

Jürgen Oelkers

German “Bildung” and the Education of Teachers ^{*)}

1. Puzzles around German “Bildung”

English is the *lingua franca* of the world, but even Queen’s English allows loans from other languages, and not at least from German. You all know “Weltanschauung”, “Kindergarten” or “Wanderlust”. Two other loans are “German Angst” and “German Bildung”, which both express strange anomalies to English ears and are for that reason alone untranslatable. So it is better to use the original word to show the distinction. “Angst” is not fear or anxiety but just *Angst*, and “Bildung” is not education or instruction but just *Bildung*, a very German affair, which we Germans do not realize.

Unlike “German Angst”, “German Bildung” is ambiguous, and not tied to any sensory perception. The German word *Bildung* is a highly successful but also much overused term, allowing a broad range of applications. It is possible to speak of “Wellnessbildung” without expecting to encounter any semantic conflict. Somehow everything promising seems to be connected to *Bildung*; one German company has even managed to coin the term “Beautybildung”¹ – not to be confused with “bodybuilding” –, without being arrested by the language police.

This would not be possible with the word *Erziehung*, which is always associated with a hint of coercion or prescription. The term “Gesundheits- und Wellness-Erziehung” (or health and wellness education) is mainly used in the context of schools, specifically – and not just by chance – primary schools (Strotmann 2008). *Bildung*, on the other hand, always sounds like a worthy effort at self-improvement. It is quite easy to talk about “Bildungschancen” (educational opportunities), but difficult to imagine what “Erziehungschancen” might be. And it is only in the German language that a terminological distinction, firmly established in everyday language, can be made between *Bildung* and *Erziehung*. We make use of this distinction without having to precisely define it.

In the German language, the word *Bildung* has a magical ring to it, and not just because it is untranslatable. *Bildung* can be given special emphasis only in German. The magic of the word has three historical sources,

- the medieval *Imago Dei*, man as the *Nachbildung* or imitation of God or Christ,

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¹ www.bb-academy.weebly.com/mehr-beautybildung.html

- the early modern idea of *Bildung* through science and scholarship
- and modern *Bildung*, the self-cultivation of man.

The three sources have little in common; the idea that man should form himself in the imitation of Christ is difficult to reconcile with the research-oriented academic concept of *Bildung*, and the humanistic idea of self-formation contradicts, in most respects, both the idea of man as God's likeness, and the concept of research-based learning, which cannot focus attention on the person of the researcher.

From these three contradictory sources, *Bildung* has become a hybrid concept. It has never completely lost its religious expectations; it takes a central position in scientific and scholarly culture; and at the same time it can focus attention on subjectivity. The concept has no internal consistency, but can be put to a multitude of uses. Another reason why we can speak of *Bildung* with such emphasis is that, theoretically, there has never been any consensus about what exactly is meant by this term. What we are dealing with here is more a field of associations, magically superposed over the obvious contradictions and inconsistencies of the concept.

With this I mean both the expectations attached to *Bildung* and the aura surrounding the concept. It is risky to refer to oneself as "ungebildet" (that is, uneducated or uncultured), in fact no one in Germany can afford *Unbildung*; one has to at least pretend to be striving for *Bildung*, preferably with the traditional methods of imitation, research and self-formation. The concept itself seems to be above dispute, which is why it allows so many variations. One of these is *Lehrerbildung* (teacher education). This often implies self-cultivation, as distinct from *Ausbildung*, another untranslatable German term; "Ausbildung" is not simply apprenticeship.

So this German language games clearly invite controversy. *Bildung*, understood as a political programme, is always contested. To confirm this we need only glance at the issues currently on the political agenda: does a general education (*schulische Allgemeinbildung*) require art, literature and philosophy, or only English (introduced at an early age), school mathematics and computer literacy? This is not a rhetorical question. It is no coincidence that arts subjects are always marginal subjects at school, nor is it a coincidence that the public debate has other priorities than artistic, literary and philosophical *Bildung*, namely English from an early age, school mathematics or computer literacy.

In Switzerland, for example, the political dispute revolves around the role of manual work in the future school curriculum, and the requirements of the future labour market: will there still be a demand for manual skills, or only for linguistic, mathematical and technical skills? The dispute is difficult to resolve; there is always a clash between different beliefs about what, in material terms, *Bildung* should be.

In any case, education in school is supposed to qualify individuals for the labour market, and can therefore no longer be seen as an end in itself. This has an impact on the magic of the concept, or at least appears to do so. Today the talk is not of *Bildung*, but of *Qualifikation*, which is supposedly linked with a particular use or benefit. When associated with usefulness, however, the concept of *Bildung* loses its aura, and comes to be seen as both

unclear and unattainable, while “qualification” and the related term “competence” seem to be more tangible and attainable.

It is strange, though, that the magic of the word *Bildung* is not disappearing behind the increasing expectations of usefulness, but is instead being affirmed. It is evidently possible to miss *Bildung* among the many opportunities for qualification. The more people talk of “competence”, “goal management” and “modularized teaching”, the brighter the glow of the opposite pole: *Bildung* as something sacrosanct, resisting the logic of utility. There is one key witness for this point of view, one person who should always be mentioned when the relationship between the utility and magic of *Bildung* is under discussion: Friedrich Nietzsche.

