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Preface

Tamas Kozma ¹ & Ildiko Olah²

Wolfgang Mitter, of whom this compilation is about, was born in 1927 in Czechoslovakia, (Trutnov, now part of the Czech Republic), and died in 2014 in Oberursel, Germany. He spent his life among beautiful mountains and in scenic villages, where he kept on returning until the end of his life. He had grand esplanades in Austria, Slovenia, the Tatra Mountains, and in the Hungarian mountains as well. He had said the reason behind this was that it was more cost-effective this way. In truth, both his heart and his memories attached him to Central Europe.

Mitter professor's career tied him to colleges of teacher training and university faculties of arts (1954-64 Kassel, 1964-72 Lueneburg and Hamburg, 1974-2007 Frankfurt a.M.). He found his true workplace when he began his work at the German Institute for International and Comparative Education (DIPF, Deutsches Institut fur Internationale Paedagogische Forschung). Here, he became one of the four directors (Comparative Education) and served as the director of the institute for two terms.

This institute, the Frankfurt DIPF granted him the opportunity to be the educational representative of the German “change through rapprochement” policy (Willy Brand, 1974). He had visited the so called Socialist countries on numerous occasions from the 70s of the previous century until the political turn of the 1989/90. He became affiliated with the local pedagogical pieces of research, the institutes, and the researchers and greatly contributed to the modernization of these researchers and pieces of research after the regime change.

Equally important was, both for him and his colleagues, the reunification of Germany. The integration of Germany's eastern half – the Soviet occupied former German Democratic Republic – was not an effortless process. Due to the political fights and decisions made under pressure even those notions were divested in East Berlin that could have remained and were considered valuable in the academia of occupied Berlin. An important deed of

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Mitter’s career was safeguarding the values of the Academy of Pedagogy (founded on Soviet standards), for example the former pedagogy trade union library. (Today it is the Frankfurt DIPF’s library and museum of the history of education.)

Yet, Mitter did not remain the educational diplomat of the “change through rapprochement” and the German reunification. These activities – form the teacher training to his university professorship and education diplomacy – he understood and practiced as international and comparative pedagogy. In this field of science he was and remained the disciple of the previously well-known German scientist Oskar Anweiler. Both belonged to the school which did not think of comparative pedagogy as merely cultural diplomacy, but considered it a scientific disciple; searching for the place of comparative pedagogy in the fields of teacher training programmes and social sciences.

That is how Mitter became the internationally prominent figure of comparative pedagogy. From 1981 to 1985 he was the chairperson of CESE (Comparative Education Societies in Europe), between 1991 and 1995 he was the chairperson of WCCES (World Congress of Comparative Education Societies), and between 1997 and 2000 he was the chairperson of WAER (World Association of Educational Researchers, now WERA). During his chairmanship comparative pedagogy – as scientific activity and as educational development – reached its peak. This fortunately coincided with the formation of the European Research Area, and the unfolding of its organizations (ECER, European Educational Research Association), that fill this place as representatives of education. Mitter grew up, created and became an international scientific figure in a Europe that experienced the horrors world war divisions, and so he put his faith in a unified Europe and globalising world. It was an era of great hopes and vigour. Mitter did not take part in the reunification of Europe solely as a researcher. He had personal reasons for his motivation as well, the fate of his family; he was committed to the cause of achieving an unified, viable Europe.

The HERJ’s following studies are devoted to the memory of Mitter. The preparation of approximately 2 years preceded it. We began as soon as we were informed of Mitter’s passing and we publish it now – to honour his memory. As our starting point we contacted the authors of the Festschrift, which was written to commemorate the 70th birthday of Mitter, edited by his beloved institute the DIPF. Many of the former authors replied, welcomed the initiative of HERJ and recalled Mitter both orally and in written format. The great interest and substantial feedback showed that we were on the right track to organize a memorial issue dedicated to Wolfgang Mitter.

In the following, we present eight studies written in the memory of Mitter. Among the authors there are Europeans and Americans as well, which reflects Wolfgang Mitter’s great authority and effect in international erudition. It also reflects Mitter professor’s accomplishment in fields of practicing and managing science, in the domestic sphere (Germany) and on the international scene as well. All writings are presented with scientificity, even if their genres and styles differ from one another. Among them we can
find pieces of research and recollections, of historical type and those looking towards the future. What connect them are their scientific demand, comparative aspect and international mind-set.

Christel Adick recognizes and precisely describes the ‘soft power’ (Joseph Nye) characteristics of German cultural and educational politics (diplomacy). The Goethe-Institutes, a German Schools Abroad network’s or the German Academic Exchange Service’s image is always twofold. On the one hand, it successfully builds friendship groups around Germany; on the other hand, it significantly contributes to the new image building of Germany. From the perspective of comparative education these institutions, their actuation and programmes can be regarded as a peculiar fulfilment of educational transfer.

Wolfgang Mitter visited East-Central European countries readily, gave presentations at universities and organized scientific events. Laszlo Brezsnyanszky reviews the 50 years of the University of Debrecen’s (Hungary) Pedagogy Department, based on his institutional research. Between 1912 and 19760, from its foundation there have been four professors of this department. All four have understood pedagogy differently both as practice and as research. However different these understandings might have been, the image of pedagogy was basically shaped by German pedagogy. Thus, they were active in the same intellectual sphere as the one from which Mitter emerged.

Stephen P Heyneman was division chief in charge of Education, Health and Social Protection in the Technical department of the World Bank. In his study he recalls his visits to the former Soviet Union, and after its dissolution to Russia “Newcomers were on both sides of the table”, writes the author. The representatives of the Russian side presumed to know education in an international comparison (governance, finance, study material development) and had specific concepts of what they wanted. These ideas however, were not baed on personal experience, but on readings and preconceptions. He, the representative of the World Bank, also had prejudices and theoretical knowledge about the regime change. That is how the rebuilding of education systems had to be commenced in Russia and other countries of the former Soviet empire.

For a long time Mitter was the co-editor of the reference book entitled Educational Systems of Europe. In his essay Wolfgang Hoerner evokes the editorial debates. One recurrent question of these debates was: is it possible to compare the education system of European nation states, at least in the scientific sense. Considering comparative education’s four models (idiographic, meliorist, evolutionist, experimental) Europe’s education systems can be understood as cases, comparable based on their history, governance, structure, and new development trends. Thus the reference book introduces case studies, but these cases (of the respective national education systems) are analysed based on these aspects.
Vandra L. Masemann got to know Wolfgang Mitter in 1987, after he had become the chairperson of the German Society of Pedagogy’s comparative department. They worked together from 1991 to 96 in the WCCES (World Council of Comparative Education Societies). She recalls Mitter as a scientist and scientific manager, who always strived to reconcile former foes under the comparative aegis and to bringing the former adversaries together around a table to negotiate and defuse tension. Masemann also recalls the companion and colleague with whom it was enjoyable to spend leisure time with in the breaks of conferences and congresses, because he was fond of excursions in nature and (as a former teacher) he had a vast knowledge of historical and geographic knowledge. As joint author she has proven himself to be tactful, cooperative, and rather helpful over the course of preparing the concerted documents.

Wolfgang Mitter was not only the superior Botho von Kopp but also his friend. Botho von Kopp was the one who edited a memorial issue in celebration of Mitter’s 70th birthday. The thoughts that the author summarized in this study are the recalled conversations that he had had with Mitter over their shared years at DIPF. A central theme of these conversations was about the possibility of predicting the future. Idealist German philosophy teaches that mankind’s history – and subsequently the history of education – is the unfolding of ideas over time. In truth, the future is unpredictable and can bring unexpected turns. Comparative pedagogy strives the get a solid grasp of this unpredictability when, based on their history it attempts to predict the education system’s possible development course.

Dietmar Waterkamp’s starting point is also that the future is uncertain. Europe’s history has been, in pervious centuries, defined by the religious world view; since the Enlightenment it has been defined by the world view of freedom. The religious world view suggests safety, whereas the world view of freedom leaves the children drowning in uncertainty. Once, the role of schools and pedagogy was to mediate the religious world view, now it is to mediate values which can offer safety to children (the world is good, beautiful and true). These values are to be mediated to the children through the education of different sciences, to grant them safety.

Horst Weishaupt asks the following question; how the present demographic changes affect the national (German) education by international standards and domestically. He emphasises three changes. The first is age groups with decreasing numbers that have replaced the previous baby boom age groups. The second is the changed labour market that requires new, well-qualified workforce. The third is international scale migration. The author demonstrates through examples from Germany, how these changes affect the transformation of the school network, especially small rural schools.

All authors’ respective writings are dedicated to pay tribute to the memory of Wolfgang Mitter and can be read in the current issue of HERJ. From these studies education’s impressive international panorama and its inventory of problems unfold, genuinely, often in a personal fashion. We express our sincere gratitude to the authors for their
contribution to the Wolfgang Mitter memorial issue. Let us also recognize with great thanks the contributions of the following researchers of the Doctoral School of Education at the University of Pecs (Hungary). Adrienne Acs, Katalin Farady, Ildiko Jenak, Ilona Millei, Klaudia Szabad and Orsolya Uherkovich. They supported the editorial works of the Guest Editors with intensive internet research as well as personal enquiries.
German Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy as a Means of Soft Power

Christel Adick

Abstract

The main focus of the following article is to highlight “foreign cultural and educational policy” as a very specific variant of educational transfer. Many countries have created specific ways and institutions to further their cultural and educational interests abroad by various cultural, educational and scientific institutes. This will be discussed by taking the example of some of the core institutions of the German Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy, namely the Goethe-Institute, German Schools Abroad and the German Academic Exchange Service, which have branches in a lot of countries around the world. These will be described and analyzed as instruments of foreign policy by applying the interpretative concept of ‘soft power’ (as propelled by Joseph Nye), also showing that their proclaimed reference to ‘cooperation’ may be considered as more or less rhetoric because it is likely to obfuscate the political self-interests behind it.

Keywords: Comparative Education, International Education, International Educational Transfer, Foreign Cultural Policy, Student Exchange, Cultural Institutes, Foreign Schools, Goethe Institute, German Schools Abroad, German Academic Exchange Service

3 This article is written in the memory of Wolfgang Mitter. It is based on an unpublished presentation of the author at the CESE (Comparative Education in Europe) conference in 2014 at Freiburg, Germany, where she last met and talked to him, who was, as had been the case often on conferences, accompanied by his wife. At this occasion, Wolfgang Mitter did not give the impression to decease not long after the CESE conference.

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I. Introduction

Educational transfer across national borders has since long been discussed in various social science disciplines including not least *Comparative Education*. There has been a recurrent debate in this sub-discipline if realms like international education or international educational policies and policy transfer across borders should be considered as legitimate concerns of Comparative Education as part of or besides its main focus on scientific comparisons. Wolfgang Mitter highlighted this issue in a very enlightening article (1996), in which he paradigmatically discussed these positions and relations between, as he illustratively named them: ‘*comparativists*’ and ‘*internationalists*’. He expressed his conviction that, on the one hand, both are categorically different from each other, because comparativists aim at acquiring scientific knowledge about education worldwide, getting insights and explaining realities, whereby internationalists want to become practical by influencing educational practices and policies and change the world to the better. On the other hand, however, Mitter has suggested that both objectives should not lead to organizational ruptures and that in the academic reality both might even come together in one and the same person.

The scientific community proves that Mitter’s reflections are still valid today, because they are fundamental for Comparative Education throughout. Most academic societies have adopted the practice of including both aspects, as can be seen in the example of the North American Comparative Education Society (CES), founded in 1956, which was renamed into Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) in the year 1969. In the days of international large scale assessments like PISA or TIMMS it has become obvious again that scientific research is entangled with educational policies. Furthermore, global challenges like climate change, international competition and increasing cross border migration also hint to the fact that Comparative Education cannot remain in an academic ivory tower, but instead has to reflect its societal relevance and enhance models and practices of intercultural or global education or education for sustainable development and others. This is why Mitter’s deliberations on *comparativists* and *internationalists* have been chosen as one of the basics for the author’s concept of Comparative Education (Adick 2008, 63ff.). The following analysis is placed into this perspective.

According to the debate mentioned above, educational transfer across borders, then, falls into the focus of *internationalists*, respectively into the *international* endeavors of the scientific community, if we may call them this. The international dimension belongs to Comparative Education since its beginnings, and was mostly discussed under the headings of ‘borrowing & lending’ (cf. Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). Research and discussions often referred to reform policies that travel around the world. In this respect, Phillips & Ochs (2003) developed an international policy cycle for the reconstruction of how a country adopts and adapts foreign influences. Alternatively the term ‘*international educational transfer*’ has come into use as an umbrella term for reviewing all these ‘practical’ and ‘political’ border-crossing dimensions discussed in
Comparative Education (Beech, 2003). It will be used here to cover the broad range of activities across national borders in various governmental and nongovernmental institutions which are active around the world. These range from the Associated Schools Project of UNESCO to charity projects to further education in non-governmental organizations like Save the Children. It also includes variants of youth and students exchange programs like, for instance, between partner cities or in the well-known ERASMUS program for students in Europe and beyond. In addition, educational transfer also occurs between individuals and reform initiatives e.g. on international conferences. Commercial educational export prevalent in entrepreneurial branch campuses overseas or in the activities of e-learning in distance education enterprises abroad is also considered to be one variant of educational transfer (Adick 2014). It is posited in this article that foreign cultural and educational policy is another very typical version of educational transfer, which, however, is distinct from other variants like exchange or twin programs. Its specificity shall be demonstrated in the following analysis and interpretation.

II. Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy and the Concept of Soft Power

Many countries have formulated their specific Foreign Cultural Policy, also including institutionalized forms of educational transfer. Similar to the case of Germany – which is the topic of this article – the French foreign policy has installed the Instituts français, the Centres Culturels Français and the Alliance Française which incorporate their ‘politique culturelle extérieure’, and equally known around the world is the British Council and the ‘cultural diplomacy’ it claims for Great Britain. The British, German, and French ways have already been compared in a research especially devoted to their foreign cultural policies (Sattler 2007). In recent times Chinese Confucius Institutes have expanded in Europe, but also in other parts of the world. A detailed research on Africa revealed the strategies and outcomes of Chinese educational transfers, especially the expansion of Confucius Institutes, in various African countries (King 2013). Like Germany, many other countries operate their national schools in foreign countries (a short overview on Spain and Portugal, the Netherlands, the United States of America, and Great Britain in: Kohler-Fritsch 2014). For instance, the French Agence de l’Enseignement Français à l’Etranger coordinates nearly 500 French schools abroad and has been placed under the auspices of the French Foreign Office, the same like it is in Germany and possibly in many other countries (Horner 2014). Such schools mostly originated in order to furnish the children of their expatriates who live outside their home country with teaching and learning along the lines of their national education system. But in the course of time, these foreign schools abroad have often come to attract more pupils of the host country than expatriates and can thus be considered as important agents of educational transfer across borders.

The main mission of foreign cultural and educational policy is to the culture, education and science of a specific country across borders and around the world. This is done in
close and overt relation to the official Foreign Policy. Therefore, it is claimed here, that these organizations may be analyzed in the light of the concept of ‘soft power’ as it has been propelled by Joseph S. Nye (esp. Nye 2004). Nye defines soft power in contrast to the well-known forms of hard power, namely military power and economic dominance. According to him, soft power means “getting others to want the outcomes you want” (Nye, 2004, p. 5). This can be achieved by applying various forms of attraction and moral persuasion, using reputation, co-optation, seduction, conviction, inducements, and other ‘soft’ means – all this in the name of influencing others towards one’s owns interests, ideas and principles without exercising (overtly) coercive measures. The concept has been widely used in international relations studies, but also in political debates. Its strengths lie “in the fact that it allows theorists and practitioners to think about power in more complex and dynamic ways” (Commuri, 2012, p. 43). Soft power overlaps with the notion of ‘nation branding’ and the debates on public or cultural diplomacy which are set against or conceived of as supporting traditional ‘secret diplomacy’ practices behind closed doors. Even though there is the danger of soft power becoming a ‘catch-all’-concept, it is challenging to apply it to the topic of this article since soft power can also be exercised by non-state actors. This opens the way to interpret the border-crossing educational and scientific organisations such as the Goethe-Institute, DAAD, German Schools Abroad in the light of the soft power concept.

Used in social science research soft power is meant to be an analytical concept, and not a normative one. However, it can be mentioned that the concept has also attracted the interest of (practical) politics. For instance, meant to brief politicians, the scientific service of the German parliament prepared a dossier on soft power5. As an analytical concept it is directed in the following to analyse how foreign cultural and educational policies function, and how they appeal to the addressees, even though they are likely not to admit officially that they are ‘applying soft power’. By the very nature of the ‘soft’ character of these power relations the ‘real’ aims behind the actions might be obfuscated or masqueraded. This is often done by claiming to practice various forms of cooperation or collaboration with national, European and local actors of the host countries in which they operate. Yet, there is no coherent concept of cooperation which might be traced back to a certain author (like soft power to Nye); instead, as a catch-all term, it is ubiquitously used in discussions about cross-border relations. For instance, the Federal German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development is responsible for ‘development aid’, which, however, is called ‘cooperation’ in order to prevent the negative image of external aid coming from (powerful) donors and going to (dependent) recipients. Different sorts of cross-border educational relations; e.g. exchange of students, export of international campuses, education as part of development aid, school partnerships, educational enterprises venturing abroad, etc. all claim to practice ‘cooperation’ in one or the other way. But at a

5 The dossier was prepared by Huberta v. Voss-Wittig from the scientific service (Wissenschaftliche Dienste) of the German Parliament, and it is available online: http://www.bundestag.de/blob/189706/8c40cb75069889f8829a5a0db838da1f/soft_power-data.pdf [accessed 16 Jan, 2016]
closer look, their objectives and practices are quite different so that a reference to cooperation might be purely rhetoric or ideological and thus does not appeal to be a valid analytical category as an alternative to soft power. Therefore it is concluded here, that cooperation or collaboration are equivalent to what is called co-optation in the concept of soft power.

In an article on public and cultural diplomacy, it has been remarked that the organisations operating in this field may be considered as long-term soft-power instruments of external networking. Their special value for the foreign policy of a country lies in the fact that they are meant to attract future top executives from around the world and to strengthen the position of a country as an important global player in education, science and research (cf. Schwan, 2012, p. 221ff.). This leads to the question: who are the addressees of soft power in the ‘receiving’ countries? If soft power is understood as relational power it is not a one-way road; instead, the receptive state and society and their reactions must be taken into consideration. For instance, it makes a difference if the culture of a given country is attractive to the elites or to the masses in another country, and if the relations of the two countries bear historical legacies like between former colonial powers and their ex-colonies (Commuri, 2012, p. 51, p. 55).

It should be added that soft power has in the meantime been operationalised in the construction of an international ranking scale by explicitly paying tribute to Nye’s concept (McClory 2010). In this endeavour under the auspices of The Institute for Government (a British charity organisation, i.e. a NGO) and the Monocle (a monthly periodical) the soft power of countries is assessed on the basis of the five categories: Business/Innovation, Culture, Government, Diplomacy, and Education. Among others the index is made up of variables which are directly connected with the topic of this article, such as the global distribution of the language of a country, its attraction of foreign students, and the number of its cultural institutes abroad. In the first ranking (year 2010), the first five places (from N=26 countries) went to France, UK, USA, Germany, and Switzerland.6

Following these general remarks on the concept of soft power as an interpretative frame, German Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy will be considered namely the Goethe-Institut, German Schools Abroad and the German Academic Exchange Service, which have branches in a lot of countries around the world. It will be analyzed how they function and how they use factors like attraction, persuasion or co-optation in their operations.

III. German Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy: an overview

German Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy (Deutsche Auswärtige Kultur- und Bildungspolitik) falls into the domain of the Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt; AA) and is

6The rankings under the title “Monocle Soft Power Survey” have since been repeated in successive intervals and included a larger number of countries. Over the years the placement of the first five or ten countries has fluctuated to a certain degree, but it would lead too far to go into more details in this article. Readers are directed to check information in the internet.
part of the official German Foreign Policy, which follows three main objectives: (1) *political relations* – via embassies and official treaties, (2) *economic relations* – via chambers of commerce, (3) *cultural relations* – via education and scientific exchange.

The self-description on the English-language website of the German Foreign Office can be taken as an illustration of what *soft power* means [www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/KulturDialog.html; 10 May, 2014]:

“Along with political and economic relations, cultural relations – including education – is one of the three cornerstones of German foreign policy and has, moreover, a demonstrably long-term impact. Cultural and educational programmes tailored to the needs and interests of people in our partner countries not only create a broad basis for stable international relations but also build trust in our country around the world. As a result of such programmes, our civil society, business and political actors readily find a host of important and reliable partners to work with. Our cultural relations and education policy objectives are:

- to present Germany as a country with a lively, multifaceted and internationally renowned cultural scene,
- to strengthen Germany as an education, science and research location by awarding scholarships, for example, to students and outstanding young researchers from all parts of the world,
- to promote interest in the German language in Europe and also internationally,
- to contribute to international crisis and conflict prevention efforts by helping, for example, to rebuild schools and universities in Afghanistan,
- to promote European integration by introducing EU-wide education and training parameters, for example,
- to preserve cultural diversity around the world by supporting, for example, projects to restore endangered cultural sites in developing countries,
- to create a stable foundation for international relations by fostering dialogue and encounter.

Seen in the light of the *soft power* concept, the proclamation refers to “long-term impact” (an indication of power relations) by addressing “partners” overseas (a sign of co-optation). Cultural relations want to build “trust in our country” (using persuasion, conviction), and to appeal to Germany’s “lively, multifaceted and internationally renowned cultural scene” (in search of reputation), etc.

Soft power is not exerted directly by the Foreign Office but through *intermediary organisations* of a special kind. Citing again from the self-description of the Foreign Office addressed to the international public: “These are non-governmental organizations which operate under strategic guidelines laid down by the German Government and with a German Government mandate. In their programme and project work they enjoy a very large measure of independence. In the interest of consistency, the various activities
undertaken by these organizations abroad on behalf of the German Government are coordinated locally by the relevant German embassy and consulate-general. Given the increasing number and diversity of the organizations involved, the coordinating role of our missions abroad is becoming increasingly important.”

The role of these organisations seems to match the classical situation of what in social psychology is known as a ‘double-bind’ relationship, since on the one hand, they are said to “enjoy a very large measure of independence”, while on the other hand, they are stated to work under “strategic guidelines” and a “mandate” of the German Government, reasons for which they are and have to be “coordinated” (re: controlled) by the German embassies. Regarding the literature on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or non-profit organisations (NPOs), it is difficult to place them correctly. They are NGOs – yes, but they are only formally independent, since they operate under governmental custody. They are NPOs – yes, but they depend on public money to a large extent and not on ‘private’ money (donations, private investments) as other NPOs. According to Anheier (2005, 48) all these organisations can be called ‘quasi-NGOs’. Even though they are organised under private law, they are no genuine NPOs, since they have national members (Frantz & Martens, 2006, 43). According to Fowler (1997, p. 32) they are a „Para-state body set up by government as an NGO, often to enable better conditions of service or create political distance”. In the case of foreign cultural and educational policy the motif ‘to create political distance’ applies, since the foreign country may not interfere into the host country, but an ‘intermediary organisations’ formally organized as NGO / NPO may do so according to the laws of the host country. In this regard, the creation of a special type of intermediary organization may itself be identified as one mechanism of exerting soft power.

IV. DAAD, Goethe-Institut and German Schools Abroad: an illustrative analysis

The main intermediary organisations of the AA are the Goethe-Institut (GI), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH), the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa), the Central Agency for Schools Abroad (ZfA), the Educational Exchange Service (PAD), the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK), the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), the Max Weber Stiftung – Foundation for German Humanities Institutes Abroad (MWS), the Federal Cultural Foundation (KSB), and the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures, HKW) [www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/KulturDialog.html; 10 May, 2014]. In the following, three of

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7 www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/KulturDialog.html; 10 May, 2014

8 For a more extended discussion of the classification of these organisations in the literature on NGOs, NPOs and the Third Sector see Adick/Hahm/Weiler (2014).
them: DAAD, Goethe-Institut and German Schools Abroad (see table 1), will be considered because they are very important agencies for educational transfer.

Table 1: Actors of German Cultural and Educational Policy (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Finances</th>
<th>Main activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DAAD</td>
<td>HQ in Bonn, office in Berlin, 15 regional branch offices, 54 information centres worldwide</td>
<td>AA (ca. € 170 Mio.) plus BMBF (ca. € 92 Mio.) and BMZ (ca. € 35 Mio.); i.e. 77 % state financed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goethe-Institut</td>
<td>HQ in Munich, office in Berlin, 159 institutions incl. 12 liaison offices in 94 countries</td>
<td>AA (ca. € 224 Mio); i.e. 63% state financed, private financing via inscriptions and fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Schools Abroad</td>
<td>ZfA in Bonn under the auspices of the AA, part of Bundesverwaltungsamt, 141 German schools in 72 countries</td>
<td>AA (ca. € 152 Mio); i.e. 30% state financed; mainly private financing of each school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: own elaboration according to if possible the English-language website of each organisation: www.daad.de/en; www.goethe.de/ins/en/index; www.bva.bund.de/DE/Organisation/Abteilungen/Abteilung_ZfA/ (no English website available), accessed in May 2014. The data on Finances for around the year 2011 are taken from Hahm & Weiler, 2014, p. 184

From the financing schemes it can be concluded that the main public financier in all three cases is the Foreign Office (AA) which proves they are part of the official German Foreign Policy. The DAAD also receives money from other federal ministries; but this is also public money. The Goethe Institutes also live on fees, private money which the participants pay. Contrary to what one might think, the German schools abroad are mainly financed by their own individual school budgets. But their most important public financier is also the Foreign Office. Applying the interpretative view of the soft power concept, one might say, that even though all these organisations are not completely remunerated by the German public purse for their ‘image campaigns’ for Germany, and the German schools even less than the other two organisations, they obviously accept their role of mediating German culture to the outside world.

The headquarters of these organisations are located in Germany, but all of them have offices and are well-known around the world. If one considers the number of offices outside Germany, one can say that in about half of the countries assembled in the United Nations (N= 193) there are Goethe-Institutes (N= 94 countries) to be found, and in about every third there will be a German school (N= 72 countries) and/or a representation of the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD (N= 69 countries).

The wide international distribution of these organisations can be taken as an indicator for their visibility as representations of German language, culture, education and science. But
contrary to the rhetoric of cooperation or exchange suggesting equal partners there is no reciprocity that would lie in the fact that these many host countries would have equivalents of their cultural organisations in Germany. In a research project on German-Mexican relations in profit compared to non-profit organisations (Adick/Gandlgruber/Maltezky/Pries 2014) it was envisaged to compare counterparts, but in the area of foreign cultural and educational policy no single Mexican cultural or educational organisation could be identified in Germany that would match the DAAD, Goethe-Institut or German Schools which are all having offices in Mexico. Considering staff mobility between Mexico and Germany and vice versa (which was the main object of the research), we found out that German branch offices overseas are headed by a German Representative, who is paid and dispatched by and who is – next to his/her headquarters – responsible to German governmental institutions. Furthermore, it may be highlighted that these expatriates have to sign a contract whereby s/he has to respect German interests and image abroad. In addition, it was stressed that the organisations are closely knitted among them and around the German Embassy. All these features are strong indications on how soft power works alongside official diplomacy.

Considering the actual activities of the DAAD, Goethe-Institut and the German Schools Abroad in the case of Mexico and including what expert interview partners of these organisations have responded, the following main features may be summarized (for more details and references cf. Hahm & Weiler, 2014). These organisations propagate German language and culture. The five German schools are private schools under Mexican law, but they are nevertheless controlled in peculiar ways by the German government. In 2014, Germany issued a special law (Auslandsschulgesetz) for these schools; among others they have to send regular reports and student registers to the German government agency which sends out German civil service teachers on a rotational basis. These German expatriate teachers work alongside other (less well paid) categories of teachers including locals and are mostly forming a (privileged) minority (about only one fifth; year 2012) within the overall staff at the German foreign schools. The schools are attracting a lot of Mexican students who, because of the school fees, mostly stem from well-to-do families. The Goethe Institut recorded nearly 4,000 inscriptions (2011-12) in Mexico; it also employs local staff alongside (numerically much fewer) expatriates with long-term assignments from Germany. Schools and Goethe-Institut are rewarding such certificates and language diplomas that are recognised in Germany – which is not least meant to attract Mexican scholars to Germany. Germany is not so attractive as the neighbouring USA or the historically and culturally close European country Spain, but it nevertheless ranks among the most popular destinations of Mexican students abroad, which might be the reason for having installed a DAAD office in Mexico that (possibly) already resulted in a factual increase of German-Mexican collaborations in higher education. Some common features arise: Teachers, lecturers and top personnel are dispatched from Germany on the basis of rotation after some years. The reason behind is that they are not meant to take roots in the host country, but, instead, stay in close contact with their home country Germany, for which they have to fulfil the roles of cultural representatives abroad. All
three organisations have to report back and are linked to German governmental institutions by law, special agreements, budgets, evaluation schemes and others. All these features can be interpreted as mechanisms aimed to further the international reputation of Germany by ‘soft’, i.e. non-coercive means.

