Rethinking Education

Substantiating an Authentic and Sustainable, Post–
Traditional Understanding of Education
— A Philosophical Foundational Study

By

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"Mahia ngā mahi o ngā tamariki hei āpōpō ka tū hei rangatira"

('Fulfil the needs of our children and tomorrow they stand strong')

Waru (2010, p. 2) [1]

I dedicate this thesis

to my loving and supportive parents,

Heide and Harald Steiner.

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[1] The *Whakamarama*, the explanation, of the *Whakatauki*, the powerful proverb of the Aotearoa New Zealand Children's Day, was composed by Kui Pani Waru (Ngati Porou), and inspired by a well-known *Kohanga Waiata*.

Mihi Whakatau i te Tāngata Whenua[2]

E ngā mana, e ngā reo,
E te iti, e te rahi,
E ngā mātāwaka o ngā tōpito o te ao.
Ngā mahuetanga iho e kawe nei i ngā moemoeā o rātou mā,
Tēnā koutou katoa.
Piki mai rā, kake mai rā,
Nau mai, haere mai ki tēnei o ngā wānanga.

To the prestigious, the many voices,
The few, the great,
To those of all races and creeds.
We who remain to fulfil the dreams
And aspirations of the ancestors,
Greetings one and all.
Climb, ascend,
Embark on the journey of knowledge.[3]

Know that our truth and your truth may not be the same.
We all have our own journey to make
And many are the trails that lead to wisdom. ...
There are old trails that lead on to new worlds.
It is time to gain inspiration from the past
To guide us into the future.

We journey with the vision that the traditions recorded in the land
Will become the shared inheritance of all who call it home. ...
May the wisdom of old be a force for good,
Today and tomorrow, and in all our tomorrows. ...
May you journey far in peace and understanding.[4]

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[2] (transl.: '[traditional] greeting by the people of the land')
[3] The greeting, including translation, has been adapted from AUT University (2014a, p. 2).
[4] This *karakia* ('prayer') has been adapted from Ruka Te Korako et al. (2003, pp. 5-13).

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My cordial thanks to you all!

Abstract

CONTEXT

What should education in the 21st century look like? Which principles should postmodern education be based upon? The unfolding of the Age of Knowledge since the late 1990s has caused far-reaching transformations regarding the direction and emphasis of formal education and the way it is facilitated. On a different level, the educational discourse has also advanced in multifarious, knowledge-innovative directions. These developments have opened up a plurality of conceivable, futuristic ways of learning, particularly in the online-collaborative realm. In short, the meaning of knowledge and learning have been and continue to be redefined. Besides imparting crucial knowledge, education's role in developing the human personality and enabling participation in societal life is becoming more complex and, at the same time, more important. This constitutes both a challenge and an opportunity for the sector and its practitioners.

PROBLEM

While the Digital Revolution has yielded a whole new economy, the Knowledge Economy, the effects, globalisation, merged with the new economy, and the technological capabilities of the ICT industry, have had on education systems, is ambiguous and arguably problematic. Under the guise of 'efficiency' and 'professionalism', a plethora of internal and external expectations are influencing public education systems to deliver. Policy changes have shifted the focus of public education in the direction of goals, such as the application of new learning technologies in the classroom, or the securing of superior scores in international benchmarking tests. As a consequence, instead of becoming broader, more versatile,

and more pluralistic, curricula have become more linear and unitary, from early childhood education up to and including tertiary education. In short, public education systems have become increasingly streamlined. These developments, which have their origin in the late 1980s, have taken place on a global level, representing some implicit global education reform agenda. This late shift towards economy-driven educational policies has once again reinforced education's position of being essentially understood as a 'product' as opposed to a 'subjective process of development'. I, therefore, argue that amongst the hype about fast-paced information-technological innovation, education systems have essentially remained based on the authoritarian 19th century (factory model) paradigm.

RATIONALE

Such a materialistic model, which largely leaves the learning individual out of consideration, seems not appropriate if the intention is to allow young people to develop to the fullest of their potentials and ideally become self-actualised, independent, social, critical, and successful members of society. The initial assumption, that there is a need to resubstantiate education from the ground up in order to better relate to the realities of life and the capabilities of the human being in the 21st century, led me to the central question that drove this philosophical study, namely: How can education, and schooling in particular, remain relevant in the future? With the objective to bring about lasting change in the educational landscape, I framed the following guiding question: What would contemporary education have to look like and what principles should it be based upon in order to be a) authentic (in the sense being most meaningful to the learner and the teacher) and b) sustainable (in the sense of long-lasting learning experiences, and sustainable as a social institution

as such)? In other words, with this study, I philosophically explore the challenges, contradictions, and possibilities for education in a 21st-century context.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was carried out as an inter-perspectival critical theoretical-philosophical exploration and theory construction—in short, a Socratic exploration. Believing that education cannot take place disconnected from society, culture, and the environment, a range of relevant, interacting perspectives have been included. This review started off in the historical past with an in-depth exploration and theorisation of the origins of the idea of public education and the course of development of formal education throughout subsequent centuries up until today. Further perspectives included epistemology, education-political philosophy, manifestations of current educational reality, global education reform trends, and current educational philosophy. Combined with the historical perspectives and the one on current educational realities, this constituted the methodology of a seven-fold thematic 'triangulation'. This inter-perspectival approach led to an open-ended, critical-theoretical exploration and theorisation of the above fields to develop a contemporary understanding of and approach to education. The study emphasises Western education with reference to the researcher's personal background in the German school system.

THEORISATIONS

The insights and theorisations from this critical-theoretical exploration of interrelated fields, to a great extent, complemented each other. On an ideational level, the insight regularly coincided with existent overarching UN policy aspirations. As concerns implementation, however, evidence points to significant contentual disparities between policy rhetoric (i.e. the 'desired condition') and educational reality. While

changes implemented may have kept pace with technological advances and shifts in cultural and political trends, education systems have largely remained stagnant as concerns developments relating to developmental psychology, neuroscience, international benchmarking results, educational theory (paradigm), changes in perception of social reality, and the overall advancement of consciousness and thinking. In sum, the problematisation suggests that the current understanding of education and schooling is not in accordance with the necessities of contemporary reality, life, culture, and thinking.

IMPLICATIONS

The theorisations of this holistic review of education substantiate that justified, alternative ways of interpreting most aspects of public education,[5] to those currently applied, exist. The problematisation particularly emphasises the detriments brought about by decades of neoliberal education policy and conservative reforms. The concerted theorisations can be seen as an alternative concept to the current approach to education and can be used to contextualise education accordingly. In order to meet contemporary needs to develop self-actualised world citizens of the 21st century, 21st century education should aim to develop the whole human being in its entirety and 'to the fullest of its potentials'—as is worded in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* of 1989. Apart from an intellectual and physical education, this should also include social, relational, mental/emotional, ethical, spiritual, and cultural education, as well as aesthetic (artistic/creative) development 'to the maximum of one's abilities' as well as a wide range of practical skills (including digital-technological

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[5] (that is, educational governance, system philosophy, curricular variety, learning philosophy, didactics, evaluation of the learning process, staff management, and teacher education)

literacy). To do so, indications suggest curricula need to be intrinsically learner-centred with topics being studied when developmentally appropriate. From an ethical-existentialistic, post-material perspective, a key approach, indicated for education in the 21st century, has been shown to be 'learning experiences'. Key considerations for implementation are:

1) Authenticity—in the sense of 'real and meaningful learning experiences', and
2) Sustainability—in the sense of 'intrinsic and enduringly formative learning experiences'.

Similarly, performance evaluation should equally shift from a one-measure-fits-all notion to individualised and personalised ways of evaluating learning and development. Further evidence-based consequences have been concluded regarding teaching didactics/learning methodology, contents/curriculum indications, and school and classroom organisation.

ORIGINALITY

This theoretical treatise's originality is first and foremost comprised of its unique philosophical method, an inter-perspectival and open-ended phenomenological approach to qualitative theoretical research. This combines both breadth of perspective and in-depth problematisation of the core issues in order to attain holistic and meaningful results. This approach is original to both philosophical research as well as the topic in particular.

KEYWORDS

Education philosophy | postmodern | 21st-century education | education paradigm | post-traditional | critical theory of 'Bildung' | authentic | meaningful & sustainable ways of learning | lasting learning experiences | experiential learning | constructivism | 21st-century curriculum | lifelong learning | progressive education | right to education | fullest development (UN) | education policy & reform | holistic perspective.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Dirk M. Steiner

CHAPTER ONE

A new approach to education?
— Rationale and significance of the study

"If you want to truly understand something, try to change it."

Kurt Lewin [6] (as cited in Stam, 1996, p. 31)

Introduction

In this study, I set out on a philosophical exploration of the general concept(s) and practice(s) of education and its manifestations in the 21st century. In doing so, the aim of this study was to explore and study philosophical concerns, questions and implications for contemporary education, which have the potential to contribute to new approaches to education. An immediate question, that arose, was: Is there a need for a different (or new) approach to education?

If the answer to this were 'yes', it would imply a niche-in-research and thus a need for new knowledge to be brought out. At the same time, it would constitute this study's rationale and significance. To arrive at an initial research assumption, I first looked at this question from a broad, philosophical perspective. Assuming that it could be answered in the affirmative, there was an immediate question that followed, namely: Is there a new approach after all? I shall address this second question once I have addressed the first one. The outline of this chapter looks as follows:

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[6] (1890 – 1947), German-American psychologist, referred to as the 'father of social psychology'.

1.1   The meaning of learning for the human individual today

The Oxford English Dictionary defined learning as the action of acquiring knowledge or skills gained through study, experience, or being taught, leading to a transformation in thinking and a modification of behaviour or ways of doing ("learning," 2016). While some definitions of learning have focussed more on certain elements than others (such as the process of acquiring knowledge, or the change in behaviour), I believe that Mayer's (1982) definition is still relevant today. He stated:

> Learning is a relatively permanent change in a person's knowledge or behaviour due to experience. This definition has three components: 1) the duration of the change is long-term rather than short-term; 2) the locus of the change is the content and structure of knowledge in memory or the behaviour of the learner; 3) the cause of the change is the learner's experience in the environment rather than fatigue, motivation, drugs, physical condition, or physiological intervention. (Mayer, 1982, p. 1040)

As the ability to gain insights or to learn how to do something—whether through imitation during childhood, by means of self-guided study or learning by doing during the age of youth, or through intellectually stimulating topics at the age of adolescence and thereafter—learning accompanies us in various forms throughout all stages of our life (Aspin & Chapman, 2000; Hager, 2011; Passarelli & Kolb,

2011). Being able to perceive, make sense, learn, and consciously alter one's ways of thinking and doing, that is, learning by experience, is a uniquely human attribute (Passarelli & Kolb, 2011), and presumably as old as humankind itself.

Accumulated knowledge and experience, individually ingrained, informs one's personality, one's ways of thinking, and one's character. The art of human learning and development accommodates the idea of individuality, free will, and human freedom at large. It forms the central idea of humanist philosophy (Edwords, 2008).

Arguably, our life experiences teach us not just that there is meaning, but rather, what gives meaning to life is to see meaning and to be able to relate and connect to ideas conceived by others throughout the course of history. This is what we call knowledge. Be it wisdom in the form of tales or nursery rhymes, songs, folk tales, stories, novels, poetry, music, visual or performing arts, via non-verbal, sensual knowledge, meditation, or prayer—sharing thoughts, knowledge, and wisdom in creating new knowledge, and sharing it with others, in my view, is what gives higher meaning to human existence and allows us to grow. As part of this, I follow Aristotle's argument that the development of language may, by itself, be an indication that humans are and long to be social (cf. Aristotle, 1944; Loos, 1897). This resonates with Dewey's sense of the world. Dewey (1897) said: "Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself" (p. 78). It is, therefore, important to view learning as a vital and developmental necessity, as the 'principle of the child' in particular, and of the human being in general.

On the one hand, education ensures that a society's socio-cultural practices [7] are handed down to succeeding generations (cf. 'enculturation' and 'socialisation') (Kendall, Murray, & Linden, 2004); and this has been the historical purpose of learning for thousands of years. On the other hand, the aim of education—at least theoretically—is also to leverage young people to become self-actualised, independent individuals, able to get by in the societies and the world human civilisation has shaped over time (Crabtree, 2010; de Bellis, 2013; Gardner & Hatch, 1989; Greenberg, 1995; Rolin, 2014; UNESCO, 1997). In my view, this reflects both the aspect of securing a highly-advanced humanity's continuity at large, as well as; or rather, by means of each individual's personal prospects of fulfilling success in life. Historico-culturally speaking, both aspects are truly social deeds and in a literal sense 'inter – national' and 'cross – cultural' indeed since not being confined to any conceivable encapsulation, but simply universally human. To facilitate learning and the passing on of knowledge (i.e. education), this process has become organised and institutionalised over time; the institutionalised form of education, called schooling.

