

P e t e r L u t z k e r

The Art of Foreign Language Teaching

Improvisation and Drama
in Teacher Development
and Language Learning



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Peter Lutzker

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The Art of Foreign Language Teaching

Introduction

The intention of this study is to explore and develop the idea that *foreign language teaching can be an art*. This will encompass both considering the meaning of artistry in language teaching as well as the possibilities which artistic processes offer pupils in language learning. The first section focuses on the in-service education of language teachers in theatre and improvisation workshops; the second section examines high school pupils rehearsing and performing a full length play in a foreign language. Thus, this work views the fields of *language teacher education* and *foreign language learning* within a common conceptual framework.

This study has been deeply shaped by my experiences in teaching English to high school pupils in a Steiner School in Germany for more than two decades and in training Steiner School teachers for nearly 15 years. In both of these contexts, having experienced how meaningful artistic and particularly dramatic activities can be for pupils and teachers has led me to continually explore possibilities of working in this manner. This has contributed to significant developments in my own language teaching, as well as to a restructuring of the design/s of teacher education programs with which I have been associated. With respect to the latter, the most far-ranging consequence has been the institution of intensive workshops with professional actors, directors, storytellers and clowns as an integral element in language teacher education. In conjunction with these developments, the annual European Steiner School language teacher conference *English Week* was founded in 1996, based on the central idea that concentrated artistic work with outstanding professionals could lead to decisive steps in a teacher's personal and professional growth. The highly positive reactions to this form of in-service training, reflected in oral and written feedback as well as in the popularity of *English Week* which has become the largest conference of its kind in Steiner education, attest to the deep meaning which this type of work has proven to have for many language teachers. This has also led to the inclusion of such courses in the context of other in-service and pre-service programs, primarily, but not exclusively, in the framework of Steiner teacher training.

At the same time, it has become increasingly clear that this approach to teacher education raises a number of crucial questions and issues. Although both feedback sessions and written evaluations can be revealing with respect to what participants directly experience in such workshops, the decisive question of what this will later come to mean for them remains unanswered. Thus, a primary task of this study will be to assess for the first time the long-

term effects and value of these courses. Moreover, while articles have been published describing different elements of the programs, there have been no previous attempts to develop a broad conceptual basis for the inclusion of these courses in teacher training. Hence, a further deficit that I will attempt to redress with my work is the absence of a detailed study exploring and discussing the arguments for incorporating this form of artistic work into in-service language teacher development. Both within the framework of Steiner Schools and with respect to establishing a constructive basis for dialogue with educators *outside* of Steiner education, it has become increasingly important to address these issues.

Understanding the potential implications of considering teaching as an art requires a closer examination of the ways in which teaching has been viewed in the past and how it is viewed today. The first chapter will thus address this topic within an historical and a contemporary framework. The second chapter examines relevant issues concerning teacher education and focuses on different approaches which have been developed in the context of in-service language teacher education. The following chapters (3 to 6) first explore the conceptual and experiential basis of having teachers work with professional performing artists and then focus extensively on Vivian Gladwell's clowning and improvisation courses in the framework of a qualitative research study. Workshops for language teachers which Mr. Gladwell has given in different contexts over the last decade in England, Germany, and Finland, present the empirical basis for this study. What the participants of these workshops wrote in response to my research inquiry is considered in Chapter 7, leading to a detailed discussion of these courses in Chapter 8. In this context the perspectives of a number of contemporary educators are also considered. The final chapter in the first section, Chapter 9, draws conclusions from the empirical study and addresses possible future areas of research.

In the second section of this study the focus shifts from language teacher development to language learning. The concept of foreign language teaching as an art is examined with respect to its implications for pupils learning a foreign language in high school. The process of rehearsing and performing a full length foreign language play in a 10th grade presents the basis for empirical research within the specific framework of a case study. This research is based to a substantial degree on what pupils themselves reported, as well as on what their parents and teachers wrote. As I was the teacher of this class, this study was conducted from the standpoint of practitioner-based research.

Although there now exists an impressive body of literature regarding the use of drama techniques in language learning, many of the key works in this field are more directly concerned with adult education, either in regard to teaching English as a second language or in university programs.¹ In

¹ These works will be discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

evaluating the use of drama in the context of high school foreign language lessons, there has been a widely acknowledged lack of empirical research studies.² This is particularly the case with respect to performance drama.³ The unusual dimensions which such plays have in the curriculum of the school in which I teach – involving an entire class of up to 40 pupils for six months – offers a unique opportunity to examine such processes. There has, to my knowledge, been no comparable research conducted examining the effects of such intensive, dramatic work in a foreign language. This clearly highlights the need for studies designed to evaluate its potential value.