V. Concluding Remarks

The article commenced by recalling Wolfgang Mitter who has suggested that international educational transfer should be considered as a legitimate part of Comparative Education. Most of the scientific community including the author of this article have practiced this option in their research and teaching. In this view three important actors of the Foreign German Cultural and Educational Policy have been sketched out and interpreted through the lens of the soft power concept. This was done with the objective to direct the attention of researchers in Comparative Education to the broad scope of international educational transfers with their very different variants. It was posited that the type called ‘foreign cultural and educational policy’ has very specific traits which sets it apart from other forms of international educational transfer. The logic it follows has been subsumed here under the heading of soft power, which is quite different from e.g. education aid (humanitarian impetus) or from education export (commercial interests). Systematic comparisons of various types, let alone a typology of all the different variants of international educational transfer are still lacking, as far as the author knows. The article can be seen as an incentive to start on more discussions and to draft typologies of this varied field.

VI. Acronyms

BMBF (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung). The Federal Ministry of Education and Research

BMZ (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung). The Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development

ZfA: Zentralstelle für das deutsche Auslandsschulwesen: Central Agency for the German Schools Abroad

DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst). German Academic Exchange Service; Motto: Change by Exchange (Wandel durch Austausch)

References


Websites of the organisations analysed in the text

Central Agency for the German Schools Abroad (ZfA, Zentralstelle für das deutsche Auslandsschulwesen). www.bva.bund.de/DE/Organisation/Abteilungen/Abteilung_ZfA/

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD, Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst). www.daad.de/en;

German Foreign Office (AA, Auswärtiges Amt), concerning its foreign cultural and educational policy: www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/KulturDialog.html www.auswaertiges-amt.de/

Goethe Institut: www.goethe.de/ins/enindex
Transformations Arcing Over Changes of Regimes in the History of a University Department

Laszlo Brezsnyanszky

Abstract

Our research aims to explore what transformations happened in the academic world of Pedagogy during the sixty years (1912–1970) marked with many changes. We analysed the manifestations of the personal, structural and professional continuity and discontinuity of the professorship of the history of the department of Pedagogy of a university. During the research we worked with the academic documents and sources of the archives. We were able to lean upon the accounts and reminiscences of witnesses of the period who are still alive today. Sacred to the memory of Professor Mitter, we would like to enrich the repertoire of the researches of sociological transformations with an instance of an institutional history.

Keywords: university history, professorship of Pedagogy, transformation period of the 20th century, continuity and discontinuity

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I. Introduction

The following study is a tribute to the memory of Professor Wolfgang Mitter. I had the privilege of meeting him multiple times throughout my career, back in the days of the split Germany in Frankfurt and later on, in other places in different professional workshops. He was our guest speaker at the University of Debrecen on more occasions. He was travelling through many countries with his presentations; he was known as the ambassador of the comparative Pedagogy. In my opinion he was really at home in the Middle-European area and this world was really familiar in his soul and habit and he was its true representative.

He was one of the guests of honour in the National Pedagogical Conference in 2003 in Budapest. On the opening day, he had a presentation on the relationships between the education politics and the change of the regime in the state room of the Hungarian Academy of Science. On the basis of the union of two German states he pointed out some features and problems. The text of the presentation was published in the following issue of Hungarian Pedagogy (Magyar Pedagógia) 2003. Issue no. 4 (Mitter, 2003)

Having read his presentation again ten years later, I think it is worth reminiscing his claims and reflect them with respect and looking for the experiences actual for our own research endeavours.

“The notion of transformation – according to Mitter – can already be found in the special literature of sociological science of the 30's of the 20th century, however, it was widely spread in the last tertiary of the century to express the political and social changes taking place in the Middle and East Europe” (Mitter, 2003:413).

In this regard, transformation means the social and political changes of regime which were many during the last hundred years in this area of Europe; the kind of changes which 'upset the world' fundamentally and permanently.

Professor Mitter chose to analyse the change of regime and union of the German Democratic Republic. The very transformation that was earlier seemingly impossible, bringing joyful alterations not only for German people but for the world politics. He was right in emphasizing: “changes begin in the atmosphere of euphoric anticipation and they extend to the basic and secondary goals as well. Realization is not only characterized by steps towards the goals but by breaks, fragmentations, withdrawals and 'onetime' openly or covertly re budding attitudes and behaviours that are thought to be excessed long ago” (Mitter, 2003:414).

Shifts – and we can know that from our experiences as well- can be launched among violent or peaceful proportions, they could be swift and fancy, but they get to some consolidation only through a long progress. We are convicted that no matter how successful and futile a transformation is it never happens without distress. However, a new chapter is not without a transition either as it wears the marks of continuity in a
hidden way. Momenta elevated to symbols of great transformations, such as a cannon-shot, breaking of a wall or wire-cutting denote only the momentum of start. Better understanding comes from a thorough and retrospective analyses. It means a serious task for political scientists, researchers of economy and society and historians. Without the chores of historical research the subtle mechanism and its progress of realization of the transformation can hardly be known and understood. Mitter’s study warns that researchers regard educational politics as the consequence of the political and economic changes not one of the factors of the transformation. On the other hand, they put the emphasis on the macro processes, they pay less attention to the expectable realizations coming from the micro analyses and biographical researches.

The history of the nations of the Middle-European area of the 20th century abounds in social and political transformations, and the one of the Hungarians was manifested in more complex forms than others. From the 90’s, there is a cumulative attention to the investigations of the causes, consequences and connections of transformations. There are more and more publications in researches of education history regarding the period shifts and changes of regime (Nemeth, 2016). At present, the shift happening in the 1940’s and 50’s is in the focus. It seems that the change in 1989/90 is too near and the involvement is too real to have objective analyses.

Our research was realised with the support of the following fund: OTKA no. T043016, which was carried out in the spirit of the previously mentioned thoughts to explore the characteristics of the activities of the pedagogical school of the University of Debrecen. It revealed the structural and contextual features of the science-, arts- and teacher training for the period of 1912 and 1970 and before their foundation at the University of Debrecen (Brezsnyanzszy, 2007) and as its continuation it still investigated the specialties and composition of today’s students as well. It is time for this research to have its sequel and expansion on the basis of raised interest at the centennial of the establishment of the university and the intention of institutions doing scientific research to have their self-determination (Orosz-Barta, 2012; Papp, 2014).

We defined the Pedagogical School of Debrecen as one with three educating functions and activities, mainly parallel – deriving from the features of the universities of the 20th century:

- It took care of the education of the academic second-line of its own professional field, it academically qualified the students held suitable according to the all-time academic certifications.
- It had a training in its own professional discipline and had boarding schools in the field of pedagogy for those students who were interested.
- It maintained the educational tasks of the theoretical pedagogical theory of the teacher training according to the all-time ordinary teacher training.
In the research we elaborated the rectorial and magisterial documents and archives which concerned the pedagogical training though in this respect not yet revealed. We studied the available materials of teacher training. We were able to lean upon the accounts and reminiscences of witnesses of the period who are still alive today.

Our study summarizes parts of the research which point out the personal, structural and spiritual manifestations of the transformational features of the transitions. Continuity and discontinuity can be observed running along activities of more functions, however, we cannot directly answer where and to what extent we can talk about proven continuity. At the same time, in spite of the sometimes spectacular discontinuity we can neither state that there were more distinct (professorial, academic and professional political) periods following one another for more than half a century. We cannot even state that the periods before and after the war or the shift of the civilian and coalitional regime or that of the socialist, Soviet-style regime could mean global personal and structural discontinuity in the life of the professional field or institutional work.

We can draw an outline on two aspects showing what changes and turning-points were present in the work of the school(s) at the investigated period and where we can look for arcing continuities, maybe furtively predominating. One of the aspects is the continuity of the professorship and the other is the question of professional, theoretical continuity.

II. The Relative Continuity of the Professorship

The professorship in this content means the varying named structural unit and first and foremost the status of professorship that meant competence in classes, exams and scientific qualification matters in the division of labour in the university and the faculty of arts.

Taking the first approach, we can say that the University of Debrecen has the continuity in principle for the period of 1918 (the year of foundation) to 1970, therefore the pedagogical unit is marked and working. In fact the work cannot be said continuous completely. There were breaks for personal causes of structural matters. It happened more times that there was no professorship for either a professor could not fulfil the requirements of leadership or because there was not status for a professor. A temporary vacancy in a department was not an unknown phenomenon in the life of the university. For example, in 1922/23 there were only 42 positions hold down out of the 51 authorized departments and 9 of them had deputies (Varga, 1967).

In 1912, at the foundation of the university, pedagogy had no teachers of professorship. Lectures in pedagogy were noticed and given by philosophers. This cooperation; the retraining and training, followed along the educational and qualification activity of the professorship later as well. There were four appointed professors of the department of pedagogy from the foundation until 1970. Gyula Mitrovics (Sarospatak 1871–Stuttgart 1965) led the department between 1918 and 1941. He was unequivocally the governor of
Pedagogy at the university during his professorship. University has to be added as after 1924, with the foundation of the institution of teacher training and its organization alongside the university, the system of teaching Pedagogy has become dual. To our knowledge, there were hardly any maintainers of academic professorship present among the lecturers of the institution of Pedagogy. However, Professors Mitrovsics and Karacsony were part of the teachers’ examiners committee, so they took part in the quality assurance work. Sandor Karacsony (Foldes 1891–Budapest 1952) was the head of the department between 1942 and 1950. Bela Jausz (Sopron 1895–Budapest 1974) was the head of the department between 1951 and 1966. Laszlo Kelemen (Kiskunfélegyhaza 1919–Pecs 1984) was the first man in the professorship of Pedagogy between 1966 and 1970.

1944/45., the war year directly affecting Debrecen, caused disturbance in the continuity of the work. Sandor Karacsony, who resided in Budapest, was substituted. However, later on it was him who was asked to notice lectures on Philosophy. 1949/50 created a vacuum, after the removal of Sandor Karacsony the position of the professorship was vacant for a while, but practically the professorship as a structural unit did not function either. We can only state an administrative continuity. The proportions were hard to reconstruct but they were not resulting only from the lack of a head teacher but from the period on the whole. The ‘university reform’ of 1949 created a deranged situation for the pedagogical subjects and teacher training. Pedagogical and other kinds of lectures, subjects and exams were made obligatory without having teachers to them. The situation was similar in more other departments where the new authority removed professors entitled ‘reactionist’.

There were more names included in the student offices until the commission of Bela Jausz as head of the department. Teaching work was going on but the department itself was not in operation. There were only few left from the lecturers at the university. Some of them counted notable later in the profession but some of them proved to be only temporary characters.

Due to the 1949’s rules the structural unit was significantly altered. The earlier structural order had the department as a unit few in number with a professor and an assistant, maybe a trainee. The lectures were noticed by the university professors and they were the ones to certify the exams as well. Private teachers with habilitation could also be present with restricted right to examinations and their lesser paid courses. This scheme was altered by a multiple-stage hierarchic system in the socialist period. The steps of the ‘ladder’ meant the following statuses still known today: assistant lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor and professor. The university of the new political system brought more departments in number so did the number of students. The educating tasks moved towards the lower positions of the service ladder. Affairs regarding decision and responsibility had changed. By the end of our examined period the manpower of the department of Pedagogy had reached 15 people. The new structure had become integrated (Vasko, 1981).
The naming of the structural unit connected to the professorship has its own history as well. The change of the names can be results of the professional orientation of the professor or that of the structural alteration of the university. From 1949/50 the names Seminary of Pedagogy and Institution of Social Psychology ceased to exist and its place was given to the Institution of Pedagogy which is one of the eight institution of the Arts Faculty at the time. The new structural change taking place in 1970 divides the institution of pedagogy into three parts: Departments of Pedagogy, Psychology and Andragogy, which constituted a common group of department with Professor Laszlo Kelemen as the head.

III. The Professional, Spiritual Continuity

Nowadays it seems evident again that all professors (head of department, the owner, leader of the professorship) would like to start his department’s teaching and researching work with his own program. He would like to draw a clean slate to an extent, even if he takes the professorship as a student of his forerunner. In the examined period and professional field, it was not always required to be committed to the antecedents. Especially not after the change of system after the war.

If we can talk about a civilian and socialist period in the investigated decades from the founding of the university, then it was in the civilian period when the continuity of teacher-student could be more likely, however, the (narrowly taken) attitudinal continuity. It is well known fact that, Sandor Karacsony could not continue the Mitrovics-style aesthetic and psychological line of conduct, he represented his own social psychological line in his lectures and publications. Though, this can be explained with the difference in their personal and professional conviction.

On the contrary, the discontinuity between the civilian and socialist courses is spectacular: it can be observed in operational pauses and declarations as well. In an ideologized professionalism (avowable) continuity is not bearable. From the 50’s until the investigated period the representation of professional line of conduct did not count only as a question of scientific conviction. Only in the measure and the nature of cooperation or keeping of distance can interpretable differences be searched. Therefore, professional and spiritual continuity is to be raised differently in the civilian and the socialist periods.

In the first, the teacher as an applicant was invited and accepted with his principles knowingly and respectively. Before his appointment his program and work in his application were considered and the differences between applicants were accounted for that. Mainly this practice prevailed even if we know that there were less public reasons for a decision, a commission. In the case of Mitrovics and Karacsony we know a lot of details and thoughts about this progress (Vincze, 2011).

In the socialist period, teachers were instructed to represent and teach the official line of conduct. Their work was regarded as a contribution to the line of the ‘brunt’. This period needs to be examined by being conscious and considerate of the foregoing. At the same
time, not only executor roles could be undertaken. A teacher or leader could achieve recognition and professional freedom inside the elbow-room of the system. For example, Bela Jausz got his professorship being a recognized head of a school, he was treated as one belonging to Debrecen and he had his own personal respect as well. His career did not launch in the socialist paradigm and as far as we know he was not politically committed either. Laszlo Kelemen was a successful researcher when he was invited to the department only his religiousness was stressed behind his back. He got the vacant position caused by retirement of the professorship coming as a professional from the fields of psychology and school researches. The change in the head caused a change in the professional line of conduct in the before mentioned frames and areas.

Our research could only get to the setting of the hypotheses for the question of the professional continuity of the whole period. There are more set of values that assumes and accompanies continuity: the identity of the protestant spiritualism, being from Debrecen or that of commitment to a pedagogical paradigm. So far, Tamas Kozma (2007) assumes two professional lines of conduct going through the examined period: the Mitrovicsian philosophical-psychological and the Karacsonyian free-education trends. He declares these two as they were arcing over the alterations of political courses, mainly hidden or half publicly, but they can be recognized today in the teachings and effects of the professorship of Pedagogy in Debrecen.

The investigation of the professional and spiritual continuity is a hard task for a researcher in more aspects. It is hard, as it is strongly attached to people and attitudes: it presumes the collective monitoring of works, messages and relationships. It is acutely difficult as the professional profile of the professorship was basically not formed by the professional-immanent convictions but the ideological and political orders. The altered structure of the department made the determining role of the professor grow dim. It was so outwardly and inwardly as well. The power relations of the department and institution, the raised number and more times hierarchized staff had made peculiar dependencies. Regarding the tasks and structural features of the university and the department of the socialist era were substantially different from those of the civilian period. It worked in order with more people in number, according to a hierarchy and was supported and controlled by the partners of the system in the staff, the trade union and the party. In this field of power the professional head could carry out his own restricted decisions.

This is where – in our opinion – the problem of researching the continuity of the structure, professorship and spiritualism meet. More accurately, this circumstance gives the must of handling of the professional and spiritual face of the department differently from the 50’s. A period of a certain professorship did not mean a uniform aspect tied to the researches and disciplinary creed of a professional leader or not in every case of the departments. The professional profiles and relationship systems of teachers, first of all the associate professors had the representation of the professorship pluralized and became pluralized. In such an articulated relationship, requirements regarding teaching and scientific life prevailed peculiarly.
Above all of the foregoing, professional continuity has an emancipatory thread, which can be followed throughout: preservation of professionalism in the university and the work for the prestige of pedagogical science. In a natural way, with different tools, colours and tone, Mitrovics, Karacsony, Jausz, Kelemen and we can risk that all the others following them undertook the representation of this matter. Let’s add, they had varying degrees of success.

First of all, Gyula Mitrovics’s aesthetic and psychological work is what helping the university accept his pedagogy, too. However, the opinion of his successor is prevailing, namely, that Mitrovics can only be regarded consequentially as a true scientist of pedagogy. On the contrary, Sandor Karacsony had to cope with the opinion and represent the profession, that although his lectures are very popular, it is thanks to his popular way of diction, rather than its scientific content. His fellow professors argued with his order of his views and scientific validity. Bela Jausz started out in German Studies. He was acknowledged for his work in organizing the training grammar school and its working successfully. His accomplishments in professional science met with less warm response. Though, it is true that his professorship was at the time of the spiritually altered period. For Laszlo Kelemen, establishing and summarizing the pedagogical psychology inland meant the basis for the personal and professional acknowledgement and acceptance. He met much opposition as a head of the department and the institution and also as a vice-rector as well, he had difficulties in representing the matters of pedagogy and teacher training.

There are also differences in the intellectual heritage of the professors. Mitrovics spent his time of retirement in Germany. The national profession ’forgot’ him for a long time and was silent regarding his work. We can find an analytical read about him only in the 90’s and there was a thesis for the doctor’s degree (Vincze, 2011) in the framework of the mentioned research. Sandor Karacsony had another story, he was bumped by the new authority and after his death and he was only mentioned critically in the professional literature. His professional and personal rehabilitation started in the 80’s. Bela Jausz took a professional-public role as the head of the Hungarian Pedagogical Society in his pensioner years. The university honoured him with a Memorandum Album (Emlekkonyv, 1976). There was a thesis for the doctor’s degree about his career and work (V. Nagy Aniko, 2009; 2013). The heritage and work of Laszlo Kelemen has not been processed.

In our study we are summarizing some of the conclusions of our research, which characterized 50 years of the pedagogical professorship in the University of Debrecen with regard to its structural and personal changes. The period of four school-funding professors had their time intercepted by socio-political shifts that affected the destiny of the professorship and the people and had a great influence on the situation and spirit of the discipline in the university.
References


How It Started? The First Work on Post-Soviet Education (In honor of Wolfgang Mitter)

Stephen P. Heyneman

Abstract

I was privileged to lead the first work on education in the former Soviet Union after the breakup of the former Soviet Union and this constituted the first time that education had been analyzed without the control of the Communist Party. My first impression may be worthy of mention. In the discussion with ministers of education I was not the only novice. Few of the ministers had travelled outside of the former Soviet Union or had seen an education system anywhere else. What they knew of how education was financed and managed in France, Britain, Germany, Japan or the United States was superficial. What they knew of how skills were provided, how standards were maintained, how the sector was financed, how institutions were governed, how curriculum was designed, how institutions adjust to shifts in the labor market, their understanding was determined by stereotype and naivete. Newcomers were on both sides of the table.

Keywords: Eastern Europe, political transition, Soviet education, comparative education, politics of education

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I. First relationships with Soviet Educators.

From 1983–1989 I was a Division Chief for Education and Training Design in the Economic Development Institute at the World Bank. Developing countries were demanding assistance for textbooks. Textbook investments were rapidly becoming a major part of the World Bank’s education portfolio so we wanted to sponsor policy discussions on the textbook industry. We cooperated with an institute in Budapest, as the site for the week-long seminar. The institute invited Victor Firsov, a Russian mathematics educator from the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. Victor and I became fast friends and we remained friends until his death a decade later. Among the many things he and I discussed was the rationale for having private suppliers of textbooks instead of having textbooks designed and manufactured by the Ministry of Education. I had been working on textbook issues in a dozen countries and I described for him how textbook industry worked in France, Japan, Germany, the U.S., in which there were no occasions in which a Ministry of Education carried out the functions of a manufacturer. I found Victor to be remarkably open to new ideas, innovative and creatively provocative. In the beginning however Victor had no idea about the World Bank. I remember spending hours with him in Budapest trying to explain the origins and workings of my organization. He returned to Moscow and described our meetings with his friend Vladimir Shadrikov, then the Minister of Education, and that began my professional linkage to Russia.

Following the Budapest seminar, I received an invitation to visit the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. But the USSR was not a member of the World Bank and therefore contact from me could not be on an official basis. On the other hand, I had work to do in East Asia and I discovered that the cost of a return flight through Moscow was about the same as a flight across the Pacific. Since some flights stopped in Moscow anyway I thought I might take a two-day holiday and meet with Professor Shadrikov and Victor Firsov on the way back from working in Asia. They agreed.

The next thing I knew I was in the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences and allowed to discuss problems of education with anyone I wished to see. After one particularly insightful conversation, Professor Shadrikov asked if I would agree to address the USSR Presidium. I was allowed 15 minutes. I described the World Bank, the sectors in which it was involved, the rate of interest, the numbers of countries which were members and the tiny sector of education in which I was working. I was nervous because I thought I may have over-stepped the bounds of World Bank diplomacy, given that the USSR was not even a member. No one in the Bank noticed, but in Russia the reaction was quite warm. I was

11 In this first conversation Professor Shadrikov described a ‘voucher system’ which he intended to put into place throughout the USSR. I had studied voucher systems but what he described to me was unique. It included: the division of the voucher (per student funding) between the national government, the regional government and the parent. The parents’ portion would rise as a child got older and would be fungible. Parents could put their vouchers together as a group and do anything they wished --- fix the school roof, hire a new English teacher, teach ballet. I later described this system to a meeting of senior officials at a meeting on education finance in Oxford. A description can be found here (Heyneman, 1991).
told that my 15-minute presentation was seen on television throughout the USSR. Several years later, I would meet a director of education in an isolated oblast in Siberia and he would say “I know who you are. We saw you on television”. Those two or three days in Moscow constituted the beginning of a strong, often combative, but thoroughly respectful relationship. I loved the exchange of views. We argued a lot, but always with respect because we learned so much from one another.

In 1988 I transferred to being a division chief for the Middle East and North Africa Region. A year later the Berlin wall came down. The USSR began to collapse in July, 1991 and was formally dissolved in December, 1991. By December all 15 republics and declared their independence. Including those in Eastern and Central Europe, 26 new countries asked to join the World Bank. I was asked to make original contact with three of them: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. On that first visit to those countries I asked for help with interpreters from the Russian Academy of Education (the old USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences). I knew them well and we liked each other enormously. After that trip I was transferred within the World Bank from being a division chief in the Middle East and North Africa Region to be the Chief of Education, Health and Social Assistance for the 26 countries of the new Europe and Central Asia region. That was in 1991.

My first objective was to make contact with each of the ministers of education. Since the World Bank placed priorities on other sectors, there were no resources to make contacts individually. However, with the generous support of the government of the Netherlands, and the Minister of Education (Jo Ritzen), a meeting of education and finance ministers was held in a rural chateau on the Dutch coast in 1991. I was asked to make a 20-minute presentation to the ministers. That speech laid out what I believed were the major challenges to any nation making the transition from a party/state, (e.g. the production of textbooks outside of the Ministry of Education, the de-linking of higher education from sector ministries, the initiation of standardized achievement testing etc.). These remarks later appeared in several places and languages (Heyneman, 1994a; 1994b; 1994c) and became generalized to being education ethos for the region generally. Twenty years later a retrospective appeared which attempted to weigh the degree to which the early assessment proved prescient (Heyneman, 2010; forthcoming).

After that meeting I asked permission to work on education in the Russian Federation. That work commenced in 1992 and was completed in 1994. The report was published in 1995 (World Bank, 1995). I used those whom I originally met at the USSR academy of Pedagogical Sciences to assist me with the logistics of that study.
II. The most surprising or shocking thing about Soviet education

There were many shocking things — not all of them bad. I was shocked by some very good things which I have tried to recommend to other countries, including my own. Here is a list of both ‘bad’ shocks and ‘good’ shocks.12

‘Good’ Shocks (things which deeply impressed me about Soviet Education)

Creative experiments in public policy (e.g. voucher system mentioned above).

– Creative pedagogy and educational philosophies in kindergartens.
– Espirit d’corps among teachers — willing to sacrifice even in times of personal hardship.
– Cross-age social cohesion within schools because of not being segregated by age group.
– Social protection within schools because of having health and welfare service personnel on site and considered to be a normal part of the education administration.13

‘Bad’ Shocks (things which deeply disturbed me about Soviet Education)

– Scientific pedagogy as though there was a single approach.14
– The division of the economy into ‘sectors’ and the control of schools and universities by sectors.15

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12 These are described in more detail here: (Heyneman, 1995a; 1997a; 1997b; 1997v; 1998; 2000).

13 The merging different professions for the protection of children caused a brief but dangerous misunderstanding within the Bank. Country economists discovered the pupil/staff ratios to be drastically different from the typical OECD country. They assumed that all education ministry staff were teachers and that such a low pupil/teacher ratios could not be afforded. They concluded that teachers should be dismissed from employment. The first instance of this was in Hungary. Hungarian teachers threatened to strike. I was responsible for pointing out that education ministry staff in schools included dentists, doctors, nurses and social workers. In an OECD country these staff would have been counted as being under the Ministries of Health or of Social Protection. The confrontation was averted in Hungary when the Bank’s economists recognized the distinction. But the lesson was clear: the Bank (and other Western agencies) had to be aware that deep misunderstandings were likely. In many instances I, and other educators, acted as defenders of the education sector against other parts of the Bank.

14 The USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences had ‘proved’ that the ideal classroom should have 25 students regardless of the age, subject, or student learning ability. 25 students/class was the tripping point for a school to claim additional resources (26 students would justify an additional class). It was suggested that this was irrelevant to the science. I suspected however that there was a tendency to portray ‘science’ as the reason for making an administrative decision.

15 We found this to be bizarre. One example: a minister of education from the USSR visited the U.S. for the first time and had a meeting with the Secretary of Education Richard Riley. During that meeting he offered to sell pencils to the United States education system. He had no idea that a Ministry of Education outside of the USSR did not manufacture pencils.
The ‘ownership’ of vocational schools by a state owned enterprise.\textsuperscript{16}

The absence of education statistics available neither to educational managers or to the public.\textsuperscript{17}

The poverty of the typical library, science laboratories and the reliance on a textbook for teaching subject matter.\textsuperscript{18}

The mistrust of government statistics and the total disdain for courses or professions associated with Marxism/Leninism.\textsuperscript{19}

The lack of academic freedom in universities. Library books had to be stamped with the mark of having passed censorship.\textsuperscript{20}

The division of programs into a myriad number of obscure specializations. In vocational education there were hundreds. Training to sell shoes was treated differently from training to sell dresses or towels and it was assumed that an employee could not easily shift to a position which required a different training.\textsuperscript{21}

The term ‘engineering’. Over 60\% of the graduates from higher education in the USSR considered themselves to be engineers. A comparable figure for Germany

\textsuperscript{16}This made curriculum design a simple exercise by comparison to an OECD country where a curriculum had to prepare a student in a wide latitude of skills across multiple sectors to be applied in jobs across widely distributed employers (Heyneman, 1997c).

\textsuperscript{17}Statistics were kept by Goskumstat and were not shared with the Ministry of Education. This included statistics on education finance and expenditures. No educational manager in the USSR could track his budget or re-allocate a budget outside of rigidly enforces expenditure categories. Efficiency gains were impossible without available statistics on costs. Universities and university programs were a state secret. This shocked and frustrated me. On one occasion I was waiting for a meeting in the lobby of the Ministry of Education in Moscow. The room was full of souvenirs left by visiting education delegations from other countries. On the shelf was a book given to the Ministry of Education by the Chinese Ministry of Education. It contained a list of all universities in China, a list of the programs, departments and addresses where someone might inquire for more information. It was in Chinese, Russian and English. I stole the book and later that evening took it with me to the home of the minister of education where I had been invited for dinner. Before dinner I asked for a minute of his time alone. I gave him the book which I had taken from the Ministry and said: see “China has it.” A month later, back in Washington, a package was delivered to me from the Russian embassy. It was a book in Russian and English listing every university in the country. There was a handwritten message to me written by the minister: To Steve Heyneman: Thanks. Signed by the Minister of Education, Russian Federation.

\textsuperscript{18}A typical secondary school in an OECD country would have a more extensive library than the typical university in the USSR.

\textsuperscript{19}I once asked a Minister of Education about the profession of his son. I was told that he was an historian. Modern history, I inquired? Oh no! I was told, he specializes in the origins of man (what OECD universities label as Physical Anthropology). It was then explained that there was no prestige in modern history because it was assumed to be based on ideology not science.

\textsuperscript{20}One disgusted rector showed me a priceless ancient Russian text where a censor has placed his stamp right over the main page, essentially ruining the document. It was shown to me as an example of the intellectual brutality of the government.

\textsuperscript{21}A typical vocational or technical school might offer over 300 ‘specializations’; one in Germany would offer about 16.
was about 20% and for the U.S., about 8%. Also, engineering goals were to train how to make a product correctly whereas the goals of an engineering curriculum in OECD universities was to train how to make a product correctly within the constraints of price and environmental standards.