In his lectures on the future of educational institutions (*Bildungsanstalten*), delivered in Basel in 1872, Nietzsche formulated some hypotheses on the future decline of *Bildung*. He believed it was rapidly becoming “cultureless”, because of the widespread imposition of school structures. In modern society, he argued, *Bildung* was no longer regarded as the subjective side of culture, but was entrusted to the didactic machinery of state schools. And this, he felt, could lead to only one thing: the levelling out of both culture and *Bildung*. The only party to benefit from this is the bureaucracy, since levelling out is a process requiring elaborate organization.

Looking at this, Nietzsche spoke of “that laughable disproportionality between the number of truly educated individuals [*Gebildete*] and the monstrously large education system [*Bildungsapparat*]” (Nietzsche 1980, p. 665, own translation). This was without being able to imagine the situation at the beginning of the 21st century, where the imbalance between expenses and output seems to have increased spectacularly yet again. Nietzsche argued that broadening *Bildung* and extending it to a wider population would inevitably end up weakening and reducing it (ibid., p. 667). And he also warned against naïve trust in the magic of the word:

- No one would strive for *Bildung* “if he knew how unbelievably small, in the end, the number of truly educated individuals is and can be” (ibid., p. 665).
- The many who strive for *Bildung* only supply the mass for the few who really achieve it (ibid.).

This striving, according to Nietzsche, can be explained with reference to the “present-day dogmas of economics”, which focus attention on utility only:

“As much knowledge and *Bildung* as possible – hence as much production and need as possible – hence as much happiness as possible: - this is more or less the formula. Here we have utility as the goal and purpose of *Bildung*, or more exactly gain, the greatest possible monetary profit... In these terms, the actual function of *Bildung* would be to form people who are as ‘current’ as possible, in the sense that coins which are in circulation are current. The more ‘current’ people of this kind there are, the happier a nation is thought to be; and this is assumed to be the intention of modern educational institutions: to encourage every individual to become ‘current’, as far as his nature permits” (ibid., p. 667).

In other words, people are expected to become current coins, to become a valid currency which can be profitably deployed. In these terms, the utility of *Bildung* is its exchange value in money and happiness. This demands *Bildung* which can be acquired as fast as possible, to quickly attain its exchange value, but which is nonetheless thorough enough to earn a large amount of money with it. No more than this, though: *Bildung* that pursues goals beyond “money and gain”, which makes one solitary rather than happy, and which takes up a great deal of time without actually getting anywhere, in other words *Bildung* that is purposeless, is, according to Nietzsche, seen today as virtually immoral (ibid., p. 668).

Is he right? And is he right because he criticizes the reduction of *Bildung* to the *homo oeconomicus* – before its time, as it were – and is still praised for this today (Fuhrmann 2004, final chapter)? The issue cannot be dealt with by means of a simple polemic, which treats “true *Bildung*” as a something which is in short supply and, ironically, deploys economic arguments while dismissing the whole idea of utility.

- Nietzsche uses a particular concept of *Bildung* that can be traced back to Winckelmann (Marchand 1996). Its focus is on antiquity, of which it takes a highly idealized view.
- According to this concept, the only people who can claim to be educated (*gebildet*) are those who have mastered the ancient languages, can read Homer in the original, and whose mentality and habits are indebted to Hellenism.

2. *Development and criticism of schools*

This was of course the sign and symbol of a small elite, not just in Germany, and was the antithesis of a phenomenon which Nietzsche (1980, p. 666) was in fact only able to deal with polemically: the democratization of *Bildung*, which lost its basically aristocratic nature in the 19th century and, with the development of the *Volksschule* (compulsory state school), became a public matter. This has to be the starting point for our reflections on teacher training, not an ideal of antiquity which only influenced the culture of the German *Gymnasium*.

The process underlying the changes in the 19th century is the expansion and state regulation of elementary education (*Elementarbildung*). It is not the case that the historical expansion of *Bildung* in the form of state schools meant a levelling-out of its quality, to the contrary, but on the other hand *Bildung* is not simply confined to what is taught in schools. Hence there is a need to distinguish between *Bildung* and *Schulbildung* (schooling); this also makes things harder for polemical critiques of school. Such critiques often miss their target because they overlook the special features of institutional education or of what can only be learned in schools. This might not be *Bildung* in the sense Nietzsche used the term.

This also has to do with theoretical problems – but I will not go into how the theory of human capital has put a positive spin on Nietzsche’s suspicions about people as “currency”. My point is another one: Contrary to recurring assumptions, in the German debate in particular, from Nietzsche to Adorno, there is no straightforward division between “true” and “false” *Bildung*. A simple dualism can never be the solution, indeed it is the problem: “true” *Bildung* can only ever be one’s own, and yet it would be arrogant to assume that everything else is “false”. What Nietzsche and Adorno both had in mind were the experiences of the

cultural elite; anyone basing their views on this will be unable to deal adequately with *Berufsbildung* (vocational education and training) or with *Lehrerbildung* (teacher education), although the German language does allow the use of *Bildung* in both of these contexts.