The second section is divided into eight chapters. In Chapter 10, after an historical overview of the use of drama in foreign language teaching, relevant contemporary developments are discussed, thus placing this case study within a larger contextual framework. The next two chapters (11 and 12) present an overview of the research goals and methods and give the necessary background information concerning the particular circumstances in which the work took place. In Chapter 13 the entire process of rehearsing and performing the play is examined from a cross-sectional, chronological perspective, primarily based on what the pupils wrote over the course of six months, but also including observations and comments made by their parents and teachers. Chapter 14 traces the development of five pupils in depth. In Chapter 15, the pupils' experiences are first viewed in the light of recent neurological research and then connections to relevant educational approaches are drawn. In this context the writings of a broad range of scientists and educators are also considered. Chapter 16 elucidates conclusions which can be drawn from this study both with respect to foreign language learning as well as in considering the overriding goals of a high school education. In the final chapter, the decisive elements of a concept of foreign language teaching as an art, encompassing both teacher education and language learning are elaborated.

In consulting the relevant literature, I have drawn equally on German and Anglo-American research and writings. This has meant addressing issues in teacher education and foreign language learning within both an Anglo-American and a European framework. Being able to base this study on the insights of leading figures from different educational traditions has had incontrovertible advantages. At the same time, this larger perspective precludes both a complete accessing of all the possibly relevant material within each single context, as well as an exclusive focusing on all the pertinent issues connected to a specific national situation. In conducting this study, the advantages of adopting an international view have clearly proved to outweigh the disadvantages particularly insofar as many crucial issues

² Betty Jane Wagner, *Educational Drama and Language Arts: What Research Shows*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998) 1-4.

³ *Ibid.*, 5-11.

share a common basis in the primary acts of teaching and learning a foreign language.

The multiple perspectives which have been adopted here, focusing on the fields of both teacher education and foreign language learning while drawing extensively on different educational traditions, can also be seen to have autobiographical roots. As an American who has been teaching English in Germany and training English teachers in Europe for many years, I have always found the mixture and integration of these different standpoints to be a continual source of stimulation and inspiration. Thus it seems natural and, in fact, inevitable to attempt to incorporate these different perspectives into this study. Although my own work as a foreign language teacher has occurred solely within the context of having taught English in Steiner schools in Germany, my work as a teacher trainer in Waldorf education has been conducted within a much broader European framework. Having trained foreign language teachers in seminars and courses over the last decade in Germany, Hungary, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland and England, has given me a larger and richer perspective on critical issues in European teacher education which I have attempted to integrate into this study.

In considering foreign language teaching as an art, this study will examine a concept that in fundamental respects constitutes an alternative approach to most contemporary educational views. Nevertheless, it is an idea which is both deeply rooted in a long historical tradition, as well as strongly influenced by research and thinking in a number of related fields including the behavioural sciences, neurology, philosophy and the dramatic arts. Thus, a vital dimension of this work has been the incorporation of a wide range of perspectives and writings in exploring the far-ranging implications of this concept. This has necessarily led to the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach in which extensive connections to writings in a number of fields are drawn. At the same time, the particular value of this study is seen to lie in its also being based on the concrete experiences of teachers and pupils. Substantial portions of this work consist of what they said and wrote which then provides a broad empirical basis for discussion and evaluation. In the end, I remain convinced that it is through deeply considering the actual reports of pupils and teachers that educational research can make contributions of lasting value to teaching and learning.

1. Concepts of Teaching

1.1 Introduction

The metaphors and images underlying concepts of teaching often remain unspoken and unexamined. At the same time, they deeply influence the ways teaching and education are perceived and understood. It is precisely because they are seldom the subject of critical reflection that they can subtly and irrevocably shape both the framework and atmosphere in which educational questions are considered and decided. Hence, drawing attention to those latent metaphors and images which shape educational thinking can be seen as an essential task of educational research. Before exploring the concept of language teaching as an art, it will be necessary to first examine those underlying metaphors which have formed contemporary educational perspectives.

1.2 The Models of Science and Business

The concept of *teaching as a science* became an accepted view of teaching in the course of the 20th century. Its origins can be found in educational thinking in the second half of the 19th century, largely due to the widespread influence of Johann Friedrich Herbart's writings and the ensuing *Herbartismus*. From this point on, the practices of teaching and teacher education increasingly came to be seen as legitimate fields of scientific inquiry offering the underlying basis for educational theory and practice. This is evident, for instance, in most educational research in which the methods of the natural sciences have generally been accepted as a standard paradigm. Concurrently, it has also been the dominant perspective in the training of teachers, shaping the entire approach to pre-service and in-service training. This view of teaching is also inherent in the traditional development of educational research and theory in a university setting, generally set apart from the actual practice of teachers working in schools. The fact that *teacher education* occurs chiefly within this academic context can be seen as a further manifestation of this prevalent view of teaching as an educational *science*. In regard to both educational research and teaching this perspective has generally proved to be self-perpetuating: most researchers and teachers trained in this vein have naturally tended to think and work within these same categories.