The lack of progress in advancing the working classes in higher education. It turns out that the portion of university students from working class backgrounds was no higher in the USSR than in OECD countries. University students from professional backgrounds were over represented by 2.4 times in 1939 and by 2.1 times in 1970. University students with proletarian backgrounds were over-represented by 10% after quotas had taken effect, but by 1964 they were underrepresented by 35%.22

One significant problem which was overlooked in this early work, was that of education corruption. I first noticed the gap a few years later when stories of bribery for university admissions began to circulate. Eventually education corruption and the consequent damage to a nation’s social cohesion became all consuming and a primary focus (Heyneman, 2002/3; 2004a; 2004b; 2007; 2009; 2010; 2011; Heyneman, Anderson and Nuraliva, 2008; Heyneman, Lesko and Bastedo, 2007; Heyneman and Skinner, 2014; Silova, Johnson and Heyneman, 2007).

### III. Personal Position

From 1991 to 1998 I was division chief in charge of Education, Health and Social Protection in the Technical Department of the Europe and Central Asia Region of the World Bank. The region was divided into two categories of functions: lending and policy. There were three country departments in charge of lending and each with an education, health and social protection division. The function of my department and my division was to do the analytic work needed for lending operations to take place. We had no authority to sign lending agreements, that was done within the three country departments. But lending could not occur without a consensus between the country department and the technical department on the purposes and design of an operation. Once agreement was reached an operation needed then to be cleared by the regional Chief Economist and the regional Vice President.

Many ask whether there was there any clear or common vision at the Bank’s senior management on how to deal with Russia? Was there any difference between programs and

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22 Comparisons of the portion of working class or professional students among a student population are notoriously difficult because occupations have different prestige in different countries and occupational prestige changes over time. University students from professional backgrounds were 3.1 times over-represented in the U.S. in 1927 and 2.5 times over-represented in 1957. In France, university students from professional backgrounds were over-represented by 2.8 times in 1950 and by 2.4 times in 1965. In the UK students from professional backgrounds were 2.6 times over-represented in 1961 and by 2.4 times in 1979. In Japan students from professional backgrounds were over-represented 2.4 times in 1953 and 1.8 times in 1968. In Hungary they were over-represented by 3.1 times in 1961 and by 3.2 times in 1964. (Anderson, 1983, Table 6.1).
If the question of a 'common vision' applies only to education, then the answer is no. There was no clear vision among the Bank senior management. They did not care about education. They had too many other more serious concerns. This was true of most countries in the region, including Russia. Education was last on their list of priorities. Sector strategy in education was developed from papers referred to in this note and gradually over time with sector work associated with a few loans. But the lending for education never amounted to much in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region. At one time there were more loans for education in a single country (Brazil) than for the 26 countries of ECA.23

If the question applies to issues other than education, then the answer is yes. Russia was deeply important, so important in fact that at one stage requests for action were received by the regional Vice President directly from the White House. If the question concerns the nature of the vision, then it is time dependent. The Chief Economist at the beginning of the transition was trained by Milton Friedman. His relationship with the Russian Minister of Finance was close. The GDP was in rapid decline (Heyneman, 1994, p. 11). The population was elderly, and pensions had collapsed. Rates of poverty were rapidly climbing. Nuclear power plants were in danger of leakage. Coal mines were bankrupt. Even gold and petroleum mining were unprofitable. Above the arctic circle they were opened in conjunction with the establishment of artificial cities instead (as in OECD countries) of flying workers in and out from residences further south. Agricultural land and industry were privatized. Collective farms were abandoned. Traditional trade relationships had broken down. Cotton from Uzbekistan could no longer be imported to the mills located in Ukraine; the price of petroleum from Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan began to reflect a world price, hence suddenly expensive to all others. The strategy was to break the Soviet traditions quickly (privatization of property and industry, free up labor markets, protect the environment, save pensions through privatization etc.). Nevertheless over time and when corruption scandals over the monopolization of property vouchers become common, strategy changed, became more nuanced, and more reflective.

I left the Bank in 1998 to take a position as vice president for International Affairs in a consulting firm and lost touch with the day-to-day operations in Russia. In Between 1993 and 1995 I worked in Russia about 6 - 7 times/year. I led a team of educators and economists, which had been offered to the Bank for free since the ECA region had insufficient internal resources to sponsor education sector work. I had to beg for assistance. Assistance was received from France, Finland, Britain, and the Netherlands. Assistance was 'in kind', so the experts from those countries were paid by those countries.

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23 At one point the chief economist for the ECA region announced that a (secret) proposal had been made to the Asian Development Bank. He said the ADB should handle education and the World Bank would handle Social Protection. This proposal received a 'spirited rejection' from myself and the operational division chiefs in charge of education in the ECA region.
Their assistance was not fungible so I could not hire experts from countries other than the country which offered the assistance.

I am sometimes asked whether the education work of the Bank was coordinated with other organizations, whether experts other than World Bank staff participated in the Bank’s field work on education in the Russian Federation, and whether the final reports represented the views of other organizations and non-Bank education experts. I tried to consult with every organization working on education in Russia at that time. This included: The European Training Foundation, the European Union, UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF, OSI and many bilateral agencies – British, Finnish, French, German, Swedish, Dutch, Canadian and American. But my team took full control over the content of the work and the report.

With respect to education work on the Russian Federation, we had experts from outside of the Bank from Ukraine, Finland, Russia, France, Britain, and the Netherlands. The Bank staff who were working on Russian education came from the U.S. (me), France and Korea. From the beginning I insisted on two things: (I.) that we would make no recommendation whose principle had been established within one country alone; all ideas had to have precedent in multiple (OECD) country contexts. In addition, (II.) we would make no recommendation which was not approved by all us. I am proud to say that we adhered to these two principles.

Our report recommended loans to improve primary and secondary education, textbooks, examinations and higher education. There were ideas for eight education projects. I then left the department and had no opportunity to work on the development of lending. Sometimes I am asked what were the Bank’s main accomplishments in the area of Russian education. I can respond to this question only about the analytic work. I cannot answer this question with respect to World Bank education loans. The analytic work which I directed helped familiarize senior Russian educators and administrators on the ingredients which would align their operations with those of the wider world outside of the former Soviet Union. This wider world is NOT just the West. The recommendations which we made helped Russia make the transition from the unsustainable structures established under the USSR to those of every other modern country.

Were there Russian educators and policy makers who were especially instrumental in terms of disseminating and adapting ideas stimulated by the World Bank analytic work? I do not know if it is fair to suggest that the following people were responsible for disseminating and adopting ideas of World Bank expert teams, what I can say is that we had superb dialogue with them. I would moreover consider them to be among the most thoughtful educators I have met in my experience in working in more than 65 countries. They would include: Vladimir Shadrikov, Victor Firsov, Victor Bolotov, Isk Frumin, and many many others.
Today some ask whether the Bank’s management forced local partners to follow a standard ‘menu’ of policy options also suggested for other developing countries. This is an interesting question since I was first to use the term ‘menu’ to describe the bank’s education policy in that era (Heyneman, 1995b). To be sure it was a time of feverish ideology because of the Chief Economist in the region and his long-standing connection with George Psacharopoulos the proponent of the ‘education policy menu’ based on a narrow interpretation of economic rate of return models. Personally I and Ralph Harbison, the Education Operations Division chief for Eastern and Central Europe, fought against the standard ideology.24 When I was replaced it was likely that the ideology was without as strong an opponent, and in the lending phase Russian education may have suffered from the effects of this menu (Heyneman, 2005; 2012).

It may be important to also mention that I was fired from the World Bank because of my objections to its education policy menu. I went on to do many enjoyable things as the Vice President for a consulting firm25 and between 2000 and 2015 as a tenured professor at the number one ranked graduate school of education in the United States. In the interim the Bank changed its views and no longer follows the short policy menu. I lost the battle but won the war. I am proud of what I did and have no regrets.

Some ask whether the policies suggested by the World Bank in the 1990’s can be characterized as ‘neo-liberal’. In terms of the recommendations in the Russia Education Report, the answer is no. I would argue that the recommendations were based on what was typical among OECD countries, and which any nation must consider to participate in a market economy based on the principles of open labor markets. All the nations needed a wide divergence of approved textbooks; all needed standardized examinations to guide entry into their universities; all need to free-up higher education institutions from the 21 sector ministries under which they had previously been controlled. In terms of what happened after the Russian Education Report was published I will leave it to others to decide. There may be no method to prove this, but I suspect that the strengths of the current Russian education system were more heavily influenced by the recommendations in the Russia Education Report than by the few lending operations which came later.

24 With respect to one proposed policy paper which used economic rates of return to limit lending to the education sector except primary education, there was a general revolt of education division chiefs. Of 26 division chief’s responsible for education, 20 signed the protest memorandum on February 2, 1995 asking that the paper not be sent to the Board. Two others agreed with the memorandum in principle but did not wish to sign, one objected to the memorandum, and three others could not be reached (Heyneman, 2005).

25 My two main clients were the Education Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey and the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) in London.
References


Abstract

For a long time Wolfgang Mitter was the co-editor of the handbook *Die Bildungssysteme Europas/The Education Systems of Europe*. Besides his formal co-editorship Wolfgang Mitter took actively part in the discussions about the conception of the book. One of the remaining methodological issues in these discussions has been: Is it possible and does it make sense to develop comparisons *stricto sensu* by analysing a series of education systems (area studies) of different countries? Can it create scientifically founded knowledge, which is more than a description? The paper refers to the discussions among the editors about this topic.

**Keywords:** Comparative education, European education, educational systems, research methodology

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I. The problem

Without any doubt, the question raised in the title of this paper would have been answered by Wolfgang Mitter in an affirmative way: The education systems of Europe are evidently a subject of Comparative Education. As a matter of fact, for long years, Wolfgang Mitter was co-editor of our handbook Die Bildungssysteme Europas/The Education Systems of Europe. But besides his formal co-editorship it is evident that Wolfgang Mitter took actively part in the discussions about the conception of this book (cf. Mitter 2002; Mitter 2007). One of the remaining methodological issues in these discussions has been: Is it possible and makes it sense to develop comparisons stricto sensu by analysing a series of education systems (area studies) of different countries? Can it create scientifically founded knowledge, which is more than a description? The following exposition refers to the discussions among the editors about this topic (cf. for the following also Horner/Döbert, 2007 and Horner, 2010).

What could be the sustainable cognitive interest of such comparisons of the education systems, just among European countries? If we want to answer to this question it will be necessary to explain at first a certain number of key concepts.

II. Education as a paradox

Education seems to be a paradoxical phenomenon. On the one hand, education is universal: as a matter of fact, since the period of Enlightenment in the end of the 18th century, it has been declared universal good of the whole humanity, a good that must be available for everybody. Moreover, historical educational research inspired by the ideas of world system theory, told us that since this historical period public education took even universal traits in its main structures (it became compulsory state education, given by professional teachers in classrooms... cf. Adick, 1992). However, on the other hand, the fact that education was organised or at least controlled by the state was in the same time the beginning of an opposite characteristic of education: education given by educational institutions organized or controlled by the state became a mean of nation building, a mean of creating national identity. By this double evolution, education has two opposite meanings: education as enlightenment, education as the light of reason shining for everybody, is opposed to education as a more or less nationalist concept, a national
feature of educating which excludes all the other national features – education is a feature of a particular nation state.

The dialectical tension between the universal and the particular is one of the important motives which make the interest of comparing European education systems. One of the central issues of the numerous area studies presented in the handbook is precisely to display the different relationships between universal values and the research for national identity in the different European countries.

III. The functions of comparison

If we try to approach from this background the question what could be the cognitive interest of comparing stricto sensu European education systems, it would be useful to ask what could be the possible functions of comparison (in education or in social sciences in general). The answer to this question has to go back to our distinction of four functions of systematic comparison situated on the axes of coordinates between the poles ‘theoretical versus practical interest’ and ‘research of the universal versus research of the particular’, distinction which I developed more explicitly in my contribution to the Festschrift for Wolfgang Mitter (cf. Horner, 1997, p. 70ss.). I will try to summarize the essentials.

The four functions are the idiographic, the meliorist, the evolutionist, and the experimental function. The purpose of the idiographic function (in the intersection of theoretical cognitive interest and the research of the particular) is to work out the particularities, the unique traits of educational phenomena in a system. Comparative research is interested in things that render an educational system different from all the others. This search for particularities has its complementary side in the search for common features. The distinction between what is particular and what is common is the elementary logical action in comparative research. At the centre of this research activity there is an interest in individual phenomena.

The meliorist function does share the same interest in the individual traits of educational phenomena. However, they are selected in accordance with their supposed usefulness in order to ‘ameliorate’ other systems. As it is not possible to ‘import’ whole education systems, this research of individual characteristics is typical for the meliorist function. The guiding question of the meliorist function in comparative education would be: what special features of an educational system can be used for enhancing another system? However, it is true that some methodologists of comparative education since the time of Michael Sadler at the very beginning of the twentieth century are reluctant to use this function. They deny that it is logically possible to transfer elements which represent a unique configuration of phenomena to another system that does not have this configuration. Nevertheless this pragmatic function of comparative education never lost its significance. On the one hand, the logical problem may be resolved by pointing out the structural similarity between the systems; on the other hand, legitimated by the modern term of ‘best practice’, the meliorist function of educational comparisons has regained its
importance to shape and to justify educational policy making (in particular during the
debates after the PISA studies). This political function of comparative education is
legitimate if there is methodological control ensuring that the imported elements of ‘best
practice’ may have really the same function as in their original context, i.e. that there exist
structural analogies in sufficient number.

The *evolutionist* function is searching for common trends in the development of
educational systems. These common trends are considered mostly in a practical political
perspective: in educational policy it may be important not to miss the trend of the
evolution in order to be on the ‘right path’. One of the most impressive examples for the
practical use of the evolutionist function is the so-called Bologna process, with its aim to
create a common European (or rather worldwide) space of higher education by adopting
a common structure of university studies. The evolutionist function has in itself an
inherent danger: namely that in a hidden normative understanding the most developed
system (developed in a certain direction) might serve as a model while the others have to
follow it. For the rest there is a special type of evolutionist thinking, the world-system
theory and its application to the evolution of schooling (the universalization of schooling,
which may be seen either in a more theoretical or in a more political way) (cf. Adick,

The *experimental* function of comparative education, in the venerable tradition of Emile
Durkheim, considers the comparison of systems as equivalent to an experiment in
(natural) sciences. As in social sciences the creation of experimental situations by
isolating variables is hardly possible, social systems constitute the equivalent of
experimental groups bearing different variables.

We shall come back to this model later.

**IV. Europe as an object of investigation**

But what are the reasons with regard to content to put just of all things European
education systems in the focal point of the investigation? We already mentioned that the
dialectical tension between the universal and the particular constitute a peculiarity of
European education which sets it apart from other geographical contexts.

And even more: it is not only the general interest in the tension between the universal and
the particular on an abstract level. The interest may be focused on the political level of
European integration. The investigation about European education systems offers the
opportunity beyond the official interdictions of all harmonisations of structures and
content of education prescribed by EU legislation to discover the growing common
European features besides the remaining national peculiarities. By this we may moot at
least indirectly an indicator for the state of European integration. To summarize the
problem: What is the state of the famous objective ‘unity in diversity’?
The keyword ‘European integration’ refers also to a special European aspect, the political transformation of post-communist Central and Eastern European societies. Since the 1990s these countries developed a great political and social dynamic that led for a certain number of these states to EU membership, for others at least to a rapprochement to the EU. Such a political development seems to be a unique feature of Europe. The dynamic of transformation and integration being evidently in close interaction with the education systems of these countries, the opportunity of comparative examination constitutes an important interest of the Intra-European comparison.

Beyond all vast visions of European policy making, the pragmatic interest of comparative analysis of European education systems is the simple necessity for all people involved in educational issues to inform themselves rapidly and reliably about the characteristics of the education systems of other countries. Such an opportunity particularly important in the PISA era is given by the handbook. Often people regret that international large scale assessments like PISA give only little information about the institutional frame of the education systems concerned. Whereas in the conception of the handbook, analysis of education systems means essentially exploration of the system’s environment. The notion of system used in our handbook is to be understood in a wide sense given by systems theory. This means that it encompasses not only the structural features of education but also the links of the education system to its environment.

V. The methodology of investigation and presentation

This concept of system and in particular the requirement to display the dialectical relationship of integration and diversity, of the national and the universal, necessitates a particular structure of the investigation. Our approach requires that the area studies must have the same structure oriented more by functional issues than by formal criteria. By this it will be possible to read the same chapter of several country reports in parallel.

Based on the concept of system presented above it is the education system and not only the school system which constitutes our subject of investigation. By this we accommodate the fact that the clear-cut delimitations between the different levels of education beyond compulsory education are going to lose their significance. Instead of separate institutions we find today more and more simple programs of studies (even modules) which gain their own weight and which are often offered without reference to school forms or formal levels of education. By the inclusion of vocational and higher education in the investigation we wanted to stress the multiple relations of the different sub-systems of the education system among themselves and with their societal environment. Last not least we had to bear in mind that a strict separation between institutions of general education and those of vocational education is irrelevant in many countries.
VI. The structure of the area studies

In order to make these comparisons possible, the different area studies follow a common schedule. This common schedule was given to the authors in the form of guidelines (how to write the article, what to describe, how to link the information) and constitutes the methodological heart of the whole concept. The quality of the area studies and the possibility to make explicit comparisons is dependent on the degree to which the authors have respected these guidelines. The schedule follows the principle of the problem approach in comparative education (see e.g. Holmes, 1965).

The latest version of this common schedule has five main chapters giving a common structure to all country studies. After the explications given above it is evident that the logic of this structure is following rather functional issues than a formal classification.

1. History and Social Parameters of the Education System
2. Fundamentals, Organization and Governance of the Education System
3. Overview of the Structure of the Education System
4. Developments in the Current School System
5. New Developments

The historical questions try to draw the lines of the development of the school systems by embedding this development in the particular historical and cultural context which form the specific ‘philosophy’ of a given education system. Selection criteria of the basic points in history should be the relevance of these phenomena for the future function of the education system.

Finally in the first chapter the description of the social and cultural parameters of the education system and its development are of great importance. The explanation of the socio-cultural context has as its first objective the educational aims and the general function given to schools. However, these functions receive their significance only in the light of the socio-economic context in which a school works, the social structure of the student population, or the polarity of integration and segregation by the school etc. In this connection information about the recent ethnic composition (number of migrants...) of the school population is gathered. Important parts of the analytical description of the social parameters are indications about the relationship between urban and rural population concerning schooling conditions. Topics of special relevance in this chapter are the social position of the main actors of the school system, that is, the teachers, but also the role of the correspondent partners of the school, the families and their relationship to the school.

The second chapter is an analytical description of the essential aspects of the legal frame of schooling, school organisation and governance including the description of the guiding principles of educational policy, central questions of the socio-political function of the school (integration versus segregation). The legal fundamentals include the regulation of the schooling process by different actors on the different levels of the school, the
responsibility for curricula and standards, questions of financing and the division of tasks between public and private responsibility. Finally a particular question is a problem which rose in many countries after the PISA-studies: the problem of standardizing educational outcomes and the question of quality management and supporting systems, which should assure that these standards are really attained by all students. Therefore the problems listed in this chapter are not restricted to the ‘classical’ questions of comparative education (how are schools elsewhere? Why they are how they are?). The problems in the second chapter are also inspired by the results of the PISA-studies and the supposed factors of success in schooling linked with school organization.

It is only after these relatively detailed descriptions of the different patterns of governance and organisation of educational institutions that the third chapter examines systematically the structures of the different school systems, beginning by early childhood education. The core of the description is compulsory, secondary and post-secondary education. Higher Education is less pointed out. The description follows the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) of the UNESCO, which offers an authentic frame for the classification of the levels of education in the different countries.

The central part of each country analysis is a description of the functioning of the current school system at all its levels from pre-primary to post-secondary and tertiary education. Even the more descriptive part of the country study is structured according to the problem approach. Such problems may be the question of comprehensive against segregating structures of secondary schools, the structure of compulsory education as a whole (common school or two different levels), the problem of post-compulsory secondary education and its curriculum, the problem of the relationship between general and vocational education, and the problem of simple or double qualification in upper-secondary education (see also Mitter, 1994). Even in this rather descriptive core of the area studies the authors were asked to transcend a pure descriptive approach and come to an analytical presentation of issues by picking out problems found in the different levels of education. By structuring the analyses in this manner, it is possible to follow these problems in several countries or to read the same chapter ‘across’ a number of countries.

This centring on issues instead of structures is the main character of the fourth chapter which should discuss systematically actual problem areas in their context. We supposed that such problem areas could be: questions of transition between school levels (selective/non selective transition), questions of examinations and tests. Measures of quality assessment and improvement are picked out as a central theme beginning with traditional class inspections and going up to large-scale-assessments. Particular problems in some countries may be violence in schools, dropouts, the integration of children with migration background etc.

Naturally, the scheme given to the authors had to be adapted to the actual situations of the different countries. Thus, e.g. the separation of primary and lower-secondary
education is not relevant in all countries. The school systems in the Nordic countries or those in some Eastern European countries have a unique school type for the whole period of compulsory education. On the other hand, separate schools for special education do not exist everywhere. Finally, every country analysis ends with a synthesis of the current problems and discussions of the school system, and an outlook on the perspectives of its development.

VII. The functional scheme and the handbook

The elaboration of the problem areas which are the main characteristic of the handbook brings us back to the question raised at the beginning: can a reference book, composed primarily of area studies be an object of comparative research stricto sensu? If we go back to our scheme describing the four functions of comparison, we may realise that the handbook may serve all four functions, even if some of them are closer to the book's heart whereas others are of minor importance. The handbook's very centre of interest is without any doubt the idiographic function. The country analyses' first purpose is to offer reliable knowledge about the particular traits of European education systems. These idiographies may be of interest to both European and non-European readers. European readers may be interested in the situation of other European countries, not only in their immediate vicinity, but also those further away. We may remember that the slogan of the European Union ‘Unity in Diversity’ has, in terms of educational matters, its roots in the nineteenth century, when one of the forefathers of comparative education, the educationist Friedrich Thiersch, wrote as a result of his fact-finding visits to other European countries that the recognition of the profound unity of European Education is only possible by the differentiated knowledge of their particular traits (quoted after Horner, 1997, p. 79). On the other hand, the wide inclusive notion of Europe (including e.g. the Caucasian countries) guiding the composition of the handbook (cf. Mitter, 2002; 2007) can be useful for certain groupings of the countries: such groups may be the Western European ‘core members’ of the European Union, the new member states in Central and Eastern Europe, the Nordic states, or the south-eastern European countries etc.

Our ‘problem approach’, which formed the structuring principle of the country studies, already transcends the simple idiographic function and opens up the investigation for other interests. We may ask, for instance, if it is possible to find out a common model for the groups of countries mentioned above. Finally, it may be interesting to examine to which extent there is such a thing as a European model of education: Is it possible to define European standards in the field of education? Are there educational structures or curriculum elements which are not compatible with a European model? And: are there significant differences between the education systems of EU member states and those of other European countries (like the new member candidates)? Is it necessary that the candidates make at first their education system ‘compatible’ with existing European norms?
Readers outside of Europe may in a similar way ask what distinguishes European education from their own. Is there really a European model different from that of Asia or America? The outlook of Wolfgang Mitter (2002; 2007) traces some elements of answers to these questions. However, neither this methodological introduction nor the outlook of Wolfgang Mitter may serve as substitutes for explicit comparisons. Rather, they are guidelines and suggestions on how to pursue such questions. The essential comparative work has to be made by the readers themselves. The country studies can only give the necessary data.

At a first glance, the great number of countries embraced may exclude the meliorist function, as the great diversity may rather lead to confusion. However, if we take the example of the PISA studies, European countries appear both at the top and at the bottom of the ranking. Therefore, the question in what they differ is an obvious one to ask. In particular, the discussions in Germany, where the shock of the PISA results was particularly deep, showed that the question resulting from these differences was not less obvious: what may the underachievers learn from the best performing ones in order to improve their results? What may be the key to their success at the system level? It is true that it is only the system level which is outlined in the handbook, even if the notion of ‘system’ as it is used here includes elements of its internal functioning.

The evolutionist function is less evident, but may be deduced from a couple of country studies, in particular in the outlook of Wolfgang Mitter (2002; 2007), where this view of the problems dominates. One can ask to which extent European education develops toward a world model of universal schooling or to which extent it preserves specific European traits. In this sense, the handbook may serve as a data collection to scrutinize the theory of universal schooling within the world system theory. We have already noticed that the Bologna process of higher education may be an example of such an ‘evolutionary’ process: nearly all European countries are adapting their structure of tertiary education to the two-level model, consisting of a BA and a MA, which is, strictly speaking, a worldwide model. Is there perhaps a hidden ‘Bologna process’ underway in the field of school education?

The remarks made for the different functions and the explanation of the ‘problem approach’ show that even the application of the experimental function of the comparison is possible, provided the reader has a relevant question. As an example, let us consider the transformation countries in Central and Eastern Europe (cf. Horner, 2003). Is it possible to distil a common model of the transformation of educational systems within a theory of social transformation? The juxtaposition of the transformation countries according to the ‘most similar systems approach’ in comparative social research (Przeworski/Teune, 1970, p. 32ff.) may allow us to isolate common factors, which are first elements of a classification model of transforming post-socialist education systems.
In sum, we can emphasize that the handbook has been designed in order to assemble a broad range of structured problem-oriented data that permits a multifunctional use in comparative research. It is the task of the reader to discover and to use these possibilities.

Therefore we may answer to the title question in an affirmative way, too.

References


Thematic Article

A lifespan and beyond
– Essay in honor of Wolfgang Mitter

Botho von Kopp 28

Abstract

The essay traces some features of change in general, and specifically its acceleration and possible steerability but also the risk of protracted liminality. Education, and, facing ongoing globalization, especially comparative education, plays a paramount role to cope with change and its challenges. The dialectics of change are most likely not following the nice idea of progressing rational self-manifestation of the absolute idea in an orderly triad movement, but can take surprising twists and turns, and the final round is open. Nor is education automatically contributing to create a better world. Some irritating developments in today’s society and in academia might be omens of coming problematic divides.

Keywords: modernity, globalization, liminality, uncertainty, comparative education

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I. Introductory remarks

Wolfgang Mitter was not only my mentor in the field of comparative education science but also an elder friend. As the head of department for International and Comparative Education he invited me in 1974 to collaborate with him in his team in the German Institute for Comparative Educational Research in Frankfurt which he later on headed as director for many years. He encouraged me, initially a graduate of linguistic and literature studies, to immerse into the field of comparative education. For him the fundament of the discipline was a deep interest in the cultural, political and economic context of education theory and praxis, based on empirical data and intercultural comparison as a method of gaining new knowledge. This approach corresponded fully with my own research intentions and my personal and my academic background, and I felt immediately comfortable with it. With gratitude and a sense of delight I remember so many occasions of extensive and deep discussions be it in the whole research group, be it in more personal meetings and get togethers with Wolfgang Mitter.

Commemorating Wolfgang Mitter and the time of common research, I realize the changes that happened in society and education research over the years. Change in society and even in technology was somewhat slower than today. In the post-war period Europe rather tried to recover, and the West-German political and social climate for many years was typically represented by the slogan of Christian Democratic Union: “no experiments!” The students of the youth movements in the late 1960ies and 1970ies shouted revolutionary slogans, but they lastly ended up in a long march through the institutions. They were often successful in their personal careers, but certainly not forwarding revolution. The collapse of the Communist bloc, a really tremendous and surprising event in the moment when it happened, was at the first glance not a real substantial change. It simply brought the end to a long lasting antagonistic and static confrontation, and stood for the victory of the established Western democratic and capitalist system. This applies also for the educations system change. Eastern Germany copied the Western German model entirely. The education systems in Europe gradually developed into a system of common values and principles and tend – with different speed – towards standardization (Horner, Dobert, Reuter & von Kopp, 2015). This all is not to say that there were no changes at all, but probably the changes to come sooner or later will be more eruptive, deeper and wider ranging.

In the following I draw attention on some features and interpretations of change itself, and after that I will have a look at some trends which might be omens of greater changes to come. Observing a fast growing polarization in society, a rapid decline of public political language, a rapid disappearing of meaning and sloganization of terms like “critical thinking” and “tolerance”, I cannot but remember and admire, how tolerant and fair and critical was Wolfgang Mitter, and since his academic accomplishments were honored at many other occasions, I should like to stress here also these personal merits. It is not by chance that in his popular lectures he gave for students of Frankfurt University one could often find a majority of students with migration background. With their background they
were especially sensible for his noble and tolerant character being absolutely unable to discriminate someone for social background, race, religion or political convictions, being eager to learn from their experiences and contributions, open to critical thinking and always seeking to bridge differences without giving up his own convictions. I miss personally, but also in view of the present climate in society generally his generous and cosmopolitan and critical liberality.