In actuality, however, the passing on of existing knowledge has predominantly been biased in some way or other (see for instance UNESCO, 2005; Weis, Dimitriadis, & McCarthy, 2013). One reason being that, historically, not all knowledge has always been openly available. There have been times when certain knowledge was, for instance, kept and proclaimed by those who were said to be adepts (i.e. 'esoteric knowledge'). At other times, it was restricted to those who could read and were able to understand Greek or Latin, respectively, and who could afford to buy books (i.e. 'hegemonic or elites' knowledge'). At yet other times, certain

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[7] (i.e. language, social customs, ethics, cultural traditions and skills, socio-cultural values and, of course, socio-cultural knowledge)

knowledge was subject to censorship or falsification to indoctrinate people of a certain belief or worldview (i.e. 'instrumental knowledge') (Fuller, 2015; UNESCO, 2005; Weis et al., 2013). All of which, I argue, have affected freedom of thought and have hampered personal liberty and development.

Since the latter part of the previous century, online access to knowledge has seen an opening up. The availability of various forms of knowledge in digital form has undergone a globalisation—the sheer overabundance of information in the Knowledge Age and Digital Era (Ho, 2006; UNESCO, 2009, 2010; Weiler, 2006). As UNESCO (2009, 2010) has elaborated, at the touch of a button, nearly any knowledge imaginable is simply available and opportunities to find out about, exchange views on, and study almost any topic, are virtually endless (UNESCO, 2009, 2010). The innovation of information and communication technologies allows people to find, process, analyse, evaluate, follow, share, merge, contribute in, and circulate developing knowledge. Hence, people can participate in the co-creation of new knowledge in online-collaborative/interactive ways—which is a result of collective intelligence (UNESCO, 2009, 2010). Due to its open and convenient accessibility, merged with technological advancement, knowledge and information have quite suddenly become a highly practical resource and tool for everyday use (UNESCO, 2009, 2010). At the same time, information has become a productive asset and has led to a whole new economy, the Knowledge Economy (W. W. Powell & Snellman, 2004). Thus, knowledge is the future, it seems.

At the same time, we live in a world as pluralistic as it has ever been. Due to the variety and contrasts of possible perspectives on scientificity and knowledge, following Power and Phillips-Wren (2011), the rise of Modern Age media has arguably had and continues to have an overwhelming effect on people's receptivity

and decision-making ability. Although the Modern Age is referred to by various scholars as the Age of Consciousness; apart from initiating the Digital Revolution and Knowledge Economy, it is debatable whether such a shift in human consciousness has yet taken place on broadest level. I therefore argue that the skills and faculties, young people leave school with to find meaning in the complex world of today (and be able to distinguish it from meaningless knowledge), are more crucial than ever. Education is to be considered amongst the most important tasks of postmodern society as well as humankind at large: P. Brown, Lauder, and Ashton (2008) pointed out that "not only is education believed to hold the key to international competitiveness but to the foundations of social justice and social cohesion" (p. 131). I believe that this includes education's power to influence global peace, cross-cultural cooperation, inter-faith understanding, gender tolerance and equality, tolerance of sexual orientation, successful relationships, environmental sensibility, and its power to influence ethical conduct and contribute to a meaningful and creative society.

Additionally, while education may indeed hold the key to a socially fair, peaceful, and sustainable world, the more important question, however, is whether current education systems are set up to bring out these attributes when developing the young person? Alternatively, whether they may potentially be hampering or biasing certain aspects of a person's development?

Despite considerable explorations in educational theory over the course of the 20th century, it is questionable whether new theories and different approaches—other than conventional concepts of instruction—have influenced education on a broad basis. In Chapter Seven, titled *Manifestations of current educational realities — A critical-phenomenological exploration*, I argue that, apart from numerous reforms

and policy changes, essentially, current education systems remain based on the 19th-century paradigm. I provide phenomenlogical arguments that education systems still function according to a factory model that views education as a product or a mass that can be used to fill an 'empty vessel' (the one to be educated), and that can be measured to see if the knowledge mass has sunk in. Latest tendencies in standardising education (i.e. models of measurable and comparable performance standards, such as *National Standards* (New Zealand), *Common Core State Standards* (USA), *Bildungsstandards* (transl. 'educational standards', Germany), or the *National Curriculum* (UK), to name but a few) follow this notion (e.g. Ball, 2003; Robinson, 2006, 2010; Sachs, 2003; Sahlberg, 2015; Tuinamuana, 2011a, 2011b; White & Lowenthal, 2009)—and arguably more so in today's knowledge economy than before.

Instead of becoming broader, more versatile, and more pluralistic, according to Sahlberg (2015), Tuinamuana (2011b), and Robinson (2006, 2010), mainstream curricula have generally become increasingly linear and unitary, from primary up to and including tertiary education. A materialistic model, which largely leaves the learning individual out of consideration, I believe, seems not appropriate if the intention is to allow young people to develop to the fullest of their potentials and ideally become self-actualised, independent, social, critical, and successful members of society.

In this respect, it is important to note that education is by no means self-evident; it has social and individual needs to live up to. In order to do so, I argue, it is crucial that education continually resubstantiates and modernises itself. This point of view entails further questions, such as:

a) Where and how is formal education embedded in the societal system?

b) Who and what is the education system dependent on?

c) Is formal education authentic and appropriate in the way it is set up to be practised?

d) Has the education system kept pace with educational theory/philosophy as well as societal necessity?

e) Is formal education in the best interest of both the individual and society?

f) Is formal education sustainable in the way it is practised; or, how is school education going to remain relevant in the future?

These concerns lead me to suggest that the concepts of 'formal education', and 'school' respectively, should be rethought, considered from a perspective, as broad and open-minded as possible. This is the research challenge of this thesis.

1.2   Is there a need for a new approach to education?

In answering the guiding question for this section, whether there was a need for a new approach to education, the above deliberations led to the initial conclusion that the concept and the ways we educate can be rethought and reconceptualised in order to correlate with advancing postmodern conditions of life, society, individuality, culture, and thinking. Thus, my initial research assumption at the onset of this investigation is: Education can be improved to better relate to the realities of life and the capabilities of the human being in the 21st century, as well as to remain relevant in the future in general. In saying this, I believe that I have identified a niche-in-research and have thus established an initial basis for this investigation.

1.3   Is there a new approach?

The second question is, whether a 'new' (or different) approach to education is at all possible? If so, how is such an approach going to look? These questions cannot be

answered in advance; they require a philosophical investigation. This said, my assumption, that education can potentially be improved, does not guarantee that a new approach will be found. However, I am not (re)searching to 'detect' a new, finished approach. A new approach, I believe, is more likely to emerge organically and logico-constructively from the insights gained throughout this theoretical-philosophical research process. In other words, a key point to this thesis is to engage in the kind of questioning that is open to novel approaches, that helps original approaches emerge. Hence, in keeping with Sullivan's [8] (1896) principle that 'form follows function': [9] whichever pedagogical conclusion(s) and approach(es) may arise, they will be based on developmental necessity. That is to say that my adopted focus, regarding 21st-century education, is for it to chiefly suit and benefit the learning individual.

1.4   Significance of the study

Following the general assumption that 'education can be improved', the overall research question of this exploratory study was:

How could education in the 21st century ideally look, and why?

While my intention, as stated above, was to keep this exploration as open-minded and open-ended as possible, I set the following (qualitative, progressive, or possibly Deweyian) parameters for the research question to be explored:

How could education in the 21st century ideally look and why, given
  a) in the broadest sense (i.e. philosophically);
  b) as seen from a holistic (i.e. coherent) perspective;

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[8] Louis Sullivan (1856 – 1924), influential American architect, considered the 'father of skyscrapers'.
[9] (common quotation; ipsissima verba: "Form ever follows function" (Sullivan, 1896, p. 408))

c) to be most beneficial for the individual's development;

d) while, at the same time, in the best interest of society as a whole.

1.5   Chapter composition

Following the thematic and theoretical considerations in Chapter Two and the detailed layout of the research design in Chapter Three, the above questions have been investigated from the following perspectives:

Chapter Four is titled: *The creation of public education — A historical-critical exploration of its coming-into-being*. Starting in the ancient world, this chapter scrutinises the initial, original ideas and motives for a public education and investigates how and why public schooling was formally implemented in the 17th and 18th century, respectively, and its further development throughout the course of the 19th century. This critical-theoretical education-historical review leads to diverging, antithetical theorisations, which allow me to make first conclusions about education in the 21st century.

Chapter Five, *'Advancement through education' — Historical-critical review of the progression of Western formal education through the 20th century*, looks at various 'modern' developments of public education against the backdrop of advancements in education theory. In addition to considering state school systems, the impact of the *Progressive Education Movement* during the first quarter of the century, and the alternative educational approaches and school models that developed during the second half of the 20th century are theorised. In doing so, socio-historical and politico-historical circumstances are taken into account. This critical education-historical problematisation leads me to insights and understandings of the motives and driving forces of public education, and these suggest conclusions.

Chapter Six, *International education-political philosophy — The 'desired condition' and legislative status quo*, examines the current educational reality from a rights perspective. In doing so, overarching international education policies are scrutinised. In particular, the *26th Human Right*, the *Right to Education*, as declared by the United Nations in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UN, 1948) and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UN, 1989). These policies' wider educational implications for 21st-century education are discussed in-depth to endorse and reinforce the case for this humanistic hypothesis from a universal perspective.

Chapter Seven, *Manifestations of current educational realities — A critical-phenomenological exploration*, looks at the current status quo of education policy and educational practice with a view to gaining an understanding of current educational reality. This critical-theoretical problematisation leads to a number of qualitative theorisations concerning what motivates and drives today's education systems, and conclusions can be drawn regarding the extent to which this may be beneficial to both the developing child and the learning individual.

Chapter Eight, *Global education reform and Finland*, critically problematises global education reform trends in comparison with the results of the PISA studies. In particular, the education system of PISA winner Finland is analysed in detail in order to create a critical case argument regarding global trends, and conclusions concerning the qualitative improvement of education, teacher professionalism, system structure, and teacher training, are drawn.

Chapter Nine, *In touch with reality? — Philosophical problematisation*, takes up the theorisations of Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight and problematises them from a broad, philosophical perspective as to whether contemporary educational philosophy, policy, and practice (i.e. the paradigm(s) that currently

prevail in education) are 'in touch with reality'. This philosophical theorisation leads to a critical argument and to implications on a fundamental level.

Chapter Ten, *The changing nature of knowledge — Epistemological and learning-theoretical problematisation*, critically resumes the (theoretical) development of the 'education paradigm', and whether former paradigms have found full implementation in educational practice. This leads to a critical evaluation of the current education-paradigmatic status quo, followed by theorisations on a potential education paradigm of the future. This is expounded in detail from an applied, learning-theoretical perspective.

Finally, **Chapter Eleven**, *Towards post-traditional education*, summarises the challenges for modern education this inter-perspectival review and problematisation of education has brought forth. The theorisations and insights gained are concentrated and core issues—or challenges—for modern education are identified. Finally, implications for an authentic (i.e. meaningful) and a sustainable (i.e. lasting) 21st-century education are derived and framed.

1.6 Biographical background and personal motivation leading to the topic

To provide an understanding of my motivation to undertake this research and to investigate this topic, I have included the following biographical information.

A variety of previous professional and life experiences led me to my choice of topic. Having undergone a rather unspectacular schooling in the German mainstream education system, my experiences prompted me to become an educator myself; yet, I was looking for something else. Besides studying mainstream education theory in Germany and the United Kingdom, I completed a speciality

training in Steiner education. I concluded my studies with a Master's Thesis (equivalent), titled: *Yearning for Youth Experience: On the Socio-Historical Emergence and Progression of the Concept of 'Youth' as an Independent Stage of Life* (D. M. Steiner, 2003c).

Following my teacher education, I gained a rich and varied collection of teaching experiences at primary and secondary school level, and leadership skills gained as an associate principal at a progressive integrated school in the Rhineland region in Germany. Additionally, I trained as an experiential educator and incorporated experience-orientated ways of learning into my teaching. This way of imparting knowledge via experience was in consonance with the principles of Steiner pedagogy. In short, I enjoyed striving to achieve what Rudolf Steiner called the 'art of education'.