What Friedrich Nietzsche was contemplating in 1872 was the development of the *allgemeinbildende Volksschule* (state school providing general education) and in particular the restructuring of the German *Gymnasien*, moving away from classical philology and towards science. At the time, Nietzsche's critique was one of many; the language and literature teachers at the *Gymnasien* were particularly vehement in their resistance to the changes in the curriculum. Such criticisms could not be voiced without evoking the decline of *Bildung*.

- An argument constantly used here is that levelling out involved lowering standards.
- Every reform was suspected of weakening *Bildung* by broadening its scope.
- The only difference was that Nietzsche was better able to express what was in fact an extremely common argument, and one based on class interests.
- The argument was far removed from actual historical reality.

In the 19th century, *Bildung* was both nationalized and organized into school structures. The state assumed both the costs and the management of the curriculum, including the standardization of the didactic formats and of the time which was made available (Aubry 2014). Teaching was adjusted to fit a standardized time structure, and was confronted with expectations of effectiveness. The more narrowly these were interpreted, the more organization they demanded. In order to build up these organizational structures, it was necessary to professionalize the teaching staff, to standardize both their teaching materials and their opinions, and much more. The expansion of education took place nationwide, under the preconditions of a particular institutional arrangement which is still influential today.

I could also say that the basic form of schools is not going to be reinvented, and we have to live with them. Schools include standards, and this is obviously not just a burden. The development of the modern school system was, in many respects, a success story and an experience of progress, in both material and symbolic terms:

- Investments increased rapidly over history,
- after a certain point in time the state budgets were no longer reversible,
- the provision of *Bildung*, including teacher education, became a fixed social expectation
- and in return expectations of performance rose, and schools providing general education gained the respect of the public.

In this way, *Bildung* did in fact come to be expanded and more widely disseminated, not just in numerical terms but with regard to the average quality attained. Without a public school system, it would have been impossible to build up today's educational quality, to maintain a constant level of basic skills over generations, or to achieve a roughly equal distribution of educational provision and services.

This was and is premised on a calculation of utility; no society would get involved in education if it did not stand to gain anything. The utility of school education is calculated with certificates and qualifications, a fact which triggered strong criticism even in the 19th century,

without really affecting the utilitarian direction of the system. Schooling has to be worthwhile, at least in some aspects, so it was never without purpose, as could be seen from the certificates achieved at the end. Awarding qualifications on the basis of performance always meant having to distinguish between winners and losers. Even in countries – such as Finland – where the period of compulsory schooling is non-selective, this is followed by allocations which are unequal.

All education systems are selective; it would otherwise be impossible to maintain the basic principle of assessment by performance. Not everyone performs to the same standard, so not everyone can attain the same qualifications. But it is precisely this inequality which seems to be scandalous, and all the more so if the suspicion arises that the whole thing is not worthwhile on a personal level, because the school experience is an artificial one which has little to do with real life.

This suspicion also has its own history. Critics of the school system in Germany compete furiously for the title of ‘most original comment’, claiming for example that school is one huge lie (or “Bildungslüge”, Fuld 2004), because it imparts superfluous knowledge which does not lead to the stated goals of education. This has, however, been a common complaint since antiquity. This criticism has changed nothing; it does not take into account the institutional conditions of the school system, and it cannot supply real data confirming the increasing decline of education.

- If taken to its logical conclusion, the argument about the “Bildungslüge” means either imagining a situation without schools
- or assuming that everything was better in the past, for which there is little evidence when it comes to the development of education in society.
- It is striking that the critics of education are always educated individuals who can easily call into question their own privileges because they themselves are in no danger of losing them.

We should, however, make a clear distinction between what organized general education provides and what intellectual critics demand. Critics often apply standards which the school system definitely does *not* follow, and often the core idea of German *Bildung* in the sense of self-cultivation misses the point of school.

If the idea is to free students from the drudgery of scholastic learning, and this is always the direction in which the criticism points, then this is in the name of a better concept of *Bildung*. This concept is sought behind reality, as it were, without considering the learning and survival strategies that real students develop, in other words, how they deal with school and manage to live in it. And yet those who idealize and fail to take account of reality are unable to change it, because they have no concrete starting point. The site of this idealization is not practice, but *Ausbildung* (vocational training and education).

The philosophy of teacher education tends to forget that it is dealing with a large-scale system which, for all its visible changes, is historically stable, retains the same basic features, and trusts in its own experiences without being influenced by teacher education very far. The problem is to avoid that teacher education is purely self-referential, a closed system that only serves to gain qualifications, and does little to help future teachers develop actual skills.

To give a slightly polemical and of course inconsistent picture which is meant to contradict: In teacher education students learn subjects but not for the use in schools, and they learn to be “reflective” without any control if they actually are reflective when they have to teach in real schools. Teacher education and its philosophy avoid the condition of mass education and picture the ideal situation no one will be approaching in reality. It is just a new way of wording when students are told that they should act in “co-constructive” environments of learning.