II. Change in times of modernity

Nature and human society are constantly exposed to slower or faster change, affecting larger or smaller areas more or less radically. Change in itself as a neutral constant of life is not in itself problematic. But generally maladaptation to change results in serious problems. Change in our modernity has gained an unprecedented speed, and this speed – even a constant speeding up – seems to be a constituent character of modernity. It has delivered us many technical and cultural achievements we do not want to miss. On the other hand this progress is creating constantly more and more complex problems which are increasingly demanding material resources and brainpower. Thus progress is heading towards a drastically declining productivity of economic, sociocultural and infrastructural complexity and thus a declining of marginal returns (Tainter, 1988). Generally “in its neoliberal form, its ideological self-presentation is one of liberating the forces of creative destruction, setting free ever-accelerating technological and social innovations” (Williams & Srnicek, 2013). This neo liberalism is based on the belief in an “invisible hand”, assuming that in the end the anonymous self-steering forces solve the problems of the present civilization. However, “in this visioning of capital, the human can eventually be discarded as mere drag to an abstract planetary intelligence rapidly constructing itself from the bricolaged fragments of former civilisations” (ibid.).

The “invisible hand” of speeded up neo-liberal modernization was analyzed and challenged recently in a radically critical leftist “manifesto for an accelerationist politics” (ibid.). Diagnosing the notorious risks of our modernity, the “breakdown of the planetary climatic system... terminal resource depletion... collapsing economic paradigms... and new hot and cold wars” cannot be handled with the hitherto used instruments of steering and governance: “In contrast to these ever-accelerating catastrophes, today's politics is beset by an inability to generate the new ideas and modes of organization necessary to transform our societies to confront and resolve the coming annihilations. While crisis gathers force and speed, politics withers and retreats. In this paralysis of the political imaginary, the future has been cancelled” (ibid). Acceleration in the sense of the manifesto, is not merely a speeding up: “The process of liberation can only occur by accelerating capitalism's development, without however (and this is important) confusing acceleration with speed: acceleration here operates as an engine, as an experimental process of discovery and creation, within the space of the possibilities emanating from capitalism itself” (Negri, 2014).
The manifesto’s vision of “acceleration” is goal-oriented, future-oriented, knowledge-oriented and organization-oriented. The latter aspect of organization, power and governance tries to amalgamate classical socialist visions of planning with the economic and emancipatory potential of capitalism, but at the same time promises to evade the notorious antiproductive and antidemocratic legacy of historic socialist models. The envisioned organizational form of acceleration has nothing to do with the new leftist refusal of vertical structures and the philosophy of a radical horizontalism: “The fetishisation of openness, horizontality, and inclusion of much of today’s ‘radical’ left set the stage for ineffectiveness... We need to posit a collectively controlled legitimate vertical authority in addition to distributed horizontal forms of sociality, to avoid becoming the slaves of either a tyrannical totalitarian centralism or a capricious emergent order beyond our control. The command of The Plan must be married to the improvised order of The Network” (Williams & Srnicek, 2013).

The accelerationist project, planning to use the potential of liberating cognitive power and its productive forces, relies categorically on education and the new kind of highly educated specialists: it “insists on the material and technical nature of a reappropriation of fixed capital understood as tangible, in which productive quantification, economic modeling, big data analysis, abstract cognitive models, etc., are appropriated through education, and through the scientific re-elaboration of these forms by worker-subjects” (Negri, 2014). Whatever we think about the details of the outlined neo-Marxist “manifesto”, it is clearly breaking open the crustifications of many prevalent boring and self-circling mainstream debates about the reasons of crisis and the possible or necessary societal change, and at the same time it is linked with the historical core legacy of the socialist project, which after the end of Cold war has repeatedly been declared to be dead.

Interestingly, in its reliance on technological progress, its general attitude towards civilizational change as an actively steerable undertaking and a general positive notion of technology and future, the “manifesto” approximates – or rather is an answer to – tendencies we can find among today’s supercapitalists and their prophets from the Silicon Valley who boost the digital revolution, like Bill Gates, Ray Kurzweil and others. They apparently see themselves to be beyond the point of merely making more money, which does no longer give them any substantial added value. This added value they seek individually – and this point distinguishes them fundamentally from the neo-Marxist acceleration project – to influence the direction of technological and societal progress to some meaningful purpose. These activities in reality seem to be far more pretentious than what a headline recently called a “philanthropists race among billionaires” (Medick, 2015). In the contrary: “The masterminds of the Valley make no secret of their plans. They say completely openly: We want to shape the world according to our ideas. They are convinced that the technological revolutions in the past years were not more than an overture.” (Schulz, 2015.)

The neo-Marxists of the manifesto will probably have more problems with steering because they want to control capital and production, the Valley is the Capital and the
production. We thus see three relevant models towards future – not taking into account
the anti-technologists – which will certainly for the next time count on accelerated
technological progress: The neo-Marxists, the Valley capitalists, and the neo-liberal
believers in the invisible hand.

Whereas the neoliberals gate out planning and steering, the Manifesto and the Valley
visionaries tend to gate out the complexly layered psychology of society which
accumulated over time and as a system is rooted in structures and layers more or less
deeply hidden under the visible surface of cultures and civilizations. This psychology is
not easily “steerable”. The deeper structures accumulate the whole load of history, a
complex stock of old piled up experiences, manners and beliefs, values, knowledge, but
also collective nightmares, rites, and narratives. The upper levels generally feed in a more
erratic and more volatile way the visible side of change. They constantly interfere with
the surface processes, they trigger experiments and play with given ideas, practices and
solutions, discard old and create new ones, clean up, restore and change appearance and
images, perceptions, ideologies, and spirits of given civilizational periods. This
experimental and selective playing, some planned, some as trial and error activity, is
necessary in face of the need for society to constantly adapt to the challenges of a changing
world on the one hand and handling the huge overload of piled up complexity of the
society’s memory and to link it meaningfully to the cultural and technological changes on
the other hand.

Speaking about civilizational and cultural change, especially about rapid and dramatic or
revolutionary change, we incline to interpret it as something happening within a very
short time and all of a sudden. Very often this is not really the case. Outburst of change
can develop for a long time hidden in the deep structures similar to earthquakes, slowly
preparing “sudden” explosions. Even seemingly sudden societal change, such as
revolutions, may “mature” over longer periods of time, and in history deep changes
sometimes started in tiny contexts not expected to create substantial change, and some
great civilizations and empires took off from what were marginal peripheries on the
political and economic world map of the given time.

Great historical changes are labeled with various names and described with concepts such
as “gaps”, “divides”, “revolutions” etc. Alvin Toffler's description of the developing
modernity as “wave” for example, suggests a substantial hiatus which stands in a row with
the most basic civilizational transformations of history. As he sees it, today we face the
dawn of a third form of civilization which follows the first (agrarian) and the second
(industrial) ones (Toffler, 1980). Peter F. Drucker concentrates on more frequent, less
deep but nevertheless very dynamic “divides” and compares the present one with
transformations like the Renaissance, the invention of book printing, the First Industrial
Revolution etc.: “Every few hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp
transformation. We cross in... a ‘divide’. Within a few short decades, society rearranges
itself – its world view, its basic values; its social and political structure; its arts; its key
institutions” (Drucker, 1993, p. 1). Joseph Tainter studies the question why civilizations
collapse, and he applies a model of the growing costs of building complex systems which tend to accumulate to an unbearable level (Tainter, 1988).

Education as a system is involved intimately in the processes of civilization change. It acts, among others, in its own manner, as a link between the deep and the surface structures. It secures the dialogue and the intergenerational relative stability as well as hostility towards or acceptance and acceleration of innovation. Thus it contributes to the constant adaption as well on the personal as also on the collective levels of societies, and it secures a “dialogue” between those levels. Since large scale societies are generally unstable, at times less at times more, pedagogy as a system is particularly labile. But in traditional societies too, the ruptures between collective and personal transformations and transitions can come to surface, as is expressed in the often quoted outcry ascribed to Socrates: “The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize their teachers” (Bartleby).

In contrary, today, society seems to favor youth culture. The topic of the “white male”, especially he old one as being associated with political and economic power, as the image of an utmost reactionary attitude (and the evil in world history) was originally highly popular in Western gender studies, but has outgrown this discipline and has penetrated the common politically correct academic and non-academic discourse. Even in the context of the recent public immigration and refugee debate in Germany it became popular to picture critics of the governmental policy as the “angry old men” respectively the “enraged white-haired citizens” as the ambassadors of populistic and reactionary attitudes. The German journalist and honorary professor of philosophy Richard David Precht and the sociologist Harald Welzer thus consequently see the “refugee crisis” discussion as “dominated by elder intellectuals who fuel fear”, and they head their article with the slogan: “Youth to power” (Precht & Welzer, 2016).

### III. Liminality, incertainty, and Comparative Education

In much more traditional and small-scale societies than those of the Greece at the time of Socrates, we do not find similarly established education, but of course transfer of knowledge, skills, narratives and belief from one generation to the next in various forms. Although not being something like “systems of education”, transmission proceeds in situationally varying and open, but also in strictly constructed patterns. Certain transitions in the course of life must be executed by applying traditional and unchangeable rites and guidance. Anthropology describes the phases of those transitions as “rites of passage”. The passage from youth to adulthood is only one example. There can be many more transitions: from one group to another, from one societal status to another, and finally, from life to death. The phase of transition between the before and the after, in anthropology was named “liminal” (from Latin “limen”: threshold). Used already in the
late 19th century, it was the anthropologist Victor Turner who ‘rediscovered’ the term in the 1960ies, elaborated and systematized it, still limiting its use to small-scale societies (Turner, 1964). The liminal phase in small scale societies typically suspends ritually and under the guidance of an elder person for a certain time the normal order, opening a space of chaos and uncertainty which must be gone through. The liminal phase ends up in a new order and new status and role pattern. Liminal phases, for instance the ritual passage from childhood to adulthood, enable societies to give meaning, structure to and control over substantial and potentially problematic transitions in the life of the individual and in societies. Thus the collapse of order allows the creation of a new order.

Since Turner’s first studies, the concept of “liminality” found its way into various disciplines studying large-scale modern societies. In these, the collapse of order is not guided and non-intentional, but is a part of change. There are no prepared or guided ways out of the liminal phase in due time. Only learning and adaptation could help to eventually find possible exits. But societies do not “learn” easily. A ‘protracted transition’ is usually seen as risky and dangerous. The sociologist Arpad Szakolczai described the history of communism as such a liminal protracted, “frozen transition” as a system of passage without exit, circling all the time, again and again, within its own limits and lack of adaptiveness (Szakolczai, 2000). In psychology protracted phases of permanent liminality and basic uncertainty on the individual level tend to evoke “mimetic” behavior: “A central characteristic of liminal situations is that, by eliminating the stable boundary lines, they contribute to the proliferation of imitative processes and thus to the continuous reproduction of dominant messages about what to copy” (Horvath, 2009, S. 55). This is not without risks: Without stable institutions – which are effectively broken down in a liminal period – “people will look at concrete individuals for guidance” (Szakolczai, 2009, p. 154). Tis guidance-seeking can be easily manipulated and abused.

Recent progress in communication technology, the constant connectedness – preferably among youth – via smartphone and soon to come via a smart environment, has pushed this power of mimesis to a new level. Now technology provides the possibility of instant and constant connectivity which multiplies the potential of “copyism” substantially. The new social media in the internet are the perfect communality area for continuous checking and co-creating pools of dominant messages. The tools of collating users to visited sites, initially developed for economic purposes, has expanded to personal spheres, creating separate worlds of self-referential, simple, and polarized (“like” – “dislike”) and emotionalized spaces of homogenous information and values full of “followers”, “emojis”, and “emoticons”. The internet, which the sociologist Heinz Bude characterizes in contrast to the traditional media like newspapers, as “an inordinate atmospheric universe” (Bude, 2016, p. 122), thus provides us with a well suited environment for mimetic copyism as a strategy to handle tentatively protracted liminality. Liminality is but one of many constructs of explanation some features of change, though an interesting one by taking into consideration the deep rooted connections between individual and collective processes, between rational and non-
rational spheres, surface and deep structures of society. In face of the characteristic loss of order and certainty, modernity generally can be interpreted as a “protracted liminality”.

The growing incertitude in our modern society obviously has permeated all spheres of society and has found extensive notice by scholars of very heterogeneous disciplines. Also in comparative education theory, scholars pointed to the “collapse of certainty” (Welch, 1999), and called for designing an “education for uncertainty” (King, 2000, p. 268). Initially, modern comparative education profited from the globalization shift which accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s. Among others, the enlarged pool of knowledge on context and functional conditions of education systems from all possible regions of the world, promised to make school a factor of societal change, and to help making a better world soon. UNESCO in the 1980ies declared that by the year 2000 there would be no child left behind without schooling and in illiteracy. Today we know that although much has been accomplished, we are far from having fully reached this objective quantitatively and much less qualitatively. Schooling is endangered or suspended in many conflict regions and school children often are first victims. In the first line girls are often deprived of their right for education. Ultra conservative religious, notably Islamic, movements, oppose in some countries education of girls or fight modern education by even murdering children and teachers. Recently UNICEF reported that Boko Haram impeded last year the functioning of more than 2.000 schools in Nigeria and its neighboring countries, preventing thus school attendance of more than one million children (FAZ, 2015).

Apart from this, today alphabetization as such is only one of the unconditional prerequisites for improving life in modern society. An education certificate per se does not at all automatically free the individual from restrictions as is illustrated in the following story, published some years ago in a newspaper report about Afghanistan: “The most important outcome of education is that girls learn to oppose forced marriage” emphasizes a woman teacher who was forced into marriage in the age of 15, but, as she points out, even “12 years old brides are not seldom to be found”, and this generally means no more schooling. Her 18 year old teacher colleague, however, had successfully fended off an imminent forced marriage still being a child. “I needed the money”, said her father, himself a teacher, because he hoped to get bride money which at that time was Euro 3.000 in average. But his daughter did not give in. “Now there is no longer a necessity to marry her” says her father laughing: “Now I get her salary” (Boge, 2007).

Nevertheless, and in spite of drawbacks, evidently education plays a paramount role. In face of today’s rapid globalization particularly the discipline of Comparative Education, in its nature dealing with different cultures and systems, is predestined to play an important and innovative role.

From its very beginning the discipline is inquisitive and open for other systems and cultures, but also somewhat ambiguous. Jacqueline Gautherin, sketching the life and the work of the “founding father” of the discipline, Marc-Antoine Jullien, called Jullien de Paris
(1775–1848), speaks about the “shaky construction of Julien’s ‘science of education’, which is indeed a curious piece arranged for several voices, that of the honnête homme confident of the progress of reason, that of the former revolutionary interested in social and political change, that of the administrator concerned with efficiency and rationality, that of the amateur scientist and that of the traveler curious to observe the minutiae of school life. This ‘science of practical utility’... is not only torn between a concern for specifics and the requirements of universality or between anthropological realities and lofty generalizations, dichotomies... but also hesitates between disparate formal schemata and cannot make up its mind between ‘knowledge’, will and action” (Gautherin, 1993). As for the inconsistencies of a “curious piece arranged for several voices”, this might be seen as a birth defect, which tears apart the envisioned discipline. But we should certainly also take into consideration that this polyphonic nature of several voices is not necessarily the consequence of a basic antagonism, but perhaps an intuitive anticipation of a unique new and challenging multifocal and multidisciplinary view on education, whose potential today can and should be developed further. Without this ambiguity the field can hardly develop its full opportunities and be a possible guide through the liminality of growing complexity and instability of modern society and education (von Kopp, 2010).

Apart from its validity of academic research, comparative education as a teaching discipline provides to a high degree “the kinds of skills that individuals who face directly the challenges driven by changes in the global order need to have – ‘how to think and act flexibly and strategically, how to move readily from one project or region to another, how to grasp a new situation quickly, and how to start solving pragmatic problems” (Epstein, 1997, 118). Perhaps still more important: Comparative Education could have the potential and the function to become a “relevant voice of criticism and dissent in face of the distortions of globalization” (Torres, 2001: VIII). Thus Comparative Education should play a crucial role in helping to resume and pass on the heritage of the critical and emancipatory idea of humanistic education. Unfortunately, this idea is permanently threatened, and it is a bad sign that so many of the central terms of an emancipatory pedagogy like “flexibility” too often in reality mean for many young occupied, namely in the academia, a protracted, underpaid, or even unpaid, work as freelancers or “voluntary interns”.

IV. The noble objective of political correctness and the dialectics of change.

The demand to foster “critical thinking” in school has become such a matter of course in most modern school systems that the degree of draining all content of this void formula, does not attract much, if any, attention. The presently dominant techniques of measuring school success in form of homogenized large scale assessments of test performance like Pisa, overshadow the question of what critical thinking is, what kind of critical thinking we wish to foster, how to teach it and how to find out if and to what extend the education system performed well in this matter or not. As for the higher education sector, skeptical voices concluded, that the ongoing homogenization and marketization of higher
education in Europe in many respects ended up in lowered standards and impeded the development of critical thinking. The sociologist Richard Munch in comprehensive studies revealed how in many cases the new criteria of evaluating and certifying higher education institutions are not primarily based on the scientific or pedagogical quality, and partly even contradict the rules and principles formulated by the institutions themselves (Munch, 2007 and 2009). Many studies and many members of the academia blame the whole machinery of evaluating and certifying, of tightening the curricula and of other measures of “modernizing” the university for creating an atmosphere of mediocracy. A recent combat writing by literary scholar und philosopher Armen Avanessian – a representative of the above mentioned accelerationist movement – is most outspoken: For him “university, which he also calls a “retirement mansion of critical thinking”, is a monstrous, publicly supported ‘obviation factory’, desperately clinging to the myth of ‘critical thinking’ out of existential fear and without realizing that ‘critical thinking’ itself long since has become a commodity which is bartered for real money via third party funding proposals” within a system of “academic omertà” (Diez, 2014; Avanessian, 2014). Avanessian denounces this “bugaboo of ‘critical thinking’”, as a criticism which only confirms its “bossiness establishing for its own benefit only fields of work and of knowledge and patterns of thinking, which are adaptable to such forms of ‘criticism’.” For him this “secondary thinking” results in “depression” and in “mediocrity”, and “it explores and acknowledges only things that have been explored already since long ago” (Dietz, 2014).

Today we find the devaluation of critical thinking even in movements which originally started criticizing and to break the encrustation of the 1950ies and 1960ies, fighting against intolerance, racism, exclusion, and marginalization of minorities. Especially the academic institutions played in this movement a paramount role. Most of us growing up in these times, were educated in this atmosphere and we made these goals to ours. On the scholarly level various facets of theoretical relativism, constructivism, theoretical postmodernism etc. enriched and systematized those attitudes. This endeavor for positive change was – though certainly not at once and to different degrees – widely accepted as mainstream. In this context internationalization and globalization could be seen as a promise for more openness and international and intercultural communication and the external condition for building a better world. Unfortunately, real-life globalization has not delivered its promises. Today not only confirmed pessimists see that – unfortunately – globalization has not led us into to the world of Francis Fukuyama predicting the “end of history” as the definite victory of a liberal democratic order after the end of the Cold War, but into that of Samuel Huntington’s more pessimistic visioning of a possible “clash of civilizations” (Fukuyama, 1992; Huntington, 1993).

Other than some eruptive changes, the twists of the antidiscrimination movement came on tiptoe. Since some time we can see an increasing and alarming tendency to radicalize the issues of fetishizing minorities to a degree which – in a weird kind of dialectics – is seriously harassing members of other minorities and of majorities. The ideological basis
of emancipation and liberality themselves and with it the emancipatory discourse are eroding. In this context sometimes even the concept and the term of “tolerance” is no longer tolerated. In the field of academia we have alarming news about a veritable “culture war”, so far mainly in US-American and in British universities, but progressing elsewhere. Growing numbers of student activists fight for enforcing rules of a new political correctness in the academic world. The British Guardian summarized this trend in a headline: “Free speech? Not at four in five UK universities” and specified: “According to research by online magazine Spiked 80% of universities have restrictions on free speech” (Tickle, 2015).

The following examples are taken from two articles, one of them written by a German teacher at an US-American college, who decided better to remain anonymous (DIE ZEIT, 2016; Buchsteiner, 2016; Dunt, 2015). There are four battlefields of strategic thrust: Cultural appropriation, meaning that members of a “privileged majority” must not use cultural mental or material assets of cultural or racial minorities and transpose them into another cultural sphere. Consequently for example in Obelin College the restaurant gave in to activist pressure and withdrew sushi and other “appropriated” and thus falsified and offensive “exotic” food from its menu. Erika Christakis, a Child psychologist at Yale university was attacked because she refused to sign a request by a university committee warning students not to wear at Halloween “cultural appropriative” costumes like sombrero hats, native American dress etc. The activists argued that their campus must be a “safe place” – another combat slogan – were nobody would be offended, and asked for her dismissal. The pressure continued until she herself resigned and left the college. Another severe offence is in the politically correct newspeak labeled as “microagression”. In German sometimes the similarly eccentric term “passively aggressive” is used. In order to be blamed of “macroaggression” it is not even necessary that the committer willingly wanted to offend or even could have known what and why something was offensive. The main problem with this term is that it is completely vague and discretionary. This notwithstanding, the general pressure of the new political correctness activists was for instance strong enough to make the representative of the University of California teaching staff to write an open letter to the faculty members asking to avoid in their teaching any “microagressive expression”. The letter gave examples of microagressive sentences like: “The most qualified person should get the job”, because this allegation would support the myth of meritocracy and ignore the factor of gender or race in a job searching situation. Banned should be also: “The US is a melting pot” and even: “there is only one race and this is the human race”. They are taboo because allegedly such statements (especially coming from a white person) would deny the significance of racial origin in society. The “safe place” policy’s aspect of preventing dissenting opinion comes with the slogan and the policy of “no platform”, that is, not allowing unwanted speakers public presentations. At the Goldsmith institute in London, for example, the Iranian human right activist Maryam Namazie was forced to stop her speech against the persecution of bloggers and inhuman punishment in some Islamic countries, thus allegedly violating the “safe space” of Muslim students. Curiously enough, the activists were supported by the homosexual and lesbian
activist factions. On the other hand this is not so surprising since the political and cultural Islam is similarly exclusive and dictatorial as are the mentioned student activist movements and a kind of thought police. The radical British feminist Julie Bindel was attacked as being not only “islamophobic” but also “transphobic” and even – a quite new term: “whorephobic”, and banned from speaking at University of Manchester by the school’s student union and “she now finds it increasingly difficult to get on to college campuses at all” (Dunt, 2015). Since “phobia” initially is a medical term, the inflationary usage and the undercurrent meaning of being insane if not being in line is disquieting.

The “safe place” philosophy also requires, that students must be warned before being confronted with teaching contents which possibly could offend or shock them. Music, song texts, novels, but also nonfiction can be “disturbing”. The keyword for correct behavior of the teacher in case of possible offense is “trigger warning”. Practically all elder texts studied in seminars on literature can – and in the eyes of the activists: will – contain parts and depictions which are potentially disturbing or shocking. A school text editor preparing a new edition of Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason put the warning on the front page of its new edition “that before parents allow their children to read this book they better should talk with them about how deeply the view on themes like race, sexual role, sexuality, ethnicity and interpersonal relations have changed since the time this book was written”. For similar reasons – to “protect the students” – the London University College prohibited the activities of a “Nietzsche Society”. Apparently the growing pressure of attempts to regulate what can be said and what not, who may speak and who not, is certainly not promoting critical thinking which is seen to be a cornerstone of academic culture. “Instead of producing confident students who can handle any argument you throw at them, universities are a production line for cowed conformists. Instead of being free spaces where ideas can be debated without restraint, universities have become like the private and public bureaucracies the young will go on to join: speak out of turn, or even wear the wrong T-shirt, and the bosses will make you suffer” (Cohen, 2013). He summarized his message in the headline: “Universities should be the last place to ban free speech” (ibid.).

One of the changes that came recently, seemingly “out of nothing”, to the surface in various countries, is the new polarization in political action, communication and argumentation. Perhaps it is a byproduct of the often registered social polarization which is apparently fast progressing. The quality of debate is different from “habitual” democratic, often fierce confrontations and quarrels over political issues. It developed in various contexts and was triggered by different persons or events. The most prominent person representing the new style of polarization is probably Donald Trump in the US. The trigger for unleashing polarization in Germany (or as for that: in Europe) was the “refugee crisis”.

When in 2015 the German chancellor Merkel – with a solitary decision, without consulting the other European countries but rather steamrolling them – started her adventurous and voluntarist policy of opening the borders for a completely uncontrolled immigration, it was quite normal that this would provoke dissent. Since there was no plan, although the
refugee and immigration flood did not come all of a sudden and policy in this respect had not moved for years, considerable parts of people, including even many of those with immigrant roots themselves, were alarmed. The conditions and implications of such a massive and uncontrolled immigration were however not discussed. “Welcome culture” is a heartwarming term but it must not serve to oppress discussion and to veil political incompetency, chaos and bypassing democratic procedures. The problem however, was not immigration a such. The “crisis” came in a moment, when we had reached over the years in Germany a strong public support for the culture of integration, not the least by seeing the generally successful integration over the last decades. True, in Germany there was and is the danger of racism and neo-nazism – which, by the way, for years could and should have been fought against far more consequently then it was – but it certainly was not a mass movement. However, now we had apparently a completely different situation, and something remarkable happened: Those who criticized the policy of Merkel, were in the public discussion immediately and extremely harshly and collectively and without distinction and differentiation attacked and stigmatized as right wing, if not racists and neo-Nazis, and the previous broad consensus eroded. The attitude of “who is not on my side is against me” in such a consequent stiffness was new. To denounce all those who do not follow the official line in the question of immigration and Islam fueled extremism. Even the language in public discussions lost sometimes control. Critical voices were denounced in one example as coming from a “great coalition” stretching from street protests to “smear campaigns from the lounge bar writers of FAZ, Welt and Cicero” (Kohlmann, 2016) – all three renowned newspapers. The next example is still more disquieting: The renowned specialist on ancient Roman history, Alexander Demandt was asked to contribute on the theme of migration to the bimonthly periodical “Die politische Meinung”, which is edited by the “Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung”, the political cultural foundation of the Christian Democratic Union, chancellor Merkel’s party. Demandt wrote about immigration and the end of the Roman Empire. The journal refused to print his article claiming that “in the present political situation it could be misinterpreted”. The article in the meantime was published in another periodical, but a bitter aftertaste remains (Demandt, 2016).

The officially propagated and demanded exaltation for a blind “welcome culture”, the tabooing of discussion and critique together with an initial concealment of negative news related to criminal acts committed by refugees and immigrants, and examples of self-censorship, nurtured in a large part of the public the suspicion that the government and the media were not telling the truth about the situation. Examples of self-censorship in the media and the new hostility towards critique is always an alarming signal because it fights any opposition, not only the extremist one.

We should be also alert in respect to our support of any political correctness, because as was shown in the examples from the new movements in universities, the “dialectic of change” can be tricky. A major NGO in Brussels The “European Council on Tolerance and Reconciliation” – ECTR, elaborated the proposal for “A European Model Law for the
Promotion of Tolerance and the Suppression on Intolerance” to be adopted in all EU member states. Every good willing person will agree with the principle that all kinds of mentioned discrimination must not be tolerated. But the text proposes some measures we should consider very carefully. Those are: the call to oblige all mass media and public and private educational institutions to give regularly a certain room to inform about and train these attitudes, to regard hate speech, group libel and slander as a criminal act punishable as aggravated crimes, the obligation that juveniles convicted of committing correspondent crimes will be required to undergo a rehabilitation program conducive to a culture of tolerance, to grant (acknowledged) minority groups automatically a preferential treatment – for instance unconditional free legal aid to the victims of correspondent crimes – and last but not least to establish a National Tolerance Monitoring Commission (ECTR, 2015). Again: The refusal of discrimination is an absolutely noble objective. But a general vagueness as for what is exactly hate speech and what not, including the fact that easily whatever can be declared to be a “phobia”, as the above mentioned examples from the PC activist movement in universities illustrate, and lastly the creation of a supervising commission which can, under changed political conditions, easily and quickly turn into an Orwell-like ministry of thought control and a thought police, is not very attractive.

V. Concluding remarks

In my essay I highlighted some problematic trends that might be seen as symptoms of coming big changes – which hopefully will be rather those of Toffler’s divides than a collapse in the sense of Tainter. It seems impossible to foresee, even only in general lines and even for the near future, how the problems I touched upon could possibly be handled effectively and decently. Fanaticism, in the name of exclusiveness as well as in the name of inclusiveness and of whatever other “holy principle”, and possibly further waves of immigration, perhaps manifold larger than the ones we experience today in Europe, will lead to more and more diversity. Today in Germany it is generally propagated as inevitable and desirable to integrate as quickly as possible this huge diversity into one common cultural economic and political inclusive space. The emergence of “parallel societies” is seen as a substantial thread to our societies, and “integration” – giving education a central role in this project – is presented as the only solution. But the objectives and the content of a European, or as for that a German, a French etc. “integration” are completely vague and obscure. Studying the existing concepts of “integration” without parallelism in this context and in the last consequence can only mean to make the “others” like “us” – and we even do not know clearly, what is this “us” - respectively to make them to a willing and unproblematic workforce – which is not very ethical and probably will also not function.