Beyond that, I initiated a series of extra-curricular projects, such as tri-weekly summer hiking trips for intermediate and high school students, and these became increasingly popular with each year (cf. D. M. Steiner, 2003a, 2005a, 2005b, 2013c; D. M. Steiner & Busch-Geertsema, 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; D. M. Steiner, Busch-Geertsema, & Nermerich, 2007; D. M. Steiner, Busch-Geertsema, & Stief, 2003a, 2003b).

Besides being the focus of my Master's Thesis, the theme of 'youth' has always loomed large for me. Prior to, during, and after my university studies, I have been dealing with young people in various educational settings and thus can look back on 25 years of experience in independent youth work in Germany and abroad. Consequently, many experiential pedagogical methods were already familiar to me when I started teaching.

In large part, the youth work I have done, was for the German Scout Movement. This said, Scouting in Germany has always been quite distinct from how Scouting is conceived internationally.[10] This is due to an event that occurred a few years before Baden-Powell, militarily-inspired, brought Scouting into being in the United Kingdom in 1907. The German version of Scouting—which I have been part of during my childhood and youth—is considered part of the *Bündische Jugend* ('bundist youth', or lit. 'confederate youth').[11] The bundist youth movement originated from an impulse that has taken place around the beginning of the 20th century in what was then Imperial Germany. It was an impulse which emerged entirely from youth (Blüher, 1976). In taking to the German countryside and forests for multiple-day nature hikes, the young had found a way to break out of the uptight disciplinary constraints that Prussian-Wilhelmine society was dictating at the time (Blüher, 1976). Those youth hikes turned out to be very musical and poetic; with a focus on genuine meeting and nature experience (Blüher, 1976). Hence, contrary to its rather practical skills-orientated international counterpart, an aesthetic and romantically-inspired type of Scouting arose, which Safranski (2007) characterised in the following way:

> 'Life' meant the unity of body and soul, dynamic, creativity. The protests of Sturm und Drang and Romanticism repeated themselves. 'Nature' and 'spirit' respectively had then been a battle cry against rationalism and materialism. The term 'life' now has the same function. 'Life' is abundancy of gestalt, inventiveness, an ocean of possibilities, so unforeseeable, so adventurous that

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[10] (at least certain branches of it)

[11] Over the course of the 20th century, there have been around 50 different scout associations in Germany, varying from left-wing via non-political to right-wing. Most of them—except those far right-wing—are considered part of the 'bundist' tradition. What connects them is their emphasis on the 'Bund' as a kind of 'band of brothers and sisters' as opposed to an 'association' or 'organisation'.

we do not need an Everafter anymore. This world offers us enough. 'Life' is setting out to pastures new; yet, at the same time also the very near, the own, shape-demanding liveliness. 'Life' becomes the slogan of the Youth Movement, the Jugendstil, the neo-Romanticism, the Progressive Education Movement. [Own translation,[12] emphasis in the original] (pp. 303-304)

The impulse actuated in Berlin in 1901 with the first youth association being called the *Wandervogelbewegung* ('bird of passage movement', or lit. 'wayfaring bird movement'). On the *Erster Freideutscher Jugendtag* ('first free-German youth summit'), held on the *Hoher Meißner* [13] in 1913, German youth enacted the so-called *Meißnerformel* (lit. 'Meissner formula'), which stated:

The free-German youth, on their own determination, under their own responsibility, and with inner truthfulness, are determined to shape their own lives. For this inner freedom, they will, under all circumstances, stand up unified. For mutual exchange, free-German youth summits will be held. All joint gatherings of the free-German youth are alcohol and nicotine-free. [Own translation [14]] (as cited in Kindt, 1968, pp. 495-496)

This cultural youth movement, including its various split-offs to follow, had a lasting influence on Germany's culture-historical and societal development

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[12] Ipsissima verba (German): " 'Leben' bedeutete die Einheit von Leib und Seele, Dynamik, Kreativität. Es wiederholte sich der Protest von Sturm und Drang und Romantik. Damals war 'Natur' beziehungsweise 'Geist' die Kampfparole gegen Rationalismus und Materialismus gewesen. Der Begriff 'Leben' hat jetzt dieselbe Funktion. 'Leben' ist Gestaltenfülle, Erfindungsreichtum, ein Ozean der Möglichkeiten, so unabsehbar, so abenteuerlich, daß wir kein Jenseits mehr brauchen. Das Diesseits bietet uns genug. 'Leben' ist Aufbruch zu fernen Ufern und doch zugleich das ganz Nahe, die eigene gestaltfordernde Lebendigkeit. 'Leben' wird zur Losung der Jugendbewegung, des Jugendstils, der Neuromantik, der Reformpädagogik" (Safranski, 2007, pp. 303-304).

[13] (mountain massif and highest peak of the *Northern Hesse Nature Park*, central Germany)

[14] Ipsissima verba (German): "Die Freideutsche Jugend will nach eigener Bestimmung, vor eigener Verantwortung, in innerer Wahrhaftigkeit ihr Leben gestalten. Für diese innere Freiheit tritt sie unter allen Umständen geschlossen ein. Zur gegenseitigen Verständigung werden Freideutsche Jugendtage abgehalten. Alle gemeinsamen Veranstaltungen der Freideutschen Jugend sind alkohol- und nikotinfrei" (as cited in Kindt, 1968, pp. 495-496).

throughout the rest of the century.[15] Beyond that, it was a determining phase in the emergence and progression of the life stage of 'youth' in modern times (cf. D. M. Steiner, 2003c). Even today, there are about 80 youth organisations in Germany which consider themselves 'bundist' and which preserve and practise the principle of *Jugend führt Jugend* (lit. 'youth leads youth') [16] (Laqueur, 1991).

Having been part of such a youth group enabled me to realise my potential in creative, experiential, social, musical, as well as practical and physical ways; with its most important aspect being creative freedom. During unaccompanied multiple-day hikes, one grows into carrying responsibility (for oneself and others) on day-to-day challenges as a team of peers while also practising democratic principles, social skills, and various practical and technical skills; in short, the whole spectre of daily life is included. For me as a young person, Scouting was the ideal experiential 'playground' to immerse myself in. Retrospectively, it was the best thing that could happen to me to successfully weather puberty and adolescence.

Last but not least, prior to this research journey, my life experience was fundamentally broadened by a backpacking trip around the world during a year-long sabbatical. Accompanied by a friend, we made our way on foot via land route from Europe, across the Middle East, all the way to Malaysia. This adventure can be described as my most educative experience so far. Publications about this experience included D. M. Steiner (2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010h, 2010i) and Danner-Schmidt and Steiner (2009).

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[15] The ideals and the spirit of the *Youth Movement* were later on also seized and misused by the *Hitler Youth* during *Nazi Germany* (betw. 1926 – 1945). Parts of the *Youth Movement* continued to exist in the underground and the resistance movement, respectively.

[16] (with reference to the principle of peer education, with responsibilities starting from as young as 13 years of age onwards)

To sum up, my interest in creative and experience-orientated ways of learning and teaching is a combination of my youth in Scouting, my teaching background in alternative/progressive education, and my backpacking trip. Thus, enabling students to have meaningful and lasting learning experiences has been my concern and objective for a long time, and I have published on this (D. M. Steiner, 2003b, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2010e, 2010f, 2010g, 2010h, 2010i, 2011a, 2011b, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2017a, 2017b; D. M. Steiner & Busch-Geertsema, 2004, 2006b, 2006c).

1.7   Contribution to knowledge

At the Auckland University of Technology, a doctorate is awarded for "an original and substantial contribution to knowledge" (AUT University, 2014b, p. 133) by way of demonstrating "independence of thought" (AUT University, 2014b, p. 7). Concerning 'substantiality' and 'originality', E. M. Phillips and Pugh (2006), based on Francis (1976) and E. M. Phillips (1993), pointed out 17 ways of how a PhD can be original. The thesis at hand concurs with a number of them, which can be summarised as follows: The originality of this research is provided by its original approach in a discipline, based on a synthesis (of particular, unoriginal approaches) that has not been attempted before.

Beyond that, the process of writing this thesis has been a very informative and fruitful journey of learning and development for myself. In doing so, I believe, I have obtained "advanced specialist/discipline knowledge that makes an original contribution to a particular field of enquiry and as appropriate to local and global communities" (AUT University, 2014b, p. 8). Hence, apart from making this journey

and its outcome comprehensible to the generality, it has already fulfilled its principal task of constituting a process of individual further development for its originator.

The rationale and significance of the research study will be developed further in Chapter Two, *Exploring education for the 21st century*, and Chapter Three, *Research philosophy* and design.

CHAPTER TWO

Exploring education for the 21st century

Chapter outline

2.1 Contentual–thematic considerations

Investigating a topic as old, broad, far-reaching, and complex as education, with a view to contributing to a new theory and approach for the 21st century, is a vast undertaking and transcends traditional categories of thinking and understanding. While some form of formal or informal education has long been regarded as critical to both participation in society and social order, key questions abide regarding education's nature and role: What constitutes good education in the 21st century? Following this, what should education in the 21st century look like? Beyond this, another important question is: What are the limits of public/state education?

2.1.1 The problem of perspective

Concerning school education, a key tension is that nowadays formal education is not just seen from a pedagogical, or, still less, from a child development-based perspective (see for instance Bredekamp, 1987; Davis, 1993; Lauwerys, Swink, & Lawson, 2016b). Instead, a plethora of expectations require public education systems to deliver, including sectors that may have few or no benefits to offer to the learners (as the in-depth theorisation in Chapter Nine (*In touch with reality? — Philosophical problematisation*) will show).

According to Arendt (1958/2006), formal education cannot and should not take place in a 'vacuum', disconnected from society, culture, or the environment. Quite the contrary: Following initial elaborations in section 1.2, it can be argued that, in order to maintain its actuality and relevance, education, and the philosophy that goes with it, needs to constantly resubstantiate itself to address the plethora of inconstant factors that continuously influence it. Following this, researching a latent, potential educational philosophy and approach of the future needed to involve a myriad of interacting factors, such as child-developmental, social, historical, education-political, ethical, socio-ecological, philosophical, economic, and global developments, amongst others.

Different domains naturally have different backgrounds, perspectives, and focus areas, and emphasise different sets of key drivers. Understandably, this often results in strongly varying outcomes being endorsed and different emphases and approaches being propounded:

- *Sociologists*, for instance, might have approached such an exploration for an educational approach of the future from a socio-cultural (emancipatory) perspective, emphasising democratic education, socio-environmental learning

experiences and the forming of resilience and adaptability as key to 21st-century education (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Passarelli & Kolb, 2011; B. Walker & Salt, 2012).

- *Educational policy-makers* might have emphasised educational achievement standards with regard to outscoring international benchmarking targets (Breakspear, 2012) as key to a quality education system of the future.

- *Economists* might have looked at education from a human resource perspective, responding to labour market demands and emphasising employability and economic efficiency of the system (Mahmud & International Growth Centre, 2014; World Economic Forum — Global Agenda Council on Employment, 2014).

- *Neuroscientists* might have emphasised strategies of knowledge acquisition and problem-solving with regard to 'neural efficiency' (Hoffman, Schraw, & McCrudden, 2012; Neubauer & Fink, 2009).

- The *information and communication technology industry* might have emphasised turning children into 'digital natives' with the help of technological learning tools (21st Century Learning Reference Group, 2014; Adobe Systems, 2009; International Education Advisory Board, 2008).

- *Education theorists* might have employed a behaviour and classroom management perspective as key (Cipani, 2008; R. Lewis, 2008; Lyons, Ford, & Arthur-Kelly, 2011; Porter, 2007; Richmond, 2008).

- And the *United Nations* might have emphasised a sustainability and human rights perspective as core approach to modern-day formal education (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 2009; UNESCO, 1997).

Individually, each of these objectives may be well-justified in accordance with the perspective applied. However, when considering the overall composition of child development within the framework of formal education, most turn out to be one-sided in some way or other; and, from a developmental-psychological perspective, could have become an obstacle or even have a counter-productive effect on children's development. Thus, it can be said that the lens, through which children

and childhood are viewed, is what makes a fundamental difference. Hence, this investigation was intended to overcome these disciplinary biases—or, in Nietzsche's (1884/1922) words, the problem of *perspectivism*:

> Insofar as the word 'knowledge' has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. — 'Perspectivism.' It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm. [Emphasis in the original] (Nietzsche, 1883-1888/1968, sect. 481)

I rejected the notion of discussing the issue of education in isolation from the preceding perspectives. Consequently, the key was to bring these multifarious, polydimensional objectives—provided they be justified—into concerted harmony while not losing sight of the principal task of education, which is to develop the young person as a whole in the best possible way (cf. United Nations, 1989).