Whereas the methods of science have been seen as offering a model for objective, research-based educational theory and practice, the paradigm of *successful business practices* has often been considered to offer a model of

efficiency and productivity. From a perspective based on attaining the best possible results in the most efficient manner, schools have increasingly been viewed as a form of service institution in which teachers are held accountable for productivity, generally measured on the basis of their pupils' standardized test scores.⁴ A number of studies have examined the prevalence of such business frameworks in both curriculum design and teacher education and in this context the underlying metaphor of the teacher as a technician trained to achieve optimal results has been consistently remarked upon.⁵ Writing in 1977, Elliot Eisner argued that in the course of the 20th century the dominant images which formed educational views were the *factory and the assembly-line*, in which productivity and efficiency were the primary goals:

Consider, for example, our interest in control, in the productivity of schooling, in the creation of measurable products, in the specification of criteria against which products can be judged, in the supervision of the teaching force, in the growing breach between labor (teachers) and management (administrator), the talk about quality assurance and quality control, in contract learning, in payment by results, in the hiring of probationary teachers on the one hand and superintendents on the other. What happens is that such terms become ubiquitous, their conceptual implications are taken for granted, they become a part of our way of educational life without the benefit of critical analysis. (...) Such an image of education requires that schools be organized to prescribe, control, and predict the consequences of their actions, that those consequences be immediate and empirically manifest, and that they be measurable.⁶

There can be little doubt that what Eisner wrote then is more valid than ever today. Even within the very different educational traditions and systems of the United States and Germany, a deeply held view of the necessity of achieving that degree of standardization and accountability which both science and economic production demand is clearly prevalent. This has become particularly evident in policies precipitated by recent educational developments in the United States and in a number of European countries, including Germany. The disastrous results of national and international tests in regard to the basic skills of reading and mathematics along with clear deficits in pupils' scientific knowledge have made educational reform one of the most pressing issues on the political agenda. The catastrophic economic and political dimensions of failing schools have become so apparent that it has led to an unprecedented range of large-scale programs and initiatives, for example, the "No Child Left Behind" program in the United States, or the national *Bildungsstandards* in Germany. In their wide-scale attempts to

⁴ Elyse Lamm Pineau, "Teaching is Performance: Reconceptualizing a Problematic Metaphor," *American Educational Research Journal*, Spring 1994, Vol. 31, No. 1, 3-4.

⁵ H.H. Marshall, "Work or Learning: Implications of Classroom Metaphor," *Educational Researcher* 17(9), (1988): 9-16.

⁶ Elliot Eisner, *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs* 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1985) 356-7.

establish objective and measurable standards for all pupils, these programs evidence the continued dominance of a view of teaching and learning based on the dictum of education as a 'hard science.' The dominance of this position can also be seen in a host of curricular decisions, ranging from the widespread propagation of 'scripted teaching' methods in the United States, to the clear tendency towards adapting curricula to meet the requirements of increased standardized national testing at all age levels which can be found in both Germany and the United States.

What Eisner has recently described as a *formalist vision* of schooling based on the goal of efficiently reaching narrowly defined aims, can be considered the basis of most contemporary educational thinking and policies in both the United States and much of Europe. He writes,

...a formalist vision conceives of curriculum and teaching as rule guided activities that lead to pre-specified ends capable of being achieved if the pedagogical and curricular methods employed are appropriate. The aim of educational policy is to create institutions that make the realization of those aims possible. (...) Like the management of an assembly line, predictability, control, order and specificity are prized and pursued. The administrator's main task is to run the organizational machine so that students achieve intended outcomes. In this vision, schooling is taken "seriously." By seriously I mean that the student's life within the school is analogized to the world of work. Schooling is the child's work and the teacher's job is to supervise its development so that it is performed well.⁷

It is this view of schooling and teaching, formed by the paradigms of science and business, which must be seen as the dominant contemporary perspective in shaping most educational policies. These models and their relevant metaphors can also be seen as highly influential in the framework of teacher education, shaping both pre-service and in-service training. Although it is perhaps unsurprising that Science and Business have been considered to best exemplify accomplishment and progress, the far-ranging implications of the adoption of such criteria deserve to be considered more closely. One of the central aims of this study will be to critically examine these models and metaphors in the context of exploring an alternative view of teaching and teacher education based on the concept of *teaching as an art*.

1.3 The Model of Teaching as an Art

Considering teaching as an art implies not only a different understanding, but requires adopting a different *framework of knowledge* as well. In the arts there are clearly ways of knowing that cannot be represented within the measurable, objective domains of traditional science and education. The musician's sensitivity to nuances of tone, the actor's to voice and gesture, the

⁷ Elliot Eisner, "Two Visions of Education," *Teachers College Record* November 07, 2005. (available online at (last accessed on 5.10.2006) <http://www.tcrecord.org>. ID Number: 12234

clown's to the possibilities of improvisation, all represent forms of knowledge and expression which do not lend themselves easily to rational, scientific discourse. Nor do they represent that type of knowledge which most educational research and theory has propagated as essential in teacher education, or, for that matter, for pupils in their schooling. At the same time they are all, incontrovertibly, examples of highly precise and expressive ways of knowing and acting.