I therefore doubt that the unconditional refusal of a certain parallelism of societies is the best strategy to cope with diversity. In reality many of us today live anyway partially (sometimes completely) in “parallel sub societies”, be it for a migration background or for
personal preferences of a mixed lifestyle and a chosen complex personality identity. In some respect the toleration of parallel spaces might be more democratic than the integration model, because it legitimizes us individually to choose between remaining in our culture however we define it, or to assimilate (another no-word of political correctness) and immerse into whatever culture and group we choose, or, on the other hand, allows us to choose whatever adventurous cultural combinations or “safe places” we are looking for. An example for a vision of how parallel societies could emerge from today’s multiplicity is found in fiction. Nial Stevenson, a writer the milieu of the valley, draws us in his book “The Diamond Age” – by the way an interesting “Erziehungsroman”, a novel of educational development which was published first in 1995 and apparently drew inspiration from the liberal Westcoast culture of the time – into a world of all kind of great or tiny nations, kingdoms, units, based on race, religion, political movements, ideologies, and other commonalities. The larger and wealthier ones reside in historical boundaries, in “leased territories” and other territorial units, the smaller ones occupy “claves”, enclaves in or outside larger cities. In the novel a constable arresting a criminal is using the following formula: “Are you a member of any signatory tribe, phyle, registered diaspora, franchise-organized quasi national entity, sovereign polity, or any other form of dynamic security collective claiming status under the CEP – Common Economic Protocol?” (Stephenson, 1995, part one). Future will probably not look like Stevenson’s vision, but it will also certainly not be like today. However since education is innately and inseparably committed to shape the future – of individuals and through them of societies – it is a quite responsible undertaking. I am afraid education research and praxis is too obsessed with weighting and assessing in the first line “competencies” rather than be concerned of innovative critical thinking and phantasy.

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Memories of Wolfgang Mitter

Vandra Lea Masemann

Abstract

This recollection of the memories that Vandra Masemann has about Wolfgang Mitter focuses mainly on the period from 1987 to 1996. He was the representative of the Comparative Education Commission of the German Education Society, and then became President of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) from 1991 to 1996. She shares her professional, academic and collegial memories during the time when she worked closely with him on the WCCES.

Keywords: Wolfgang Mitter, World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES)
My memories of Professor Wolfgang Mitter date back some thirty years. I am honoured to be able to share some of them briefly in this special issue of the HERJ. We were both presidents of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), and shared many experiences in meetings during the 1980s and 1990s particularly. I was very sorry to hear of his death as we had remained in touch until the year of his death.

I first met him in 1986, when the WCCES Executive Committee met in Toronto, in conjunction with the meeting of the U.S.-based Comparative and International Education Society (CIES). There were also some venerable and esteemed persons at that meeting – WCCES President Michel Debeauvais from France, Secretary-General Raymond Ryba from the U.K., and Gerald Read, one of the WCCES founders, from the U.S.A. As the representative of the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC), I knew almost no-one there, but Professor Mitter who was the representative of the German society was friendly and welcoming.

My memories of Wolfgang Mitter are much clearer when we met again at the 1987 World Congress in Rio de Janeiro. He had invited me to chair some of the sessions in his Research Commission which dealt with issues of cultural diversity. This was an honour which I greatly appreciated, and we enjoyed a mutual academic interest. It was the first time I had ever attended a World Congress or one of its sessions. I was entirely unused to the protracted verbatim delivery of some of the papers! I recall some very enjoyable social times in the evening at that Congress, with colleagues speaking a variety of languages while imbibing a variety of drinks. Certainly we all became more lucid as the evening wore on. It was my first experience of the very convivial social occasions which I was to have in succeeding years with many WCCES colleagues and with Wolfgang and his wife Sylvia. I also have a memory of visiting Professor Mitter in Frankfurt at the Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung (DIPF), where he introduced me to some of his Eastern European colleagues. That was the first time I had ever heard anyone use the term “glasnost”.

There was also serious business to attend to at the Rio Congress that would have a lasting impact on us for many years to come. The CIESC with Professor David Wilson as President had prepared a proposal to host the next Congress in Montreal in 1990, but we were unaware that the Chinese Comparative Education Society with Professor Gu Mingyuan as President had also prepared a proposal to host it in Beijing the same year. After a period of intense debate and negotiation, the World Council decided to allow Canada to host the next World Congress in Montreal in 1989 and China to host it in Beijing in 1991. Neither I nor Professor Mitter had any idea at the time of that decision that our roles in the WCCES were to be intertwined for several years after that!

The events in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in June 1989 had a profound effect on the WCCES and on Professor Mitter and me personally. Because of the suppression of student dissent, the WCCES voted at its Executive Committee meeting in Montreal on July 1989 to defer the decision about the next Congress until the following year. A subsequent meeting
of the Executive Committee agreed to admit the Chinese Comparative Education Society – Taipei (CCES-T) to the World Council, as we were informed that this decision was not in conflict with the one-China policy. However, the State Education Commission of China was not in agreement, and did not support the mainland Chinese CCES further in regard to hosting a Congress or even attending the WCCES meetings. Further details of this intense period of WCCES history can be found in the book dealing with the history of the World Council and its members in chapters written by both Professor Mitter and myself (Masemann, Bray and Manzon 2007).

These events affected the succession of the WCCES Presidency in 1991. Wolfgang Mitter would normally have succeeded me immediately, but there was so much work to do that year that we became Co-Presidents until he became sole WCCES President in 1992. Luckily, Professor Mitter offered to have the next Congress hosted by his colleagues in Prague. I handled the routine business of the World Council for that year, and Professor Mitter put a great deal of effort into helping the Comparative Education Section of the Czechoslovak Pedagogical Society colleagues to organise and finance the Congress. He was particularly happy to communicate again with his colleague Professor František Singule, who was Chairman of the Congress Organising Committee, but he was sad that Singule died before the Congress took place. At the Congress itself, it was a great pleasure to be in Prague so soon after the Velvet Revolution, and our colleagues there expressed their happiness at being able to present their papers to a much wider audience than would have been possible in the Communist era.

In 1996, another World Congress was held, in Sydney, Australia. It was also a very successful Congress, and Professor Mitter concluded his Presidency with an autobiographical account of his life and his development as a scholar in comparative education. I learned a great deal more about him from that talk than in the formal business meetings of the Council. In the Festschrift published in honour of his 70th birthday (Kodron, von Kopp, Lauterbach, Schäfer, and Schmidt, 1997, I wrote a chapter about recent directions in comparative education and made reference to that speech: “He used his own biographical experiences as a model to show the various perspectives from which he was able to view these changes over the last forty years. He then traced the major thematic, theoretical and methodological changes that had occurred over the period of his very active professional life. The main themes he referred to were as follows: East-West conflict and its impacts on education; large-scale educational reforms in Europe and other industrial countries; intercultural education in multicultural societies; the collapse of education and its educational subsystems; the post modern revolt against theories of modernity; the interrelation between universalism and cultural pluralism.” (Masemann, 1997: p. 127 quoting from Mitter, 1996: pp.4-6).

My memories of Professor Mitter at the World Council are too many and various to distinguish them separately. He was always a very energetic and enthusiastic discussant, with the interests of the Council his foremost concern. He shared that attitude with his close friend Raymond Ryba, who was the Secretary-General during almost all of that
period. Neither of them made their own personal advancement the basis of their thoughts or actions while they were in the service of the World Council. They shared a close bond for many years until Professor Ryba’s death in 1999. When Wolfgang became WCCES President, he chaired meetings in the same enthusiastic manner. He was, however, during his entire tenure, very concerned about the negotiations with the Chinese colleagues, and wanted to see a positive outcome to the problem concerning the one-China policy, a solution which eluded him. I have always regretted that he did not live long enough to attend the World Congress in Beijing in 2016.

I will end on a more personal note with my memories of sight-seeing with him in the many cities where we met at meetings. A highlight was in the early 1990s when we were part of a tour of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. Professor Mitter and his wife Sylvia, as well as Professor Ryba and his wife Annemarie and others, spent a wonderful day touring this treasure house of Chinese culture and history. One vivid memory I have is, on many other occasions, arriving at the conference hotel to be greeted by Wolfgang and Sylvia Mitter who had already explored the city, returning from their very bracing and long sight-seeing walk, also having completely mastered the public transportation system and having identified the most worthwhile tourist destinations. They were some of the most indefatigable tourists I have ever known.

Professor Mitter served the World Council for six years following his presidential term. In the years since then I still received Christmas greetings from him, “family to family” as he always wrote on the DIPF official card. I remained in touch with him until his death. I was very sad to receive the black-edged announcement of his passing. I know that he made a valuable contribution to the World Council, to the world of comparative education, to the life of his family, and more widely to the life of his friends, among whom I was lucky to count myself as one.

References


Abstract

Educational thinking has deep roots in the intellectual history of Europe. It is tightly connected with religious traditions and also with the liberation from religious constraints. We cannot but help children and youth to feel safe and secure in the world. This is the base to cope with experiences which show us that very often the world is unsafe and insecure. We must dig for basic ideas, narratives, pictures, impressions which can convey the feeling that the world is good, beautiful and true. We should not neglect or deny this when we explain scientific phenomena of nature and of history.

Keywords: Europe, educational values, philosophy of education, critical thinking

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We live in Europe. We are Europeans. Most of us make their payments in the Euro-currency. Yet, no one can say, what and where Europe is, exactly. Europe exists, for sure, but we don’t know where it begins and where it ends. Today, for most people in this area and perhaps around the world the term conjures up something positive. This was not the case throughout history. Although it was a pretty maid whom Zeus as the king of gods robbed and raped on the island of Crete, as Greek mythology knew, her name “Europe” did not have a positive sound in old Greece and so furthermore for centuries. Later, the term was opposed to Byzantium, that meant: somewhere outside. During the European middle ages it was used to confine imperial hegemony. Regional sovereigns spoke of “European” when they wanted to say: It is not a matter of the Empire. From the 17th century on, few philosophers interlinked the term with a great idea of peace (Abbe de Saint-Pierre, Comenius, Holderlin). It took until the 19th century that the term gained a positive meaning and even a political and sociological status. Today, we have come to believe in the value of the coin “Europe”.

I. Four intellectual sources of European education

People easily identify the term “Europe” with the political fact of the European Union. Yet, this must not be identified with Europe – and doesn’t like to be so. Obviously it is unwise to draw geographical borders for Europe. Europe depends on the will of the nations to belong to Europe. All the more is it reasonable to ask for the intellectual substance of Europe. Europe is not anything real in terms of state borders like a nation state, yet it is real and operates on an intellectual level.

The intellectual history of Europe is in great parts a history of religion. Centrally it has to do with the rise of Christianity. A renowned German historian of religions and Christian beliefs in the world phrased: ‘‘Europe’ is the only region in world history the rise of which from the historically identifiable beginnings until present age has been molded by fights and quarrels of religions and by the neighbourhood of religions. These occurrences were of higher density and intensity than in any other area.”

As Christendom in general repelled syncretism it was on the other hand prone to schisms. The deepest one was that between the Western Latin Church and the Eastern orthodox Byzantine church. In the beginnings of Christianity after Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans the Christian church felt urged to be present at the two most influential places in the Roman Empire: Athens and Rome. They addressed their message to the Latin speaking population and as well the Greek speaking population. Both, the Greek writing and the Latin writing church fathers, formed the catholic church in the formative centuries of the Christian “West”. The Latin Christianity became the strongest stratum of modern Europe. Yet, only in the nineteenth century the term “Europe” replaced the term “Christianity”.

The modern political European process started after World War II in Western countries with a strong influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Some years later the European process moved North and South. By this it bridged another schism that had occured in the
history of the Christian churches, the break-away of Lutheran and Reformed churches from the Roman church in the 16th century. Of similar importance was the splitting up of the Anglican Church in the sixteenth century. The turn of the modern European process to the Northern countries brought a thread of Protestantism into the fabric of Europe. The so-called iron curtain prevented some countries from joining the European process early, although geographically and historically they are parts of Europe. Today they are sometimes named central-east European countries. Some of these, especially Poland, fortified the Roman Catholic fundament of the modern Europe.

The Byzantine-Orthodox Church definitely split from the Roman Church in 1054. This event proved to be a seemingly irreparable schism in Christendom. The Eastern Orthodoxy can be regarded as the second intellectual stratum of Europe. It is a dominant feature not only in Greece which joined the European Union in 1981, but also in Bulgaria where the Patriarch of Constantinople already in the year 927 had acknowledged a new orthodox church which was neither built on the Greek language nor on the Latin language but for the first time on a Slavonic language: the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Two venerated erudite monks, Cyril and Methodius, well educated at Byzantium and as travelling missionaries also polyglot, had created an alphabet for Slavonic languages. The Bulgars originally did not speak a Slavonic language instead a Turk language, better to say an Oghuric language. By adopting the orthodox liturgy on a Slavonic linguistic base they became a model for several surrounding peoples with respect to their religious affiliation. The Serbian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church were to follow in a remarkably short time. Bulgaria entered the European Union in 2007. In European states orthodox churches not seldom are connected with the Roman-Catholic church although the rite is different (uniting churches). Even after the fall of communism they tolerate more state control than Western churches do.

Both Christian religions, the Western one in competing variants and the Eastern one, generated strong legacies for today's European intellectual cultures. The most important intellectual legacy of the Byzantine Empire was the conservation and transmission of the Greek language, which started when the Eastern Roman Empire turned its back on the Western Empire. The Byzantinians desired to preserve the written testimonies of the Hellenistic period, although Greek in their centuries was no longer a uniform language. Beyond Greek more languages were spoken in the Eastern Empire such as Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Slavic, Persian, and Arabic.

Saving the heritage of the Greek antiquity was not only the merit of the East Roman Empire and the Byzantine-Orthodox church but also the Muslim Arabs contributed much, and not minor were the efforts of Western scholars who searched for written sources from Greek antiquity in the Byzantine Empire and collected and copied many of them. The translation into Latin was mainly achieved by scholars from the Latin West. Arab scholars often built on translations into the old Syrian language, called Syriac, performed by scholarly Christians in the antique Syria.
The Byzantine Empire carried the main burden of the Christian encounter with the rising Islam, yet also the Latin West fought quarrels with Muslims in Spain – besides few periods of fruitful neighbourhood in multireligious towns. Islam must not be overlooked when we look for further stratums in the mountain of the intellectual Europe. Obviously Islam is a third layer of the European intellect besides the two Christian religions, albeit less immersive than these. After 1453 the Selçuk sultans owned large parts of the land of the former Byzantinian Empire, and they were followed by the Osmans, who also were from a Turk origin. By enlarging the Osman Empire, Turks occupied more and more areas in Europe, above all on the Balkan and further north even the main part of the modern country of Romania. In those centuries it was for the kingdom of Hungary to function as a barrier for the West drift of the Osman Empire and to defend the Western Christianity. Turkish occupation lasted in some areas for centuries and by this also influenced the religious and intellectual life in these areas. However, there was no continuous presence of Islam in the states which in our times belong to the European Union; nevertheless Islam was brought in again in the wake of migrations after World War II. Islam in the European Union is not a religion which roots in long-standing settled populations but is a migrants’ religion.

A fourth layer in European religions and culture is to be mentioned which is not bound to a political entity or to a territory. It is Judaism. It used to be spread over all countries in Europe and still is despite the persecutions which took innumerable lives. The Jewish emancipation movement which took place in some European countries in the 18th and 19th centuries encouraged not few Jewish youth to attend the rising Jewish schools which acquired high educational quality, and during the second half of the 19th century also municipal or state schools where they earned the highest school degrees. Although these people were often attributed “assimilated”, they in general did not deny their religious upbringing and education. Among the four religious streams in European history Jewish religion and culture was most brutally beaten during World War II. Survivors of the Holocaust tried to start from new in their home countries and fought different difficulties in different countries.

The four churches or religions which were mentioned here built large education systems during history and by this formed the base of education in Europe. This is true with respect to the institutional fundaments and the intellectual foundations as well. The Western idea of education is centered around the notion of the “person” or “personality” which not only connotates morality but also emotions and an active approach to life. The orthodox pedagogy is more aimed at the ideal of the “saint” who embodies the antique notion of “apatheia” which means to be free of passions. The orthodoxy’s peculiarity is due to the role and the long-lasting importance of monasteries in the Eastern Orthodoxy which lasts until now. The Western monasteries also were pillars in the edifice of the church; additionally they had a broad civilising impact by their educational efforts not only for monks and nuns but also for the surrounding population and by their role as economic centers. The Jewish ideas of education probably are the most manifold among
all the religions. Jewish education is even more bound to studying texts, mostly old ones, than education in the other three religions although all of them are book based religions. The strong emphasis on understanding texts in Jewish education results from the preoccupation with the question of Jewish identity which stimulates all studies. The Islamic notion of education underpins stronger than the others the value of human models which the younger people have to live up to. Obeyance is expected from the young Muslims and also from adult Muslims in many respects. The model behind all models is God himself.

II. Educational sovereignty of the state

Only about two hundred years ago in some countries the states gradually started to take over control of the education institutions and above all to finance education. This effort is still underway. It does no longer lead to serious conflicts between the states and the Christian churches but new conflicts with Islamic communities in Europe can arise when the states try to implement their regulations. Sometimes the French model of the strictly secular state school is within the European Union seen as the European model. The constitutional bodies of the European Union, especially the European Parliament, obviously are in favour of this principle. In the aftermath of the French Revolution French policy brought about the idea of separation of state and church. The law to establish this came in 1905. Yet, in Europe and even in France this idea is not purely put into practice – in contrast e.g. to the United States of America. The centralised states in France and in other European countries do not allow church schools to run their affairs in full independence as long as they equalise compulsory school attendance. States force the church schools to adopt most of the regulations and the curricula of the equivalent state school and in compensation for this grant the church led schools finances from the state – mostly the state pays the teachers’ salaries.

Nevertheless, there are differences among European countries with respect to the state control over religious education. Two countries with a large majority of Roman Catholic population differ remarkably. France does not allow religious education in state schools but keeps one day in the week (mostly Wednesday) free from schooling in order to enable students’ participation in church exercises outside schools. Poland in contrast compels every school from kindergarten up to higher secondary school to provide for two hours per week of religious instruction which is under control of churches who approve the teachers for religious instruction. Christian instruction lessons often begin with a prayer. Students who refuse to take part in this school subject alternatively may opt for so-called ethical instruction. During the inter-war period in Poland participation in religious instruction in schools had been compulsory, during the communist period it had been abolished. In France approximately 20% of all schools are run by non-state organisations, mainly the Roman Catholic Church, who objects to secular schools. In Poland, non-state schools only were visible after 1990 and up to the year 2006 remained a small minority
with approximately 2,000 schools including many vocational schools. In Hungary talks between the government and churches have begun to find a similar solution.

The subject of ethics might be seen as a kind of non-confessional inter-religious instruction which is more in accordance with modern secular tendencies than confessional instruction. The secularity of the public school in this way would assert itself by the decisions of the students respectively their parents who opt for the non-confessional variant. The Christian churches may be afraid of this silent mechanism. They remain privileged partners of the state yet can no longer fulfill their role because they lose footholds within the population and even within their fellowships. This concern is existent especially among protestant churches and in some countries also in the Catholic Church. The orthodox churches e.g. in Greece and Russia are better prepared to defend themselves against decisions of individual consciences because of their traditionally close relationship to the state under which they act. They are privileged by the constitutions of their states and by specific educational laws which don’t leave chances for opting out of the religious instruction of the church to which an individual belongs. Confessional religious instruction is secured by the state. The state doesn’t do this selflessly, at least where also Islamic instruction is in the game. The generosity of the state is combined with the aim to attract more youngsters into public schools, especially when many Muslim youngsters attend the so-called madrasahs upon which the state has nearly no influence. Where religious instruction is provided by the state, the control over the teachers for this subject falls to the state.

In Northeast Greece – in the former Turkish territory – the Muslims enjoy minority status and have the right to get schooling in their language and also in their religion. The Greek state guarantees Islamic religious instruction for the Muslim population and is prepared to pay for the muftis who teach the religious subject. Yet, it reserves its right to approve the muftis as teachers. The committee which delivers such approvals was disclaimed by the Muslim population because not all its members are Muslims. The Greek government wanted to maintain a sign of secularisation but the Muslim population saw their model in the state of Turkey.

Jewish education in Europe today mostly exists in day schools i.e. in voluntary schools offered by Jewish parishes. So it is with Islamic schools. Both religions lay stress on early confrontation with the basic texts of their religion. Jewish children begin to read in very early age. Muslim children come to know the Arabic texts only by hearing; they have to learn them by heart. Regular state schools would not reach the intensity of studying religious texts which religious schools are able to. Due to early training in the language of the venerated books, Jewish students also in the state school systems regularly perform well. Today e.g. Germany profits from Jewish emigration from Russia and Ukraine because Jewish children in general are excellent students.

When we ask for lasting effects that religions had on education in Europe we observe above all that most European states learned to share power in educational matters. The
states shared power with churches or other religious organisations and this is true until now, although the churches and religious organisations became weaker in the recent two hundred years. At least in the Western parts of Europe the states never accomplished to bring churches under their control. Most states gave up attempts of this kind after they had felt the strength of resistance, even after decades of confrontation. Each state had to find constitutional or statutory ways of settling the interests of both sides in the educational field. These processes have not yet been completed. In Bulgaria e.g. monastery schools across five hundred years have maintained the Bulgarian language against Ottoman rule, yet after communism took over these schools were forbidden and even since then – in the post-Communist period – church schools could not be re-established.

Partition of power includes sharing power with local and regional authorities and also with the management of individual schools. It also applies to the sector of private schools, which exists in a majority of European states. Private schools are not only those which are run by churches, but also schools which are special by their educational theories. In most states such schools enjoy more autonomy from the state than regular state schools do, and often rely on financial support from parents and independent organisations which comes in addition to the limited financial means which the state grants. Autonomy of the school does not necessarily mean autonomy of the individual teacher, but it means the autonomy that the maintaining organisation enjoys.

Wolfgang Mitter made use of the term “educational sovereignty” (Bildungssouveränität). He gave us several examples of how to combine historical research with international research. From thorough historical analysis he concluded that the state in most European countries never was the unchallenged sovereign in matters of education which the theories of state sovereignty in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had postulated. For a long while it were the rivals inside the state which at all times enforced concessions, whereas in our days additionally international and supranational institutions and movements restrict the independence of states in the field of educational policy.

III. The contribution of the European Union to world education

The gradually growing rise of the EU – that means their main organs: European Parliament, European Council, European Commission and also the Euro-Group – makes some people think that the European Union became an obstacle for Education in Europe because its regulations seem to neglect national traditions in education. The European Union however does not want to change the contents of educational traditions and educational policies in the individual member states but to have an impact on procedures and means of educational policies in order to foster its aim of mobility. Mobility within the EU and in interaction with economic areas outside the EU should help to bring people in the EU closer together, e.g. by international exchange programmes on the level of students and teachers, and also to arouse competition which might raise economic outcomes. The EU intends to make the procedures within education systems more
effective and also more democratic. This more indirect than direct manner of political action is in accordance with the specific supra-national character of the EU which is not a super-state but a common structure of 28 states based on binding treaties. The EU is more than a confederation of states and less than a federal state.

Only within defined boundaries the EU exposes itself as maintainer of educational institutions such as schools. The EU maintains 14 European Schools placed only in European towns which host a European institution such as e.g. the European Central Bank in Frankfort. These multinational and multilingual schools which mainly address the children of EU employees who work at this EU-institute combine curricula from a couple of European nations and therefore convey a broad political and linguistic education to their students. E.g. the actual German Defence Minister, Ursula von der Leyen, is an alumni of the Brussels European School because her father Ernst Albrecht who later became the Prime Minister of the State of Lower Saxony, for several years worked with the EU respectively with its forerunner institution at Brussels. The European school is a modern and demanding school model which could be attractive for many more parents who do not have the privilege to work for a European institution. Some of the parents who are not affiliated with an EU-institution indeed manage to help their children with an enrolment in one of these schools. When an internationally linked business firm contracts with such a school the firm can offer such a privilege to their employees. Yet the number of placements is rather restricted. It is one of the constitutional limitations that the status of the EU imposes that the Union is not in the position to offer this school model in each member state although this type of school fulfils the aims of the EU in an ideal manner: mobility of persons in the EU across borders and also enhancement of competition and achievements, especially language competencies. The EU as a provider of education institutions of its own in different member states – this without question would stimulate the competition about ideas and conceptions in national education systems and by this augment the striving for quality. On the level of tertiary education the EU only runs one institution, this is the European University Institute at Florence which is limited to a short list of academic subjects and only provides doctoral programmes.

When in the nineteenth century the notion of Europe became a political and also philosophical reality Europe for some thinkers appeared as an enlightened continent that paved the way to the unity of mankind. Only some decades later Europe unveiled itself as the abyss of the worst evils: colonialism, nationalism, racism, fascism, totalitarianism. Yet, then, part of Europe could respire: All this could be left behind when Europe became a follower of the United States of America, especially of its model of democracy, and when we grasped the idea that the future of Europe is already there: in the shape of the United States of America. Needed the other half of Europe after the iron curtain fell only be pulled into this direction? Was this the solution for all Europe? After twenty five years of this belief – that means one generation later – this prospect has faded. Many people in Europe are in doubts as for Europe’s future. They become aware of the smallness of Europe in the global scale and want to avoid another self-overestimation. Nevertheless others ask us
about our contribution to world education. After all I said so far, an answer can only be: States or regions need not have a unified education system, even if a unified political system seems to be advantageous and a coordinated economic system seems to be favourable. Educational thinking has deep roots in the intellectual history and this is tightly connected with religious traditions and also with the liberation from religious constraints. It can be doubted that enlightenment really helped us to replace the good that religion can provide— despite much bad that it also brought about. As educators we cannot but help children and youth to feel safe and secure in the world because this is the base to cope with experiences which show us that very often the world is unsafe and insecure. We must dig for basic ideas, narratives, pictures, impressions which can convey the feeling that the world is good and – next – that it is beautiful and – the ultimate – that it is true. We should not neglect or deny this when we explain scientific phenomena of nature and of history. Criticism is not an element men can survive on.

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How Demographic Change Affects Education?

Horst Weishaupt

Abstract

In Germany, demographic change has had far-reaching effects regarding the education system. Particularly in rural, non-urban areas, the existing network of schools is at risk – most of all, this concerns vocational education and training schools. Even more striking, however, are the consequences regarding the qualification of young people because a generation of "baby boomers" needs to be replaced by a low-birthrate generation while at the same time the labour market demands higher qualification levels. Moreover, a growing number of students are from immigrant backgrounds and/or from disadvantaged families: they represent the potential that would still allow for increases in qualification levels.

Keywords: demography, educational statistics, school network, rural schools, immigration

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I. Introduction

Developments in the education system are closely connected to developments in society at large. Wolfgang Mitter presented many analyses in this regard (Mitter 2007, 2015) and he thereby contributed to a mutual understanding of education systems from an international perspective. In light of his analyses, I will describe impacts of demographic change in Germany which will lead to far-reaching changes in societal developments and thus affect the role of education.

In the next decades, the population will significantly grow older in Germany and altogether its size will decline, Germany thereby takes a leading position in a development that will soon also affect other parts of Europe and East Asia. This process can only be cushioned by immigration but it can no longer be brought to a halt. Our concept of development which is ultimately programmed towards growth is thus fundamentally challenged. Far-reaching social and economic processes are influenced and their unintended side effects can so far not really be assessed because worldwide, no such experiences have been gathered. Still, particularly as regards education, in recent years (see Autorenguppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2010), a focus has been placed on the fact that besides immediate effects of the demographic change in terms of required educational institutions, staff and funding, more indirect effects on education can be found, see for instance the impact on the availability of qualified labour force. Demands thus emerge that have so far little been noticed by the general public in Germany.

The situation in Germany can be visualized in a population pyramid (see Autorenguppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2014, p. 15). After World War II, birthrates grew rapidly in Germany until the mid-1960s, followed by a rapid decline in birthrates which has generally continued until today with a few exceptional years. The “baby boomer” generation born between 1950 and 1965 will retire from working life in the next twenty years, to be replaced by a generation that is significantly smaller in size (see figure 1).
Even given a persistently high immigration rate, it will therefore not be possible to counterbalance the decrease in a working-age population in Germany over a very long period of time (see Statistisches Bundesamt 2015, p. 22). Today, the generation of twenty-year olds in 2034 has already been born. An urgent need for an increase in the proportion of higher-qualified school leavers is evident from the pure fact that the considerably larger cohort of highly-qualified retiring employees will need to be replaced. In the past and right until the present, educational policy has fallen short with respect to tackling disadvantages in education and in the near future this might have a negative impact on the labour market, given that nationwide a third of the population aged under 20 have an immigrant background. Among them, only a small number qualify for higher education and more than a third of the population with an immigrant background aged 30-34 years have not acquired a formal certificate of vocational education (compared to only 10% of the German population, see Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2014, p. 235).

Below, the aforementioned aspects of demographic change will be further taken into perspective: quantitative changes in the need for schools, qualitative challenges owing to a risen demand for qualified labour force and concurrently declining numbers, and a

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32 The presentation of migrants is based on the population as of late 2013 (microcensus) and it does not take immigration into account that might lead to a rise in the proportion.
growing intercultural nature of the student population needing to be prepared for future employment markets.