2.1.2 Thematic scope

Given the focus on developing a philosophy and approach that addresses the different factors explained above, there was a need to come up with a way of delimiting and sorting through those different factors, regarding them as bodies of knowledge, or discourses, to be theorised systematically. Chapter Two, and the following sections in particular, address the thematic considerations and the system to approach this task, firstly through applying the concept of triangulation to a theoretical study.

The basic question was: What makes a piece of work 'scientific'? Technically speaking, scientific research begins where ideas and insights are gathered, arranged,

and are brought into correlation, pointing out the theories and regularities that arise between them, and are communicated to the scientific community (Kruse, 1995).

In order to gain a comprehensive—holistic—understanding of the overall topic of research, and be able to develop a comprehensive, authentic, and sustainable approach or model for the 21st century, the statuses quo (including contemporary phenomena, trends, and developments) of a range of relevant domains have been critically reviewed. The seven fields examined, are:

1) *Origination* (history)
   A critical historical account of the creation of public education, including its founding impulses and initial ideas.
2) *Education* (history/development)
   A critical review of the progression of (Western) education in its historical context over the course of the 20th century.
3) *Educational ontology* (politics)
   A critical analysis of current educational realities.
4) *Education reform* (politics)
   A critical account of the trends in global education policy reform.
5) *Education* (philosophy)
   A critical-philosophical theorisation of educational practice.
6) *Epistemology*
   A critical account of the changing nature and theory of knowledge.
7) *Education* (international politics/philosophy)
   An account of international education-political philosophy.

This breadth of thematic scope was necessary to give this kind of theoretical exploration as broad as possible a foundation; or, in other words, to triangulate it thematically—as will be elaborated in the following section.

2.1.3 Thematic triangulation

Triangulation is a technique of approaching complex topics from different, convergent approaches of enquiry (Jick, 1979). The metaphor of triangulation was originally derived from navigation and military practice; it follows the basic principle of geometry being that multiple reference points allow for an object's position to be defined more precisely (Jick, 1979). Figuratively speaking, multiple viewpoints allow for greater accuracy (Jick, 1979). This principle formed the backbone of this exploratory philosophical study.

For this thesis, I did not use Denzin's (2009) 'between methods' model of triangulation [17] as this was not a mixed-method data collection in the conventional sense as the mode of 'data ascertainment' itself (if one can speak of 'data' at all) did not vary. Denzin (2009) acknowledged: "It is conventionally assumed that triangulation is the use of multiple methods in the study of the same object .... but it is only one form of the strategy" (p. 301). Instead, I looked at theoretical or thematic triangulation, meaning that multiple (cross-)disciplinary viewpoints or positions were being considered in examining the same dimension of a research problem. Denzin (2009) put forward the following points:

> Theoretical triangulation is an element that few investigations achieve. Typically, a small set of hypotheses guide any study and data are gathered that bear only those dimensions, but there would seem to be value in approaching data with multiple perspectives and hypotheses in mind. Data that would refute central hypotheses could be collected, and various theoretical points of view could be placed side by side to assess their utility and power (see Westie, 1957, pp. 149-54). Such strategies would permit [the researcher] ... to move away from polemical criticisms of various theoretical

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[17] (aka 'multiple methods design')

perspectives, since pitting alternative theories against the same body of data is a more efficient means of criticism—and it more comfortably conforms with the scientific method. (Denzin, 2009, p. 303)

In this respect, Jick (1979) argued that "triangulation may also serve as the critical test, by virtue of its comprehensiveness, for competing theories" (p. 609).

Denzin (2009) argued that "by combining multiple observers, theories, methods, and data sources, ... [one] can hope to overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-method, single-observer, single-theory studies" (p. 313). At the same time, I argue that no matter how many observers/participants have been involved, as far as qualitative research is concerned, it always comes down to the researcher's individual skill in terms of making sense, interpreting, and blending the information together.

Inter-perspectivism, on the other hand, prompts or challenges the researcher to adopt and look at a question from different perspectives. In this respect, Jick (1979) pointed out that in approaching an enquiry from multiple points of view, "the researcher is likely to sustain a profitable closeness to the situation which allows greater sensitivity to the multiple sources [and perspectives] of data" (p. 609). Hence, to some degree, inter-perspectivism ensures open-mindedness/mental agility regarding the problem as well as open-endedness concerning results. Moreover, "multiple and independent measures, if they reach the same conclusions, provide a more certain portrayal of the ... phenomenon" (Jick, 1979, p. 602). Beyond that, this progressive approach could be considered as a general didactical principle.

In addition, Jick (1979) pointed out that perspectival "triangulation may also help to uncover the deviant or off-quadrant dimension of a phenomenon. Different viewpoints are likely to produce some elements which do not fit a theory or model.

Thus, old theories are refashioned or new theories developed" (p. 609). In other words, inter-perspectivism or thematic triangulation allowed for unique—and holistic—conclusions (determined when a satisfactory holistic perspective had been reached) which otherwise may have been overlooked due to the restrictions of a mono-perspectival problem-focus.

Dewey said: "A problem well put is half solved" (as cited in Lubart, 1998, p. 301). A problem well put is half solved because it has been understood more profoundly (cf. Kruse, 1995). This approach closely resembles Socrates' technique of exploring problems; he was well known to exhaustively twist and turn the issues of his debates until he had scrutinised them from every possible perspective (Plato, 1921), leading him to well-informed conclusions—an approach one can certainly describe as 'comprehensive' or 'holistic'.[18] Following this, divergent results, that eventuate from such an inter-perspectival or Socratic approach, can lead to an enriched explanation of the research problem.

Thus, "triangulation may be used not only to examine the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives but also to enrich our understanding by allowing for new or deeper dimensions to emerge" (Jick, 1979, pp. 603-604). Moreover, triangulation "can potentially generate what anthropologists call 'holistic work' or 'thick description'" (Jick, 1979, p. 609). Following this, inter-perspectival triangulation can "capture a more complete, holistic, and contextual portrayal" (Jick, 1979, p. 603) of the topic under study—as opposed to single-perspective or single-theory kinds of investigations. By carefully considering my contentual approach or contentual

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[18] I thus use the terms 'thematic triangulation', 'inter-perspectival', and 'Socratic' interchangeably.

design, this model, which I termed a 'thematic triangulation', was must suited, as it best reflected the complexity of the topic.

Consequently, the thematic span, described in the previous section, is at the same time part of the scientific method applied: Simultaneously, this inter-perspectival approach constituted an anchoring of the research across a broad spectrum of both disciplines and discourses. To put it another way, it triangulated—or, more precisely, it 'heptangulated' [19]—the research study by means of its equilibrated contents.

In sum, including diverse perspectives made this exploration rich and holistic—and therefore authentic and sustainable in its outcome. A broad band of perspectives triangulated the research's scientificity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

2.2 Conceptualising 21st-century education theoretical-philosophically

"There is nothing so practical as a good theory."

Kurt Lewin [20] (1951, p. 169)

2.2.1 Finding the right form

When drafting this research project, I had originally intended to use *Constructivist Grounded Theory* (cf. Charmaz, 2009; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012) and interview enthusiastic teachers about their ideas in terms of 'authentic and sustainable ways of educating'. However, at a relatively early point in time, I began to understand the

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[19] (being a seven-fold thematic embedding of the research)

[20] (1890 – 1947), German-American psychologist, referred to as the 'father of social psychology'.

immensity of the task as I approached all the possible strands of thought relevant to the topic, and realised that, if the goal was to develop a new concept of education, there would be an immense and valuable project in using that body of thought as the main source. It became apparent that the investigation needed to be essentially philosophical, and that working with inspiring teachers could be a future venture.

It also became apparent that the topic needed to be investigated from a variety of perspectives because it was so pivotal and interlinked with everything else. Hence, to develop my understanding of how a contemporary approach to education in the 21st century ought to look, theoretical research appeared more suited than applied or empirical research. Salient reasons for that were:

a) In lieu of 'ascertaining external data' (which can be of any quality and applicability), theoretical research can for instance be drawn from high-quality primary literature to construct new concepts;
b) The richness of the discussion lies in the hands of and is the responsibility of the researcher;
c) Theoretical research enables experimentation with different perspectives and can enable new knowledge to emerge through theorisation.
d) Theoretical research incorporates and emphasises the researcher's knowledge, experience, professional appraisal, and intellectual capacity—which is crucial in concept development.

These considerations led to my decision to write a theoretical thesis.

2.2.2 Getting one's bearings in theoretical research

Theoretical compared with applied research

'Theoretical' does not have to mean 'out of touch with reality'. As Kellehear (1993) pointed out, " 'real' researchers are not simply or solely interviewers and pollsters.

Valuable, surprising, provocative and critical research work can also involve working alone in libraries ... and generate fertile theories or hypotheses [emphasis in the original]" (p. 8). After all, statistics and literature are as good a source of knowledge as interviewing people's opinion on the street (Kellehear, 1993).

When it comes to theoretical-philosophical research, the emphasis is less on 'data' but on the deriving of coherences by means of philosophical contemplation, inspired by existing knowledge. That turns the research into a thought piece, a continuous, organic process of personal meaning making and processing of knowledge—rather than a structured, categorical proceeding with data.

In philosophy, the duality of theoretical and applied research represents the polarity of 'theory versus praxis' (cf. Aristotle, 1934; D. M. Steiner, 2012c)—a fundamental and eternal dichotomy which has already given ample pause for thought to many (D. M. Steiner, 2012c). I shall elaborate more on the cognitive act of theorising in sections 2.2.5 (*The role of the researcher — Technician or artist?*) and 2.2.6 (*Enabling creative/philosophical theorising*), on page 44 et seqq. Following this elaboration, it is more indicated to consider this research a philosophical study rather than a theoretical one.

The quality/quantity issue

I have generally used a qualitative approach to explore commonalities (that is, qualities and meanings) instead of measuring "how much difference there is" (Larkin, 2004b, para. 1; also see Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Beyond that, Larkin (2004b) pointed out that "it is not the data themselves which are intrinsically qualitative or quantitative—but how you look at them" (para. 1). In this respect, this thesis, aiming to explore and construct new meaning, is qualitative in nature;

however, not in an empirical/applied sense, but in a theoretical/phenomenological one.

Theory–driven versus data–driven versus phenomenon–driven

In addition to the preceding, Dick (2002) argued that "the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is less important than that between theory-driven and data-driven research. ... it is a choice of paradigm, in the sense in which Kuhn (1970) [21] and others use that term" (p. 160). Moreover, instead of seeing the 'theory-driven', 'data-driven', and 'phenomenon-driven' approaches as independent concepts, I looked at them as one continuum, as I have illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 | *Theory-, data-, and phenomenon-driven approaches seen as a continuum*. Diagram ideationally based on Larkin (2004a).

	Theory-Driven	Data-Driven	Phenomenon-Driven
Approach	Specific outcome-focussed hypothesis testing	Sample-focussed data collection/analysis	Grounded, open-ended, exploratory research
Character of Investigation	Prediction	Measurement	Making meaning
Systemic Structure	Closed system (experimental control)	Semi-controlled, researcher-guided	Open system (holistic validity)
Perspective	Claimed objective	Objective and/or subjective	Accepts subjectivity
Quality of Data	'Simple' numeric data	Quantitative and/or qualitative data	Complex rich data
Descriptive Tendency	Generalisable account	Conclusive and/or contextual account	Contextual account

The phenomenon-driven approach is situated at one end of the scale, opposite to theory-driven research, with the data-driven approach situated in between the two.

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[21] (corresponding to Kuhn (1962/2012) in my bibliography)

Situating this study on this scale, I agree that it is certainly theory-substantiated; however, I rather see it as question- and phenomenon-driven (intra-literature); hence an open-ended theoretical exploration. Following the above, I also looked into exploratory research as part of the comprehensive methodology.

Exploratory research

Exploratory research, as the name states, intends to explore "what is happening; to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light" (Robson, 2002, p. 259, as cited in Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009, p. 139). While it may not always provide conclusive solutions, its aim, according to Saunders et al. (2009), is to better understand the nature, causes, and effects of the topic of research.

Saunders et al. (2009) pointed out three main ways of conducting exploratory research: a) an exploration of the "literature, b) interviewing 'experts' in the subject, and c) conducting focus group interviews" (p. 140). Having been involved with formal and extracurricular education for many years, I see myself as an 'insider' as regards the area of research. For that reason, I decided that a theoretical exploration of the literature was both adequate and sufficient as approach to this research question. Beyond that, implications of exploratory research, as a structural and procedural guideline, have been discussed in the following section.

