Teacher Education for Educational Wisdom[1]

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Introduction

In recent years policy makers and politicians have become increasingly interested in teacher education. In the UK the government has published a new policy framework for school education in England—a paper called "The Importance of Teaching"[2]—which not only sets out the parameters for a significant transformation of state funded school education but also contains specific proposals for the education of teachers. In Scotland the government commissioned a review of Scottish teacher education. The report, with the title "Teaching Scotland's Future,"[3] also makes very specific recommendations about teacher education and the further professional development of teachers.

In many countries discussions about teacher education are being influenced by developments at the European level, particularly in the context of the Lisbon strategy (2002) which sets the aim of making the European Union into "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world,"[4] and the Bologna Process, aimed at the creation of a European Higher Education Area. In the wake of the 2005 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report on the state of teacher education—a report called *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*[5]— the European Commission produced a document in 2007 called *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education*[6] which proposed "shared reflection about actions that can be taken at the Member State level and how the European Union might support these." As part of this process the European Commission also produced a set of "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications."[7] While none of these documents has any legal power, they do tend to exert a strong influence on policy development within the member states of the European Union—a point to which I will return below.

One could see the attention from policy makers and politicians for teacher education as the expression of a real concern for the quality of education at all levels and as recognition of the fact that the quality of teacher education is an important element in the overall picture. But one could also read it more negatively by observing that, now that governments in many countries have established a strong grip on schools through a combination of curriculum prescription, testing, inspection, measurement, and league tables, they are turning their attention to teacher education in order to establish total control over the educational system. Much, of course, depends on how, in concrete situations, discourse and policy will unfold or have unfolded already. In this regard it is interesting that, whereas in the English situation teaching is being depicted as a *skill* which can be picked up in practice (with the implication that teacher education can be shifted from universities to so-called "training schools"), the Scottish discussion positions teaching as a *profession*

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which requires proper teacher education and further professional development.

While there are, therefore, still important differences "on the ground," we are, at the very same time, seeing an increasing *convergence* in discourse and policy with regard to teaching which, in turn, is leading to a convergence in discourse and policy with regard to teacher education. The main concept that is emerging is the notion of "competence" (see, for example, Deakin Crick, 2008; Mulder, Weigel & Collins, 2007). The notion of competence is interesting for at least two reasons. Firstly, it has a certain rhetorical appeal—who, after all, would want to argue that teachers should *not* be competent? Secondly, competence focuses the discussion on the question of what teachers should be able to *do* rather than only on what teachers need to *know*. One could say, therefore, that the idea of competence is more practical and, in a sense, also more holistic in that it seems to encompass knowledge, skills, and action as an integrated whole, rather than to see action as the application of knowledge or the implementation of skills. Whether this is indeed so also depends on the particular approach to and conception of competence one favors. Mulder, Weigel & Collins (2007) show, for example, that within the literature there are three distinctive traditions—the behaviorist, the generic, and the cognitive—which put different emphases on the "mix" between action, cognition, and values. While some definitions of competence are very brief and succinct—such as Eraut's definition of competence as "[t]he ability to perform the tasks and roles required to the expected standards" (Eraut 2003, p.117, cited in Mulder, Weigel & Collins, 2007)—others, such as Deakin Crick's definition of competence as "a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes, and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world, in a particular domain" (Deakin Crick, 2008, p.313), are so broad that it may be difficult to see what is *not* included.

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

It is, however, not only the tendency towards uniformity that is problematic. It is also that through the discourse about competence a very particular view about education is being repeated, promoted, and *multiplied*. This is often not how ideas about

the competences that teachers need are being presented. Such competences are often presented as general, as relatively open to different views about education, as relatively neutral with regard to such views, and also as relatively uncontested. They are, in other words, presented as "common sense." One thing that is important, therefore, is to open up this common sense by showing that it is possible to think *differently* about education and about what teachers should be able to do, at least in order to move away from an unreflected and unreflective common sense about education. But I also wish to argue that the particular common sense about education that is being multiplied is problematic in itself, because it has a tendency to promote what I would see as a rather un-educational way of thinking about education. And this is the deeper problem that needs to be addressed in order to have a better starting point for our discussion about the future of teacher education.

The "common sense" about education has a tendency to promote a rather un-educational way of thinking about education.

The "learnification" of education

I invite you to take a brief look at the key competences enlisted in the document from the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, called "Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications."