In general:

- Schools are large-scale systems which learn from their own premises, and do not wait for impetus from critics,
- still less if these critics have nothing at all to say about concrete problems.
- Such criticism has nothing to offer but radicalism, and for slow-moving systems such as schools, this is too little.

3. *Organization and change in teacher education*

Today, teacher education takes place in universities. *Lehrerseminare* (seminars for teachers or in the United States normal schools) belong to the past, though in Switzerland they only ceased to exist little more than ten years ago. But didn't we do perfectly well with seminars for decades? People are still asking this question in Switzerland, and it has nothing to do with cost-awareness: *Lehrerseminare* were expensive institutions. The suspicions have to do with what is called “academization”. Universities are far removed from practice, have to prove themselves academically, and run the risk of not providing realistic training, but merely chasing after their own illusions. And the suspicion is that they benefit from the changes, while practice does not.

- More research only distracts attention from the central task of educating teachers,
- and the many incidental tasks demand an inflated structure and excess staff,
- who do not further the actual purpose of the teacher training institutions, i.e. efficient preparation for working life.

The aim of teacher education is clear: we want to have *capable* teachers. The site of this education and training, however, is disputed, as is the question of what constitutes capability in a prospective teacher. Everyone agrees, including the teachers, that future teachers need a *thorough* education (*Bildung*), but how that should happen and where is controversial. Of one thing, however, the critics are certain: one cannot acquire a thorough education for this profession by attending universities and learning theories, but only by trying things out in practice and gaining experience.

This is the only way to create *schoolmasters* who are proficient at their job. I quote the German pedagogue and teacher trainer Adolph Diesterweg (1849, p. 17). On 15 January 1849, at the “Conference for *Seminar* teachers” which he had convened in Berlin, he stated:

“The distinction between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ needs to disappear completely in the *Seminare* [training colleges]. It is futile in itself, it is a leftover piece of the scholastic teaching at the universities. There is no further need to speak of theoretical *and* practical teacher education. All teaching, all instruction should be *practical*” (ibid., p. 18).

“Learned men” with a purely theoretical education have no place in teacher training; the *Seminare* should employ no one but “thoroughly practical teachers”. “An unpractical teacher has no idea of what practical teachers call practical” (ibid.). And it is not possible to learn the theory first and then apply it in practice. Every year of teacher training must be practical, “not just the instructions the *Seminaristen* [trainee teachers] are given directly relating to the business of teaching, but all the teaching they receive” in teacher education (ibid.). “No university provides this; at university, no one is trained to be a practical teacher, i.e. an actual teacher, trained for what he is supposed to do. Proof: the *Gymnasium* teacher” (ibid., p. 22) in the German speaking world.

We can see how close the basic tenets of the historical discourse are to us today. But Diesterweg goes a step further and predicts the devaluation of everything that is taught at universities.

“If a man of letters, educated only by university studies, became a real teacher, he became so *despite* the university teachers, because a practical teacher has to reverse everything, he has to do everything differently to the way he has learnt at university” (ibid.).

In other words: forget everything you have learnt so far, practice is not the same as theory, and no programme of study can change that. I am quoting from real experience in teacher training.

And yet the *Lehrerseminare* themselves were repeatedly criticized for being “far removed from practice” and “overly theoretical”, Diesterweg’s ideal *Seminar* teacher never existed, and the structural problem of imparting useful knowledge for capable teachers has never been solved – since the real thing always comes after the training. So there is always an effect of devaluation; the trick is to keep it as small as possible. And lastly: if there was one thing that Pestalozzi (whom Diesterweg invoked as a model) could not do, it was teach professionally. He never mastered his own method.

Clearly the fundamental question of “theory and practice” in teacher training cannot simply be answered by referring to great pedagogues and apprenticeships with masters – who turn out not to be masters after all. Theory and practice are not simply two opposing sides which somehow need to be brought together. This is why there is no simple solution, as politicians always claim. My point is that the systems of teacher education *do* react to criticism, but in their own particular way. Developments occur pragmatically and require no special educational theory.

Teacher education in Switzerland is subjected to explicit criticism. Some of this can be explained by nostalgia for the old *Seminar*-based training, which, as mentioned above, was only abolished just under a decade ago. Purely as nostalgia, this criticism does not need to be taken seriously. The *Lehrerseminare* were not faced with any other problems, and could not claim to have the better solutions on the basis of their history. The training of teachers always has to achieve something that is actually impossible: preparing trainees to apply their skills in unforeseeable circumstances. Here nostalgia does nothing but obstruct the view.

Since the mid-1990s, *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (universities of teacher education) have been founded in Switzerland, replacing the old *Lehrerseminare*, a form of institution which had disappeared decades earlier in Germany. There was actually no inherent reason to abolish the *Seminare*; the step was taken because of an OECD evaluation which pointed out that *Seminar*-based training was not compatible with the European standard of tertiary-level training. Swiss teaching diplomas would therefore not have been recognized in the rest of Europe.

There are now fifteen *Pädagogische Hochschulen*, established in the historical sites of the *Lehrerseminare*. The one I am most familiar with is the Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich, which I helped to establish – so I know what I am talking about. The English term is Zurich University of Teacher Education. The first graduates left the university in 2004, so it is possible to assess its performance ten years later. There are two types of criticism: that of the schools, and that of the political public sphere, in which teacher education is observed much more closely than in other countries.