2.2.3 Shaping the thesis: An emergent critical theoretical–philosophical exploration

Concerning the methodological design of a thesis,

> we may think of the analogy of the sonata form in music. This is a structure of musical writing, but it tells you nothing about the context. Haydn wrote in sonata form, but so did Lennon and McCartney. The range of content covered is therefore enormous, but the sonata form does not cover all music. Neither Debussy nor Britten used this form. In jazz, Scott Joplin used sonata form, but Bix Beiderbecke did not. (E. M. Phillips & Pugh, 2006, pp. 56-57)

The same is the case with a doctoral thesis: There are certain conventions and there is a common form and structure to it, but eventually, it is up to the researcher to shape it for their own purposes (Crotty, 1998; E. M. Phillips & Pugh, 2006); or as Crotty (1998) put it: "In a very real sense, every piece of research is unique and calls for a unique methodology" (pp. 14-15).

This is certainly true when it comes to theoretical research, as there is no conventional framework for a theoretical thesis. Most European theoretical theses, for instance, do not seem to follow any particular structure other than their own contentual structure. The thesis' argument often starts on page one and ends on the final page. In other words, it was quite difficult to bring this—my—thesis into its current shape, as the structure was completely open.

Conducting exploratory research, according to Saunders et al. (2009), can be compared to the journey of a traveller with its main advantage being its flexibility and adaptability to change. This involves the researcher's willingness to change direction as a result of the revelation of new findings or insights as the following quotation beautifully illustrates:

I had been concerned, at the start of my own journey, to establish some lines of enquiry, to define a theme. The approach had its difficulties. At the back of my mind was always a worry that I would come to a place and all contacts would break down. ... If you travel on a theme, the theme has to develop with the travel. At the beginning, your interests can be broad and scattered. But then, they must be more focused: the different stages of a journey cannot simply be versions of one another. And ... this kind of travel depended on luck. It depended on the people you met, the little illuminations you had. As with the next day's issue of fast-moving daily newspapers, the shape of the character in hand was continually being changed by accidents along the way. (Naipaul, 1989, p. 222, as cited in Saunders et al., 2009, p. 140)

Saunders et al. (2009) suggested that "the flexibility inherent in exploratory research does not mean absence of direction to the enquiry" (p. 140). To the contrary, I realised that structure was inextricably linked with content; in fact, the content informed the structure. The initially broad focus became incrementally narrower as the research advanced (cf. Saunders et al., 2009).

During this research journey, I have found that, what most counts in theorising, is the logic of cognition. Everything else had to evolve and could hardly be planned. In fact, the methodology itself assumed its shape in an emergent way. Equally important was the practice of letting go of certain passages and returning to them again at later stages. In simple terms, one could say, this thesis evolved asymptotically out of 'what made sense to me'.

Moreover, it stands to reason: As the term 'method'—from Greek *meta-* ('after') and *hodos* ('way') ("method," 2016)—reveals, at root, a method(ology) is a 'way of going after something', with emphasis on the form of doing it and less so on the content. Therefore, technically speaking, I argue that the idea of a 'research methodology' itself already carries a certain stance of outcome-focussedness.

Following this, in the case of open-ended (and open-minded) philosophical research, my methodology played a subordinate part; and yet, if nothing else may be foreseeable, a theoretical-philosophical thesis does fully live up to its title 'PhD'—a 'doctorate of philosophy'.

While a contentual structure gradually became apparent, the methodology as such was limited to the philosophical disambiguation of basic terms (cf. Kruse, 1995) and the processes of making sense, ideational transfer, and reasoning. This said, it is also evident that, in order to take shape, content needs to assume a form (German: 'Gestalt'); content cannot exist without form. In its practical implementation, I followed the essential design principle that 'form follows function' [22] (cf. Sullivan, 1896, p. 408).

This meant to first become explicit in terms of functionality (i.e. aim and contents), and then to work out how best to implement and structure it (Dick, 2002). Thus, the form and structure of the thesis have primarily been shaped by its content, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 | Research process and evolution of the structure of the thesis — A content-shaped research development.

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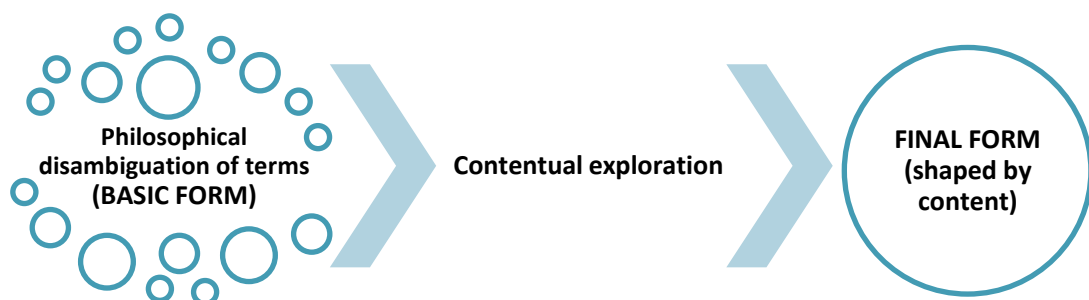
[22] (common quotation; ipsissima verba: "Form ever follows function" (Sullivan, 1896, p. 408))

Letting research evolve organically can also be termed a 'grounded' or a 'question-driven' approach. Regarding the design and structure of the thesis, I prefer to call it a 'content-shaped research design'. The philosophical disambiguation of methodological terms led to the methodology that has eventually been implemented. Most importantly, this approach and the 'form follows function' principle go hand in hand with the philosophy and application of *Constructivism* (Hein, 1991). Ultimately, developing this methodology was itself a critical, subjective construction (which I justify in sect. 3.6.1 on p. 66 et seqq.). Thus, for me, the structure is inherently consistent.

2.2.4 The role and meaning of the literature

Writing a theoretical, literature-based thesis not only comprises a 'literature review' with regard to establishing the research context; but also, the entire argument or discussion is derived and constructed from the literature. In this respect, the entire thesis can be considered a literature review. At the same time, however, it can also be considered an analysis, an interpretive study, a reflection, an observation, or all of the above.

Upon closer examination, it was apparent that the approach was neither wholly analytical,[23] nor entirely interpretive;[24] nor is it a pure literature review; rather, it involves aspects of all of these approaches. This is due to the fact that, although the literature was *the* crucial source, no specific works of literature were

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[23] (in the sense of Content Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Narrative Event Analysis, Analytic Induction, Logical Analysis, Grounded Theory, Hermeneutical Analysis, or the like)

[24] (in the sense of Case Study Analysis, Category Analysis, Constructivist Analysis, Post-Structural Analysis, Value-Critical Analysis, Grounded Theory, Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, Deconstruction, Ethnomethodology, or the like)

intended to be analysed or interpreted from a particular angle in their entirety, as particular works of literature were not the actual 'data' of this study. Being a theoretical/philosophical—and, most importantly, a phenomenon/question-driven—thesis, no 'data collection' in the conventional sense has been carried out.

The main difference being that, contrary to analytical research, such as in *Analytic Philosophy* for instance, with the characteristic to probe into details and subject the data to a linguistic analysis as a way of creating knowledge, this study aimed to explore and come to terms with the statuses quo of a number of interrelated fields from a broad philosophical perspective and, in doing so, construct new knowledge; namely a contemporary perspective on education.

Following this, it is important to make the distinction that there was no 'data' in the conventional sense that fed this study and there was no 'data' that could be 'analysed' in the conventional sense either—it was constructed out of information, knowledge, ideas, concepts, and thoughts that were processed and made meaning of by the researcher. Hence, this thesis is a constructed argument—constructed from the ground up. In other words, one could say: Everything was a source of knowledge and inspiration (cf. Glaser, 1992).

In the case of a comprehensive, critical-philosophical literature exploration of this kind, in order for a new argument, concept, or understanding to be developed, the literary fieldwork could neither be limited to a certain topic or field, nor could it be limited to particular works of literature (Dick, 2005; Glaser, 1992). Quite the contrary: In order to explore and develop the themes to triangulate, and to let the exploration of these themes evolve naturally, the literary sources and opportunities had to be expressly open-ended (Dick, 2005; Glaser, 1992).

Additionally, issue-specific literature on the topic under exploration (that is 'contemporary education in the 21st century') may not exist yet. Hence, it was my task as researcher to decide which fields of related literature to include and draw from. In selecting the literature, I followed the principle applied in *Grounded Theory* that "the literature is accessed [and incorporated] as it becomes relevant" (Dick, 2005, para. 18) to the enquiry, and to put the knowledge construction in a scholarly context (Glaser, 1998).

This open-ended approach correlated with the type of literature review I decided to apply. As opposed to a systematic literature review, which, according to Cook, Mulrow, and Haynes (1997), follows more rigorous criteria in the selection of the literature to be analysed, and which follows an explicit methodology to identify, evaluate, and synthesise results of the literature selected, my approach was that of a narrative literature review, which focusses on describing and critically discussing the state and development of a discourse from a contextual or phenomenological point of view (Cook et al., 1997). According to Polit and Beck (2004), this approach is useful to focus or refine a broad research question. Narrative literature reviews, so Polit and Beck (2004), provide a comprehensive background for understanding current knowledge within broader contexts and help identify inconsistencies in a discourse, and to develop conceptual or theoretical frameworks.

As Parahoo (2014), Cook et al. (1997), and Polit and Beck (2004) independently pointed out, in the narrative type of literature review, neither the types of databases and approaches used to conduct the review—in short the methodological approach that would permit reproduction of the data—are usually mentioned, nor does the narrative literature review answer to specific quantitative research questions. According to Parahoo (2014), Cook et al. (1997), and Polit and

Beck (2004), selection and evaluation criteria for inclusion or exclusion of sifted literary material during searches, are usually not specified, as objectivity, in the sense of systematic repeatability and reproducibility, is not a criterium in qualitative contentual research (as illustrated in Table 2).

In narrative literature reviews, and qualitative theoretical-philosophical research in general, objectivity is maintained by a well-reasoned line of argumentation—nowadays referred to as neutralist subjectivity (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Smart, 1973)—as I elaborate in depth in section 3.6.1, *The subject/object problem and its relation to truth*, on page 66 et seqq.

Table 2 | *Main differences between systematic literature review and narrative literature review*. Table adopted from Cook et al. (1997, p. 379).[25]

Features	Narrative literature review	Systematic literature review
Question	Broad	Specific
Source	Not usually specified, potentially biased	Comprehensive sources, explicit search approach
Selection	Not usually specified, potentially biased	Criterion-based selection, uniformly applied
Evaluation	Variable	Rigorous critical evaluation
Synthesis	Often qualitative	Quantitative [a]
Inferences	Sometimes evidence-based	Usually evidence-based

[a] A quantitative synthesis that includes a statistical method is a meta-analysis (Cook, 1997).

This is also where the original research work of this thesis lies: in the thorough construction of a new argument. The source(s) of each piece of reasoning are documented by means of the reference(s) that led to the idea. Therefore, in laying

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[25] [Table reprinted with permission of the publisher. Copyright © 1997 by American College of Physicians, Philadelphia, PA. All rights reserved.]

down the sources I have read, in explaining the method of making sense, and in reasoning the new coherences that I perceive—in short, in stating 'how I have done it'—I have adhered to both the academic method and the academic standard.

Following this, with this research being a subjectively-constructed, theoretical think piece, I argue that, what is normally referred to as criteria for the selection of the literature, is rather secondary. The most prominent argument for that being the fact that the approach of this thesis is not to analytically-deduct or extract any generalisable knowledge—it is the other way around: With this thesis, I 'engage' in theorisation and, thereby, I construct new coherences by problematising and synthesising relevant existing knowledge and ideas. This thesis' aim is not to find, deduct, or extract anything—it's aim is to engage in the discussion.

Therefore, following Parahoo (2014), Cook et al. (1997), and Polit and Beck (2004), the standard procedures, necessary in systematic or analytic research (with the ultimate intention to reduce findings), are not relevant here as my intention is to synthesise and transform individual findings into new conceptualisations and interpretations (as already elaborated in previous sections of this chapter).

Beyond that, this open-ended procedure in terms of the literature to be included was both necessary and justified if I wanted to meet this thesis' requirement for an open-minded and open-ended exploration of the topic under investigation. The fact that I was not limited in what I could include in this study, was also its explicit advantage: I was able to include anything that made the discussion rich and varied. This could include—but was not limited to—primary sources, historical sources, secondary material, contemporary perspectives, the results of both qualitative and quantitative research, outcomes of systematic and meta-analytic reviews, findings of meta-syntheses and so forth—all that was informative to the discussion was valuable

and turned this thesis into a rich and unique piece of research. This also included the decision not to introduce a timeframe as regards the age of the works to be included—as original historical sources, and seminal or influential works in particular, were expressly intended to be drawn on in this study.