II. Decline in student population and the security of school locations

After a first significant round of shrinking student numbers has come to a halt in the East German federal states, the assurance of school locations will principally be a matter of concern in West German states. The ministries of cultural affairs of the federal states published calculations according to which the student population will probably decrease by 20% after 2011 at the secondary school level (Sekretariat der KMK 2014), bearing in mind that developments will proceed at a different pace within the federal states. Besides the rural areas, particularly the traditional industrialised regions like the Saar and the Ruhr area will experience a significant decline in the student population, whilst some service-centred areas will experience growths.

Subject to a model programme funded by the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conversation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), diverse suggestions are currently being prepared and ideas are put to a test to safeguard the educational infrastructure in rural areas. Respective approaches predominantly focus on general education schools even though vocational education schools are particularly at risk in such peripheral areas. Therefore, more attention should be paid to vocational education schools and their training programmes in structurally underdeveloped, rural areas and vocational education institutions should serve these regions as “innovation agencies” (Weishaupt 2014). This concerns safeguarding of classes for dual vocational education and training courses that are offered in the respective regions in Germany, full-time vocational education schools tailored to the economic situation in the region, and grammar schools with a special focus on vocational education offering special subjects – particularly in areas outside urban agglomerations (technical and science subjects, economics, environmental studies, design, social work and social pedagogy, healthcare). After all, vocational educational schools also need to be assured because the demographically caused decline in numbers of school leavers in rural areas will significantly improve job-seekers’ opportunities. A dense network of initial and further training institutions should therefore not only support initial training but also be more embedded into the qualification of those already in work (“second chance”, recognition of vocational qualifications obtained in another country, in-service training and continuous qualification measures).

III. Qualification demands and offers

To illustrate the consequences of demographic change on the labour market in the near future, figure 1 compares 20-year olds (half of whom are already in work) with 60-year olds (because at present half of the latter age cohort are in work, too). In ten years (2025), for instance, the generation of young people entering the labour market will account for only two thirds of the inhabitants reaching retirement age. Given the continuation of the situation found in 2013, a third of this future workforce will have an immigrant background, and the ratio will even increase as the number of immigrants is rising. Structural change in Germany also needs to be considered which means that Germany will not only need to replace highly-qualified persons retiring from the labour market, but there is a need for an even higher number of qualified workers. Recent prognoses from relevant sources have underlined this demand, see studies by the Federal Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, and the Federal Institute of Vocational Education with the Institute for Labour Market Research (BMAS 2013; Maier et al. 2014).

Nowadays, more than half of the students each year obtain a higher education entry qualification – yet only around 70% of those such qualified enroll in a university course (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2014, p. 294). Moreover, only around two thirds to three quarters of these university students continue and graduate (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2014, S. 301). By consequence, the proportion of university graduates in the population aged 30-34 in Germany in 2014 was 24%, thus only half the size of persons in the age group who possessed a higher education entry qualification (46%). In recent years, the expansion of participation rates in education that became known as “educational expansion” has nearly exclusively impacted on the graduation rates of women while little change is noticeable regarding men. Therefore, calls for a further expansion are justified regarding higher education entry qualifications and improved conditions of study. The debate on Germany becoming “over-academic” does not pay service to societal reality. If assuming that future changes in the labour market are only caused by demographic change, by 2034 the workforce will be reduced by nearly five million and among them the number of academics will decline by one million (see figure 2).
Regardless of the stated demand, it is not easy to raise the number of university students and to subsequently increase higher education graduate numbers in Germany. In particular, it is necessary to bear in mind that especially for children from non-academic backgrounds, the dual vocational education and training system represents an appealing alternative to higher education. A quarter of the school leavers qualifying for higher education choose a vocational training course instead of university, either in the dual system or at a full-time school\textsuperscript{34}. Dual vocational education (including a dual study course) offers the perspective of paid further qualification that allows the students to cover their living expenses. On the other hand, many university study courses cannot clearly guarantee that the investment will pay out in the future. Currently, developments in the dual vocational and education system have not suffered from a lack of demand from qualified applicants – instead, for nearly all training occupations the demand is exceeded by the number of applicants (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2014, p. 102).

To service societal demand for highly-qualified workers in Germany, a significant potential can thus be tapped among qualified school graduates who have either not taken up or dropped out of a university course and they could be offered in-work further qualification measures. To this end, however, it would be necessary to provide for a relevant number of in-work study courses at universities in Germany.

\textsuperscript{34} At this point, it is important to note that in Germany, for example, the entire range of non-medical healthcare training courses (e.g. nurses, medical assistants, physiotherapists) and staff working in preschool care are not trained at universities but in full-time vocational schools.
Meanwhile, political measures targeting the assurance of a qualified workforce in Germany are taking all labour market approaches into perspective that are available for the expansion of potential:

- An increase in the employment ratio.
- An extension of the time spent in employment.
- An increase in the number of women in employment.
- An increase in the employment ratio of immigrants.
- A reduction of the proportion of part-time workers (particularly with respect to women).

It is important to note that all of these labour market policy measures are closely linked to education: rising levels of education correspond to an increase in employment rates, time spent in employment, employment of women, employment of immigrants and the proportion of full-time employees. In this regard, educational measures targeting the increase in general levels of qualification in the population present an important prerequisite to achieving labour—market policy objectives. This also pertains to improved opportunities regarding the professional qualification measures offered to older employees, enabling them to stay in work without losing touch regarding the latest developments in their field of work (Maier et al. 2014, p. 6). As far as women are concerned, it is highly important to provide for adequate education and care solutions in pre-primary and primary school settings. In West Germany in particular, there is a persistent need for all-day primary care (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2014, p. 80).

Projections of needs versus offer anticipate a continued release of tension on the labour market. According to federal state calculations, a nearly balanced labour market can be expected by 2030. However, the release of pressure comes along with a persistent excess availability of ca. 1.2 million workers without proper vocational qualification until 2030 (Maier et al. 2014, p. 5). The high number of unskilled, unemployed workforce has particularly been caused by past and present neglects regarding vocational qualification measures for immigrants. As long as no successful efforts are made to re-train a relevant number of unskilled workers in the near future, we can predict a situation with a demand for skilled workers facing a significant number of unemployed people in Germany who lack the qualifications that are necessary for an integration into the labour market. Different types of second-chance qualification are necessary to successfully train persons with a low level of education and/or immigrant background for their integration into society.\(^{35}\) This is expressed in the labour market prognosis published by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs [translation: “Educational endeavours will need to focus on the lower end of the qualification spectrum. It is essential to reinforce efforts in

\(^{35}\) If persons with an immigrant background reached the same level of employment as persons without an immigrant background by 2034, the number of employees would rise by (ceteris paribus) 1.5 million.
targeting young people from less educated families but an expansion of further training programmes is also essential. These are the prerequisites for the economy to facilitate transfer of a call for qualification into effective demand.”\(^{36}\) (BMAS 2013, p. 23). So far, such measures have been limited to isolated model projects and it is no longer possible to make up for the past neglect. This is all the more evident when looking at the group of immigrants.

**VI. Migration and segregation**

The group of migrants will be highly relevant in light of the aforementioned developments because nowadays a third of the children in Germany have an immigrant background. Particularly in densely populated areas in West Germany, the number of inhabitants with immigrant backgrounds has risen continuously. In many cases, the majority of children and adolescents under the age of 18 have an immigrant background (see figure 3).

*Figure 3: Proportion of population aged under 18 with an immigrant status in selected cities 2011*

[Graph showing proportion of population aged under 18 with an immigrant status in selected cities 2011]

*Source: Statistical Offices of the Länder and the Federal Statistical Office - Population according to immigrant status regional 2011, the author’s calculation*

\(^{36}\) Original German: “Das Augenmerk der Bildungsbemühungen wird sich auf das untere Ende des Qualifikationsspektrums richten müssen. Dort muss es zu verstärkten Anstrengungen bei der Integration ausbildungsferner Jugendlicher kommen, aber auch zum Ausbau der beruflichen Weiterbildung. Dies sind die Voraussetzungen, damit die Wirtschaft ihren Qualifikationsbedarf überhaupt in wirksame Nachfrage umsetzen kann.”
The proportion of preschool and primary-school aged children is even higher than among the entire age group. By comparison, areas in the eastern part of Germany (the former GDR), the proportion of children and youth under 18 with an immigrant background is only 8% (2011).

The situation of immigrants in Germany is marked by the fact that in most cases they do not speak German as their first language, economically and socially they are deprived compared to the average population without immigrant status in Germany (Schwarz/Weishaupt 2014). Owing to their disadvantaged social and economic status, children from immigrant backgrounds are concentrated in big city areas with low rents. Consequently, learning conditions are disadvantaged in such areas - even more so if those resident parents from non-immigrant families find ways and means of enrolling their children elsewhere, choosing less challenged and if necessary privately paid schools. In the recent past, several studies have demonstrated that migrant-specific segregation of primary schoolers in cities in Germany somewhat exceeds the geographical distribution of the population with an immigrant background (see, for example, Morris-Lange/Wendt/Wohlfarth 2013). At the lower secondary school level, students from immigrant backgrounds are found in special schools for the learning disabled and the lowest-track secondary schools (Hauptschule). In the big cities, a growing number of school classes can be found where most of the students do not speak German as their first language. Such processes in school development place a clear burden on integration endeavours because student composition impacts on individual student achievement (Dumont et al. 2013).

Successful efforts targeting the improvement of educational opportunities for immigrants will be crucial regarding the necessary expansion of educational participation, ultimately increasing the proportion of students qualifying for higher education and the proportion of a skilled, qualified workforce.

V. Conclusion

Summarising the arguments outlined above, threatened school locations in rural areas present the flipside only. Owing to demographic change, the education system in Germany is even more challenged by societal demands for replacement and supplemental qualified workforce, and the demands will only be met if participation in education and thus the general level of education are increased. Given the growing proportion of children and adolescents with immigrant backgrounds, however, the needs can only be met if endeavours are reinforced regarding the educational participation of people with immigrant backgrounds. In this regard, it is necessary to intensify efforts and counteract the growing social and ethnic segregation processes in pre-primary and school education.

37 In child daycare institutions, 34% of the children who generally do not speak German at home attend care settings with a proportion of more than 50% immigrant children. (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung 2014, p. 56). No comparable data have been published for schools.
There is also an urgent need to (re)train and qualify low-skilled employees, and in the latter case to some extent an institutional framework is required because existing further training institutions would not be able to cope with the challenge. In this respect, it would also be important to strengthen the role of vocational education schools particularly in the rural areas.

Significant regional differences in demographic change also invoke regionally different challenges: in rural areas with a declining population, it is necessary to ensure a regionally adequate educational infrastructure, to support better opportunities for school leavers seeking employment in their area of residence (relevance of vocational education schools in less populated areas!).

In urban cities with more people in occupation (workplace) than in employment (residence), it is more difficult to replace qualified workers. Here, it is important to provide for educational opportunities for migrants (also by reducing segregation in education), all-day school to improve conditions for women, and comprehensive programmes for unskilled workers to improve their prospects. Towns in the traditionally industrialised regions in West Germany do not possess the same economic power as the big cities described above but they are facing the same social problems (probably along with risen numbers of unskilled workers). First of all, they would need the funding to offer their citizens adequate measures that are given in other West German towns. Once they have acquired the financial resources, they will be able to take on appropriate measures and tackle socially disadvantageous living and educational conditions, thus they will become more appealing.

Conflicts will grow between regions with different issues caused by demographic change. A conflict of interests is predictable regarding federal government and state policies on the one hand, and developmental interests of big cities and municipalities within the federal states on the other. Political strategies for action should address different problems. First and foremost, however, it is necessary to focus on interlinking labour market and education policies.

References


Research Article

Researching Oral Feedback in the Foreign Language Classroom

Ildiko Csepész

Abstract

Oral feedback to learners in foreign language learning has been in the focus of attention of researchers for a long time. While research in second language acquisition (SLA) has classified various types of oral corrective feedback and explored their perceptions by learners (e.g. Ellis & Sheen, 2006) as well as their effectiveness (e.g. Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Lyster & Saito, 2010), the role of oral feedback has also been discussed in the context of general pedagogy, where it has been promoted as an integral part of formative assessment, or assessment for learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Boud & Falchikov, 2006; Carless, 2006, 2007). According to the latter view, oral feedback is regarded as a form of assessment of learner performance, which can be characterised by a collaborative and interaction-based approach and is expected to be meaningful, constructive and motivating for learners. In this paper, an attempt is made to relate the SLA findings to general pedagogy in order to make recommendations for the use of oral corrective feedback in the foreign language classroom.

Keywords: feedback, prompts, foreign language, oral corrective feedback, assessment feedback, recasts

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I. Introduction

The central role of oral feedback as part of classroom-based language assessment has been long recognised since it is seen as a key influence in enhancing students’ developing language competence. Davison and Leung (2009) suggested a number of important skills that teachers pursuing classroom-based assessment should possess, such as, for instance, involving students more actively in the assessment process (self- and peer assessment), and giving immediate and constructive feedback to students. In its simplest form feedback can take the form of praise to represent the quality of the work, but students may not benefit from it so much as the information on what has been mastered and what needs improvement may not be transparent for the learner. By the same token, grades alone are not likely to result in learning gains either as suggestions on how to attend to problems and what to strengthen about the student’s work are not evident. Furthermore, according to Butler (as cited in Sadler, 2010, p. 537), there is a major difference between the effects of praise of the student-self as a person (labelled as “ego-involving feedback”), and praise directed towards how well a task was accomplished (labelled as “task-involving feedback”). Sadler (ibid.) points out that feedback, if it is intended to fulfil its formative purpose, “has to be both specific (referring to the work just appraised) and general (identifying a broader principle that could be applied to later works)”, which means that it should have a prospective orientation and should be constructive and supportive as well. This suggestion was highlighted by Black and Wiliam (1998), who found that the giving of marks and the grading function were overemphasized in schools, while the giving of useful advice and the learning function were underemphasized. They argued that grading enhanced student comparison, which was harmful as it strengthened competition rather than personal involvement in learning. Thus, they concluded that “assessment feedback [i.e. grades] teaches low-achieving pupils that they lack ‘ability’, causing them to come to believe that they are not able to learn” (ibid. p. 4). Black and Wiliam claimed that instead of giving students rewards in the form of grades, they should be encouraged to look for ways to improve their learning rather than how to climb higher in the class ranking. The teacher’s main job, thus, seems to be to facilitate students’ learning by giving them feedback that will guide them further on the way to achieve their goals.

According to Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), good feedback practice helps, among other things, to clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards); it delivers high quality information to students about their learning; it encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem, and it provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance. These recommendations apply to general pedagogy rather than specific assessment principles relevant to language pedagogy. In this paper, first I review how assessment feedback has been conceptualised in general pedagogy and then examine what aspects of oral feedback have been taken up in second language acquisition research I order to find the common concerns.
II. Assessment feedback in general pedagogy

Assessment feedback can be overt or covert (actively and/or passively sought and/or received), drawing from a range of sources (Evans, 2013). According to Evans (ibid.), a distinction needs to be made between a cognitivist and a socio-constructivist view of feedback. The former is closely associated with a directive telling approach where feedback functions as corrective, since an expert provides information to a passive recipient. The socio-constructivist feedback, however, is regarded as facilitative because it provides the students with suggestions to enable them to make their own revisions. This reflects a dynamic learning environment where the informant also learns from the students through dialogue and participation in shared experiences (cf. Carless, Salter, Yang & Lam, 2011). Carless et al. go on to propose that students can benefit fully from feedback processes only when they are self-monitoring their own work at increasingly higher levels. They term this development of self-regulative capacities as sustainable feedback (ibid.).

It is assumed that individual differences, variables such as personality, gender, culture, previous experiences of learning, motivation, beliefs about learning and expectations of the learning environment, cognitive styles impact on access to and perceptions of feedback (Evans, 2013). Furthermore, feedback exchanges are mediated by a range of contextual variables (e.g., subject-specific requirements of feedback), and awareness of subject-specific knowledge and communication skills are also important in feedback exchanges. The great number of variables that seem to shape feedback, enhance its efficiency are important to identify as any investigation into feedback giving and feedback receiving must take those variable into account.

The learner undoubtedly has a central role in utilizing feedback. Evans (2013) has proposed a number of personal qualities or traits that are considered to be critical, for instance, whether the student (a) can focus on meaning making, (b) can demonstrate perspective (is able to make sense of feedback through effective filtering), (c) possesses resilience (self-awareness and self-monitoring), (d) can demonstrate personal responsibility in the feedback and feed-forward process. Although these individual learner characteristics are important, they seem to be difficult to control or influence. Nevertheless, research should take into account their potential role in the process of feedback giving and getting.

Feedback can have different functions, depending on whom or what it is targeted at. Hattie and Timperley (2007), propose four types of feedback: task feedback is intended as information and activities with the purpose of clarifying and reinforcing aspects of the learning task; process feedback is aimed at helping the student to proceed with a learning task; self-regulation feedback comprises metacognitive elements that the students can activate to monitor and evaluate the strategies they use; and self-feedback is targeted at personal attributes, for instance, how well the student has performed. While these feedback types seem to be fully legitimate across different contexts, the learner in the
foreign language classroom also needs another type of feedback, which is closely linked to the special characteristic of the learning context: corrective feedback (CF) that handles erroneous second language (L2) production (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). This type of feedback, because of its central role in students’ developing language mastery, has been the focus of investigation in a number of SLA studies (Nicholas, Lightbown & Spada, 2001; Carpenter, Jeon, MacGregor & MacKey, 2006; Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Nassaji 2007, 2009; Li, 2010; Goo & MacKey, 2013), all of them trying to explore CF from different perspectives. In this paper, we will focus on oral corrective feedback research only.

III. Oral corrective feedback in SLA

Experimental studies to date have demonstrated that oral corrective feedback can facilitate L2 development but at the same time, it has also been shown that its effects may be constrained by contextual factors and individual learner differences (Li, 2014; Lyster & Saito, 2010). Lyster and Ranta (1997) identify six types of corrective strategy, providing the following examples in response to the erroneous utterance 'He has dog':

1. reformulating it (recast). ‘A dog’;
2. alerting the learner to the error and providing the correct form (explicit correction). ‘No, you should say “a dog”’;
3. asking for clarification (clarification request). ‘Sorry?’;
4. making a metalinguistic comment (metalinguistic feedback). ‘You need an indefinite article’;
5. eliciting the correct form (elicitation). ‘He has ...?’;
6. repeating the wrong sentence (repetition). ‘He has dog?’

Lyster and Ranta (1997) distinguish between recasts (1) and explicit correction (2) and the other four feedback types (3-6) in that the former provide the correct form and do not encourage a response from the learner (‘uptake’). The latter (types 3-6) can be referred to as prompts, which withhold the correct form and are more likely to result in learner uptake. Corrective feedback types listed above, however, can also be categorised as direct CF (1, 2, 4) vs. indirect CF (3, 5, 6). Lyster and Ranta suggest that the latter should be favoured over direct CF because excessive feedback can damage learner autonomy.

Kartchava and Ammar (2014) elaborated on CF types building on the work by Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Sheen (2004). Recasts were further distinguished into 4 subcategories as full, partial, interrogative and integrated reformulation (2014, p. 90). The following utterances illustrate the CF subtypes of recasts:

Erroneous student utterance: *He go to the movies yesterday.

- Full reformulation: Okay. He went to the movies yesterday.
- Partial reformulation: (He) Went.
- Interrogative reformulation: Where did you say he went yesterday?
Integrated reformulation: He went to the movies yesterday. Did he go alone or with someone?

Prompts that aim to elicit the correct form from the learner were also further distinguished by Kartchava and Ammar (2014) as full or partial repetition, elicitation and metalinguistic information. In response to *He go to the movies yesterday, the teacher may choose any of the 4 subtypes of prompts:

- Full repetition: He go to the movies yesterday?
- Partial repetition: Go yesterday? Go?
- Elicitation: He what [stressed] yesterday?
- Metalinguistic information: It happened yesterday. So what should we say? (How do we form the past in English?)

As can be seen above, corrective feedback can be offered in the form of addition, deletion, substitution or reordering (Ellis & Sheen, 2006). However, the role of recasts can also vary: the student/teacher orientation will determine whether CF is treated as an object or to convey a message. In other words, corrective feedback can be didactically or communicatively motivated. In SLA studies, the research focus has been twofold: on the one hand, researchers have investigated the learner’s perception of CF, on the other hand, they have tried to explore the effectiveness of various CF types. In the following, these two lines of investigations will be reviewed in order to have an overview of how oral corrective feedback is regarded by learners and how it impacts on learners’ performance, i.e. their language output.

3.1 Learners’ perceptions of oral corrective feedback

SLA research has focused on only some types of CF, primarily recasts and prompts. For instance, lower proficiency learners claimed to favour prompts over recasts (Yoshida, 2008), but more advanced proficiency learners preferred recasts to prompts (Brown, 2009). Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada (2001, p.751) found that there is uncertainty as to what learners make of recasts, “whether they perceive them as negative evidence or as further input showing how to say the same thing in a different way or whether they simply look upon recasts as an acknowledgement that their message has been understood”. This view is reinforced by Gass (2003), who suggested that learners may simply repeat a reformulation (recast) without true understanding just to show compliance.

Concerning learners’ perceptions of CF, Ellis and Sheen (2006) propose the most detailed interpretation for recasts, according to which they are complex discourse structures that can provide implicit negative feedback (rephrasing one or more sentence components correctly) and sometimes explicit, transparent correction, as well as positive evidence (samples of what is acceptable in L2). However, not all types of recasts have the same impact on learners, who may fail to perceive recasts as corrective in purpose in the first place. Lack of noticing the corrective force of recasts may be explained by the learner
orientation (recasts can be considered as positive or negative feedback), individual learner differences, or the learner’s developmental readiness.

Carpenter et al. (2006) set out to investigate recasts as to what extent learners identify them as corrective in nature or as a semantic repetition to express meaning in an alternative way. Based on previous research findings, the authors also selected nonlinguistic information embedded in the interactional context as a main research variable because learners were believed to make use of the paralinguistic and extralinguistic cues to infer the teacher’s intention correctly. According to the findings from 14 think-aloud protocols, nonlinguistic information (manual and facial gestures) was hardly noticed by the respondents as opposed to the linguistic information that they were able to identify in the recasts. It was concluded that the learners’ perceptions of recasts were minimally influenced by the nonverbal clues in contrast to the explicit linguistic information embedded in the recasts. On the other hand, in the context of the interaction learners seemed to be guided in their identification of recasts as such primarily by the negative evidence (learners’ original utterance) that was immediately followed by the teacher’s recast. However, it seems that in order to make recasts efficient, they need to be followed by learner response. Recasts followed by immediate repetition or primed production by the learner (i.e. productively using a form in one’s own way a short time after hearing it) are believed to be a more effective type of interactional feedback (McDonough & Mackey, 2006). In the next section, I will review some findings in relation to interactional feedback that elicits learner responses.

3.2 The effectiveness of oral corrective feedback

Effectiveness of corrective feedback is related to the rate of accurate repair (correction by the learner). Although the list of CF types is quite extensive, as was shown above, researchers seem to have been most interested in recasts. Nassaji (2007) examined the role of reformulations (recasts) and compared it to that of elicitation. The former functions both as positive evidence (correct model of the target language is provided) and as negative feedback, as a result of which the feedback can help the learner to notice the gap between his/her original output and the teacher’s output. Elicitation, on the other hand, refers to “feedback that does not reformulate the learner’s erroneous utterance; rather, it pushes the learner, implicitly or explicitly, to reformulate it into a correct form” (p. 514). These two types of CF were chosen by Nassaji for investigation because of the conflicting research findings by Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Ellis et al. (2001 as cited in Nassaji, 2007). Lyster and Ranta found that although recasts were the most frequent type of feedback, they generated only a limited amount of repair of the learners’ erroneous utterances. In contrast, elicitation, although used considerably less frequently, led to larger amounts of learner repair. According to Ellis et al., however, the success rate of repairs was considerably higher than in the study by Lyster and Ranta. In order to account for the differences in the research findings, Nassaji mentions the following variables that may have influenced the outcome: the type of form targeted, learners’ cognitive orientation, the learner’s developmental readiness, the types of task used, and learners’
memory, aptitude and motivation. Furthermore, Nassaji also points out that when a specific type of feedback is enhanced with additional features such as added stress, rising intonation, or other verbal phrases, its effectiveness may improve.

The analysis of recasts by Nassaji helped to produce the most detailed classification of recasts. There are six different types identified (Nassaji 2007, p.527-528).

1. Isolated recast, without prompt: The feedback isolated the error and reformulated it with a falling intonation outside of the context with no other additional prompts to highlight the error or push the learner to respond to feedback.

*Example 1*

Student: and a girl behind the woman is rob, rob her.
Teacher: Robbing her.

2. Isolated recast, with prompt: The feedback isolated the error and reformulated it outside of the context with a rising intonation and/or added stress, thus prompting the learner to respond to the feedback.

*Example 2*

Student: The woman who stole the purse realized the situation and she ran away more fast.
Teacher: More quickly?

3. Embedded recast, without prompt: The feedback reformulated the error with a falling intonation within the context without highlighting the error or prompting the learner to respond to feedback.

*Example 3*

Student: Her friend pointed . . . pointed . . . another woman and said to her friend said to his friend . . .
Teacher: Ok, another man pointed to the woman.

4. Embedded recast, with prompt: The feedback reformulated the error within the context with a rising intonation and/or added stress, thus prompting the learner to respond to feedback.

*Example 4*

Student: The woman found a police on the street.
Teacher: The woman found a police officer?
5. Recast, with enhanced prompts: The feedback reformulated the erroneous utterance with a rising intonation and/or added stress as well as with other additional verbal prompts such as, “Do you mean . . .?”

Example 5

Student: At this time the wallet, the wallet fall, um, fall to the ground.
Teacher: Do you mean it FELL to the ground?

6. Recast, with expansion: The feedback reformulated the erroneous utterance but at the same time expanded on it by adding new information to it. This feedback occurred mostly with a confirmatory tone with no additional prompts.

Example 6

Student: He steal the purse.
Teacher: Oh, he stole the purse and ran away.

Nassaji (2007, p. 528) also managed to distinguish five types of elicitation, proposing the following:

1. Unmarked elicitation: The feedback elicited a reformulation without marking the error or making any reference to the error. This kind of feedback was mainly in the form of simple clarification requests.

Example 7

Student: There was an old woman who runt some material before.
Teacher: Sorry, what?

2. Marked elicitation: The feedback elicited a reformulation by marking the error or making reference to it in the form of interrogative repetition.

Example 8

Student: So and she, she get, get the wallet.
Teacher: Get, get the wallet?

3. Marked elicitation, with prompt: The feedback elicited a reformulation by marking or making reference to the error by repeating the error with rising intonation and also by adding some extra verbal prompts (e.g., “Could you say that again?”) to prompt the learner further to respond to the feedback.

Example 9

Student: She easily catched the girl.
Teacher: She catched the girl? I’m sorry, say that again?

4. Marked elicitation, with enhanced prompt: The feedback elicited a reformulation by marking or repeating the error with a rising intonation and with additional more explicit metalinguistic or other verbal prompts that indicated more explicitly to the learner that something was wrong with the utterance.

Example 10

Student: A man who are walking with the woman.
Teacher: A man who ARE walking? Is that correct?

5. Elliptical elicitation: The feedback elicited the correct form by repeating the utterance up to the error and waiting for the learner to supply the correct form.

Example 11

Student: And when the young girl arrive, ah, beside the old woman.
Teacher: When the young girl . . .?

The frequency of occurrence was checked by Nassaji (2007) for all the above types of recasts and elicitation forms. The findings revealed that the teachers used type 4 (embedded recasts with prompt) the most frequently (59%), while among the elicitation types, type 3 (marked elicitation, with prompt) was used the most often (48%). As for the effectiveness of these CF types, Nassiji’s findings are somewhat disappointing. There was a relatively low level of success reported for both reformulations and elicitations in general. When the two selected feedback types resulted in accurate repair by the learner, however, both recasts and elicitation were used in combination with some kind of feedback enhancement prompt. In other words, more explicit verbal prompts were needed to generate higher rates of repair in both cases. This finding underscores the role of salience and explicitness as important characteristics of effective feedback in dyadic student-teacher interaction. Nassaji (2009) in a subsequent study also examined whether recasts or elicitation were more effective. According to his findings, when learners managed to provide appropriate repair after receiving elicitation, they seemed more likely to remember their own corrections than the corrections provided by the teacher in the form of recasts. Nassaji suggested that when “learners are pushed to self-correct, they may become aware of the gap in their knowledge and their attention may be directed to subsequent input” (2009, p. 438). Nevertheless, elicitation appeared to work only when the learner had latent knowledge of the required form, while the effectiveness of recasts was primarily influenced by the explicitness or enhancement of the recast.

The effectiveness of oral corrective feedback has also been explored through two meta-analyses (Li, 2014; Lyster & Saito, 2010). Li called attention to some significant moderating variables such as research context and setting; task type; treatment length and interlocutor type. Other potentially important moderating variables were also
mentioned, for instance, the learner’s age, gender, proficiency; L1 transfer and complexity of the target structure. The meta-analysis by Li revealed that explicit feedback was more effective than implicit feedback over a short term, and implicit feedback was remembered over a long period of time. In addition to examining the size effect of many of the aforementioned significant moderating variables, Lyster and Saito’s meta-analysis also focused on age and whether the instructional setting was a second or a foreign language classroom. They found that younger learners benefited from CF more than older learners, and that studies carried out in foreign language contexts produced larger effect sizes than those in second language contexts, but irrespective of instructional settings, CF was facilitative of L2 development.

