is at play in this simple distinction between 'change' and 'improvement'. Answering the question whether change is improvement is, therefore, not only a matter of assessing progress towards one particular aim. Because of the multi-dimensionality of education we always need to consider the possibility that gain with regard to one dimension may be loss with regard to another.

What is beginning to emerge from this line of thinking, as you will probably be able to see, is the idea that because education is a teleological practice and because the question of the 'telos' of education is a multi-dimensional question, judgement —judgement about what is educationally desirable—turns out to be an absolutely crucial element of what teachers do. Before I say more about this in order, then, to link this to the question of teacher education, let me make three brief further points about the approach to the question of purpose in education I have outlined above.

First: while I would argue that all education in some way impacts in the three domains—qualification, socialisation, and subjectification—different schools concepts do this in quite different ways. They have different priorities in relation to the three dimensions and these priorities, in a sense, characterise their educational outlook. It is at least crucial that schools are able to *articulate* their position, are able to articulate what their priorities are and what they want to stand for—and it is my experience that the distinction between the three domains and the representation of them in a Venn diagram provide a helpful set of tools which schools can use to become clearer about what it is they prioritise and what it is they ultimately stand for. Secondly: next to the question of the articulation of this—which is about providing clarity—there is of course also the question of the *justification* of a particular school concept, that is the justification of why a particular position and a particular way of prioritising is considered to be desirable. By being able to articulate one's position it becomes at least easier to see what it is that needs to be justified. Third there is, of course, the question whether some school concepts—or wider conceptions of education—are more desirable than others. My own humble opinion here is that education—if it is education and not, say, training or brain-washing—should always have an explicit concern for the person and the question of the freedom of the person, which, as mentioned before, leaves open what it means to be concerned about the person and about the freedom of the person.

(I have developed this in more detail in Biesta 2006 through the introduction of the ideas of 'coming into the world' and 'uniqueness'—see also Biesta 2010a, c.)[8]

29.4 Judgement and Wisdom in Education: Becoming Educationally Wise

If I try to bring the lines of my argument so far together, the point that is emerging is that the question is not so much whether teachers should be competent to do things—one could say that of course they should be competent—but that competence, the ability to do things, is in itself *never enough*. To put it bluntly: a teacher who possesses all the competences teachers need but who is unable to judge which competence needs to be deployed when, is a useless teacher. Judgements about what needs to be done always need to be made with reference to the purposes of education—which is why the language of learning is unhelpful as it is not a language in which the question of purpose can easily be raised, articulated and addressed. And since the question of purpose of education is a multi-dimensional question, the judgement that is needed needs to be *multi-dimensional*, taking into consideration that a gain with regard to one dimension may be a loss with regard to another dimension—so that there is a need to make judgement about the right *balance* and the right '*trade off'* between gains and losses, so to speak. Exerting such judgements is not something that is done at the level of school policy documents, but lies at the very heart of what goes on in the classroom and in the relationships between teachers and students—and this goes on again, and again, and again.

While some might argue that this is an argument for saying that teachers need to be competent in making educational judgements, I would rather want to see the capacity for judgement as something different from competences. Part of my argument for this is that if we would see the ability for educational judgements as a competence, it would be the one and only competence on the list. But we could also say that to the extent that there is something reasonable in the idea that teachers should be competent in doing certain things, there is always the further need to judge when it is appropriate to do what.