Following the above reasoning based on Parahoo (2014), Dick (2005), Cook et al. (1997), Glaser (1992), and Polit and Beck (2004), no systematic selection criteria, other than the quality criteria mentioned hereafter, were defined regarding the literature I picked up.

In my general approach, I adopted Stanfield's recommendation of looking at secondary literature on the respective discourse(s) or chapter topics first, in order to "develop a preconceived but informed theoretical hunch/or conceptual framework" (as cited in Kellehear, 1993, p. 60) about the literary fieldwork that was going to be conducted. That meant in practice that I would first read several encyclopedic essays on the topic of investigation so as to get the said overview and an idea of the key thinkers in the discipline, before advancing to in-depth explorations of primary/foundational and related literature in a second step. Hence, additional literature often proceeded from the reading. When I searched for literature available, I used descriptive keyword searches on applicable databases, and, if the respective abstract fit the topic of the discussion, and sounded interesting, I selected it, until a certain number of works to begin with had been reached. The same applied to sub-topics and sections, where I used issue-specific search terms and selected what best fit the topic, and in a number that was manageable.

The choice, which authors or literature to include in the argument, as elaborated above, was generally unconditional and unrestricted so as to remain open-ended in terms of the line of argumentation and problematisation. Nonetheless, I

adhered to a number of (literary) criteria in the composition of each chapter in order to ensure the quality and equilibrium of the argument. Besides ensuring that the literature used was of scientific publication standard, additional criteria were:

a) Breadth of literary sources

   With a total of nearly 800 different sources used throughout the thesis, a very wide basis of research and a diversity of opinion has been included.

b) Original and secondary sources

   Approximately 40% of the sources used are primary sources, which ensured that original ideas had been revisited and reconsidered in the problematisation.

c) Historical and contemporary literary accounts

   Every chapter includes a historical overview (written from both historical and contemporary accounts) so as to be able to problematise a situation or development within its historical context and to demonstrate the longitudinal aspects of the overall topic.

d) Pro-and-contra literary accounts

   Decisions on which literature to include were also made on the basis of making sure that, if applicable, pro and contra reasoning could be applied.

e) Preferred use of seminal or influential works

   Prominent academics in the field/topic have been referred to extensively in order to maintain a high level of academic expert contributions.

f) Use of official publications by (international) authorities

   Regular use of official publications/statistics by (international) authorities so as to ensure the comparability of figures and hence the quality and accuracy of my argument.

g) International variety of the literature

   I also made sure I always maintained an international variety in the literature I used, in order to reflect different national perspectives. This said, as stated previously, this study has been limited in its scope to specifically emphasise 'Western' education.

h) Inclusion of German research literature in particular

   If applicable, German research literature (that may not have been translated

into English yet) has been included—which has become a particular linguistic and ideational advantage of this study.

These are the literary criteria I set up for this study in order to achieve a balanced variety of academic sources, opinions, and perspectives across time and from around the globe. As this study, as elaborated above, was not a literature analysis, there was no need for rigorous inclusion and exclusion—that is selection—criteria in the conventional sense. In this case of a thematic exploration and argument construction, it was found sufficient to follow the above quality criteria; meaning, if a particular argument or passage of literature, that came up, seemed valid and seemed to contribute to the discussion, it was classified thematically and included—while always keeping in mind the overall balance and quality of the chapter.

In doing so, as already mentioned, I followed the principle, applied in these kinds of grounded, constructivist explorations, namely that "the literature is accessed [and incorporated] as it becomes relevant" (Dick, 2005, para. 18) to the enquiry. A chapter was seen complete once, after several rounds of 'letting go' and 'revisiting', a stage of natural saturation had been reached, believing that knowledge does not come about out of context; it comes as a knock-on effect, a chain reaction. In constructing this thesis, I have respected and made utilisable this very nature of knowledge. Following this, I argue that the conscious inclusion and exclusion of particular works of literature was, in a manner, not necessary and not relevant. In carefully studying my approach, these are the ideas that were of interest because they reflected the complexity of the topic.

The available literature constituted the body of knowledge to be drawn from, but it also carried a deeper significance beyond the levels of data and information.

On the levels of knowledge and wisdom, the literature was a source of inspiration—rather than data—it contributed to an informed discussion and the construction of new knowledge.

The challenge of this study was that it was composed of constructed knowledge based on argument and reasoning, not quantified, deducted knowledge. This is the key advantage of philosophical research: it 'con – structs' new knowledge—rather than 'ex – tracts' it from polls and statistics. The process is almost inverted; knowledge is created continually, and from the beginning—in the very meaning of 'constructivism'—which holds that every contribution can be valuable in that it 'adds to the picture'—as opposed to 'reductionism', which is interested in extracting truth. Following this, the thesis' main strength and value lies in its contentual engagement; that is, its qualitative discussion and its theorisations—in contradistinction to an outcome-focussed or quantitative thesis. In this respect, theoretical research is purely contentual; that is to say, the thesis itself *is* the investigation.

In other words, the (research) journey was the reward; hence, I considered this fundamental research an 'exploration' and 'problematisation', respectively, rather than a 'review', an 'analysis', or an 'interpretation'. This methodological principle has been applied right from the beginning throughout the thesis. This way, the thesis maintained the character of an evolving work of philosophical art (cf. Dick, 2002). In sum, the literature has a special meaning and particular importance, and most of it was only discovered along the journey. The idea of 'data' was clearly of secondary importance.

2.2.5 The role of the researcher — Technician or artist?

'Constructing' is associated with 'creating' or 'being creative', and this is how I have seen my role in this study. Dick (2002) encapsulated this aspect by asking: "Will you engage with the research primarily as technician or as performing artist: Will you closely follow a research recipe, or design and conduct your study to fit the situation and the theme?" (Dick, 2002, p. 168). He continued:

> Do you expect to engage in research with whatever resources and understanding you can bring to bear, learning from your experience? That is, will your learning be primarily through questioning enquiry, with supervisor and committee functioning as mentors rather than as teachers? Such an approach will engage you in examining your assumptions about the nature of knowledge and of methodologies. This is research as performing art. (Dick, 2002, p. 162)

In transferring this to theoretical-philosophical research, a phenomenologically-exploratory process of critical-theoretical meaning-making, based on Socratic questioning, deconstructing, critical thinking, contemplating, and—if applicable—abductive inferring [26] has evolved organically and new knowledge has emerged and has been constructed, respectively.

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[26] Abductive inferring or "inference to the best explanation" (Harman, 1965, p. 88)—as adopted by *Grounded Theory* (cf. Strauss & Corbin, 1994)—has been applied in certain instances as a mode of reasoning. Peirce (1929) held the view that abductive inference was the sole true way to attain creative cognitions and thus 'discover' new knowledge whereas inductive and deductive inferring both mainly reinforced a refining of existing knowledge (by means of identifying similarities and establishing of relationships between them). Abduction, on the other hand, provides the means for creative acts of cognition that enable conceiving overriding coherences in relation to phenomena in the research matter. Peirce (1929) originally described this way of creative scholarly contemplation as a meditative academic conversation with oneself which he called 'musement' (1935, p. 315). Reichertz (2009) described it as follows: "Something unintelligible is discovered in the 'data' and, on the basis of the mental design of a new rule, the rule is discovered or invented and, simultaneously, it becomes clear what the case is. The logical form of this operation is that of abduction. Here one has decided (with whatever degree of awareness and for whatever reason) no longer to adhere to the conventional view of things.

Occasionally, I have also availed myself of Scharmer's *Theory U*; a creative method of ideation, carried out in a number of contemplative steps, which he referred to as 'presencing' (Scharmer, 2009). The method is closely related to mindfulness practices. Overall, the process was literature-stimulated/guided and subject to my prior knowledge, experience, professional appraisal, awareness, and intellectual capacity as researcher. These acts of cognition, as part of a self-constructed learning journey, were my creative process of associative reasoning and creatively transferring and interlinking rational thoughts and insights in order to develop new ideas.

Following this, I did not see myself as an external researcher who wants to find out about a question he/she is interested in. Quite the contrary: Being an experienced practitioner, I saw myself as an insider, right in the middle of it. My professional background and experience enabled me to approach this topic with an insider's perspective (as opposed to that of an outsider with little or no prior experience in the field). This fact gave me a much better access to and understanding of the research topic and its various discourses, and was thus an important—if not crucial—advantage to the study.

In addition, the personified or subjective stance gives this philosophical study its unique character. While it may not be representative of most people, it does represent the reasoned analyses, concerns, and conclusions of one person—namely the researcher—in the most accurate way (cf. Saunders et al., 2009). For that reason, this thesis is foremost a subjectively-perceived think piece.

This way of creating a new 'type' ... is a creative outcome which engenders a new idea. ... Abduction is, therefore, a cerebral process, an intellectual act, a mental leap, that brings together things which one had never associated with one another: A cognitive logic of discovery" (para. 16).

This said, while this research may include subjective, semi-biographical, theoretical viewpoints as concerns the analyses, problematisations, interpretations, and theorisations carried out throughout this research; it was my scholarly responsibility to maintain an open-minded, objective balance in the designing and conducting of this research—which I did at any stage of the project. I expand more on the subjective stance, I have taken, in section 3.6 (p. 63 et seqq.), and particularly in section 3.6.1 (p. 66 et seqq.).

2.2.6 Enabling creative/philosophical theorising

The generating of creative cognitions in the creation of new knowledge was of crucial significance in this theoretical-philosophical study as this artistic aspect is inextricably linked with the personal qualities and cognitive faculties of the researcher. In the 1970s, Phillips argued:

> Researchers must begin to recognise what they bring with them to the design, execution, and analysis of their investigations. We simply cannot afford to continue to engage in the same kinds of sterile, unproductive, unimaginative investigations which have long characterised most ... research. (D. L. Phillips, 1971, p. 175)

Strauss and Corbin (1994) shared this concern for creative inference insofar as they believed that "too rigid a conception of induction can lead to sterile or boring studies" (p. 277). Beyond that, Urquhart, Lehmann, and Myers (2010) have suggested amplifying the thematic breadth of one's topic also encourages the possibility for abductive inferring to occur. Reichertz (2009) argued that abductive reasoning be "an attitude towards data and towards one's own knowledge .... a state of preparedness for being taken unprepared" (para. 22). Again, this bears a resemblance to Scharmer's method of 'presencing' (2009).

2.2.7 The significance of an individualised methodology

Larkin (2004a) argued that a researcher's choice of approach be "always informed by their theoretical and philosophical positions" (para. 3). Similarly, Trow (1957) provocatively used the metaphor: "Every cobbler thinks leather is the only thing" (p. 35) to argue that most researchers favour the method(s) and approach(es) they are most familiar with. Obviously, one's preferred tools and methods can be as much an asset as also a bias. On the positive side, there is an important personal aspect to this, which should not be ignored—but rather utilised. Dick (2002) emphasised this point, stating: "Good research is designed to fit the interests and skills of those involved and it is partly created by and helps to create the research situation and the research questions" (p. 159).

Secondly, one's personal or professional background often leads individuals to the topic of their research. So, too, one's choice of theoretical assumptions and approaches often reflects the researcher's personal motivation. 'Awareness of and concern for the world', for instance, may lead to a research design based on *Critical Theory*. Beyond that, an individualised methodology is closely intertwined with the researcher's biographical background,[27] his or her knowledge, skills, experience, social and cultural understanding, values, perspectives, privileges, positions, interactions, geographic location(s) and so forth. In short, the researcher's entire personality and life experience plays an important part in the research.[28] Within the scope of this study, my approach was to integrate and emphasise (rather than hiding)

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[27] (incl. parents, family, childhood, upbringing, education, environment, etc.)
[28] (admittedly more so in—but not limited to—qualitative research)

these life experiences and skills. I have therefore included the section *Biographical background and personal motivation leading to the topic* on page 12 et seqq.

This social-constructivist stance, which *Interpretivism* takes (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991; Walsham, 2009), is based on Husserl's all-encompassing concept of the *Lebenswelt* ('Life-World Theory') (1936/1970).[29] Kraus' latest definition of Life-World captures it as follows: "Life conditions mean a person's material and immaterial circumstances of life. Life-World means a person's subjective construction of reality, which he or she forms under the condition of his or her life circumstances" (2013, p. 153).

The idea of *Social Constructivism* (cf. Bruner, 1960; Vygotsky, 1934/1978) expands the theory of *Constructivism* (Piaget, 1967) insofar as that it factors-in the significance of social surroundings and culture in interaction with an individual's process of development. In giving prominence to the aspect of interaction with one's surroundings—as opposed to mere observation of the same—contemporary concepts of Social Constructivism arguably also exceed Bandura's *Social Modelling Theory* (1971). Social Constructivism accepts *Subjectivism*. In other words, it opposes the theory of *Objectivism*. Because this form of constructivism, outlined above, is all-encompassing, I prefer to call it 'holistic constructivism'.