The main criticism of the schools in Zurich is the limited deployability of the newly trained teachers, who, at primary level, are no longer trained in all the subjects taught at *Volksschulen*. This problem is still acute, but has been reduced by the teacher shortage and the resulting willingness of schools to compromise when hiring graduates.

- The most important issue in the public view is the “theory-practice problem”, i.e. the usefulness of the training for the job.
- Experienced professionals complain, to considerable political effect, that training is overly theoretical,
- although the students have more practical components than in the old *Seminar*-based teacher education.

This debate has given rise to two measures. On the one hand, all the graduates of the Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich are now asked, after two years of practical experience in schools, to assess how well they were prepared by their training. The idea here is to remove the “theory-practice problem” – clearly a persistent suspicion in the history of teacher training – from the zone of polemic, and to discuss it using actual data.

This regular survey is a fundamental element of performance review which was not part of the old *Seminar*-based training. In the old *Lehrerseminare* the masters were convinced that they knew what effect they had; they knew exactly how to train capable teachers. Those were happy days, back when “output” was an unknown word and the authority of the teacher training institution was not questioned but only because the students had no voice.

The second measure undertaken by the Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich serves to increase the practical relevance of the training; this has in fact been a weakness of all previous training concepts. So far the tradition has been to offer internships (*Praktika*) in schools. There was preparation and follow-up work for these, but they otherwise had little to do with the rest of the training. Now the Pädagogische Hochschule has developed a concept which covers the whole of the primary teacher training. Throughout the six semesters, the students are supported by *Praxislehrkräfte*, practising teachers who have been trained by the university itself. These teachers work together with the lecturers and are obliged to read the same literature.

The students gain practical experience right from the first semester, and later completing a three-month classroom placement which is organized like the real experience. Here they can use the *Praxislehrkräfte* as mentors, and at the seminars at university they learn how their practical experience can be put to use. The relevant scientific literature is available, so they can gain an objective view of their experiences. An important aspect of this concept is that the students actually have, for the whole duration of their training, people they can talk to about the things they experience in practice, and the conclusions they draw from this.

In the more recent literature this is referred to as “learning from the field”, so not relating theory to practice, but looking at problems on the basis of experience. Adolph Diesterweg would never have expected such a development: he had no faith in the ability of universities to find intelligent new solutions to fundamental problems. He thought in terms of ideal types, and used one principle for all cases, but this is precisely the approach that gets one nowhere in professional training. “Practical relevance” cannot mean being able to prescribe ideals, but recognizing problems, seeking solutions, and accepting the limitations of one’s own sphere of action.

Most institutions of teacher training are linked to strategies of school reform. Students are instructed how to change the school and the classroom. The habit of being progressive is deeply embedded in the philosophy of teacher education. If that is so the question is what is *not* being taught in teacher education.

In every process of change there are also experiences of failure, moments when reform strategies are interrupted or displaced. These are experiences of limitation which are not expected at the beginning; reforms have to calculate possible difficulties, but they are not permitted to anticipate their own failure. However, no reform *must* succeed, and every process can find itself faced with the threat of abandonment, perhaps because the resistance at grass-roots level has become too great. At this point, there is no use in falling back on “tried and tested concepts”, whichever pedagogy they may be based on. The only thing that is “tried and tested” is practical solutions.

We must also distinguish very carefully between the postulates or the big ideas of reform and goals. Goals have to be attainable, postulates do not. This idea comes from John Dewey, who suggests, in *Democracy and Education*, that we should only speak of educational goals (“Erziehungsziele”) if there is a chance that they can be attained.

- This limits the ambitiousness of the goals and the time period in which they can be pursued.
- Normally, educational goals are communicated without any time limit, which makes them seem very abstract and far removed from practice.
- They then have only rhetorical usefulness.

4. *Management through feedback*

We cannot speak of “responsibility” for teacher education until we have not only clarified who is responsible, but also tested the outcome of the training. This can be done by regular evaluations, whose results have consequences. It has to be possible to replace unsuitable modules, and training outcomes must be used to measure what is “unsuitable” or not. This would mean not only that all courses would be evaluated by the students, but also that transfer data would be gathered, i.e. data that record what is taken in by the recipients in the field, and is therefore actually used.

Initial experiences with feedback from the field, i.e. principals and teachers, are now available, and make it clear that a painstaking cultural shift in teacher education is being exacted here. Studies showing how students actually learn also tell us that the language of training is not especially reliable with regard to its effects.

- The “reflective practitioner” is just a buzz word,
- as is the “co-constructive learning environment”
- or the “efficient use of resources”,
- unless these are linked with concrete experiences.

John Goodlad’s pioneering study *Teachers of our Nation’s School*, published in 1990, was a breakthrough for international research on the effectiveness of teacher education. Goodlad mainly surveyed students, investigating their expectations. This led to what is known as the “what works” hypothesis, which states

- that prospective teachers sort and evaluate the available elements of training according to
- what seems likely to prepare them best for their subsequent teaching
- and what seems most useful for them personally.