The framework which will be examined in the following chapters is based on a view of teaching in which such forms of artistic knowledge are considered to be highly relevant in teaching and thus essential elements in teacher education. Intrinsic to this standpoint is the belief that teaching demands sensitivities and skills which are far closer to those required of artists, than those of scientists. Although this approach does not reflect most contemporary educational thinking, there have been educators who have adopted similar positions. The most prominent of these has been Elliot Eisner. In a chapter called 'On the Art of Teaching' in his seminal book *The Educational Imagination* (1985) he explains the four reasons which lead him to define teaching as an art:

First, it is an art in the sense that teaching can be performed with such skill and grace that, for the student as for the teacher, the experience can be justifiably characterized as aesthetic. (...)

Second, teaching, is an art in the sense that teachers, like painters, composers, actresses, and dancers, make judgments based on qualities that unfold during the course of action. (...)

Third, teaching is an art in the sense that the teacher's activity is not dominated by prescriptions or routines but is influenced by qualities and contingencies that are unpredicted. (...)

Fourth, teaching is an art in the sense that the ends it achieves are often created in process. (...)

It is in these four senses – teaching as a source of aesthetic experience, as dependent on the perception and control of qualities, as a heuristic, or adventitious activity, and as seeking emergent ends – that teaching can be regarded as an art.⁸

In the context of this study, the last three reasons which Eisner has presented will become the focus of attention. They address different, but related aspects of the process of teaching itself, emphasizing its dynamic and indeterminate qualities. In contrast to his initial point in which he adopts the more distanced perspective of *appreciating* the aesthetic/artistic qualities of excellent teaching, his last three points are focused on the internal and creative processes occurring *during the act of teaching*. Using terms like "flexible purposing" and "fluid intelligence," he elucidates how artists learn to address changing elements in their mediums, drawing on a repertoire of possibilities to create and work with those dynamic qualities intrinsic to

⁸ Eisner 1985, 175-177.

their respective art forms.⁹ In establishing parallels between such processes in the arts and in teaching, a framework is created in which the paradigms of the arts become attainable for teachers through realizing possibilities within their own medium. The teacher as artist is thus seen as exhibiting comparable forms of skill and grace as the musician, dancer, or actor. Such highly individual, dynamic processes in which unique qualities of artistry become most visible, contrast most strongly with the mechanistic following of predefined recipes and routines.

This vision of teaching clearly raises a host of significant issues and questions in regard to *teacher education*. In the context of viewing teaching as an art, an alternative to traditional pre-service and in-service education is clearly called for. However, within the settings and frameworks in which such training customarily takes place, this has, unsurprisingly, proved to be extremely difficult to institute. Hence for Eisner and others who have argued in a similar vein, the daunting challenges implied in developing new forms of teacher education have consistently emerged as a central and intransigent problem.¹⁰ The first part of this study will focus on addressing this problem both conceptually and in the context of empirical research.

In examining the concept of teaching as an art and the resulting implications for teacher education today, it will first be helpful to consider critical issues within a much larger historical framework. It was most notably in Classical Greece, in the period of German Idealism and later in the reform movements at the beginning of the 20th century that the connections between teaching and the arts were viewed as a central dimension of educational thinking. Many of the questions and problems which were widely discussed in those times bear strong similarities to issues which Eisner and others have raised today. Thus, to gain a broader understanding of the origins and development of this concept, as well as to incorporate previous thinking and experiences into present considerations, it can be highly instructive to trace the historical origins of this view in both the European and Anglo-American educational traditions. Adopting an historical perspective is thus seen as a prerequisite to understanding how this concept evolved into its present form and also as potentially relevant and illuminating in a contemporary context.

1.3.1 The Origins of Teaching as an Art: The Sophists

The origins of the concept of teaching as an art can be seen in the practice of the Sophists beginning in the 5th century B.C. who were the first pedagogues to develop a broadly humanistic and ethical approach to education reflected in the concept of *paideia*. This implied for them forming the entire person

⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

¹⁰ The challenges which this vision of teaching poses for teacher education and educational research have been convincingly elucidated by Pineau 1994.

spiritually, morally and intellectually. To achieve these goals they introduced the idea of a broad humanistic education based on the disciplined study of rhetoric, grammar and dialectics, as well as on the accumulation of an encyclopaedic knowledge of a broad range of subjects including geometry, music, poetry, ethics and politics. This approach reflected a new democratic understanding of the role of a liberal arts education in preparing more young people to take an active part in Greek political and cultural life.¹¹ Through their widely recognized virtuosity as teachers and speakers the Sophists quickly and dramatically transformed the entire Greek concept of education.

Realizing the aims implied in their understanding of *paideia* meant coming to terms with the numerous pedagogical challenges inherent in carrying out such a broadly based educational approach. This required the initial development of didactical principles. Ernst Lichtenstein sees here the origins of Didactics as a relevant educational field. He writes,

A pedagogical consciousness also becomes aware ... for the first time of the educative process, of the preconditions and conditions that are the basis for its success and of the factors that must work within it. In the course of this reflection it encounters both the problem of how individuals can be shaped and influenced with respect to their individual possibilities, as well as theoretical questions pertaining to educational leadership, the educational path and methodology.¹²

In the widespread realization of their new educational concepts, Lichtenstein sees the Sophists as having created the basis for an understanding of pedagogy as an art.