This subjective stance, I argue, is even more so the case with theoretical research. In most cases, theoretical research is a question-guided, literature-stimulated, self-constructed learning process, as the processing of what is conventally considered the 'data' (here: information, knowledge, ideas, concepts, and thoughts), takes place mentally-conceptually based on the researcher's

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[29] (which he derived from Heidegger's treatise on *Being-in-the-World* (German: 'In-der-Welt-Sein') (1927/2006), a decade earlier)

intellectual capacity at large. As opposed to a statically structured reductionist approach, applying the holistic paradigm makes it a creative, organic process. The process of reflecting, evaluating, determining, researching further, reflecting, re-evaluating and determining, on an internal, theoretical level, is constantly taking place. In this respect, one could arguably interpret this research as theoretical action research. I expand on this, and the subjective stance I have taken, in the section on epistemology (sect. 3.6) on page 63 et seqq.

CHAPTER THREE

Research philosophy and design

"It is the theory that decides what we can observe."

Albert Einstein (as cited in Heisenberg, 1971, p. 63)

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline and justify the overall design of the study, ranging from a fundamental conceptual level right down to the level of the research methods that have been applied. After establishing a basic framework for the research process, I continue by elaborating the scientific paradigm (or worldview) that I employ in this study, followed by in-depth elaborations on the ontology and epistemology that underlie the thesis. The 'theoretical perspectives' and fundamental principles of methodology, that would normally follow as the next subordinate levels of the design, were comprised and have already been elaborated in section 2.2. Finally, the 'research methods' that have been applied in this investigation are specified and discussed. The chapter closes with a laconic summary of the preceding two chapters in the form of a chart—which I call the 'research matrix'. This composition led to the following outline of the chapter:

3.1   Scaffolding the research process

Whilst acknowledging that "the terminology [with respect to different scholars] is far from consistent in research literature" (Crotty, 1998, p. 1) and sometimes differs—or even contradicts—by either definition or application, I concur and commit to the definitions introduced by Crotty (1998); namely 'epistemology', 'theoretical perspective', 'methodology', and 'method'—which he refers to as an interactive "framework [or 'scaffolding'—as he calls it] of the social research process" (Crotty, 1998, p. 4 et seqq.); each term informing the ensuing one, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Having adopted Crotty's 'scaffolding' as a basic framework, in order for the overall methodology to be comprehensible, it was found necessary to expand the above framework by two more levels, or elements, as I am going to explain in the following: Above the level of epistemology, I introduced an overarching 'scientific paradigm' (or 'worldview'). Secondly, alongside the formulating of an 'epistemology', I introduced an equipollent 'ontology' (i.e. a 'theory of being' or 'nature of reality'), as reality-as-it-appears-to-be (epistemology) may differ from reality-as-I-believe-it-to-be (ontology). These extensions taken into consideration, the previous figure has been altered as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 | The framework of the present research process (i.e. the 'research design'). Figure in part ideationally based on elaborations presented in Crotty (1998, p. 4 et seqq.).
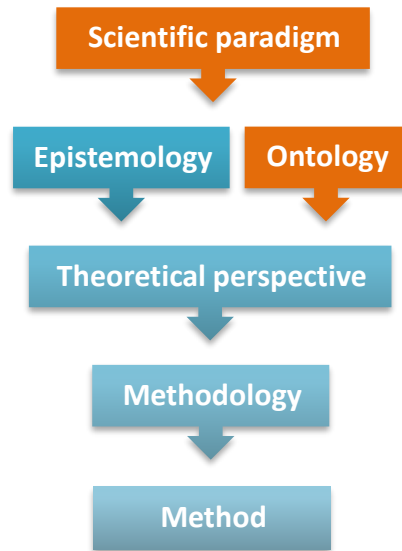
Each level of the framework is defined as follows:

a) Paradigm:

The 'overall worldview', that is, 'how we consider', referring to sets of 'axioms', meaning "undemonstrated (and undemonstrable) 'basic beliefs' accepted by convention or established by practice as the building blocks of some conceptual or theoretical structure or system [emphasis in the original]" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 33). In other words, the scientific paradigm constitutes a certain system of thought.

b) Epistemology:

"is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). It implicates further assumptions within a paradigm and its axioms about the nature, acquisition, justification and development of knowledge, and thus constitutes a 'theory of knowledge' which is "embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3).

c) Ontology:

derives from the Greek, meaning the philosophical study of the nature of

being as such. Ontology is concerned with 'what is' rather than 'what it means to know' (which applies to epistemology). Thus, both concepts should inform the theoretical perspective alongside each other. This concurs with Crotty's understanding as outlined in *The Foundations of Social Research* (1998).

d) Theoretical perspective:
refers to "the assumptions about [the] reality [of the human world] that we bring to our work" (Crotty, 1998, p. 2); that is, "the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3).

e) Methodology:
includes the "strategy, plan of action, [the] design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3), that integrates them into an overall approach.

f) Method(s):
comprise the practical means or procedures used to gather and analyse the sources of knowledge and information appropriate to the research question (Crotty, 1998).

These integral constituents are now elaborated and defined in turn, so as to provide the theoretical scaffolding that informed the design and the organisation of the research work on hand.

3.2 Levels of perspective

Inspired by Kim's (1995, 1996) model of the *Levels of Perspective*,[30] which state that 'having a vision' and seeing the 'big picture' was of fundamental importance with

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[30] (also referred to as the *Vision Deployment Matrix* (cf. D. H. Kim, 1995))

regard to the success of any undertaking,[31] this research has been approached likewise. Kim argued that without a 'proper' vision, anything that happened on the level of daily events was going to have a disjointing and contentually impoverishing effect and higher objectives may not be reached. Also, 'having one's vision (and perspective) sorted' was an essential condition for profound decision-making [32]—as opposed to holding fundamental debates ad infinitum (Kotter, 1995). "The further one moves from specific events toward mental models or vision, the more leverage one has to resolve a problem ... [and] intervening at the higher levels (external structure, mental models or vision) is more likely to increase influence over future outcomes [emphasis in the original]" (Schwarz, Davidson, Carlson, & McKinney, 2005, p. 83). Here, leverage refers to "small, well-focussed actions that can produce significant, lasting changes" (Schwarz et al., 2005, p. 83; cf. Senge, 1990). This is interesting insofar as that Kim's model (D. H. Kim, 1995, 1996) bears resemblance to the scaffolding, Crotty (1998) used to describe the research process. I have collated Kim's *Levels of Perspective* (1995, 1996) with Crotty's *Scaffolding of the Social Research Process* (1998) in Figure 4. I amplify each level of the two models in the following.

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[31] Kim originally referred to an institutional or organisational level, such as a company, school, government, etc.

[32] (especially with regard to a company's functioning; i.e. a 'shared vision')

The Levels of Perspective

(D. H. Kim, 1995, 1996)

The Scaffolding of the Research Process

(Crotty, 1998)

Vision

Mental Models

Systemic Structures

Patterns of Behaviour

Events

increasing leverage

Worldview ➡ *Paradigm*

Theory of Knowledge ➡ *Epistemology*

Overriding Concepts ➡ *Theoretical Perspectives*

General Approaches ➡ *Methodology*

Applied Techniques ➡ *Methods*
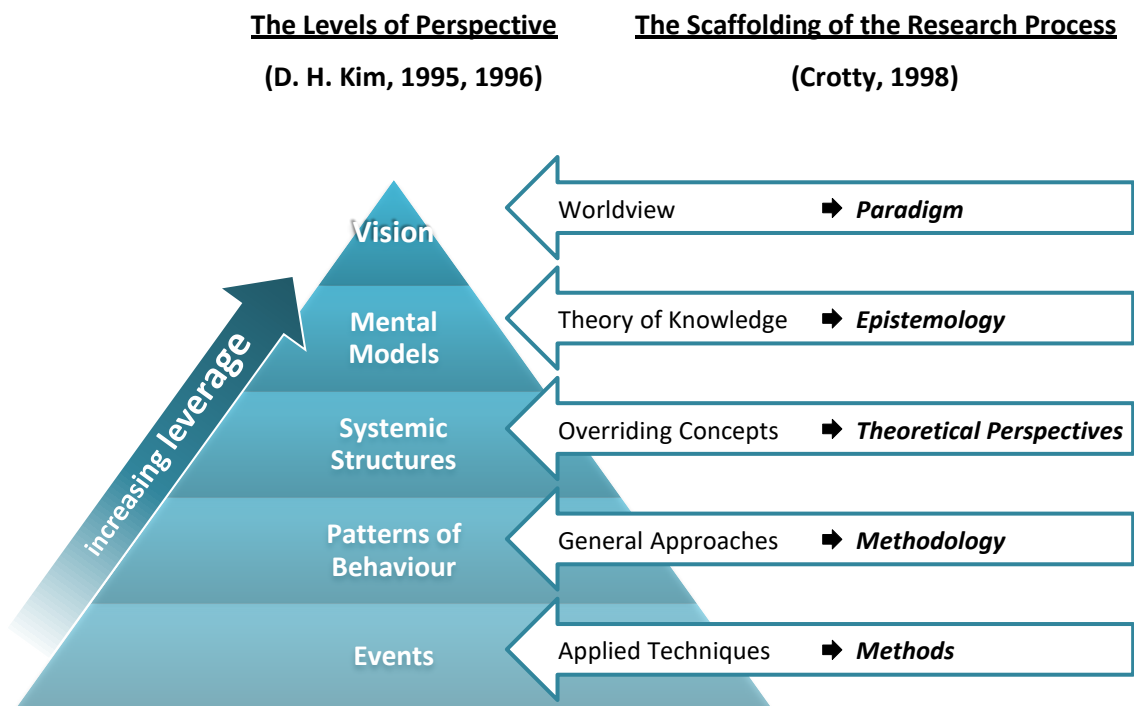
3.3 Scientific paradigm

The word 'paradigm' derives from the Greek *paradeigma*, meaning 'pattern, example' and that from *para*, ('beside') and *deiknumi*, ('to show, to point out') ("παραδείκνυμι ['paradeiknumi']," 1940). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), it refers to "undemonstrated (and undemonstrable) 'basic beliefs' accepted by convention or established by practice as the building blocks of some conceptual or theoretical structure or system [emphasis in the original]" (p. 33). In other words, a paradigm describes a certain system of thought.

The term paradigm was first adopted in 1962 in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962/2012) by science historian Thomas S. Kuhn. In the sense of the

German word *Weltanschauung* (lit. 'way of looking at the world'), Kuhn argued that a paradigm represents a prevailing, rather specific way of viewing reality, applicable in a certain field ("paradigm," 2011). As an analogy for 'normal science', it represents a form of 'reasoning inside the box', whereas 'thinking outside the box' and touching upon yet unconventional habits, is what Kuhn considered 'revolutionary science'.[33] I am referring to a paradigm in this very sense of an overall worldview.

With reference to Kim (1995, 1996), a scientific paradigm constitutes the 'pointing out' of one's system of thought. Committing to a paradigm, with respect to scientific research, is not merely a technical, but also a personal expression of one's way of thinking (about the world), much intertwined with one's ethical principles (viz. values and beliefs) in relation to the research investigation to be undertaken. The paradigm represents the lens, the researcher chooses, in order to "consider it possible to produce knowledge about the ... world that is both reliable and valid" (Livesey, 2016, p. 2).

In order to find the scientific paradigm, best suited to lay the foundation for this research study, I had to ask myself about my own understanding of the world. How do I fundamentally perceive the world? What do I define to be reality; and whether I—as an analogy—position myself 'inside the box', say within the common habit of reasoning, or possibly outside of the box.

With regard to the research question being geared to explore authentic and sustainable ways of educating young learners in and for the 21st century, the holistic

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[33] That is, underlying assumptions of the field are being re-examined, and a new paradigm is being established. A *'paradigm shift'* takes place. As soon as a new paradigm's dominance has been established, scientists return to normal science, solving puzzles within this new paradigm, as before (Kuhn, 1962/2012).

paradigm appeared to be a suitable thought system as superstructure because it is broad-minded, open-ended, and corresponds well with broad philosophical discussions.

3.4   Holism as the overarching scientific paradigm

Deriving from the Greek term *holos* ('whole'), holism dates back to Aristotle's [34] *Metaphysics*, where he famously stated: "The totality is not, as it were, a mere heap, but the whole is something besides the parts" (Aristotle, 1928, 1045a, 8-10), that is, the whole is different from and greater than the sum of its parts—which forms the core principle of holistic understanding.