A similar argument for the absolutely central role of educational judgements can be made in relation to another tendency we can find in discussions about teaching

[8]In my view the priority of Steiner education lies with the person and with the freedom of the person. That does not mean that the other two dimensions—subjectification and socialisation—do not matter in Steiner education, but they do not simply matter in themselves but always as ways in which the person can 'encounter' the world and through this can also 'encounter' himself or herself. This suggests the importance of using the Venn diagram in a *dynamic* way, so that a particular school conception is not simply represented as a position in the diagram, but has to be identified through where its starting point is located and how, from this starting point, it relates to the different dimensions of education.

and teacher education, which is the idea that teaching should develop into a so-called evidence-based profession just as, for example, people have argued that medicine should develop into an evidence-based profession. This is a big and complicated discussion (for more detail see Biesta 2007, 2010b; in Swedish Biesta 2011b; in German Biesta 2010c), so let me try to capture the main issue here, which is the idea that rather than for education to rely on the judgement of professionals it should be based on strong scientific evidence about 'what works'. The idea is that such evidence can only generated in one way, viz. through large scale experimental studies where there is an experimental group who gets a particular 'treatment' and a control group who does not get this 'treatment', in order then to measure whether the 'treatment' had any particular effect. If it did, then—so the argument goes—we have evidence that the 'treatment' 'works' and therefore have an evidence base that tells us what to do. You may recognise these ideas from clinical trials used to test the effectiveness of certain medications and drugs—where there is often an experimental group who gets the real drug and a control group who gets the placebo. The same approach is also used in agriculture, for example to test whether particular chemicals have any effect on, say, the growth of potatoes.

There is a lot that can be said about this, such as the question whether teaching can be understood as a 'treatment'—which I have argued does not make sense—or that students can be compared to potatoes—which I have also argued does not make sense. But even if, for the sake of the argument, we would concede that it might be possible to conduct the kind of studies suggested above, the outcomes of those studies are limited in two ways. One point is that such studies at most give us knowledge about *the past*. That is, they give us knowledge about what may have worked in the past, but there is no guarantee whatsoever—at least not in the domain of human interaction—that what has worked in the past will also work in the future. This already means that such knowledge can at most give us *possibilities* for action, but not rules. While it may therefore have the possibility to *inform* our judgements, it cannot *replace* our judgements about what needs to be done. Judgement is also important because something that may work in relation to one dimension of education may actually have a detrimental effect in relation to another dimension. (An example of this is the whole medicalisation of education—partly in the domain of diagnoses such as ADHD and partly through the use of drugs such as Ritalin—which may perhaps have positive effects on cognitive achievement, but is most likely to have quite negative effects in the domain of subjectification.)

So just as competencies in themselves are not enough to capture what teaching is about, the idea of education as an evidence-based profession makes even less sense. What is missing in both cases is the absolutely crucial role of educational judgement. Particularly with regard to the latter discussion—that is, about the role of scientific evidence—this may remind you of a question that has been circulating in education for a fairly long time. This is the question whether teaching is an art or a science. I think that it is important to pose this question again in our times, not in the least because of the strong push to bring (a certain conception of) science into education, partly through the discussion about evidence, but also increasingly through neuroscience. One person who has very concisely and very convincingly

argued against the idea of teaching as a science is the American psychologist William James (1842–1910), and I quote him here because it is perhaps better to hear this argument from one of the founding fathers of modern psychology than from me.

> Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art; and sciences never generate arts directly out of themselves. An intermediary inventive mind must make the application, by using its originality.
>
> The most such sciences can do is to help us to catch ourselves up and check ourselves, if we start to reason or to behave wrongly; and to criticise ourselves more articulately after we have made mistakes.
>
> To know psychology, therefore, is absolutely no guarantee that we shall be good teachers. To advance to that result, we must have an additional endowment altogether, a happy tact and ingenuity to tell us what definite things to say and do when the pupil is before us. That ingenuity in meeting and pursuing the pupil, that tact for the concrete situation, though they are the alpha and omega of the teacher's art, are things to which psychology cannot help us in the least. (James 1899, pp. 14–15)

While James provides a convincing argument why teaching should not and cannot be understood as a science—and actually needs tact, ingenuity and, so I wish to add, judgement—James has less to say about the positive side of the argument, that is, the idea that education should therefore be understood as an art. A thinker who I think has something very helpful and important to say with regard to this question is Aristotle (384–322 B.C), and the interesting question he allows us to ask is not whether teaching is an art or not, but *what kind of art* teaching is (see Aristotle 1980).