4. Discussion

As has been shown above, oral corrective feedback plays an important role in learners’ L2 development and can be provided for them in a variety of forms that range from explicit to implicit, direct to indirect, isolated to embedded, simple to enhanced, marked to unmarked, complete to elliptical, and are provided with or without further prompt. The effectiveness of the different forms, however, are mostly judged on the basis of evidence for learner repair. Given the complex interplay among a great number of variables that shape interaction in L2 in the foreign language classroom, there is sometimes straightforward, sometimes conflicting evidence in relation to the efficiency of some CF types. While recast, elicitation and prompt have been extensively researched, there are a number of other CF forms that have received little attention from SLA researchers until now. Furthermore, assessment feedback, especially if it is in the form of recast, seems to be difficult for some learners to discern as corrective in nature because CF is part of the dyadic exchange between the teacher and the learner where meaning negotiation may override pedagogical intentions, i.e. learners may fail to notice the corrective function of the teacher’s feedback.

5. Conclusion

Corrective feedback clearly represents formative assessment or assessment for learning because it is intended to facilitate students’ learning by giving them feedback that will guide them further in their L2 development. Furthermore, CF can represent both the cognitivist and the socio-constructivist view of feedback because some types of feedback (i.e. recast, explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback) provide straightforward information as to what needs correction in the learner output, while other types (clarification request, elicitation and repetition) seem to be more facilitative, therefore closer to the socio-constructivist view of feedback, because they encourage learners to make their own revisions without direct teacher intervention. All corrective feedback types, however, aim to activate the learner, involving him/her in self-correction. Based on the review of SLA research findings above, there seems to be no one single most effective form of corrective feedback, therefore, L2 teachers are advised to employ a variety of CF forms that have been outlined above. When it comes to recast, however, research
evidence suggests that the efficiency of recast is dependent upon its explicitness or enhancement. Future research is warranted in order to explore factors that may positively impact on the use of other corrective feedback forms.

References


Pedagogy of Multinational Realtime Online Trainings (Webinars) for Blended Learnings

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Abstract

The study aimed at the development of a pedagogical approach for multinational online seminars, embedded in a Blended Learning scenario. To obtain a sound database for the approach, the teams from six different countries conducted a sequence of transnational realtime online seminars during one year. All sessions were evaluated from the participants and from the trainers. Based on this empirical database they worked out an educational approach for the conduction of webinars. As Zoumenou (Zoumenou et al., 2015, 67) and also Slåtto, T. (Slåtto, T. et al., 2016, p. 98) already stated, articles and academic studies about interactive webinars are quite rare in peer-reviewed journals. Included in an international Blended Learning scenario the webinars turned out to be a highly efficient tool for the transnational cooperative learning and institutional cooperation. Nevertheless, a webinar takes careful planning and content creation to make it an attractive event for the learners and to increase the participant satisfaction.

Keywords: Web Based Instruction, Electronic Learning, Blended Learning, Teaching Methods, Participant Satisfaction, Educational Technology, Computer uses in education, Cooperative Learning

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Introduction

This paper presents a result of a two-year transnational cooperation of different education providers applying Blended Learning with the integration of webinars. The activity was part of the ERASMUS+ Project "European Blended Learning and HDR-Photography" co-financed by the European Commission. The guiding research questions were as follows:

- Are webinars an efficient tool for transnational Blended Learning?
- Are webinars easy to use?
- Which teaching concepts and online pedagogy could be applied to make a webinar an interesting and efficient learning event?

The goal was to test and to show that transnational webinars are an efficient tool for the internationalisation of the education sector, for cross-sectoral networking of different education providers and for the improvement of learning quality and learning opportunities. In one year the VIR2COPE-Teams conducted a sequence of transnational webinars with online-trainers from six different countries. The object of learning was High Dynamic Range Photography.

Similar to a face-to-face meeting in a brick-and-mortar location, the webinars require a good educational approach adapted to the needs of learners and learning content (Hermann-Ruess, 2012). Universities, education providers for adult and further education as well as companies contributed their skills and vast experiences from different educational sectors to work out a practical pedagogical guide for online-trainers presented in this essay.

The study shall contribute to the increased implementation of Blended Learning and motivate teachers and learners to use webinars. As Forgo Sandor (Forgo, 2013, p.1) already stated there is still a lack of digital relevant device systems in educational institutions and digital skills of teachers.

Definition of Terms

The term "webinar" is composed of the two words "Web" and "Seminar". It is a web-based E-Learning tool, a realtime online seminar where the group meets simultaneously in a virtual classroom through the internet. One or more online-trainers conduct the online-seminar.

Until now there is no consensus on a definition of Blended Learning. To define it as a combination of traditional presence meetings and e-Learning is the least common denominator.

Blended Learning is the combination of direct instruction (traditional presence meetings) with elements of e-Learning, for example complete computer-based learning
environments or web-based tools like webinars, tutorials or online-collaborations. Meanwhile the range of different e-Learning tools is large. Virtual classrooms could be used as an interesting interface to work with other WBT's or CBT's.

Empirical Database

Within the Vir2Cope Project the teams involved practised cooperation as European Blended Learning. In two years four presence meetings and more than 80 webinars were conducted. At the beginning of the project the trainers and teachers of the teams met for a short-term training activity in order to learn and exchange knowledge about online-training and HDR-Photography. In the following year a series of 17 official transnational webinars was launched. Online-trainers from Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and United Kingdom alternated in each webinar. Various international guests such as persons from rural countries, disabled persons, teachers, managers, retired persons, students, pupils and political decisionmakers were invited to attend the webinars. Many of them had never participated in a webinar. Additionally a webinar with 5 deaf persons, a sign language interpreter and an online-trainer was conducted on national level. All sessions were recorded for further evaluation and documentation. The web conferencing software Adobe Connect 9 was used as virtual classroom (Online Meeting Software Review, 2016).

Finally in 17 webinars 462 attendies from 14 different countries took part. Using a big screen some teams participated as a face-to-face group in the webinar. All participants as well as trainers were invited to evaluate the webinars with an online-questionnaire. The questionnaires have been worked out from the trainers of the project-teams during a presence meeting. Beside oral feedback 116 questionnaires were sent. As a result a large majority affirmed that webinars are user-friendly and that they would be ready to make
use of webinars in their own field of activity, as learners or trainers. The majority of the participants stated, that webinars are a good way to learn.

Since the tools of the virtual classrooms are often similar, the results of the study can be applied to other virtual classrooms (Online Meeting Software Review, 2016).

**Methodology and Implementation: Blended Learning**

The involvement of experienced teachers and trainers from different European countries and from different educational sectors (university, vocational training, adult education, school) was an important element of the project, providing a very interesting pool of different experiences, skills and educational approaches. The systematic evaluation of the recorded webinars with the online-questionnaires, oral feedback and comments in the chat of the virtual classroom provided empirical data from the trainers and participants. Blended Learning with the inclusion of webinars was tested as a self-experience from the teams by learning together about HDR Photography.

The successful implementation of Blended Learning depends on a composition of methods adapted to the learning content, learning goal, the learners and learning situation. Blended Learning *per se* does not guarantee learning success. Thus the conception of the learning environment for the project was accordingly designed:

At first, the e-learning tools useful for the project were selected. In the present case the learning situation took place in the context of a transnational, cross-sectoral cooperation in a two-year project. The conditions of the persons involved were conceivably different, for example with respect to the knowledge of learning management systems (LMS) and other e-learning tools. The introduction of a high-quality, interactive, computer-based learning program would have been too expensive and inefficient. As an alternative, an extensive Wiki (TikiWiki) was implemented for e-collaboration of the project-teams.

Thus, for the project-cooperation shared learning tools were selected, which are well known like email, chat and login-area of a website. This composition improved the ease of use of e-learning and optimized the cooperation (Kerres, 2016).

The presence meeting of the trainers at the beginning of the project was primarily to introduce the learning topic, to allow peer-to-peer exchange, and to convey the implementation of webinars under the practical guidance of an experienced online-trainer. The instruction-led learning in a brick-and-mortar location provided possibilities for interpersonal, two-way communication, which has an important social function especially for an intercultural group. Team building, interpersonal communication, informal learning and motivation are important strengths of the presence meetings.

Individuals learn in different ways. Knowledge acquisition takes place in many ways, for example through hearing, seeing, talking about and applying. Depending on how people can best comprehend content, they can be assigned to different types of learners. From
this point of view Blended Learning offers many possibilities for the different acquisition of knowledge.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of Webinars**

Webinars save cost and time, for example travel and logistic cost which could be saved with an online meeting instead of a (transnational) face-to-face meeting. To attend a webinar you only need a computer with internet access. This nearly ubiquitous availability of an education offer removes barriers to participation and supports the integration of disadvantaged groups, for example, physically handicapped and elderly people, people from rural areas or those with domestic responsibilities such as caregivers or parents. Webinars are conducted without a local binding, which also supports the cross-sectoral, international cooperation of education providers. Experts from around the world can be invited as guest lecturers to a presentation or an interview via webinar. Whether in education, private life, policy or other sectors, the scope of an actor increases significantly by using webinars. Spontaneous meetings of large groups from all over the world are possible. Only one participant of a webinar needs to have the software for a virtual classroom.

Since a webinar takes place in real time and all participants meet at the same time in the virtual classroom, and since an online trainer and not an electronic voice leads the meeting, a webinar becomes an interesting social function. All participants can communicate with each other, especially using the chat tool of the virtual classroom. They are able to observe reactions from the other participants. Some people who are reluctant in presence meetings are more integrated and active in webinars. This effect was also mentioned from Zoumenou (Zoumenou et al., 2015, 64) who stated that "shy participants enjoyed the anonymity of the virtual component, promoting more lively discussions". Virtual classrooms are an ideal tool for e-collaboration of groups, for example for research, other working group meetings or even large-scale events. The recording of webinars ensures an excellent documentation as well as the opportunity to watch the records one or more times in order to deepen contents or to make up missed meetings.

The didactic design of a webinar should be adapted to the learner and the learning content. As in a presence meeting an attractive, attention-catching, for example multimedia presentation, does not necessarily bring the expected learning effects. Participants can get bored and leave the webinar unnoticed. The virtual presence of participants can be controlled only partly e.g. through their login in the VC, which is visible for the online-trainer, or by temporarily activating their webcam.

Especially for the learning of practical skills, pure e-Learning is limited. Therefore the method of Blended Learning, where webinars are combined with presence phases, provides an optimal solution. Although a kind of social interaction take place in a VC, non-verbal communication, such as body language, facial expressions, gestures and eye contact can not or can only scarcely (webcam) be integrated. This has advantages and
disadvantages. Disadvantages of nonverbal communication, like the transmission of not willfully transmitted messages or - especially in the context of an intercultural exchange - faulty decoded nonverbal messages, are omitted in webinars whereas elements of para-verbal communication such as voice-level and intonation can be used. Adult learners of a one-year part-time study, where presence meetings were augmented by regular webinars felt that only a few presence meetings are necessary for the group-building process. Once they have got to know each other personally, the webinars become even more of a social function, because the participants can associate the others with their names.

The technical function of webinars entails specific risks, for example the loss of internet connection, slow network speed or technical settings of the computer preventing the trouble-free participation in the webinar. Therefore, brief technical checks before a webinar are essential.

**The Qualification of an Online-Trainer**

Whereas a learner could participate in a webinar without background knowledge, the conduction of a webinar as an online trainer needs at least a short introduction (text or instruction-led) and a little practice. For inexperienced online trainers, it is difficult to present content and at the same time keep an eye on the chat window or using various software applications without major time delays in the webinar. Delays and technical problems during a webinar affect the participants and have significant impact on the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of webinars.

**Learning environment: The Virtual Classroom (VC)**

The learning environment of a VC provides tools for different presentations, polls, groupworking and the exchange of information. Combined with face-to-face meetings in a brick-and-mortar location all kinds of learning contents can be completely transferred with webinars.

Adapted on the requirements of the learners, the learning environment of VCs can be enlarged enormously by combination with other e-Learning tools (Muller, 2012, pp.75), like complete Learning Management Systems (LMS) as MOODLE or ILIAS or with freeware tools for e-collaboration like WIKIS. VCs are group-software available as chargeable or free software on the market.

The learning environment of a webinar is different from a face-to-face meeting, where the trainer and/or organiser (education provider) of the meeting design the learning environment. There are things like whiteboard, black board, posters, beamer and pins. The room could be white or colourful, dark or bright, equipped with comfortable chairs or not and so on. The learning environment of a webinar is composed of the graphical user interface of the VC and the learning environment of the participant who is sitting on his or her computer at home or any other location. The learning environment of the VC is designed from both the software company providing the VC and the online-trainer. But
the learning environment of each participant must be designed by the participant. This is an important point, because nobody can concentrate when the learning environment provides lots of possibilities to disturb and divert the attention of the participant like other persons or other activities.

**The main important Tools of a Virtual Classroom**

- **Share my Screen**

This tool enables the online-trainer to share the computer screen with all participants. That means that all applications on his computer can be shown to the participants. Individual file types could also be shared. It is like using a beamer, but instead of projecting the picture on a wall, the participants can watch it on their computers.

- **Chat**

VCs usually provide an integrated chat tool. It is most important for the communication of the group in the webinar.

![Screenshot of the graphical interface of a virtual classroom. The chat tool can be seen in the lower right hand corner](image)

It is already difficult in smaller groups of approximately ten people to give all participants the right to speak (audio function/microphone). The conduction of the webinar would become uncontrolled. It is enough if only one or two persons have an option to speak at the same time. Usually the participants should have no right to speak, but the trainer can activate this tool temporary for single participants if it is necessary. The chat tool is continuously available for all participants and trainers. It is possible to write something at any time, like questions, answers, information, common brainstorming, feedback. Every comment in the chat is documented, which is a valuable source of information for
the trainer and participants. During the webinar the trainer or co-trainer can watch the chat for questions and other comments.

- **Whiteboard**

Nearly all VCs offer an integrated whiteboard, which provides simple tools to paint and write in a screen window. All participants can get the right to write and paint something on the whiteboard, which enhance the integration of all in the webinar. Short own activities like painting a sign, writing a comment or gathering keywords for a new topic on the whiteboard increases the attention and integration of the participants enormously. For example, a simple activity could be to upload a map on the whiteboard and all participants can mark their location on the map. This could impressively show the catchment area of the webinar. The whiteboard is a creative tool which should be included from time to time in the webinar.

- **Polls**

Polls are useful for the integration of the participants and exchange of impersonal informations concerning the whole group. The trainer could formulate any question that can be answered by choosing yes or no or where different answers can be clicked.

The trainer could ask for information like: How is your knowledge about a special topic? (high, middle, low, nothing), which could give valuable information how to proceed in the webinar. Polls need a bit of preparation time. Thus they should be prepared before the webinar starts in order to avoid waiting time for the participants. Polls are ideal for bigger groups of approximately 15 or more persons. Within smaller groups the chat facility is more practical for a poll. Whiteboards as well as polls keep the class engaged.

- **Possibility to change the role between host (Online-Trainer), presenter and participant**

During the webinar each participant could get the right to be the online-trainer or the presenter. Similar to a face-to-face meeting, different persons can present contents in a session. Although it needs a bit time for a common computer-user to get acquainted with the complete range of tools of a VC, it is possible to present for example a powerpoint-presentation without training. In the transnational VIR2COPE-webinars the trainer providing the VC software opened the sessions. After it was opened, the role of the presenter was transferred to those who prepared the respective webinar, no matter in which country they were located. If there arose any technical or software problem, the presenter was provided with support from the experienced online-trainer, if necessary. This aspect of cooperation is important for experts, who could be invited to be the presenter in a webinar, but are not experienced online-trainers.
The possibility to record webinars allows an excellent documentation opportunity. Participants and trainers can watch the record one or several times as a review, to deepen their knowledge, to analyse the pedagogical setting, to evaluate the webinar or gathering data, for example from polls or texts in the chat.

**Duration of a Webinar**

The duration of a webinar is based on different parameters, like the content, the participants, the trainer and the teaching method. Usually one hour is accepted by the participants. In the evaluations of the Vir2Cope webinars 94% of the learners agreed with a duration of one hour. Nevertheless, some online-trainers stated that it is also possible to conduct an interesting webinar with a length of two hours. Several participants felt also that the webinars could last longer. The webinar could be divided into different sequences like short videos, presentations, images, brainstorming with the group, etc.

As in traditional face-to-face meetings, webinars with participants from different backgrounds or cross-cultural groups are also more demanding for teaching. The more homogeneous the group the more adapted the curriculum can be taught. For intercultural groups, an additional amount of time for questions and explanations should be planned.

**The Preparation of a Webinar**

Generally everything that can be shown with a computer and beamer can also be presented with a VC such as different software applications, contents from the internet, images, texts and videos. The inclusion of a co-speaker for the monitoring of the chat during the webinar is helpful, because the presentation itself requires the full attention of a trainer.

Technical trouble shooting can occur, especially at the beginning of a webinar, such as trouble with audio and/or video, computer settings, lack of installed apps required for the VC, or connectivity of the internet. The online-trainer should be able to give short support. In a sequence of webinars, possible technical problems usually disappear after one or two sessions. The screen of the VC differs slightly between online-trainer and participants. Thus it is helpful for the online-trainer to log onto the classroom with a second computer as participant. It allows the trainer to see how fast the upload of the presentation is and to control the correct display of the webinar. Concerning the technical functionality of webinars, the tolerance of the participants seems lower than in presence meetings. Therefore it is very important to avoid technical problems (Wong Sze Ki, 2012).

Especially for intercultural groups it could be helpful to provide some learning materials for the preparation of the webinar. In the Vir2Cope project the participants received an e-book about HDR-photography in english language some weeks before the start. English
language was also the language in which the webinars were conducted. This way the linguistic and content-related preparation was supported.

To avoid boring waiting time of the participants open all software programs and internet pages which will be used during the webinar before the session starts. It is much faster hide the opened programmes or sites in the taskbar and open them with a click on the respective icon in the taskbar when needed.

To find everything quickly, load images, videos and documents you want to show in special folders on your desktop. The file size of videos could be a problem for a fluent streaming during the webinar. It is necessary to reduce the size of the videos as much as possible and to upload them on the server of the VC provider before the webinar in order to enable also the audio.

**Intercultural Webinars**

How can webinars be influenced by cultural differences? How can an online-trainer deal with intercultural differences in a webinar? What kind of intercultural differences should be kept in mind when the trainer conducts the webinar? These are questions that arise in the context of a webinar with a multinational group.

It is quite difficult for an online-trainer to discover intercultural differences in a group of webinar-participants, much more difficult than in a presence meeting, where during personal contact, information is transferred through nonverbal communication. A precise differentiation of behaviour between personal affinities and cultural backgrounds is also problematic during the webinar.

The online-trainer can try to avoid cultural induced misunderstandings by being careful with sensitive themes such as the perception of traditions, clothing, gender-specific behavior patterns and gender roles. It is helpful to frequently ask for feedback or opinions during the webinar. The trainer could remind the participants repeatedly on the multinationality of the group, which can increase the tolerance towards difference and ideally can be seen as an opportunity to take advantage of cultural diversity. A presence meeting at the start of the cooperation is very helpful to learn about the cultural differences within the group.

On the other side in a virtual meeting many sensitive cultural areas as the different distance behavior of cultures disappear. The non-verbal communication in webinars is considerably reduced, which reduces the unintended cause of misunderstandings due to different cultural backgrounds.

The language barrier in an intercultural group must be considered mandatory. In a multinational webinar the language of instruction is usually english. Most of the participants are inevitably non english native speakers. It is important to make sure that the content that was communicated, was understood. increased integration of imagery
such as pictures, videos, sketches and diagrams, can support the understanding of content.

An interpreter could act as co-speaker in the webinar. During the Vir2Cope-Project a webinar with deaf people was conducted. The online-trainer, the sign language interpreter and the participants were all using their webcams and were able to follow the webinar by using sign language and partly the chat tool.

**An educational approach for Webinars. The Didactical Setting.**

Similar to face-to-face meetings there are different parameters in a webinar important for the educational approach like the seize of the group. In a webinar with 15-20 participants, a direct communication with single persons can take place. For group sizes above 20 participants it becomes more difficult. Teacher-centred teaching in a webinar means that the participants are hardly or not at all involved in the presentation. Nevertheless, even in bigger groups, it is possible to activate the participants of a webinar for example with the chat facility, whiteboard or with polls. These tools increase the attention and motivation of the participants enormously.

To switch on the webcams in a webinar could be an attractive thing. All participants of the webinar can see each other. It is more personal and is giving the impression of a real face-to-face meeting. Several fields of non-verbal communication are available like clothes, gestures and facial expressions. Unfortunately technical problems such as weak transfer rates or limited computer display space to show all participants do not usually allow such sessions. It could be helpful if at least the online trainer welcomes the participants more personally when he switch on his webcam at the beginning of the webinar. The effect: The visible online-trainer conveys a real synchronous meeting. All participants feel a social presence and a kind of "virtual team spirit" can be generated. The feeling of a common meeting makes the participants alert and open for the following presentation. Additionally a friendly spoken word from the trainer can influence the learning climate even in a webinar. This fact should not be underestimated. In some of the VIR2COPE-webinars it was demonstrated how to generate a relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere with a short video at the beginning of the webinar, where the online-trainer welcomed all participants in a friendly manner, standing in front of a garden and demonstrating briefly some tools of his digital camera. Comments like "teachers were very nice and friendly" or " The speaker was very helpful and I like his way of teaching" proved the possibilities of an online-trainer to influence the learning climate even in a webinar.

A high percentage of communication is taking place through the voice and body language. Often the content-related communication is not as important as non-verbal communication. Also in the VC the conscious use of voice is particularly important.
Intonation, pitch of voice and speech rate influence the subjective evaluation of the webinar enormously. Most of the listeners feel comfortable when the pitch of voice is neutral. Intonation influences the content-related communication. Clear intonation of a speaker transfers self-consciousness, competence, can inspire the audience and attract attention. A monotonous voice appear negative whereas the variation of pitch has a positive effect on content-related communication and interpersonal relationship. In a multinational event intercultural differences must be taken into account. Some languages have more variability in intonation than others.

Intonation can be used to tell something about the intention behind what has been said. Voice can express emotions. You can speak loudly or softly, fast or slow, high or low pitched. Every variation of voice influence the communication. Therefore the conscious use of the voice is one of the most important tools of an online-trainer to design the webinar. The VIR2COPE webinars were conducted by different online trainers. Nearly all of them were non-native speakers. Their use of voice was a crucial point for the positive evaluation of their webinar.

As in a face-to-face-seminar, variation and creativity are also necessary in a webinar to make it an interesting and efficient learning event. To use only one application during the whole webinar could easily turn it into a boring presentation, whereas few changes in the programme increase the attention of the participants and quality of the webinar. Sequences with more ambitious learning contents should alternate with less challenging parts. For example a Powerpoint presentation could be interrupted in order to show something on the internet. Then the trainer turns back to the Powerpoint presentation. The navigation from one tool to the other should not require a long search for certain files. Besides the opportunity for the learners to watch the record of the webinars, the online-trainer could also provide one or more documents for download with important contents supplementary to the webinar. Short video clips during the webinars could substitute practical hands-on demonstrations in face-to-face meetings.

Software applications can be demonstrated very well in a webinar. The trainer can open a software programme and show step by step what can be done with this programme while the participants can follow directly on their computers. In case of questions they can ask in the chat, which is visible all the time in a separate screen window. These sequences could require high concentration from the participants. The duration of such sequences should not be too long or probably divided into single steps. Polls, brainstorming with the chat or other less demanding sequences can be interposed. Small explanation videos enhance the attention of the participants and could show practical aspects of learning contents.

The integration of other web-based or computer-based e-Learning tools in a VC could be an enrichment for the webinar. There exist internet platforms providing short interactive or game-based learning contents about special subjects, some even for free. Using the tool "Share my screen" the online-trainer can easily include interactive e-Learning contents.
that match to his/her webinar. While the trainer conducts step by step through the e-Learning programme, the participants of the webinar could contribute with the chat facility or get the right to speak (activating their audio). Even YouTube-films can be used for the webinars. Technical problems with films can sometimes occur with the audio. Using a cable with two pin connectors the trainer forwards the audio signal of the video directly to the connector of the microphone in the computer. The volume control must be carefully set in order to avoid feedback of the sound.

Brainstorming using the chat facility is a useful tool to profit from the synergy of the group and include all learners into the session. However, the inclusion of non-native speakers with the chat depends on their language knowledge. Polls are reduced to a more concrete question, where the participants can easily vote. This tool is suitable for non-native speakers with less language knowledge, because no active language use is required.

Small digressions inspired by questions or remarks from the participants convey the feeling of a group meeting, where all can involve themselves in the debate. These are common activities in a face-to-face learning session. It is also possible to do it in a webinar. The influence of the learners on the course of the webinar is an important point for the integrated learning process.

If the participants are very active in the chat then the supervision of the chat, parallel to the presentation, could be a challenging task for the online-trainer during the webinar. A co-speaker for the supervision of the chat is helpful. He or she can answer questions or catch the trainer's attention for important questions in the chat. It is important that the chat doesn't become more central than the presentation. To answer questions written in the chat not continuously but during a few breaks in the presentation, or at the end of the webinar, is also a possibility to avoid a strong deviation of the planned presentation.

**Summary of the comments in the questionnaires**

116 questionnaires were filled out from the participants of the webinars. Not all questionnaires were filled out completely. In answer to the question which tool of the VC they like, the chat (98 %), Powerpoint-presentations (95 %), the demonstration of software applications (95%), the integration of videos (80%) and the use of polls (89%) got the highest ratings. Working with images was favored by all.

Several comments were given to the questions asked in the questionnaire. Some exemplary statements are listed as follows:

*Do you think webinars are a good way to learn?*
- YES. But it is important to be well prepared.

*What is your main field of activity? Do you think that realtime-online-seminars could be useful in your field of activity?*
I work with youth. Webinar is a very effective way to reach teens and learn. It is an interesting educational method. There are risks of the Internet.

- I am a high energy physicist. In my field of activity, realtime online seminars are widely used and turn out to be extremely useful.

- I am a sign language interpreter for deaf persons. Webinars are really a great thing, because deaf persons have usually no opportunity to participate with their sign language interpreter.

- I am absolutely convinced that webinars are a good way to learn. It saves time since I can participate from home. No driving and no travel cost.

- My main activity is consultant in [IT-branch]. It would be certainly very helpful to conduct realtime online-seminars in this field. We test currently E-Learning in the company, but unfortunately I have never the chance to ask something :-(

And - for sure - exactly this is the point I like very much in Online-seminars!

Same like in common face-to-face-meetings: If the seminar is prepared interesting with different pedagogical tools, it is a good way to learn. Depending also on the learning type of a person.

**Could you concentrate all the time during the webinar?**

- In every webinar Internet access and Audio must be checked. Problems can easily occur.

- Yes, but it is important to keep away things which could distract during the webinar. It is the best to be alone.

**Should anything different in the webinar?**

- NO. The Online-Trainer prepared a Powerpoint-Presentation for the Webinar. The Powerpoint was very lively and easy to follow because the trainer included a lot of pictures. She spoke clearly and slowly, well adapted to the level of no native speakers.

- NO. The participants have seen a powerpoint as introduction and for the description of the project, the online-trainers used a video. They stopped the videos from time to time in order to explain the steps within the project. Finally photos from the activities and the results of the project were shown. At the end of the webinar the participants had the opportunity to ask questions through the chat. The online-trainers answered the questions with the micro. Altogether a really good webinar!

- Simple subjects, adapted to the level of attendees is always necessary. There should be also time for discussion or questions-answers.

- It would be good to try to include some way of involving participants more - surveys etc during the presentation / interaction such as asking each person to comment in the Chat window

**Which sequences or tools of the webinar did you like most?**

- The level of the topic was already very high right at the beginning. It was good that in the second part of the webinar there were used a lot of impressive HDR-images in order to show the potential and possibilities. That was relaxing for the participants. The trainer switched between a Powerpoint Presentation and other programs which increased the attention of the participants.
If 30 persons are involved, you easily loose the overview of the chat. I did not watch the chat all the time during the webinar. But the chat is important to post questions. The topic about HDR-software was very interesting for me. The final questions at the end of the webinar was good. It was an opportunity for the participants to give a feedback.

Professional videos of the project combined with a very good powerpoint-presentation were shown. The participants had the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the webinar. It was very good that also the social worker of CRINABEL was available for questions. That has emphasized one of the strengths of the webinars: The participants from all over the world can ask questions to a special person in Lisbon! Great opportunity for interviews!

*Any other comments?*

- Generally I think the possibility for further education with webinars is a great chance for those, who are living in rural areas like me, who have not so many learning possibilities or have not so many time to visit lectures or coming every week to a presence meeting in the cities.