This new pedagogical consciousness understands education firstly as an independent cultural activity that has to be brought into the form of art.¹³

1.3.2 Socrates

In both his goals and methods, Socrates presents a clear contrast to the Sophists. As opposed to the wide-ranging programs of the Sophists, Socrates saw the paramount aim of all education to be the attainment of a deeper knowledge of the soul and herein a realization of the highest possibilities of Self. His methods were based on his recognition of his own lack of knowledge, thus making possible a true questioning; a dialectical conversation in which the other had to draw conclusions on his own. In this sense he considered the teacher's role as comparable to the *art of the midwife* (*maieutikos*) – assisting in the birth of productive thinking and self-discovery. Socrates says in *Theaetetus*,

¹¹ Ernst Lichtenstein, *Der Ursprung der Pädagogik im griechischen Denken*. (Hannover: Hermann Schrödel, 1970) 47-48. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of German into English I have done together with Martyn Rawson.

¹² *Ibid.*, 62.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 61.

For one thing I have in common with ordinary midwives is that I myself am barren of wisdom. The common reproach against me is that I am always asking questions of other people but never express my own ideas about anything, because there is no wisdom in me; and that is true enough. And of the reason of it is this, that God compels me to attend the travail of others, but has forbidden me to procreate.¹⁴

This dialectical approach contrasts strongly with the Sophist approach which was closely tied to their rhetorical skills. Lichtenstein sees the essential distinctions in the ways the Sophists and Socrates each perceived education as an art as originating in the highly disparate nature of their respective educational visions:

Socrates could be misunderstood as a Sophist, but he was far more radical in his much deeper understanding of education as an art, because he saw education as an ethical art. Art demands knowledge and ability. Art realises and moulds into a 'work' what had previously been an imaginative 'draft' and image, also clearly and objectively perceived as a 'task' to be accomplished. Thus, one must know what one wants. The Sophists who desired to be the arbiters of education, lacked exactly that essential concept underlying all education – 'the knowledge of the Good'.¹⁵

1.3.3 Plato

Building on the teachings of Socrates, Plato designed the first encompassing educational philosophy and system, which was to become the foundation of his ideal Republic. His educational concepts beginning with kindergarten age addressed all stages of schooling, ending in the rigorous philosophical Academy which for a select few ended at the age of 35. In considering the historical development of the concept of teaching as an art, he can be viewed as a central figure whose thinking not only shaped his own times, but strongly influenced later periods as well.

Plato's concept of *paideia* can only be understood in the context of his understanding of the eternal nature of knowledge in which the process of learning is inextricably tied to the immortality of the human soul:

As the soul is immortal, has been born often and has seen all things here and in the underworld, there is nothing which it has not learned; thus it is in no way surprising that it can recollect the things it knew before, both about virtue and other things. As the whole of nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, nothing prevents a man after recalling one thing only – a process men call learning – discovering everything else for himself, if he is brave and does not tire of the search, for searching and learning are, as a whole, recollection.¹⁶

¹⁴ Plato. "Theaetetus" 150c. In *Complete Works* Ed. John M. Cooper. Trans. M.J. Levitt, rev. Myle Burnyeat. (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1997) 167.

¹⁵ Lichtenstein 1970, 78.

¹⁶ Plato. "Menon" 81d. In *Complete Works* Ed. John M. Cooper. Trans. G.M.A. Grude. (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett 1997) 880.

His view of the human soul as inherently possessing an ultimate knowledge which for Plato is the equivalent of the ultimate Good, also implies that the discovery, or re-discovery, of this knowledge is an inborn and driving force in all learning. Werner Jäger writes,

What is essential for Plato here is the insight that the truth of Being is 'present' in the soul. This insight initiates a process of seeking and methodological self-awareness. The search for the truth is nothing other than the development of the soul and that content which naturally lies within it. This arises from a deep longing originating in the soul itself.¹⁷

The learning process required in helping an individual to experience that eternal unity which he is capable of knowing, implies a bringing together of those separate parts which have 'fallen out' of this whole. In this sense the art of teaching is seen as being comparable to the art of healing. Lichtenstein writes,

The Platonic educational ideal is therefore simply this - to enable the human being to become human. As he is, the human being is only on the surface a whole; in reality, he is sorely divided within. To become whole, he must be educated and formed. The art of education is thus like the art of medicine, in that it aims to bring the forces of the soul into a state in which these inner forces can rule naturally and be ruled by each other naturally.¹⁸

Plato's understanding of *paideia* contrasts with that of the Sophists in that the function of education is not seen to lie in the forming and development of different capabilities, but rather in the realization of the predestined potentials inherent in human nature. Jäger writes,

Paideia is not simply a stage of transition in the development of the human being in which certain spiritual and intellectual abilities are developed, but rather its significance is broadened to encompass the completion and realization of the human being in accordance with his nature.¹⁹

The role of the teacher as midwife is thus understood as helping the learner to give birth to and then sustain his own learning processes. The art of teaching lies in helping learning. W. Flitner writes,

...it comes down to this - that one "learns to learn." Whoever can do this therefore relates everything to the idea of the Good itself; he learns philosophically and he learns to philosophize. This learning leads to knowledge about the Good and to a love of justice and all the other virtues.²⁰

¹⁷ Werner Jäger. *Paideia: Die Formung des Griechischen Menschen*. 3 vols. 5th. ed.(Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1972) 755.