Aristotle's argument starts from the distinction between the theoretical life and the practical life. While the theoretical life has to do with "the necessary and the eternal" (Aristotle 1980, p. 140) and thus with a kind of knowledge to which Aristotle refers as science (*episteme*), the practical life has to do with what is 'variable' (ibid., p. 142), that is with the world of change. This is the world in which we act and in which our actions make a difference. What is interesting about Aristotle's ideas about our engagement with the world of change is that he makes a distinction between two modes of acting in the domain of the variable: '*poiesis'* and '*praxis'* or, in Carr's (1987) translation, 'making action' and 'doing action'. Both 'modes' of action require judgement, but the kind of judgement needed is radically different, and this is an important insight for the art of education. *Poiesis* is about the production or fabrication of things—such as, for example, a saddle or a ship. It is, as Aristotle puts it, about "how something may come into being which is capable of either being or not being" (which means that it is about the variable, not about what is eternal and necessary), and about things "whose origin is in the maker and not in the thing made" (which distinguishes *poiesis* from biological phenomena such as growth and development) (Aristotle 1980, p. 141). *Poiesis* is, in short, about the creation of something that did not exist before. The kind of knowledge we need for *poiesis* is *techne* (usually translated as 'art'). It is, in more contemporary vocabulary, technological or instrumental knowledge, "knowledge of how to make

things" (ibid., p. 141). Aristotle comments that *poiesis* "has an end other than itself" (ibid., p. 143). The end of *poiesis* is *external* to the means, which means that *techne*, the knowledge of how to make things, is about finding the means that will produce the thing one wants to make. *Techne* therefore encompasses knowledge about the materials we work with and about the techniques we can apply to work with those materials. But making a saddle is never about simply following a recipe. It involves making judgements about the application of our general knowledge to *this* piece of leather, for *this* horse, and for *this* person riding the horse. So we make judgements about application, production and effectiveness as our focus is on producing something—or to be more precise: producing some *thing*.

But the domain of the variable is not confined to the world of things, but also includes the social world; the world of human action and interaction. This is the domain of praxis. The orientation here, as Aristotle puts it, is not towards the production of things but to bringing about 'goodness' or human flourishing (eudamonia). Praxis is "about what sort of things conduce to the good life in general" (ibid., p. 142). It is about good action, but good action is not a means for the achievement of something else. "(G)ood action itself is its end" (ibid., p. 143). The kind of judgement we need here is not about how things should be done; we need judgement "about what is to be done" (ibid.; emphasis added). Aristotle refers to this kind of judgement as phronesis, which is usually translated as practical wisdom. Phronesis is a "reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods" (ibid., p. 143).

Two points follow from this. The first has to do with the nature education. Here I would argue, with Aristotle, that we should never think of education *only* as a process of production, that is, of *poiesis*. While education is clearly located in the domain of the variable, it is concerned with the interaction between human beings, not the interaction between human beings and the material world. Education, in other words, is a social art and the aesthetics of the social is in important ways different from the aesthetics of the material (which is not to say that they are entirely separate). This does not mean that we should exclude the idea of *poiesis* from our educational thinking. After all, we do want our teaching and our curricula to have effect and be effective; we do want our students to become good citizens, skilful professionals, knowledgeable human beings; and for that we do need to think about educational processes in terms of *poiesis*, that is, in terms of bringing about some*thing*. But that should never be the be all and end all of education. Education is always more than just production, than just *poiesis*, and ultimately education is precisely what production/poiesis is not because at the end of the day we, as educators, cannot claim that we produce our students; instead we educate them, and we educate them *in* freedom and *for* freedom. That is why what matters in education—what makes education educational—does not lie in the domain of *poiesis* but in the domain of *praxis*. (Which is one of the reasons why the whole idea of evidence-based practice in education does not really make sense, at it is based on a poiesis model, which might work for potatoes, but not for human beings.) It shows, in other words, why education is a social art and not a material art.