Making it work: the key competences

Teaching and education add to the economic and cultural aspects of the knowledge society and should therefore be seen in their societal context. Teachers should be able to:

Work with others. They work in a profession which should be based on the values of social inclusion and nurturing the potential of every learner. They need to have knowledge of human growth and development and demonstrate self-confidence when engaging with others. They need to be able to work with learners as individuals and support them to develop into fully participating and active members of society. They should also be able to work in ways which increase the collective intelligence of learners and cooperate and collaborate with colleagues to enhance their own learning and teaching.

Work with knowledge, technology and information. They need to be able to work with a variety of types of knowledge. Their education and professional development should equip them to access, analyze, validate, reflect on, and transmit knowledge, making effective use of technology where this is appropriate. Their pedagogic skills should allow them to build and manage learning environments and retain the intellectual freedom to make choices over the delivery of education. Their confidence in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) should allow them to integrate it effectively into learning and teaching. They should be able to guide and support learners in the networks in which information can be found and built. They should have a good understanding of subject knowledge and view learning as a lifelong journey. Their practical and theoretical skills should also allow them to learn from their own experiences and match a wide range of teaching and learning strategies to the needs of learners.

Work with and in society. They contribute to preparing learners to be globally responsible in their role as EU citizens. Teachers should be able to promote mobility and cooperation in Europe and encourage intercultural respect and understanding. They should have an understanding of the balance between respecting and being aware of the diversity of learners' cultures and identifying common values. They also need to understand the factors that create social cohesion and

exclusion in society and be aware of the ethical dimensions of the knowledge society. They should be able to work effectively with the local community and with partners and stakeholders in education: parents, teacher education institutions, and representative groups. Their experience and expertise should also enable them to contribute to systems of quality assurance. Teachers' work in all these areas should be embedded in a professional continuum of lifelong learning which includes initial teacher education, induction, and continuing professional development, as they cannot be expected to possess all the necessary competences on completing their initial teacher education.[8]

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

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My second observation concerns the fact that in this text, education is predominantly described in terms of *learning*. We read that teachers are supposed to nurture the potential of every learner, that they need to be able to work with learners as individuals, that they should aim at increasing the collective intelligence of learners, that they should be able to build and manage learning environments, integrate ICT effectively into learning and teaching, provide guidance and support to learners in information networks, and view learning as a lifelong journey. For me this document is another example of what elsewhere (see particularly Biesta 2004; 2006) I have referred to as the rise of a "new language of learning" in education. This rise is manifest in a number of "translations" that have taken place in the language used in educational practice, policy, and research. We can see it in the tendency to refer to students, pupils, children, and even adults as "learners." We can see it in the tendency to refer to teaching as the facilitation of learning or the creation and management of learning environments. We can see it in the tendency to refer to schools as places for learning or as learning environments. And we can see it in the tendency no longer to speak about adult education but rather to talk about lifelong learning.

Now one could argue that there is no problem with this. Isn't it, after all, the purpose of education that children and students learn? Isn't it therefore reasonable to think of the task of teachers as that of supporting such learning? And doesn't that mean that schools are and should be understood as learning environments or places of learning? Perhaps the quickest

way to make my point is to say that for me the point of education is *not* that students learn, but that they learn *something*, that they learn this for particular *purposes*, and that they learn this from *someone*.[9] A main problem with the language of learning is that it is a language of *process,* but not a language of content and purpose. Yet education is never just about any learning, but always about the learning of something for particular purposes. In addition education is always about learning from someone. Whereas the language of learning is an *individualistic* language—learning is, after all, something you can do on your own—the language of education is a *relational* language, where there is always the idea of someone educating somebody else. The problem with the rise of the language of learning in education is therefore threefold: it is a language that makes it more difficult to ask questions about content; it is a language that makes it more difficult to ask questions of purpose; and it is a language that makes it more difficult to ask questions about the specific role and responsibility of the teacher in the educational relationship.

The problem with the rise of the language of learning in education is threefold; it makes it more difficult to ask questions about content, purpose, and the role and responsibility of the teacher in the educational relationship.

All this is not to say that learning is a meaningless idea, or that learning has no place in education. But it is to highlight the fact that the language of learning is not an *educational* language, so that when discussions about education become entirely framed in terms of learning, some of the most central educational questions and issues—about purpose, content, and relationships—begin to disappear from the conversation and, subsequently, run the risk of beginning to disappear from the practice of education too. In my own work I have referred to this development as the "learnification" of education (see Biesta 2010a). I have deliberately constructed an ugly word for this because, from the standpoint of education, I think that this is a very worrying trend. This means that if we wish to say anything *educational* about teacher education, if, in other words, we wish to move beyond the language of learning, we need to engage with a way of speaking and thinking that is more properly educational. Once we do this we may find—and this is what I will be arguing below—that the idea of competences becomes less attractive and less appropriate when thinking about teacher education and its future. Let me move, then, to the next step in my argument, which has to do with the nature of educational practices.