¹⁸ Lichtenstein 1970, 91.

¹⁹ Jäger 1972, 713.

²⁰ Wilhelm Flitner. *Die Erziehung: Pädagogen und Philosophen über die Erziehung und ihre Probleme*. (Wiesbaden: Dietrich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung 1958) XXXII.

Hence, in contrast to the Sophists, Plato does not construct his didactical framework from the perspective of the teacher, but from the standpoint of the *learner*.²¹

In helping the learner to realize this goal, the *dialectical method* of Socrates becomes the fundamental basis of his didactical concept. Through a dialectical approach, it becomes possible for the learner to find his own way through the different stages of knowledge which necessarily precede the highest form of understanding and knowledge. Through answering the necessary questions, a latent, eternal knowledge is awakened: for Plato, the dialectical principle becomes the key to going past a material understanding of the world and ultimately perceiving reality – the Idea – behind the material world.

The immense and differentiated artistry required in the teacher's use of the dialectical method was based not only on his posing the appropriate questions, but on precise listening, and the exact nature of his responses, often given in the form of examples (*Paradeigma*). This was considered to be a long and difficult process, requiring an extraordinary degree of attention and presence. The paradigm of this degree of artistry was, of course, Socrates.

In the end, the full realization of this process is seen not only as constituting the highest realization of artistry in teaching, but as the essence of the process of *learning*. Through the artistry of the teacher, the learner acquires a knowledge which is *not teachable*, but only *learnable*. W. Jäger writes,

... truly, this new concept of knowledge offers an insight into a kind of cognition which can not be 'externally' taught, but which through correct guidance of thought arises within the soul of the seeker itself. The charm of Plato's Socratic art of conversation lies in the fact that now that we have come close to grasping the idea, he does not offer us this conclusion ready-made, but allows us to find it ourselves. Indeed, the new Padeia can not be taught...²²

Plato's entire concept of the teacher's artistry is perhaps best explained with the term *techne* which is not accurately translated with its closest approximation 'art.' *Techne* shares in common with art its focus on concrete artistic expression. However, it emphasizes the practical and wide-ranging knowledge and skills which art requires and not the individual creativity commonly associated with the arts. In this sense it is closer, for instance, to the kind of artistry associated with the art of healing than with that of painting or music. A further decisive characteristic is that its expression is considered to be ultimately helpful for the realization and development of the highest human potentials. This is, for example, what leads Socrates and Plato to the conclusion that Rhetoric cannot be considered *techne*. As will become evident in the context of later developments, Plato's entire approach

²¹ Lichtenstein 1970, 108

²² Jäger 1972, 757.

to teaching as *techne* can be considered as a decisive contribution to the concept of teaching as an art.

1.3.4 European Humanism and the Art of Teaching

One of the consequences of the rise of Humanism in the Renaissance was the re-emergence of an approach to teaching with clear roots in Sophistic thinking. The earlier Scholastic approach to studying theological writings based on the strict dialectical approach of *lectio* and *disputatio* which had been the accepted teaching practice in all subjects throughout the Middle Ages, was gradually transformed, in part, through a new emphasis on the discipline of Rhetoric in teaching.²³ Later, in the course of the 17th century, a new and independent field of Didactics emerged, in which the specific principles of teaching were developed and systematized.²⁴ Comenius' *Didactica magna* (1657) can be seen as the first large scale attempt to develop a rational system of teaching principles. In his emphasis on a new way of teaching based on *Anschauungsprinzipien* (illustrative principles) as opposed to mechanical learning procedures, as well as in the significance which he attached to spontaneity in teaching ("sponte fluit") Comenius offered elements of a new, humanistic vision of teaching which differed substantially from those shaped by previous medieval traditions.

The writings of J. Locke and later J. J. Rousseau were also influential in advocating a view of teaching in which encouraging and developing young pupils' own interest and activity in learning was seen as vital.²⁵ This contrasted strongly with the style of teaching still widely present in the first half of the 18th century based on a strictly catechistical approach. Pestalozzi's educational principles and methods can also be clearly distinguished from the formalistic principles and authoritative style of teaching prevalent at that time.²⁶ J. G. Hamman's *Fünf Hirten Briefe das Schuldrama betreffend* (1763) offered a new vision of teaching based on incorporating elements of drama and acting.²⁷ Fröbel's later development of the idea of a kindergarten, based on his belief in the harmonious nature of the young child's being, and the adult's responsibility to appropriately assist the child in her natural development can also be seen as reflecting a broadly humanistic approach to education. Parallel to these developments, a new approach to studying the classics in universities developed in which the texts were no longer used as a basis for exercises in grammar and rhetoric, but were intensively studied