The second point I wish to make is that practical wisdom, the kind of wisdom we need in relation to *praxis* with the intention to bring about goodness, captures quite well what I have been saying about educational judgement. Educational judgements are, after all, judgements about what needs to be done, not with the aim to produce something in the technical sense, but with the aim to bring about what is considered to be educationally desirable (in the three—overlapping—domains I have identified). Such judgements are, therefore, not 'technical' judgements but they are value judgements—and perhaps we can even call them moral judgements. What Aristotle adds to the picture—and this is important for developing these views about education into views about teacher education—is that practical wisdom is not to be understood as a set of skills or dispositions or a set of competencies, but rather denotes a certain quality or excellence of the person. The Greek term here is ἀρετή and the English translation of ἀρετή is virtue. The ability to make wise educational judgements should therefore not be seen as some kind of 'add on', that is, something that does not affect us as a person, but rather denotes what we might call a holistic quality, something that permeates and characterises the whole person—and we can take 'characterise' her quite literally, as virtue is often also translated as 'character'.

The question is therefore not how can we learn *phronesis*. The question rather is, how we can become a *phronimos*; how can we become a practically wise *person*. And more specifically the question is: how can we become an *educationally wise person*. Now this, so I wish to suggest, is the question of teacher education, and in the final step of my lecture I will draw some conclusions and make some observations about what all this might mean for the future of teacher education.

29.5 Virtuosity: Becoming Educationally Wise

I have, finally, arrived at the central question of this paper, the question of teacher education. That it took me a while to get here has to do with the fact that in order to say anything about teacher education we first need to get a sense of how we wish to understand teaching—and here I have put forward what we might call a virtue-based conception of teaching, a conception that puts the ability for educational judgements at the very centre of the 'art' of teaching—and in order to do that, I had to say a few things about education so that we were in a position to speak about teaching in an *educational* manner, rather than just in terms of learning. Where I ended up with these reflections was with the conclusion that teachers need to develop the ability to make wise educational judgements. This, as I have indicated, should not be seen as a skill or competence but should rather be understood as a quality of the person. Where I ended up, in other words, is in arguing that the overarching aim of teacher education should be the question how teachers can become educationally wise. This is not about the acquisition of *phronesis*, but about how a teacher can become a *phronimos* or, to be more precise, how a teacher can become an *educational* phronimos, so to speak.

But how can we get there? One interesting observation Aristotle makes in relation to this is that he says "that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found" (ibid., p. 148). What he is saying there is that wisdom is something that comes with age—or perhaps it's better to say that wisdom comes with *experience*. This is one important point for teacher education, to which I will return below. The second point that is relevant here is that when Aristotle comes to points where one would expect him to define what a practically wise person looks like, he doesn't come with a description of certain traits or qualities, but actually comes with examples—and one main example in Aristotle's writings is Pericles. Pericles, so we could say, appears in the argument as someone who *exemplifies* phronesis, he exemplifies what a practically wise person looks like. It is as if Aristotle is saying: if you want to know what practical wisdom is, if you want to know what a practically wise person looks like, look at him, look at her, because they are excellent examples.

If all this makes sense, it suggests three things for the education of teachers, and we could see this as three 'parameters' for our thinking about the future of teacher education.

It first of all means that teacher education is about the *formation of the person* (not, so I wish to emphasise, as a private individual but as a professional). It starts, to use the terms I introduced earlier, in the domain of subjectification. Teacher education is not about the acquisition of knowledge, skills and dispositions per se (qualification) nor about just doing as other teachers do (socialisation) but starts from the formation and transformation of the person, and it is only from there that questions about knowledge, skills and dispositions, about values and traditions, about competence and evidence come in, so to speak—*never the other way around*. What we are after in the formation of the person is educational wisdom, the ability to make wise educational judgements. Following Aristotle we can call this a virtue-based approach to teacher education. While we could say that what we are after here is for teacher students to become virtuous professionals, I prefer to play differently with the idea of virtue and would like to suggest that what we should be after in teacher education is a kind of *virtuosity* in making wise educational judgements.