What is education for?

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

we engage with the question of purpose in education we are always involved in value judgments, that is, in judgments about what is educationally desirable.[10]

By arguing that there is a need to engage with the question of educational purpose, I am not trying to define what the purpose of education should be. But I do wish to make two points about how I think we should engage with the question of purpose. The first point is that educational practices always serve more than one purpose—and do so at the very same time. The *multi-dimensionality of educational purpose* is precisely what makes education interesting. It is also, secondly, why a particular kind of judgment is needed in education. By saying that this question of educational purpose is multi-dimensional, I am trying to say that education "functions" or "works" in a number of different dimensions and that in each of these dimensions the question of purpose needs to be raised. In my own work I have suggested that we can distinguish three dimensions in which the question of purpose needs to be raised—or to put it in more simple language: I have suggested that educational processes and practices tend to function in three different domains. I have referred to these domains as *qualification*, *socialization,* and *subjectification* (see Biesta 2010a, and for a Swedish version Biesta 2011; see also Biesta 2009). *Qualification* has to do with the ways in which education qualifies people for doing things—in the broad sense of the word—by equipping them with knowledge, skills, and dispositions. However, education is not only about knowledge, skills, and dispositions but also has to do with the ways in which, through education, we become part of existing social, cultural, and political practices and traditions. This is the *socialization* dimension of education. While some take a very strict and narrow view of education and would argue that the only task of schools is to be concerned about knowledge and skills and dispositions, we can see that over the past decades the socialization function has become an explicit dimension of discussions about what schools are for. We can see this specifically in the range of societal "agendas" that have been added to the school curriculum, such as environmental education, citizenship education, social and moral education, sex education, and so on. The idea here is that education not only exerts a socializing force on children and students, but that it is actually desirable that education should do this.

While some would argue that these are the only two proper and legitimate dimensions that school education should be concerned about, I wish to argue that there is a third dimension in relation to which education operates and should operate. This has to do with the way in which education impacts the person as a subject of action and responsibility. This is the *subjectification* dimension of education. It is important to see that subjectification and socialization are not the same—and one of the important challenges for contemporary education is how we can actually articulate the distinction between the two (for more on this see Biesta 2006). Socialization has to do with how we become part of existing orders, how we identify with such orders and thus obtain an identity; subjectification, on the other hand, is always about how we can exist "outside" of such orders. With a relatively "old" but still crucially important concept, we can say that subjectification has to do with the question of human freedom—which, of course, then raises further questions about how we should understand human freedom. (For my ideas on this see, again, Biesta 2006; also chapter 4 in Biesta 2010a.)

To engage with the question of purpose in education requires that we engage with this question in relation to all three domains. The reason why engagement with the question of purpose requires that we "cover" all three domains, lies in the fact that anything we do in education potentially has "impact" in any of these three domains. It is important to

acknowledge that the three domains are *not separate*, which is why they can be depicted as a Venn diagram of three overlapping areas. The overlap is important because, on the one hand this indicates opportunities for *synergy*, whereas on the other hand it can also help us to see potential *conflict* between the different dimensions.

Given the possibilities of synergy and conflict, and given the fact that our educational activities almost always "work" in the three domains at the very same time, looking at education through these dimensions begins to make visible something that, in my view, is absolutely central about the work of teachers, which is the need for making situated judgments about what is educationally desirable in relation to these three dimensions. What is central to the work of teachers is not simply that they set aims and implement them. Teachers *constantly* need to make judgments about how to balance the different dimensions; they need to set priorities and they need to be able to handle tensions, conflicts, and "trade offs"—as gains in relation to one dimension often imply losses in relation to another.

What is beginning to emerge from this line of thinking is that, because education is a teleological practice and because the question of the *telos* of education is a multi-dimensional question, judgment about what is educationally desirable is an absolutely crucial element of what teachers do.