²³ Gottfried Hausmann. *Didaktik als Dramaturgie des Unterrichts*. (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1959) 18-19.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Wilhelm Flitner. *Allgemeine Pädagogik*. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta im Ullstein Taschenbuch, 1950/1980) 14.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Hausmann 1959, 69-70.

with the intention of developing and educating the entire human being.²⁸ All of these developments can also be seen as connected to the rise of German Idealism, and reflected in the writings of Winckelmann, Herder, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Humboldt, Fichte and Schleiermacher. In this context, Schiller's *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* can be viewed as particularly significant in regard to the later development of the concept of teaching as an art.²⁹

1.3.5 Schiller: Aesthetic Education

Schiller's small tract *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, written in the form of twenty-seven letters, conveys his ideal of the development of an individual and a society in freedom. In contrast to Kant who saw the *overcoming* of feelings and instincts through a sense of moral duty and ensuing actions as the highest virtue, Schiller sought possibilities in which an individual in full acceptance of his sentient being would *desire* to cultivate the highest moral ideals as an act of *free choice*. He describes two contrasting instincts as generally being decisive in human behaviour: an instinct in which one is led to unreflectively follow and act on sentient experience (*Stofftrieb*), and an instinct through which these feelings can be subjugated in order to act according to moral principles (*Formtrieb*). Through the *Stofftrieb*, actions are dictated by sensory experience and natural instincts; through the *Formtrieb* one controls feelings and instincts through inner thought and logic. In this polarity, Schiller saw little possibility of realizing the potentials of human development, insofar as in both cases *necessity* rather than *freedom* is decisive in shaping behaviour. To these two instincts, he envisioned a third, the *Spieltrieb*, in which these two instincts are united, creating the possibility of human behaviour resulting from freedom and choice, instead of instinct, or moral imperatives:

The sense impulse wants to be determined, to receive its object; the form impulse wants to determine for itself, to produce its object; the play impulse will endeavour to receive as it would itself have produced, and to produce as the sense aspires to receive.³⁰ (14th letter)

[Der sinnliche Trieb will bestimmt *werden*, er will sein Objekt empfangen; der Formtrieb will *selbst* bestimmen, er will sein Objekt hervorbringen; der Spieltrieb wird also bestrebt sein so zu empfangen, wie er selbst hervorgebracht hätte, und so hervorzubringen, wie der Sinn zu empfangen trachtet.] (italics in original)

The realization of the *Spieltrieb* is only possible in the realm of beauty (*Bereich des Schönen*). It is only in and through aesthetic experience that the

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁹ Friedrich Schiller. *Über die Ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*. (Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 2004 (repr. Die Horen 1795 - Sämtliche Werke Vol. 12, Stuttgart: 1904).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 84-85.

Spieltrieb can be fully experienced and it is only in play (*Spiel*) that human potentials are fully realized:

... the Beautiful is not to be mere life, nor mere shape, but living shape – that is, beauty – as it dictates to mankind the twofold law of absolute formality and absolute reality. Consequently it also pronounces the saying: Man shall only *play* with Beauty, and he shall play *only with Beauty*. Thus – and to finally speak it out – the human being only plays when he is in the full sense of the word human and *he is only wholly human* when he plays.³¹ (15th letter) (italics in original)

[...das Schöne soll nicht bloßes Leben und nicht bloße Gestalt, sondern lebende Gestalt, das ist, Schönheit sein; indem sie ja dem Menschen das doppelte Gesetz der absoluten Formalität und der absoluten Realität diktiert. Mithin tut sie auch den Ausspruch: der Mensch soll mit der Schönheit *nur spielen*, und er soll *nur mit der Schönheit* spielen. Denn, um es endlich auf einmal herauszusagen, der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und *er ist nur da ganz Mensch*, wo er spielt.] (italics in original)

Schiller's view of aesthetic education can only be fully understood in the context of the central role which he considered aesthetics to have in all human development. In his work it becomes evident that the role of art and beauty (*Schönheit*) in the further development of the *Spieltrieb* are seen as being decisive in all areas of education and life, resulting ideally in a harmony and unity – a *Lebenskunst* with implications in all areas of social life:

Through Beauty the sensuous man is led to form and to thought; through Beauty the spiritual man is brought back to matter and restored to the world of sense.³² (18th letter)

[Durch die Schönheit wird der sinnliche Mensch zur Form und zum Denken geleitet; durch die Schönheit wird der geistige Mensch zur Materie zurückgeführt und der Sinnenwelt wiedergegeben.]

In this educational/aesthetic context, individual freedom coupled with an inner sense of responsibility only becomes possible through cultivating and developing one's senses, sentient life and artistic imagination through *aesthetic experience*.