The idea of virtuosity might help to appreciate the other two components of this approach to teacher education, because if we ask how we can develop virtuosity—and here we can think, for example, about how musicians develop virtuosity—we do it through practice, that is, through doing the very thing we are supposed to be doing, and we do it by careful study of the virtuosity of others. And these are precisely the two other 'components' of the approach to teacher education I wish to suggest.

The second component, therefore, is the idea that we can develop our virtuosity for wise educational judgement only by practising judgement, that is, by being engaged in making such judgement in the widest range of educational situations possible. It is not, in other words, that we can become good at judgement by reading books about it; we have to do it, and we have to learn from doing it. At one level you may argue that this is not a very original idea, i.e. that we can only really learn the art of teaching through doing it. But I do think that there is an important difference between, say, learning on the job (the picking-skills-up-on-the-job-approach the English government seems to be returning to), or reflective practice, or even

problem-based learning. What I am after is what we might call judgement-based professional learning, or judgement-focused professional learning. It is not just about any kind of experiential or practical learning, but one that constantly takes the ability for making wise educational judgements as its reference point and centre.

The third component, so I wish to suggest, has to do with learning from examples. While on the one hand we can only develop virtuosity through practising judgement ourselves, I think that we can also learn important things from studying the virtuosity of others, particularly those who we deem to have reached a certain level of virtuosity.[9] This is not to be understood as a process of collaborative learning or peer learning. The whole idea of learning from studying the virtuosity of others is that you learn from those who exemplify the very thing you aspire to, so to speak. The process is, in other words, asymmetrical rather than symmetrical. The study of the virtuosity of other teachers can take many different forms. On the one hand this is something that can be done in the classroom through the observation of the ways in which teachers make embodied and situated wise educational judgements—or at least try to do so. We have to bear in mind, though, that such judgements are not always obvious or visible—also because they partly belong to the domain of what is known as tacit knowledge—so there is also need for conversation, for talking to teachers to find out why they did what they did. This can be done at a small scale—teacher students interviewing teachers about their judgements and their educational virtuosity—but it can also be done at a bigger scale, for example through life history work with experienced teachers, so that we not only get a sense of their virtuosity but perhaps also of the trajectory through which they have developed their educational virtuosity. (We also should bear in mind that, as with musicianship, in order to keep up your virtuosity you need to continue practising it.) And we can also go outside of educational practices and study images of teachers in literature, in film, in popular culture, and the like. We will, of course, encounter both success and failure, and we can of course learn important things about the virtuosity of educational wisdom from both.

These, then, are three reference points or three parameters for thinking about the future of teacher education: a focus on the formation and transformation of the person towards educational wisdom; a focus on learning through the practising of educational judgements; and a focus on the study of the educational virtuosity of others. This is what might follow if we approach the task of teacher education in educational way rather than with reference to a language of learning, and if we take the role of the teacher seriously rather than letting this be replaced by evidence and competence, also in order to capture that wise educational judgement is never the repetition of what was in the past, but is always a creative process that is open

[9]An interesting question here is whether we should only focus on those who exemplify educational virtuosity, or whether we can also learn from studying those who do not exemplify this virtuosity. The more general question here is whether we can learn most from good examples or from bad examples. With regard to educational virtuosity I am inclined to argue that it is only when we have developed a sense of what virtuosity looks like, that we can begin to learn from those cases where such virtuosity is absent.

towards the future for the very reason that each educational situation, each moment in the practice of education in which judgement is called for, is in some respect radically new and radically unique. If we recognise this as being at the very heart of educational processes and practices then, so I wish to conclude, we need teacher education that is neither orientated towards evidence, nor towards competence, but towards the promotion of educational wisdom.

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