Judgment and wisdom in education

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

The idea that education cannot do without judgment about what is educationally desirable stands in sharp contrast to another recent trend in discussions about teaching and teacher education, which is the suggestion that teaching should become an "evidence-based" profession, totally driven by scientific knowledge about "what works." This idea is problematic for a number of reasons, a discussion of which partly lies beyond the scope of this paper (for more on this see Biesta 2007; 2010b; and in German Biesta 2010c), albeit that the main problem here is not dissimilar from what I have said about the idea

of competences, which is that, while insights from research may give us an indication of what might be *possible* (albeit that the extent to which research can say anything about this is far more limited than the proponents of evidence-based education tend to assume), whether what is possible is educationally desirable remains a question that such research cannot answer but that requires the judgment of teachers and others involved in the educational process.

Discussions about the role of scientific evidence in teaching do relate to a much older question in the educational discussion, which is the question of whether teaching should be understood as an art or a science. One person who has very concisely and very convincingly argued against the idea of teaching as a science is the American psychologist William James (1842–1910). He writes:

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

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

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

make things" (ibid., p.141). Aristotle comments that the end of *poiesis* is *external* to the means, which means that *techne*, the knowledge of how to make things, is about finding the means that will produce the thing one wants to make. *Techne* therefore encompasses knowledge about the materials we work with and about the techniques we can apply to work with those materials. But making a saddle is never about simply following a recipe. It involves making judgments about the application of our general knowledge to *this* piece of leather, for *this* horse, and for *this* person riding the horse.

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

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

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The second point is that the idea of "practical wisdom" captures quite well what I have been saying about educational judgment. Educational judgments are, after all, judgments about what needs to be done, not with the aim to produce something in the technical sense, but with the aim to bring about what is considered to be educationally desirable (in the three—overlapping—domains I have identified). Such judgments are, therefore, not "technical" judgments but value judgments—and perhaps we can even call them *moral* judgments. What Aristotle adds to the picture—and this is important for developing these views about education into views about teacher education—is that practical wisdom is not to be understood as a set of skills or dispositions or competencies, but denotes a certain quality or excellence of the person. The Greek term here is αρετη, *arete,* and the English translation is "virtue." The ability to make wise educational judgments

should therefore not be seen as some kind of "add on," that is, something that does not affect us as a person, but rather denotes what we might call a holistic quality, something that permeates and characterizes the whole person—and we can take "characterize" here quite literally, as "virtue" is often also translated as "character."

The question for teacher education is therefore not how can we learn *phronesis*. The question rather is, how we can become a *phronimos*; how can we become a practically wise *person*. And more specifically the question is: how can we become *educationally wise*. This is the question of teacher education, and in the final step I will present some suggestions for what all this might mean for the future of teacher education.

The question for teacher education is therefore: how can we become educationally wise?

Virtuosity: Becoming educationally wise

The main idea emerging from the discussion so far is that teachers need to develop the "ability" to make wise educational judgments. This "ability" should not be seen as a skill or competence (which is why I put it in quotation marks), but should be understood as a quality of the person. This means that the overarching orientation of teacher education should be the question of how teachers can become educationally wise. How can we become educationally wise?

One interesting observation Aristotle makes in relation to this is "that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found" (ibid., p.148). This suggests that practical wisdom is something that comes with age—or perhaps it's better to say that wisdom comes with *experience*. This is one important point for teacher education, to which I will return below. The second point of relevance here is that when Aristotle comes to points in his writing where one would expect a definition of what a practically wise person looks like, he doesn't come with a description of certain traits or qualities, but actually comes with *examples*—and one main example in Aristotle's writings is Pericles. Pericles appears in the argument as someone who *exemplifies* phronesis; he exemplifies what a practically wise person looks like. It is as if Aristotle is saying: If you want to know what practical wisdom is, if you want to know what a practically wise person looks like, look at him, look at her, because they are excellent examples. If this makes sense, it suggests three things for the education of teachers, and we could see this as three "parameters" for our thinking about the future of teacher education.

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

teacher education, because if we ask how we can develop virtuosity—and here we can think, for example, about how musicians develop virtuosity—we do it through *practice*, that is, by doing the very thing we are supposed to be doing (after all, it is impossible to gain virtuosity in piano playing by studying the flute), and we do it through careful study of the virtuosity of others. And these are precisely the two other "parameters" of the approach to teacher education I wish to propose.