This is why method courses are in much higher demand in teacher education than lectures, and classroom internships are regarded as more important than the study of scholarly literature. This thesis has been confirmed in various studies on the learning behaviour of students, for example at Swiss *Pädagogische Hochschulen*. Here too, the attitude is “what works” (Ruffo 2009).

Goodlad also discussed the fact that the interest of the majority of students in training programmes for prospective teachers is not primarily intellectual. They perceive the transition

from training to working life as a change in occupation: “That is, they shifted from being students in a college or university to teachers in a school, rather than from students of the contents of their own curriculum to inquirers into teaching, learning, and enculturation” (Goodlad 1990, p. 214). And beliefs about what it means to be a teacher evolve from experience of “‘what works’ with a classroom of children or youths”.

“Being ‘able to do it’ - as, for example, one’s mentor in student teaching did it - became more important to these students than questions of why a certain way was successful or an exploration of alternative possibilities” (ibid.).

Swiss studies also suggest that the “mentors” or *Praxislehrkräfte* are the group which probably has the biggest influence on prospective teachers. A qualitative research project at the University of Zurich shows not only the influence of the training institutions on the development of competence among new teachers, but also the way in which mentalities and habits are shaped by the *Praxislehrkräfte* (Stadelmann 2006). They show beginners “what works”, and are therefore crucial points of contact for the early stages of professional competence, which are obviously a major determinant of future career development.

It is not simply good *models* of teaching that are effective, but direct guidance and feedback from the immediate proximity of real teaching practice. It is no coincidence that the expression “coaching” is used here: a coach measures the success of an attempt against the required standard, but in such a way that the feedback is perceived as helpful for the development of the “coachee”. In the United States, the term used is still “teacher training”; the expression is meant to indicate that professional competence is developed in reliable practice situations, and is not simply the result of reflection, however intense that reflection might be (Shulman 1995).

The better the *Praxislehrkräfte* are prepared for their duties, and the better the training institution organizes its interaction with them, the more willing they are to cooperate with the university. In the Zurich study, there are two basic types of *Praxislehrkräfte*.

- There are *those* who recommend forgetting all that one has learnt so far, because one’s own teaching is the best model for the development of professional competence.
- And then there are *those* who have learnt, from their own training, to make use the resources of teacher education, and who share the same standards as the Pädagogische Hochschule.
- This is the only way to avoid working against one another.

The students have particularly high expectations of the classroom internships or training schools (*Ausbildungsschulen*). The Zurich study also shows that this can be at the expense of the other components of training, unless the theoretical and practical components are coordinated, and the same language is spoken in both.

If this is not the case, students will find it very plausible, in the light of their own experiences, when they are told: “Forget everything you’ve learnt so far”. The subsequent situation then has little to do with the previous situation, and the material learnt is only

transferred to a limited extent. This is partly because knowledge transfer is not treated as a topic in teacher education. Transfer in training programmes does not occur automatically; it requires management, i.e. observation, enquiry, and testing, and – on the part of the students – the feeling that they are actually making progress (Oser/Oelkers 2001).

There is one more condition: teachers' work is focused on *teaching-related* activities. Anything that requires extra work without improving output will not be used in this real-life situation. If training is to be fit for purpose, it has to learn to adapt to this situation. Both prospective teachers and those already in office are utilitarians – perhaps not due to their philosophy but to the demands of their practice. Utility for their teaching is their key criterion, and they expect an education which stands up to this test. And this is more than just reflection-based knowledge. A German study has shown that even those in their first semester perceive their teacher education (*Lehramtsstudium*) in terms of their career goals and thus in terms of practice (Cramer/Horn/Schweizer 2009).

5. *Developing of Professional Know How and Changes of the Field*

We do not exactly know how new teachers manage not to fail. Clearly they do manage, however, as shown by Swiss studies on the path from training into practice (Larcher Klee 2005). The route must be negotiated using the individual's own navigation skills, which need to be prepared and supported as well as possible by training. This training has to provide the appropriate experiences and forms of knowledge, yet this is clearly not a straightforward matter. Training is, in a sense, always idealization; it only shows *what works* at certain points, and even at these points it is impossible to exactly anticipate what will constitute one's day-to-day work after training. There is no such thing as "one-to-one transmission" (Schmid 2006). The practical relevance of courses is always a generalization, and cannot be implemented without personal navigation.

Teachers' competence is not something abstract, and to say it again it does not simply develop through the adoption of theories. If we want to know something about "professional competence", we have to go out into the professional field and observe how the personality of teachers is formed as they engage with their tasks. So we cannot simply draw conclusions about practice on the basis of the preceding course of study; this is just the logic of the study regulations. Teacher Training always functions selectively, it is never effective as a whole, but only ever in the parts that the students perceive as relevant. This is confirmed in a recently completed study from Zurich. To explain the study, I have to fill in some of the background.

The so-called "tertiarization" of teacher education was the object of political dispute before the founding of the *Pädagogische Hochschulen* because it was feared – with the classic Diesterwegian argument – that the practical focus of *Seminar*-based training would be lost. "Academization", in this debate, was a negative label used by traditionalist defenders of the old training, but also by others. Ten years later, the suspicion again arose that the training of future teachers was not close enough to practice, and was dominated by "theoreticians" like

us. The leading proponents of this criticism included older teachers, who complained that new teachers were not being sufficiently prepared for the working environment.