- Concerning the technical point of view: It is clear that every start of a webinar needs a bit time in order to solve all the technical aspects like audio and video. Usually the webinars are running as a sequence of webinars. In this case the technical problems are declining very quickly and the webinars can run fluently. Technical troubles in the internet can occur. This is not avoidable.

- The short talk between the online-trainer and a participant at the end of the webinar about the importance of the combination of marketing and HDR-Photography emphasized once more the work of the online-trainer and her team.

**Conclusions**

The survey revealed that Webinars and Blended Learning can be applied for nearly all kinds of learning and communication events in all education sectors. Since webinars are user-friendly they can also be used for less educated people or for schoolclasses. The way in which participants experience a webinar depends on the way the webinar is conducted. For many participants of the international Vir2Cope-webinars it was the first time that they had been involved in a webinar. Nevertheless, only few technical difficulties occurred and most of them reconfirmed the ease of use of a VC. This result coincides also with a smaller study with 50 engineers (Malik et. al., 2015, 1765).

All persons involved in the Vir2Cope project reconfirmed the advantages and efficiency of webinars and Blended Learning.

Most of the participants could imagine to use webinars as a training tool in their own field of activity and stated that webinars are a good and convenient way to learn.

During the project only a short training for an online-trainer was necessary to start with a simple webinar. This result could motivate all teachers to include webinars in their
teaching activities whether they are at university or in the field of further- or adult education. Online seminars for online-trainers could be a useful tool to make more teachers familiar with VCs.

An online-pedagogy for webinars revealed that there are several approaches that should be taken into account for transnational webinars like:

- the attentive use of voice
- the use of different tools of the Virtual Classroom to increase attention of participants
- the alternation of more and less demanding learning sections
- the attentive use of images, video and audio
- how to enhance interactivity in the Virtual Classroom

The possibility of cross-sectoral national and transnational cooperation of education providers is still expandable. Ahrens (Ahrens et al., 2016,15) stated that "In higher education the transition from distance learning to online learning has started". Whereas most of the universities are already working in an international network, other education providers have less or no international cooperations. Blended Learning with the inclusion of webinars could increase such cooperations enormously in a convenient way and contribute efficiently to the European educational area.

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Disclaimer: The content of this essay does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in this essay lies entirely with the author(s).

Abbreviations: The following abbreviations are used in this article:

HDR: High Dynamic Range
WBT: Web-based tools
CBT: Computer-based tools
LMS: Learning Management System

References


Reviewed by Gabriella Pusztai

According to Gerhard Schulze’s theory of experience society, shared experience has the power to make us define social categories. Such a shared experience was the democratic transformation of Hungary for the generation of Tamás Kozma. At that time I was only a senior student at university, while the Author had already been researching education for three decades. He lived through World War II and the darkest period of the oppressing Communist regime, and then his career as a researcher started during the dawn of the Kadar era.

A significant fragment of his book consists of his reflections on the social and educational changes and processes of the century with an international outlook. From the point of view of the Author one can witness the slow reforms of the 60’s, the first academic contact with the “West”, the stop of the reforms in the 70’s, which was followed by the period called “expanding walls”, leading to the democratic transformation. Tamás Kozma was a professor of the university when the democratic transformation happened and he has been a witness and researcher of the attempt to find the democratic way for the twenty-five years that have passed since then.

Therefore, his book can be considered the story of his own development as he was both a participant and an observer of the academic life of the period. That affects the genre of book as the Author emphasizes that he is writing an essay which, while equally accurate, has a more personal tone than a scientific study. The book is based on 25 previous studies by Kozma, which he published from 1998 to 2016. He organizes these works into four chapters and completes them with recent data, therefore the book contains answers to current questions. The titles of the chapters are references to Kozma’s emblematic works such as: Whose is the democratic transformation?, Whose is the school?, Whose is the university?, Whose is knowledge?. The last three topics indicate Kozma’s main research areas while the first one provides a framework for the content of the book. As he has been doing research on the sociological functions of school, higher education and knowledge,

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both education and sociology are discussed in the book, though he is seemingly more interested in the sociological side. His own series is titled Education and Society, in which this book is the twentieth item.

The title of the book is a reference to two ancient Greek concepts of time (Kronos and Karios). The Author is fascinated by the latter one, which is a special “moment of grace”. In ancient Greek mythology Karios was a young man, bald at the back of his head and long-haired in the front. He was always running, which symbolized that one can either seize or miss him. A moment can equally be seized or missed by both a person and a whole society. In the life of Tamas Kozma such a moment was the seminar in Graenna, where he had the opportunity to learn a new technical language, which was actually English, but figuratively a language which was free from communist terminology and contained new ideas. For the Hungarians and the rest of Europe the moment of grace was the democratic transformation, when the economic, political and sociological transformation radically ended the isolation, put new political figures in power and created new identities.

In the first chapter the Author analyses the moment of the democratic transformation. He discusses the periods and the evaluation of the transformation. Those who consider the democratic transformation a process divide it into two periods, the first being the late Kadar era – the preparatory phase – and the second being the actual transformation from 1989-1990. This process was finished when Hungary joined the European Union in 2004. However, in Kozma’s view, the democratic transformation consisted of three periods, and it is the turn or change feature he considers important, lasting from the fall of 1988 to the end of 1993 and accompanied by the rebirth of active communities.

Kozma witnessed how the initial euphoric climate turned suddenly to confusion and the weakening of social norms as the spontaneous democracy of the communities was confronted with the principles and institutional leaders of market economy. In his opinion, the third period started from 2004 as the new power fields within the EU created new rivalries while bureaucracy strengthened again. In the period of change education was fundamentally altered by new laws, among others the Act on Public Education in 1993, the regulation of the national curriculum, the regulation of local governments and the guarantee of religious freedom. Along with the change of education its research also changed, as besides scientific researchers and politicians, new professional experts appeared who earned their living from project markets.

In the second and the third chapter public education and higher education are examined. The different educational levels are discussed in separate chapters, yet they are not isolated from each other. The Author points out the special features of education during the three decades. Decade by decade he shows us the typical trends of education with their contemporary interpretations, therefore we can see with the eyes of the person who witnessed the events and also with those of the researcher who relives them through research. Kozma finds the expansion of education, ethnic minority education, religious education and the education of the gypsy minority outstandingly important issues. He
pays attention to the problems of centralization, decentralization and compulsory education as well as the need to comply with EU regulations before joining the European Union. He also describes the consequences of public and higher education institutions’ rank lists patched up by some experts, which made it impossible for schools and universities to create a special personal image. The mechanisms of market economy are especially apparent in higher education due to attempts to create “university-businesses” and reach managerialism. Considerable confusion is caused by contradictory influences such as bureaucracy and market economy, state accreditation and the autonomy of universities, integration in higher education and the rivalry among universities, and the pressure of the labour market.

The last chapter of the book, which focuses on the social processes of learning, shows the different features of knowledge bought for money and democratically created free knowledge through the example of information technology systems. He proposes interesting questions: is knowledge personal or social property? Should learning be organized in a democratic or in an autocratic way? Before the democratic transformation Hungarians lived in a dictatorial system which tried to convince society of being egalitarian. In that system knowledge and learning were controlled by the communist party. After the democratic transformation Hungary became part of the global market economy, where property and individual interests had top priority. In that system knowledge could be bought and sold. In both systems education was mostly controlled in an autocratic way. However, in the last decades learning has been more and more significant, and the process of learning has been adjusted to the needs of the learner, therefore it is dominantly collective and democratic. In the light of this interpretation the case studies on the learning regions and cities in Hungary are outstandingly interesting. The case studies may indicate that social learning is the self-healing reaction of society to the uniformity of institutional education.

In this book the Author tries to find out if the once communist countries, where democratic transformation occurred, and the whole of Europe were able to seize the special moment – the period of the transformation – or were unable to do so and let it pass. According to the Author the results were lopsided. In the decades that followed the democratic transformation there were positive outcomes which were due to the search for a new way, but society paid the price for them. While some active communities profited from the transformation, many others were unable to react. This book provides the reader with new ways to approach the discourse on democratic transformation from the point of view of education.
**Book Review**


Reviewed by *Anita Hegedus*  

We all know that museums are not just for free time activities but for learning and studying as well. This role has become quite important in the last decades: the so called “museum boom”, a huge museum transforming process has changed the original roles of cultural institutions. Museum pedagogy, lifelong learning became quite an important task that the museums had to complete. The visitors became curators: they are who determine museums nowadays. That is why museums needed changes concerning not only their programs and approaches but in their ways of designing exhibitions and in their architecture as well. So the countries started to establish new and extravagant museum buildings which were able to attract more and more visitors who wanted to learn in the museums.

This phenomenon is examined in Peter Gyorgy’s issue: Museum, The Learning House. Gyorgy is an acknowledged Hungarian aesthete, who is specialized in contemporary art and new media. He also examines the changes of museums, the changes of exhibitions and contemporary art as well as the architecture’s and designs’ role in the life of museums, the museum representation of the biggest catastrophes of mankind in the 20th Century (mostly: second world war, Nazism, Communism in Eastern Europe).

This book is a selection of the author’s writings concerning the subjects mentioned above: you can find seventeen publications examining the changes in museums. His aim is to point out the main similarities and differences between European country’s museums which represent the history of the 20th Century’s second half until nowadays. Germany plays the main role in this issue: you can read articles of Berlin’s, Dresden’s, Rugen’s, Schassenhausen’s, Linz’s, Koln’s museums and exhibitions which had somehow made something extraordinary or remarkable on the museum field. There are also case studies concerning museums of Sighetu Marmatiei (Romania), Athens, Vienna, Manchester,  

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Madrid, Paris and Budapest and articles about two Jewish artists who suffered the Nazi suppression during the Second World War. All of these studies are about the new museum era, the changed architecture and the changed exhibition planning.

In the first chapter Gyorgy supports the theoretical background of these changes: museum spaces and artefacts are being reconsidered in the last few decades. The universal museums became more and more local museums with local themes where the collections look like their town and not like an ideology. The objects cannot be separated from their own history and they also cannot be separated from the space where they are situated (p. 30.). The book examines this battle between universalism and globalism in point of art theory of Alfred Gell: he says that art is a system of activities which aim is to change the world (p. 40.). He talks about the contemporary museum turn which change is mainly architectural. Gyorgy mentions Foucault who thought that museums are spaces for controlling and education and not the places for free esthetical roaming (p. 47.). But these kinds of concepts became outworn in the last decades: new architectural views brought new possibilities for museums.

The book offers quite interesting examples and case studies for those who are interested in the ways of representing Europe’s history between 1939 and 1990. Gyorgy confronts two famous cultural institutions in Berlin: the Altes Museum was built in the ordinary way as it was the open church of high culture where the process of learning did not only mean history and chronology but much more. The museum building was renovated like it was before, like nothing had changed. Neues Museum was built like Altes Museum as well but after its destruction they did not renovated like it was: in 2009, they left the marks of destruction on the walls, in the building, they did not covered the signs of the war but they created a new, an odd space. That is why the museum does not offer an illusion, does not cover the signs of history: it represents the historical memory in an unusual form (p. 88.).

The 21th Century’s great question is how to represent the terror of the Second World War and the Cold War, the Nazi terror and the Soviet terror in Europe: how can one learn about these eras 70 years later? Gyorgy offers more ways, more examples as an answer for these questions in Chapter 4-8. In Chapter 4 called “Remembrance and Amnesia” you can read about two rather interesting museums in Eastern Berlin which are located in a former Stasi prison (Gedenkstätte) and in the former Ministry of State Security’s offices (Stasi Museum). These museums are so-called “memorial museums” because they can be found in their original places, where history actually had happened (p. 124.). The author draws attention to a phenomenon in Europe (Eastern Europe) as the museums represents the Nazi terror but they rarely represent the Communist and Socialist terror of the Soviet Empire. Berliner museums are great examples to show that this abandoned theme can be demonstrated as a local theme in the exact place where history had actually happened (p. 133.). The same example can be read in Chapter 6: there is a strange and huge settlement of buildings in the Island of Rugen which was built as a holiday resort before the Second World War for Hitler’s workers. Nowadays the buildings are abandoned except two museums which are quite different although they can be found in the same building. The
first museum represents only the monstrosities of the Nazis in a conventional way: it is widely accepted professionally but only a few visits it. The other museum demonstrates not just the Nazi era but the Socialist period as well in a modern way. This museum is not really accepted professionally but lots of people visit it (p. 164) which means that visitors can decide how and what they want to learn in a museum. The Author points out another interesting phenomenon concerning these buildings of Rugen: nowadays a lot of people go to the shore to bath and they park their cars next to these buildings although they don’t care about the buildings’ history or meaning. But they meet those buildings which mean they learn when they go through them: the author defines it as “involuntary remembrance” (p. 170.). Gyorgy also mentions the memorial museum of Sachsenhausen (GER) and the Museum of Sighetu Marmatiei (RO) which are quite similar to the Berliner ones: they also represent the terror of Nazism and Communism. The Romanian museum is like a “palace of remembrance” because the exhibition halls can be found in original prison cells: visitors can get the hang of prison, the space experience, one can be a part of this world so this is the transformation of mind and sense at the same time. (p. 144.)

Another important theme of the Author’s issue is the question of restitution and reunification. Readers who are interested in this exciting topic can find examples and interesting explanations in Chapter 9-11. For example Gyorgy demonstrates the case of Acropolis Museum in Athens: the Greek artefacts of the Acropolis were transferred to British Museum in the last centuries. But from 1976, Greece wanted to get back those objects because they wanted to reunite them with the ones which remained in Athens. They had built a museum to achieve their goal but there are still huge arguments about the restitution and reunification of these Greek artefacts (p. 222.).

As it has been mentioned before, Gyorgy believes that architecture can define the mood and appeal of whole museums and exhibitions. For those who are interested in the power of architecture in museums we recommend Chapter 13-16 where the author gladden us with intriguing case studies of Paris, Madrid, Dresden and Manchester. We would like to highlight the case of the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester, Great-Britain as it seems to be the most interesting example of the architecture’s and exhibition theme’s cooperation. The museum’s aim is to represent war acts from 1900 until nowadays but this institution does not have the traditional way. Instead of talking about armament, tactics and battles show us the human dramas of the heartlands. You can meet the fates of women and children who remained home: their destiny is in the centre of the exhibition so the visitors can be easily withdrawn, they can learn throughout stories (p. 312.). They read real stories in an interesting space where architecture helps them to understand, to experience and learn about those times.

The case studies do not end here: one can learn about more interesting examples, for instance the plans for reconstruction of Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest (p. 382.).

All in all, one can say that Peter Gyorgy’s issue can help us to examine the new roles of the museums all over Europe concerning the shocking history of the 20th Century. The new
buildings’, the new architecture’s, the new exhibition designs’ aim is to help the visitors with understanding the appalling decades of modern history. As we have demonstrated visitors can learn via new ways and new methods in these new museums and readers can understand more of the problems of modern museums in the 21st Century.
Katinka Bacskai examines a truly interesting and actual question in her book which is particularly accentual in our region: what is typical for those teachers, who teach the disadvantaged pupils? We can read about this topic through 192 pages. This book stands from seven chapters: the first three concentrates to Hungarian and international literature, the next three focuses on the introduction of the database, methods and results and the last chapter contains the conclusion.

The first chapter’s name is School in space, society in the school. In this part, the author writes about the factors which impact globally on the achievement of the pupils. The author divides the chapter into subsections, this breaking is very logical: she tries to separate one effect into one subsection. The effects are the family background of the pupils, the society status, school atmosphere, the teaching staff and student composition. The author draws attention to the problems of teachers who teach disadvantaged pupils and have a lot of difficulty in their job. The main reason of disadvantaged schools is segregation because the students with good skills and good grades will achieve well on entrance examinations they can go to selective schools while the other pupils who are disadvantaged and have bad family background will fail on this exam so they can go only to schools where no entrance examination is needed thus they will study in a school where no is selection. The segregation of pupils cause the segregation of teachers too because teacher, who has good pedagogical skills, more practice and those who are able to higher achievement, will teach in good schools and bad teachers and entrant teachers can choose only such schools where the achievement of students is low. The author writes just tangentially about the gipsy situation because high rate of disadvantaged people come from gipsy population but she lays down has the aim of the book is not to investigate the gipsy population. This chapter can serve as a basis of help in other doctoral dissertations.

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and thesis because we find a lot of glossary and foreign keywords which help the reader to find new foreign literature.

The second chapter is Teachers in challenging environment. In this, the literature focuses on the personality of the teachers, teaching profession and pedagogical chances. This chapter represents the international outlook. In this part, the author uses comparative perspective because she does literature collision between Hungarian and international literature. There we can read about the “bizarre reality” what is observed in Hungary, which things cannot be experienced in other European countries. It is a really valuable part of the book because the presentation of the reality is the truly important thing and not only presenting that fact that the teaching profession stands from positive experiences. She enumerates more studies which focus on entrant teachers. It is written in these that the entrant teachers have more tasks and work in bigger rate in students where number of disadvantaged students higher is. When the author wrote this book, the teacher career model didn’t exist which offers carrier opportunities for the teachers thus earlier people considered for carrier when the teacher went from the disadvantaged school to a good school or went from the village to capital or county seat. Katinka write here about how the teachers can be encouraged for higher achievement. She tells more way how teachers can be inspired. More examples are mentioned like merit pay, skill-based pay or salary bounded to the students’ performance. These are very hard part of evaluation which is elusive.

The effect of capital resources on effectiveness is the third chapter. It still belongs to the literature part where the author extracts the first chapter. She uses a lot of literature about teachers and teachers’ personality. The qualification of the teacher and the level of it has a huge effect on the achievement of the students as a higher qualified teacher has wider horizon on its own subject thereby he/she can adapt easier to the skills and ability of the pupils. It is the reason that those teachers can bring out the best from the pupils. Teacher retraining has positive effect on the achievement of the students because teachers who participate on those trainings will be enriched with such a methodological repertoire which makes them able to do the best. Furthermore, the teachers need to have such a teacher personality with reflective habitus who want to develop and want to encourage its students for the best. The author mentions three things which influence the achievement of teacher namely the age of the teacher, the time of teaching practice and the quality of teacher training institutions (university or college). In the low achievement schools, the personality of headmaster is very important because it is the person who grants positive atmosphere to make students motivated in learning.

School research in another way is the methodological chapter. We can meet here the analysed databases which are the TALIS database from 2008 which is made by the OECD and the National Competency Test from 2008 with the achievement of students on the eighth class. The TALIS contains the teacher questionnaires. In the analyses, the author distinguished three dependent effectiveness variables. The first is the academic achievement which is calculated from mean of mathematics and comprehension which is
corrected with family background index. The second indicator is calculated from the compliance of school standards and the third consists of the own assessment of the teachers work. The explanatory variables are from more dimensions of human capital, for example gender, qualification and age of teacher etc. Furthermore, there take part variables from more dimensions of social capitals like cooperation among the teachers, personal care and employees’ assessment. This chapter contributes the three research hypotheses:

1. Low qualified teachers teach in disadvantaged schools, and fluctuation of teachers is more frequent.

2. The atmosphere of school has bigger effects on the student achievement than family background.

3. The integrational capital between teachers has teacher’ cooperation practices have the big effects on the student achievement.

The presentation of the results starts in the fifth chapter which name is *What features the schools of low status students?* The author distinguishes the schools into three groups based on the parents’ educational level. (1) Disadvantaged composition schools are where the rate of graduated parents is lower than ten percent. (2) Advantageous composition schools are where the rate of graduate parents is higher than forty percent. (3) Average composition schools where this rate is between ten and forty percent. In this part of book we can find the characterisation of these school compositions’ predominantly with crosstabs and variance analysis. Schools with the most disadvantaged compositions are in small villages in Southern Transdanubia and Northern Great Plain region. These schools are maintained mostly by the state or the local government. The results prove the findings in the literature parts that these schools have younger teacher staff, the qualification is lower and the number of support staff (special education teacher, developer teacher) is lower as well. Teachers who teach in disadvantaged schools would like to get more retraining in special educational needs and discipline relations topics than teachers of advantageous schools. The disadvantaged school teachers have more administrative burden because of the disadvantaged pupils and tenders, and they have more work time in comparison with their colleges from schools with better compositions. Summary, the teachers feel that they are less successful in school and their appreciation is lower.

The *Ecology effects and the schools achievement* topic contains the introductions of three dimension crosstabs where school compositions and achievement are in the focus of the analysis. The author distinguishes the schools according to low, average and higher achievement in all compositions (Average, Disadvantaged and Advantageous). She finds that male teachers have a key role in good achievement because in those schools where the rate of male pedagogues is higher, the achievement is higher too in all compositions although it is necessary to notice that the effect of this rate is the highest in disadvantaged
composition schools. Regarding non-academic achievement, the reverse can be seen as the atmosphere is better where the rate of female teachers is higher. The results show that in schools where the rate of the novice teachers is higher, the students’ achievement is lower and it is exponentially true in disadvantaged schools. In the disadvantaged schools where the class size is smaller, the students’ achievement is higher while in the other compositions it does not have a significant effect. Another positive effect is that the pupils’ achievement will be higher if the teacher staff members cooperate with each other.

In this chapter, the author examines the achievement of the compositions along other variables, for example teacher relationship with parents, frequency of parent’s meeting and teacher appreciation.

The final seventh chapter is the **Summary**, where Katinka feedbacks to the hypotheses what she stood up in the fourth chapter. The first hypothesis is mostly attested because in the disadvantaged composition schools work mainly young teachers with degree from college, so they are qualified lower. The teacher staff is more homogeneous in disadvantaged schools. The second hypothesis is true too because in schools with disadvantage composition where the pupil/teacher rate is higher and the teacher and pupil can build stronger relations, the students’ achievement is higher as well. The third hypothesis is proved too as the results show that the cooperation of teacher staff and common norms are more important in disadvantaged composition schools than in other compositions. In this community, teachers accept the assessment of colleague easier than in other compositions because in disadvantaged compositions emphasis is on the cooperation and not on the competition.

On the whole, this book provides information about features and combination of disadvantaged composition schools; however it compares these compositions with advantageous and average composition schools, applying a comparative outlook. This book is offered particularly for teacher students because with scrolling this book, they can study a lot of things about education world, they can learn how to be effective and they can get information about disadvantaged schools thus they can become better teacher in these compositions. They can know what kind of trait and quality is needed to become a really good teacher in a disadvantaged composition school. Nevertheless, the reader can get a lot of information about the world of school with real images of the schools as this book displays the reality: not only the positive side of school but it is written about the hard part, the seamy side of the educational world. Finally, this book is offered not only the teachers but also to every people who would like to meet the Hungarian school system.
Book Review


Reviewed by Valeria Markos & Karolina Eszter Kovacs

The monograph of Hajnalka Fenyes is unique also in Hungary and across the border. On the one hand, there are really few monograph which collect studies about volunteering in large numbers and on the other hand this monograph deal with the special group of volunteers such as the higher education students volunteering. There are researches about adult’s and young people’s voluntary work but there are not researches about higher education student’s volunteering in Hungary. There are studies about higher educational student’s volunteering in the international literature but these examine mostly the new type of volunteering. The international comparative examinations don’t investigate the Central and Eastern Europe countries’ attitudes toward volunteering. In view of these factors, it is very important to examine the higher educational student’s volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe according to the author. She examined the students volunteering from 2012 to 2015 with quantitative and qualitative researches, too. Her experiences are presented by papers which enhance the Hungarian voluntary literature.

This monograph is especially based on the results of quantitative researches but there is a study which is researched by qualitative methods (with individual interviews and a focus group interview). The monograph favours to the foreign language lovers because it contains not only Hungarian language studies but three English language studies too. The author examines in two papers the University of Debrecen student’s voluntary work and in other five studies she examines the students also in Romania and Ukraine. These studies are mostly sociological researches but we can also find social psychological studies.

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The monograph’s main examined themes are higher education students’ volunteering motivations and types; the religiosity and the values of students’ connection with the voluntary work, the gender differences in volunteering and finally the pedagogical and non-pedagogical students’ voluntary differences. According to the definition, volunteering has four main criteria: (1) it is not obligatory, (2) it is done for the other people’s benefit, (3) it is not a paid activity, (4) it is mostly done in an organizational framework. The author emphasizes that today the number of volunteering doesn’t decrease but the meaning of the volunteering is changing. Years before the volunteers were motivated by traditional/altruistic values (helping others, being useful for the society, doing something for others, protection of his/her own or others’ rights, protecting interests of a special group). Today, for the young people are very important the new types of motivations (making friends, meeting people with similar interest, spending leisure time, learning and practicing sports and cultural activities, gaining information, developing an practicing skills, getting a job more easily, enlarging human capital). The young people’s motivations are the new, flexible and non-regulated volunteering. According to the literature, in Hungary the motivations for volunteering among the young generation were those such as belonging to a community, challenge, professional development, spending leisure time in a useful way and making new friendships. The mixed motivation type is frequent among young generation: e.g. helping others with modern type of motivations is important for the students. In regard of gender; the volunteering is not more frequent among the women. Both men and women are characterized by mixed motivations nowadays. Beside the traditional motivations (helping for others) other aspects are important (developing and practicing skill) for the women.

The volunteering has a several positive effect: it increases the person’s civic awareness and political activity, it promotes the social and professional socialization, it protects the person from the anti-social behaviour, increases the mental and physical health, the social and economic performance, help the young people to the carrier building, expanding the connection network and the volunteering and the voluntary work has motivating effect to the further education. The volunteering has not only individual but social benefits as well. For example, it is useful for different social problems solving (unemployment, anomie) and there are significant economic, social, political and social psychological functions too.

According to the literature and the results of Hajnalka Fenyes, the value preference and religiosity affect volunteering to a larger extent than someone’s social background or gender. According to the data, the volunteering is more frequent in Romania and Ukraine than in Hungary. The reason is that in Ukraine and Romania the civil sector is relatively undeveloped in comparison with other countries and the students defined voluntary activity differently. Another reason is that in Ukraine and Romania the economic situation is worse than in Hungary which may induce solidarity and volunteering among people. According to the results, in Romania the regular churchgoing is more popular than in the other two countries so this drew the author’s attention to the effect of religiosity on volunteering.
The monograph’s other aims were to motivate the young people to volunteering and the popularization of volunteering. The author reflects on our civic responsibility which is doing for the society and one form is the volunteering. According to Hajnalka Fenyes's results, from 2005 to 2010 the number of the volunteering workers doubled in the University of Debrecen. It shows that the voluntary work was becoming more popular among the university students. Unfortunately this number is still lower than in other developed country. According to the qualitative researches, the reason of the low number of voluntary workers is the following: the university students have a little free time, they have no information from the voluntary factor and the bad financial situation also discourages them from the volunteering. The demographic variables such as age or gender did not affect volunteering among higher education students at the University of Debrecen. The students of mothers with degree and the wealthier students volunteered more frequently at this university which may be due to the fact that University of Debrecen is situated in a relatively underdeveloped region in Hungary. Those students who have better social and material background could afford to do volunteering in this region. According to the author’s results, religiosity increased the volunteering. Those higher educational students who were volunteers preferred e.g. helping others more than those who were not. It is very important to motivate the young students for volunteering and to emphasize the importance of volunteering.

The authors find connection between values and volunteering. Firstly, they formed factors from student’s value structure. The value background of voluntary work is becoming mixed. Those who do voluntary work regularly reached material and postmodern characteristics on the first hand and conservative characteristics on the other hand higher values than the average. The connection between values and volunteering is demonstrated by certain items of the values and the explaining force of hedonistic and intellectual factor in their model.

In the volunteer point of view, the author compares the pedagogical students with the non-pedagogical students. Although the pedagogical profession is a helping profession, the pedagogical students don’t work more frequent than non-pedagogical students. But the data shows that the motivation of those pedagogical students who work as a volunteer is more traditional and it is very important for them to help other. The author emphasizes that it is important to motivate the pedagogical students for volunteering because they will set an example for the future generations.

Today, we need to deal with the volunteering and it is necessary to emphasize the importance of it. The volunteering has personal and social benefit as well and it is the basis of the active citizenship. This bottom-up method contributes to the experimental learning, greater civic knowledge, social responsibility and more care taking about relationship with others. Our civic obligation is to recognize the social problems and our duties as citizens are to help those who are less fortunate than us. The voluntary work is useful for the individuals also because it contributes to their own ability, their skills development and it helps to advance their careers. Volunteering improves the employment prospects by increasing their human capital which means that for those people who are engaged in in volunteering activity is more likely a higher level of global
citizenship. Formal and informal groups are often created during the volunteering as well. They are expanding their social contacts which help to find better jobs. Volunteering is a possibility to find jobs easily especially in those countries where the unemployment rate is high.

In this monograph the authors and co-authors concentrate to the most important and most interesting questions of the volunteering. The studies are logically well-structured and their style is scientific and readable as well. The authors and co-authors in the studies of theoretical part were thoroughly explored with the help of Hungarian and international literatures. In the empirical part the authors use high level of quantitative research methods to analyse their hypotheses. The results can be the basis of future researches.

As a summary the followings can be said that it is very important and relevant to motivate the young people for volunteering and to emphasize their lifelong volunteering because the early volunteering leads to later volunteering as well.