There is no other way to make the sensuous man sensible other than to first make him aesthetic.³³ (23rd letter)

[Es gibt keinen anderen Weg, den sinnlichen Menschen vernünftig zu machen, als daß man denselben zuvor ästhetisch macht]

Schiller's concept of aesthetic education in which artistic processes and activity are viewed as decisive elements in all human development

³¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

³² *Ibid.*, 105.

³³ *Ibid.*, 132.

evidences clear parallels to the thinking of other philosophers of that period, most notably Herder and Schleiermacher. At the same time, his *Ästhetische Briefe* can be seen as representing a significant step in the development of this connection between art and education, which was later to have a direct and formative influence on the thinking of later educational reformers.

1.3.6 Developments in the 19th Century

It was only towards the end of the 19th century that Schiller's writings began to have a marked influence on educational views. For most of the 19th century the decisive figure was undoubtedly Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), who is generally viewed as the founder of the *science* of education. Whereas Herbart himself, particularly in his early writings, also emphasized the crucial role of pedagogical creativity and pedagogical tact in teaching, his followers stressed the formal principles and system of teaching which he elucidated in his later writings.³⁴ The result was a highly systematic and rigid view of learning and teaching which dominated educational thinking until the last decades of the 19th century.

It was the strong reaction to the rigidity of *Herbartismus* and its highly formalistic and scientific view of education that eventually led to the development of a range of concepts in which teaching and learning were considered in a broadly artistic context. These developments were strongly based on the ideas of German Idealism, as well as on the ideas of contemporary philosophers, most notably Dilthey and Nietzsche.³⁵ The entire educational reform movement beginning in the last decades of the 19th century and continuing through the Weimar Republic came to include a broad range of different movements including the *Kunsterziehungsbewegung*, *Persönlichkeitspädagogik*, *Gesamtunterrichtsidee*, *Arbeitsschulidee* and, after World War I, *Waldorfpädagogik* and the *Jenaplan*. Although the above mentioned concepts all had their origins in Germany, there was also a clear international dimension to the ideas of educational reform which developed at that time. Andreas Flitner writes,

Reform Pedagogy in the first third of the century was indeed very original and innovative in Germany, but it can only be understood as an international movement. The basis for these events and thoughts lies in the entire European and American Modernist Movement. Everywhere there are parallels, encounters and influences.³⁶

What these disparate movements shared in common were visions of an education based on the specific needs of children ("*vom Kinde aus*"). In

³⁴ G. Hausmann's illuminating discussion of Herbart's early writings offers an interesting contrast to the way Herbart's views are generally understood; Hausmann 1959, 34-36.

³⁵ Baldur Kozdon. *Didaktik als "Lehrkunst": Idee und Begründung.* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 1984) 1-36.

³⁶ Andreas Flitner. *Reform der Erziehung: Impulse des 20. Jahrhunderts.* (München: Piper, 1992) 26.

strong contrast to the proponents of Herbartismus, they placed an emphasis on sensory and aesthetic experience, as well as on the development of the child's inherent creative possibilities, predicated on a holistic, humanistic view of the child's development. In looking back at the different reform movements at the beginning of the 20th century, Flitner describes the common pedagogical credo they all shared:

Children should no longer just obey, but should understand as far as possible what it is all about: one should talk to them and discuss with them instead of giving them orders, they should have their own experiences with other children without adults always intervening, they should not be hit and ordered about; one should live with them, play with them, also work with them, as with younger friends instead of gravely setting examples to which they have to look up. All this appeared to the young educators and parents as a sign of a new style and an important part of their reforms. Youth was considered by this generation as the potential source for the renewal of society. Childhood and youth were proof of the true nature of humanity...³⁷

In considering both the content and tenor of their ideals, it is unsurprising that despite clear differences in their educational programs, they all envisioned the arts as constituting a central aspect in their curricula and artistic principles as offering a paradigm for all teaching.³⁸ Although this position was most strongly propagated in the *Kunsterziehungsbewegung*, which can be considered the most influential of the reform movements during that period, many common elements in their views of the role of artistic processes in teaching can be found in the works of the leading reformers of that time, including Ernst Linde (*Persönlichkeits-Pädagogik*), Berthold Otto and Wilhelm Albert (*Gesamtunterrichtsidee*), Georg Kerschensteiner (*Arbeitsschule*) and after WW I, Rudolf Steiner (*Waldorfpädagogik*), Peter Petersen (*Jenaplan*), as well as in the writings of Herman Nohl, Edward Spranger, Theodor Litt, Wilhelm Flitner and Friedrich Copei.³⁹ Kozdon (1982) in his later study of the various educational reform movements of this time summarizes their common basis regarding the concept of teaching as an art:

In retrospect, it is evident that the different educational movements ... while not exclusively born out of the concept of education as an art, nevertheless concur in their essential understanding of this idea. Leading educators understood their educational task as being closely related to an artistic activity. They believed that they would fail in their obligations to their pupils, if they carried out their daily work in a manner lacking 'pedagogical artistry'.⁴⁰

It will be instructive to look more concretely at how the concept of teaching as an art was understood at that time. The writings of Ernst Weber and

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁸ Kozdon 1984, 36.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.