In this situation, Zurich's Educational Board (*Bildungsrat*) decided on 21 June 2011 that graduates of the Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich would be questioned about the effects of their training two years after finishing. This is the first time that such a graduate survey has been carried out in Swiss teacher education.

- The Educational Board, which is responsible for schools, wanted to find out whether the training was really as deficient as critics contended.
- The survey covered practising teachers who had completed the two-year career entry phase after their training.
- Other groups active in the profession, such as school principals or other members of school staff, were not surveyed.

This evaluation was not concerned with the new study concept I mentioned before; those surveyed were graduates of the old programme of training, which had often been criticized by outsiders.

But: The findings do *not* confirm the critics, and they upset the traditional certainties of today's Diesterwegs (for the following: Nido/Trachsler/Swoboda 2012). The new teachers questioned state that, overall, their professional skills were developed to a satisfactory degree during their training at the Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich. Thus the Hochschule is *not* failing, from the point of view of the graduates. In detail, the training is assessed as follows:

- They received a good insight into key theoretical concepts, and a good level of competence in their subjects.
- They also state that the PH Zürich helped them to develop skills in some specifically teaching-related areas, especially planning, preparing and delivering lessons.
- They also felt they had been well supported in reflecting on and monitoring the quality of their teaching.

In some areas, the evaluations are clearly less positive. These are working with parents, collaboration in teams, dealing with the school management, and the role of the class teacher. But these are not huge deficits which would justify an outcry from critics. Experience at school and strategic use of continuing professional development will enable these teachers to become competent in these areas as well, and to act with professionalism.

Views on the practical relevance of training vary considerably. On the one hand, the professional skills of the lecturers and mentors are judged positively. On the other hand, there are definite suggestions for improvement, particularly with regard to the relationship between classroom internships and university seminar. Experiences from the internship are not systematically picked up and discussed in greater depth during the course of study – if this happens it is only by chance. The new, fully practice-oriented study concept of the Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich is a response to this criticism.

The biggest surprise of the survey is the way respondents describe their increase in competence during the two-year career entry phase.

“In all the areas of competence there are significant and in some cases marked increases in competence over the two-year career entry phase. These are particularly substantial in relation to ‘confidence about the curriculum’, ‘working with parents’, and ‘being able to fulfil [one’s] function as a class teacher’.”

The increases in competence are comparatively small when it comes to theoretical concepts, personal social competence, and reflection on one’s teaching. Reflections on theory and teaching seem to be less important in everyday working life, or there is too little time available for them. This finding may disappoint the trainers, but should not really come as a surprise, as the language of the classroom is not the same as the language used in training or in examinations. This does not mean, however, that teachers do not reflect on their teaching, just that they do not necessarily use the theoretical concepts from their training.²

The most important fields of learning for the development of professional competence were everyday working life, i.e. the real-life situation, and the support of colleagues on the ground. Clearly, it is the development or transfer of specific know-how on the ground that ensures successful career entry. In all 28 areas covered by the survey, the new teachers report increases, sometimes substantial ones, in their professional competence. This underlines the importance of the career entry phase, and suggests that there should be a close connection between training and career entry.

Career entry does not involve *one* particular, dominant challenge. Instead the quantity, the complexity and the contradictory nature of new teachers’ tasks constitute the challenge which they have to overcome every day. New teachers know that they will be faced with a change of role after completion of their studies, and prepare themselves accordingly. The “reality shock” described in earlier German studies does not occur as such; students do not enter teaching practice in a state of wide-eyed innocence and also not of eyes wide shut.

In summary:

“The important thing for new teachers is to get their bearings in the new situation, to recognize and fulfil their professional tasks and duties, to become aware of their own position as teacher, and to build up authority. This particularly applies to class teachers. The change in role is made more difficult by the fact that new teachers have a fairly low estimation of their skills here immediately after their training.”

As in various other studies, the finding here is that the most important support experienced during the career entry phase is that of colleagues on the ground. Where subject-specific support was available, this was also seen as positive, in terms of both the relationship and the actual advice received. Compulsory professional development courses were also

² Another finding is striking: the female teachers consistently evaluate their professional competence more highly than their male colleagues, especially in terms of actual lesson design. Those who start their careers with a higher workload have advantages – with regard to competence development – over those with low workloads.

viewed positively, though only around half of the respondents had been able to take up such courses, simply because not enough time was available. The new teachers receive appropriate support, but are under huge time pressure from the start; they need to be willing to work extremely hard.

New teachers have a high level of professional self-efficacy across all the aspects covered by the survey. Their enjoyment of their work is also high, and increases if they are able to teach the subjects they have studied. Their motives for choosing this career have a clear focus:

- The prospective teachers choose their career because they want to work with children and adolescents.
- This key motive is fully confirmed by the first two years in the profession.
- Only a small number of respondents have seriously thought about changing career or changing job.
- 90% of respondents would advise a young person to become a teacher.