The second component, therefore, is the idea that we can develop our virtuosity for wise educational judgment only by practicing judgment, that is, by being engaged in making such judgments in the widest range of educational situations possible. It is not, in other words, that we can become good at making judgments by reading books about it; we have to do it, and we have to learn from doing it. At one level one may argue that this is not a very original idea, i.e., that we can only really learn the art of teaching by doing it. But I do think there is an important difference between, say, learning on the job (the picking-skills-up-on-the-job-approach the English government seems to be returning to) and reflective practice, or even problem-based learning and what I am after here. What I am after is what we might call judgment-based professional learning, or judgment-focused professional learning. It is not just about any kind of experiential or practical learning, but one that constantly takes the "ability" for making wise educational judgments as its reference point and center (which means that, from day one, student-teachers should be engaging with the question as to what is educationally desirable).

The third component has to do with learning from examples. While on the one hand we can develop virtuosity only through practicing judgment ourselves, I think that we can also learn important things from studying the virtuosity of others, particularly those we deem to have reached a certain level of virtuosity.[11] This is not to be understood as a process of collaborative learning or peer-learning. The whole idea of learning from studying the virtuosity of others is that we learn from those who exemplify the very thing we aspire to, so to speak. The process is, in other words, asymmetrical rather than symmetrical. The study of the virtuosity of other teachers can take many different forms. It is something that can be done in the classroom through observation of the ways in which teachers make embodied and situated wise educational judgments—or at least try to do so. We have to bear in mind, though, that such judgments are not always "visible"—also because they partly belong to the domain of what is known as tacit knowledge—so there is also need for conversation, for talking to teachers to find out why they did what they did. This can be done on a small scale—student-teachers interviewing teachers about their judgments and their educational virtuosity—but it can also be done on a bigger scale, for example through life-history work with experienced teachers, so that we not only get a sense of their virtuosity but perhaps also of the trajectory through which they developed their educational virtuosity. (We should also bear in mind that, as with musicianship, in order to keep up one's virtuosity, one needs to continue practicing it.) And we can also go outside of educational practices and study images of teachers in literature, film, popular culture, and the like. We will, of course, encounter both successes and failures, and we can, of course, learn important things about the virtuosity of educational wisdom from both.

> Each educational moment in which judgment is called for, is in some respect radically new and radically unique.

Conclusion

These, then, are three reference points or parameters for thinking about the future of teacher education: a focus on the formation and transformation of the person towards educational wisdom; a focus on learning through the practicing of educational judgments; and a focus on the study of the educational virtuosity of others. It is what follows when we approach the task of teacher education in an educational way rather than with reference to a language of learning, and if we take the role of the teacher seriously rather than letting this be replaced by evidence and competence, also in order to capture that wise educational judgment is never the repetition of what was in the past, but is always a creative process that is open towards the future for the very reason that each educational situation, each moment in the practice of education in which judgment is called for, is in some respect radically new and radically unique. If we recognize this as being at the very heart of educational processes and practices then, I wish to conclude, we need teacher education that is orientated not towards evidence nor towards competence, but towards the promotion of educational wisdom.

> Good teaching means good crisis management, which involves teaching students how to cope with the struggles and crises of learning.

Endnotes

1. This is a shortened and slightly edited version of a paper originally published in *Research on Steiner Education*, Volume 3, Issue 1.
2. http://www.education.gov.uk/b0068570/the-importance-of-teaching/ [Retrieved 27 Feb. 2011].
3. http://www.reviewofteachereducationinscotland.org.uk/teachingscotlandsfuture/index.asp [Retrieved 27 Feb. 2011].
4. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm [Retrieved 27 Feb. 2011].
5. www.oecd/edu/teacherpolicy [Retrieved 27 Feb, 2011]
6. http://ec.europa.eu/education/com392_en.pdf [Retrieved 27 Feb. 2011].
7. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/principles_en.pdf [Retrieved 27 Feb. 2011].
8. From http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/principles_en.pdf [Retrieved 27 Feb. 2011].
9. This is a rather "quick" way of putting it. Elsewhere I have argued for the importance of the distinction between "learning from" and "being taught by," suggesting that it is the latter notion that really allows us to engage with what is distinctive about education (see Biesta, in press).
10. The idea of "good education" is also meant to provide an alternative for the ideas of "effective education" and "excellent education" which both, in my view, are highly problematic notions.
11. An interesting question here is whether we should focus only on those who exemplify educational virtuosity or whether we can also learn from studying those who do not exemplify this virtuosity. The more general question here is whether we can learn most from good examples or from bad examples. With regard to educational virtuosity, I am inclined to argue that it is only when we have developed a sense of what virtuosity looks like that we can begin to learn from those cases where such virtuosity is absent.

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