

Reflections on ideas created during the conference

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Thinking about the outcome of the conference I wondered that I had heard quite a lot of purposes from very different perspectives. But it might have been hard to reconstruct and evaluate the different purposes in the very short time I have. And as I didn't know which were your real goals – the goals behind the purposes (or what else it could have been you meant) - that act of reconstruction seemed to be rather hopeless. So I gave up that effort before I had begun with it. But what is my idea then? It's about biographical story-telling. I'll try to give you not only one perspective.

I'm now more than 60 years old. In a few years I'll retire. Of course, I need - and I want - arts education for myself. I hope that I can still live for a while and I want to do the things I love with more time then. And I want to do them as competently as possible. I want to become a more and more competent recipient of for example theatre, music, dance, visual arts, literature and so on. And I want to improve my small practical competencies in the arts too, (but I won't tell you, in which fields of art). To do that effectively, I want to know how that can work best: Therefore I need the results of comparative research and monitoring of arts education. This is my personal interest in monitoring arts education in a *lifelong perspective*.

For more than forty years I've been a husband. So I had to learn the art of living together. I learned how helpful the arts could be

for that purpose. It was often in theatre or literature or even sometimes in films my wife and I found the models of shaping our lives, of living with conflict and harmony. So I think, it might be a very relevant goal of comparative research and monitoring arts education to find out about the importance of arts education of ***the art of living together*** – and not only in a personal relationship, but in all forms of living together in modern society. Transculturality as a result of globalization absolutely requires the art of living together – and arts education might be a very important way of teaching and learning it. But how to learn the best way of doing it? You already know the answer.

For about forty years I've been a father, first of one son, then of another one. With both of the children my wife and I had wonderful experiences with their arts education in different fields, in informal, non-formal and formal contexts, in family, Kindergarten and school, and also with their private music and sports education. Theatre, literature, music, film, soccer, tennis and sailing were the preferred subjects. In school - and in non-formal situations also - they had both wonderful and terrible teachers. The good ones were not only good as teachers in their specific field of art, but also as performers of the art of teaching (and often as artists, as performers of their specific art, too). They were really both: teachers to the arts and teachers through the arts. Now I'm a grandfather – I'm very proud of my three grandchildren by now. And so, under new circumstances, the game of cultivation has begun again. So of course I want to know how ***teaching to the arts and teaching through the arts*** can be done best under the new historical and cultural conditions.

Therefore I need to be informed about what is possible and helpful – again more research and monitoring of arts education is needed.

For about twenty years I've been a professor of pedagogy. So I had to choose my subjects of research and I had to learn for myself how to be a teacher on the university level. I'm not sure if I'm a really good teacher – sometimes I doubt it -, but I know exactly why I choose my subjects of cultural and aesthetical education, of arts education. I once studied not only pedagogy, but sociology, history and political science too. So I learned a lot about education and its frameworks. But in those early days I didn't learn anything about the relevance of ***taste in history and presence***. This lasted to the early eighties, when I was looking for a helpful approach in empirical research about the processes of socialisation in universities, that I found the praxeological approach of Pierre Bourdieu. His approach was really fascinating for me. So for a long period I tried to adopt his approach not only for my sociological work of that time, but also for the pedagogy. I wrote many articles and even a book about Bourdieu – it cost me years of my life. But I learned a lot by his theoretical and empirical approach and by his scientific and essayistic work (and a bit by himself, too). At the centre of Bourdieu's scientific work you can find comparative research on the meaning of arts and culture in the everyday life of the different groups and fields of society. This includes a specific focus on the meaning the division of different competencies has for the people and their education. All the competencies for arts and culture are learned. So the question is: What do the empirical findings about the differences

in taste and habits really mean? Who learns what and why and under which circumstances? What about the meaning of range and structure of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capitals? And ***what can you do pedagogically against the blind reproduction of inequality?*** You can't answer these questions without comparative research and monitoring.

Two further remarks I want to tell you. When I was an adolescent, I didn't like school at all. As a pupil in a very traditional, very authoritarian humanistic gymnasium I wasn't very successful even if I somehow made it – but it was really no fun. What helped me to survive were two experiences, one in school and one out of school. In school there were sometimes interesting subjects in German literature, history, the visual arts and in sports. Out of school there were the peer groups, the girls and the music. In the early sixties I mostly adored the Rolling Stones and the Animals, later it was The Who, The Doors and Bob Dylan, who gave my life sense. So the arts helped me to create my biography. I think that it would be a very interesting focus of comparative research to ***question the biographical meaning of the arts in different societies*** – you can't only do that with monitoring, you need quite deep research projects for that issue.

My peers of that time met in a public space at the city centre. It was in the sixties, and so there were the guitars and the singing. The adults didn't like us to meet there and they didn't like what we did (by the way, nothing most of the time); for them we were insubordinate and annoying – so we really enjoyed studying their reactions. It was a kind of culture clash which happened there,

and we were not only in the middle, but we monitored and discussed the situation with high attentiveness. That was the first time I learned about the value of participant observation – and that method later became one of my absolute favourites, in life and in science, too. Most of my evaluation projects are based on participant observation. So I think that method might be very helpful for global comparative research and monitoring of arts education, too – especially as a view from outside, the view of a stranger. We could ***cultivate the view over the fence as a perfect method***. And there are many fences, not only between the countries, but also between the artistic disciplines and the disciplines of arts education.

Of course I could go through my other biographic roles and experiences. I hope that the short CV showed the attractiveness of a biographical approach, too, even if it was self-reporting. Of course we need the quantitative empirical data base of the fields. Of course we need sociological and political analyses of the cultural politics on the level of the international organisations, the states, the cities and the cultural and educational institutions. Of course we need participant observations. Of course we need meta-analyses of the relevant discourses. But a focus on the biographies of key-persons could be a wonderful and very fruitful method, too.

I think this is enough for now. My conclusion is clear: I need research and monitoring of arts education to improve my life. And maybe this is true for other people, too.