The survey also included questions about stress. Both teaching-related and non-teaching-related tasks were classed as moderately to highly stressful. The core business is therefore not the only problem area. Stress increases with the level of teaching: teachers at secondary level feel more stressed than teachers at primary level, who in turn feel more stressed than kindergarten teachers. *Overall*, however, the degree of stress is comparatively low. There is one notable finding in relation to gender difference: men find working with school management more stressful than women do.

In the light of these findings one can conclude that Diesterweg is *wrong* – and this is not a political comment, though one is tempted to say that calls for the return of the old “schoolmaster” cannot be met for the simple reason that most teachers today are women.

- But does the structure of teaching remain more or less the same as it is felt to be in the first few years?
- Or, to ask the question differently, what will the Pädagogische Hochschulen be training for in the future?
- Is the teacher really still important?

Today there are signs of a fundamental change in school learning culture, driven by the Internet and the new media. This change will have effects on the organization of schools, learning time, learning responsibility, and also on the way performance is measured. This means not only changes in teaching practice, but also in the requirements for training.

In Germany and Switzerland schools became more and more all-day schools. This might be surprising because in other countries they only have all-day-schools. To enforce full time schooling in the German speaking world fierce debates against the traditional model of family had been necessary and the result was that even in education no one can ignore new realities constantly.

But there is another interesting point: Today's debate about all-day schools takes it for granted that teaching must be delivered in the form of lessons, and then appropriately supplemented for full-day operation. However, self-organized learning with laptops or smart phones, managed by way of task cultures, is to gain momentum, and casts doubt on this premise. This can also be seen as the end of school in its historical form. But one has to be careful with too radical conclusions that have its own history.

In 1992 the American journalist and political advisor Lewis J. Perelman published a polemic entitled *School's out: Hyperlearning, the New Technology, and the End of Education* (Perelman 1992). Twenty years ago the book caused a sensation in the United States, attracted considerable attention in the old media, and earned its author a vast number of lectures around the world. The demand, and the interest in the end of school education in its familiar form, lasted for about five years. Today not only the American schools still exist, and the hype has been forgotten.

Over the history of the educational discourse, the end of school has often been proclaimed. The usual supporting argument is that expenditure and output are out of proportion. A well-known example is the manifesto of the Austrian social revolutionary Ivan Illich, who coined the slogan *Deschooling Society* in 1971, light years away from the Internet revolution. Today new voices are predicting the end of school as a social institution, and propounding ideas similar to those discussed in the age of Reformation: with the help of the Internet, anyone can teach anyone, rendering a professional class of teachers - or priests - superfluous (Gelernter 2012).

Of course this is not something that state-employed teachers like to hear; the reaction to Ivan Illich's theses was also one of utter horror. Teachers tend to react to criticism with what the Viennese psychoanalyst Siegfried Bernfeld (1974, p. 125) refers to as the "beleidigtes Pädagogengemüt" (literally: "the offended teacher's soul"). One does one's best, but nobody wants it. And yet school is stronger than many critics think:

- School as an institution offers, besides lessons,
- fixed beginning and ending times,
- a structured day,
- specialized staff,
- responsible supervision
- and, not least, a change from the everyday use of media.

It is therefore not very likely that school will disappear. What cannot be overlooked, however, is that school is adapting and is exploring possible benefits for itself, just as it has done with every previous media revolution.

In concrete terms: the forms of learning and the tasks assigned at school will make use of the Internet revolution, but compulsory schooling will not disappear, and we will not see the day when anyone can learn with their own links. Facebook does not replace public schools, but it does influence learning expectations and thus behaviour.

The standard situation of teaching will change. The catchwords here are “self-organized learning”, “learning at [one’s] own speed”, and “management through feedback”. The traditional textbook will lose its importance; teachers will no longer simply teach “their” class, and they will no longer primarily give lessons that they have prepared themselves, but will work with electronic learning platforms and renewable task cultures. Technologically, these are already well advanced.

This change is already clearly visible in today’s schools, and will accelerate hugely over the next few years. The standard situation of teaching comes from the 19th century, and is based on the textbook society. Textbooks are slow-moving media, incapable of rapid change, because they need to go through many editions to be profitable. Learning media of this kind have no hope of keeping up with the development of the knowledge society. Furthermore, they limit learning opportunities and are based on finding averages.

The schools of the future, on the other hand, must open up paths to learning, develop the habitus of self-responsible learning, and prevent students from assuming that their learning will one day be complete. This has consequences, for example, for the assessment of performance, for the examination system, and for the certificate awarded at the end of a period of schooling. All this will have to change, unless schools are willing to risk a gradual disappearance among the laptop learning environments.

My conclusion is therefore the following: contrary to some prognoses, the Internet is not destroying schools, but is forcing them to change, if they want to preserve their social status. And the question for teacher training can only be how to adapt to this. There is no other option. Learning has changed, and the institutions of learning cannot stand aloof; the old schoolmaster at his blackboard is pure nostalgia, with no basis in historical fact. In the future, children and adolescents will be even more astounded than they are today that they are expected to learn differently at school than in everyday life. And teacher training has to be able to react to this.

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