The philosophical perspective of holism stands in contrast to the purely analytic tradition (also referred to as reductionism), which claims that complex systems can be explained on the basis of their fundamental constituents [35] (Polkinghorne, 2002). Science-historically speaking, Christakis (2011) argued: "For the last few centuries ... science has been ... break[ing] matter down into ever smaller bits, in the pursuit of understanding" (para. 7).

Holism, on the contrary, is based on the understanding that the properties of a given system cannot be determined by its component parts alone. Instead, the emergent phenomenon of the synergy of the purposefully organised system as a whole determines in an important way how the parts behave (Corning, 2002; Dau-Schmidt, 2011). This, for instance, is why science is not (yet) able to replicate living organisms, such as plants, animals or human beings, although all constituent parts are

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[34] (384 BCE – 322 BCE)

[35] (this is argued with regard to objects, explanations, meanings, phenomena, and theories (cf. Polkinghorne, 2002))

known. Christakis (2011) explained this problem as follows: "Putting things back together in order to understand them is harder, and typically comes later in the development of ... science" (para. 8). Relating holism to research, as the creation of original knowledge, this means:

> Knowledge is not advanced by simply adding more and more individual facts. In the process of ... understanding, it is not true that facts which gradually become included in the 'whole' as parts, can be evaluated simply quantitatively so that our knowledge becomes the more firm, the more parts we are able to determine. On the contrary, each single fact has always a qualitative significance. This single, new fact may perhaps revolutionise the entire conception based on former findings, and demand an entirely new idea, in the light of which the old facts may have to be evaluated in a radically different way. (K. Goldstein, 1934/1995, p. 294)

A second holistic principle is an approach to doing science, called 'from the whole to the parts', meaning that the phenomenon or object of research is first being observed and described within its original context or normal environment, before examining it in its segments. This is how I tried to approach this research too: in a phenomenologically-exploratory way (technical elaborations of which can be found in sect. 3.7.1, *Phenomenon-driven exploratory approach*, on p. 83 et seqq.).

A third and central aspect of holism is the idea that "the scientist is not a passive observer of an external universe" (N. Myers, 1997, para. 7) and that "there is no 'objective truth' [emphasis in the original]" (N. Myers, 1997, para. 7). Von Goethe,[36] who developed a holistic approach to natural science, which is referred to as 'gentle empirism' (Hegge, 1996), saw the individual in a "reciprocal, participatory relationship with nature" (N. Myers, 1997, para. 7), and emphasised that the

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[36] (1749 – 1832), German poet, playwright, novelist, scientist, and statesman.

contribution, the observer brings forth to the process, is valuable (Seamon & Zajonc, 1998).

Von Goethe held the view that genuine scientific work involved the researcher to—without concluding—immerse him/herself in and become one with the object of investigation in order to let the phenomenon reveal its underlying purpose and logic by itself. In von Goethe's words: "Seek nothing behind the phenomena, they themselves are the theory" (von Goethe & Seidel, 1960, p. 566). This means that

> von Goethe's science requires that we actively engage our senses, and trust that they can reveal the real world. Von Goethe worked towards opening up new 'organs of perception' which would expand our understandings of the world into an integrated whole. This is a science of relationship, of quality and of wholeness. (N. Myers, 1997, para. 7)

Unfortunately, holism has become a catchword for things that are considered comprehensive. In many such instances, claims are far from being holistic in the proper sense. Christakis (2011) appreciatively stated:

> Holism does not come naturally. It is an appreciation not of the simple, but of the complex, or at least of the simplicity and coherence in complex things. Moreover, unlike curiosity or empiricism, say, holism takes a while to acquire and to appreciate. It is a very grown-up disposition. (Para. 7)

Within the scope of this study, this has also been my approach: to acknowledge that I am part of it all; hence, to accept subjectivism (cf. sect. 3.6.1 on p. 66 et seqq.), and in trying to see the coherences of the whole. Beyond that, as described above, the holistic paradigm has been implemented in approaching this research in a phenomenologically-exploratory way, and in coming to well-informed conclusions in a second step, once the whole has been perceived and considered. As

already mentioned earlier, technical elaborations on the phenomenologically-exploratory approach can be found in sect. 3.7.1, *Phenomenon-driven exploratory approach*, on p. 83 et seqq.).

3.5   Ontological considerations

Before advancing to epistemological considerations, concerned with 'what it means to know', ontology deals with the question 'what is'. The term derives from the Greek, literally meaning 'of that which is theory'. Within the field of *Metaphysics* and *Analytic Philosophy*, ontology signifies the philosophical study of the nature of being or reality as such (Blaikie, 2000). Specifically, it is concerned with the kinds of entities that (can be said to) exist. That is, to question "what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units [or categories of being] interact with each other [and can be related and grouped together]. In short, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality" (Blaikie, 2000, p. 8). By arguing that, contrary to the epistemological notion of gathering and refining knowledge, "the nature of being [is rather] that we do not know it. We simply are it" (Hyde, 1995, p. 4). While

> epistemology refers to how educational researchers can know the reality that they wish to describe .... [ontology] refers to the nature of this reality. ... There are relations between the two, in that the belief they have about the nature of reality has an influence on the way they can know it. (D. Scott & Morrison, 2006, p. 85)
>
> The problem is that reality-as-it-is-in-itself (i.e. ontological reality), once

associated with forms of constructivist epistemology, is understood as 'constructed' and hence appears to be incoherent as a concept on its own. For that reason, I make

my ontological considerations in conjunction with constructivist epistemology, following hereafter in section 3.6.

The fact that we ask the ontological question may arguably already be indication that reality is subjective. Coady and Lehman (2008) defined a constructivist ontological position, which I share, stating: " 'Reality' is subjective, the co-creation of the individual and the stimulus condition. Meanings are socially embedded and are constructed out of life experience. 'Reality' is dynamic, rather than a static condition [emphasis in the original]" (p. 402). Following Coady and Lehman (2008), the basic (subjective) stance that I take with this thesis is substantiated in recognising the nature of reality and truth (cf. sect. 3.6), and in acknowledging that personal experience and opinions are always present (cf. sect. 3.6), and in developing a reasoned argument.

A constructivist ontological position "stands in contrast to realism and objectivism, which contend that a fixed, verifiable, external reality exists ... and that 'truth' exists objectively [emphasis in the original]" (Coady & Lehman, 2008, pp. 403-404). This said, constructivism does concede that some basic reality exists; obtaining cognisance of it and its coherences, however, is a matter of individual perspective, experience, and perception (incl. personal ways of processing and coping with this perceived reality). Consequently, reality is subjective and multiple (McLaughlin, 2003).

Ritchie and Lewis (2003) presented a spectrum of ontological stances, ranging from *Realism* via *Materialism*, *Critical Realism* to *Idealism*, and that via *Subtle Idealism* to *Relativism*. Following Ritchie and Lewis (2003), I see this study situated somewhere between the following three stances:

a) Subtle realism/critical realism (a variant of realism, influenced by idealism) in the sense that "an external reality exists independent of our beliefs and understanding, ... [however,] reality is only knowable through the human mind and socially constructed meanings" (p. 16);

b) Subtle idealism (a variant acknowledging collective understandings) in that "reality is only knowable through socially constructed meanings ... [that] are shared and there is a collective or objective mind" (p. 16);

c) Relativism (a variant of idealism) insofar as that, in certain circumstances, there is limited or no shared social reality; instead, "only a series of alternative social constructions" (p. 16).

At the core, these stances are part of—if not identical with—constructivist theory. Ontology, as a conclusive stand-alone concept, as already elaborated, becomes relative. Here, constructivism acts as a meta-concept that incorporates the aspect of (social) reality with the two salient parameters being a) pluralism (i.e. multiple, context-specific, individual realities) and b) holism (i.e. various layers of shared social reality).

3.6 Epistemology – 'Critical comprehensively–interactionist constructivism'

Epistemology [37] is the philosophical study of the nature, acquisition, justification and development of knowledge and thus constitutes a 'theory of knowledge' (Crotty, 1998; Edwards, 1967). It is, amongst other things, concerned with the questions:

- How do we know what we know?
- What is the relationship between the enquirer and the known?

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[37] The term was coined by the Scottish philosopher James F. Ferrier (1808 – 1864) in 1856, deriving from the Greek: *epistēmē* ('knowledge, acquaintance with (something), skill, experience'), from *epistasthai* ('know how to do, understand', lit. 'overstand') ("epistemology," 2016) and *logos* ('description, theory, explanation, principle') ("logos," 1998).

Transferred onto this research study, this epistemology describes what constitutes knowledge/truth and how I understand knowledge to be acquired (cf. Crotty, 1998). D. Scott and Morrison (2006) alleged that there were "three principal epistemological frameworks as regards educational research: objectivism, subjectivism, and constructionism" (p. 87). Broadly speaking, I would like to equate them with quantitative, theoretical, and qualitative research. In this case, however, I chose a subjective or radical constructivist epistemology as I expound in the following:

Following the Italian Giambattista Vico (1710/1988),[38] German idealist philosopher Immanuel Kant believed that the sole reality, that could be known by humankind, was that, represented by human thought (Kant, 1781/1985). On the assumption that

> Problems do not arise by themselves. It is precisely this that marks out a problem as being of the true scientific spirit: All knowledge is in response to a question. If there were no question, there would be no scientific knowledge, [it follows that] nothing proceeds from itself. Nothing is given. All is constructed. [Own translation [39]] (Bachelard, 1938, p. 14)

In accordance with Kant and Bachelard, Piaget, "the great pioneer of the constructivist theory of knowing" (von Glasersfeld, 1990, p. 22), showed that human cognitive development was a process of adaptation to the world by way of assimilation and accommodation (cf. Piaget, 1952; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). For

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[38] Giambattista Vico (1668 – 1744), political philosopher, historian, legal scholar.

[39] Ipsissima verba (French): "Et, quoi qu'on en dise, dans la vie scientifique, les problèmes ne se posent pas d'eux-mêmes. C'est précisément ce sens du problème qui donne la marque du véritable esprit scientifique. Pour un esprit scientifique, toute connaissance est une réponse à une question. S'il n'y a pas eu de question, il ne peut y avoir de connaissance scientifique. Rien ne va de soi. Rien n'est donné. Tout est construit" (Bachelard, 1938, p. 14).

him, knowledge was a subjective construct of individual experiences Piaget (1967, 1977). Von Glasersfeld (1990) summed up Piaget's theory as follows:

a) Knowledge is not passively received either through the senses or by way of communication;
b) knowledge is actively built up by the cognising subject.
c) The function of cognition is adaptive, in the biological sense of the term, tending towards fit or viability;
d) cognition serves the subject's organisation of the experiential world, not the discovery of an objective ontological reality. (pp. 22-23)

The last aspect, emphasising that the concepts, individuals construct, are necessarily reflections of their *Lebenswelt* ('lifeworld') (Husserl, 1936/1970) and are therefore subjective versions of reality, not reality-as-it-is-in-itself; this cognition had been added by von Glasersfeld (1990). Patton (2002) illustrated this facet in the following way:

> Human beings have evolved the capacity to interpret and construct reality— indeed, they cannot do otherwise—the world of human perception is not real in an absolute sense, as the sun is real, but is 'made up' and shaped by cultural and linguistic constructs perceived and experienced as real by real people. [Emphasis in the original] (p. 96)

It follows from the foregoing that the human world is different or, critically arguing, 'alienated' from the natural world, and therefore, must be studied differently (Guba & Lincoln, 1990). This anti-positivist stance, which constructivism adopts, is in marked contrast to positivist, objectivist, and naturalist science. It leads to the fundamental dichotomy over subject and object, which I problematise in the following section in order to clarify and substantiate my position.

3.6.1 The subject/object problem and its relation to truth

Objectivity and objectivism

Objectivity is one of the basic requirements of scientific work. 'Objective' means to look at things in a scientifically-detached, impartial, fact-based way. Being 'objective', philosophically speaking, means to transcend one's own limits (cf. 'self-transcendence') and direct one's focus, undistorted by emotion or personal bias, towards the object of investigation in order to truthfully describe it based on observable phenomena. This, at least, is the clinically-rational, realist understanding of doing science.

This said, I argue that the requirement to 'be' objective is already an oxymoron in itself (cf. Derrida, 1967/1973). Von Foerster (2003) called it one of the roots of "our cognitive blind spot and this is a peculiar delusion within our Western tradition, namely, 'objectivity': 'The properties of the observer shall not enter the description of his observations' [emphasis in the original]" (p. 285).

The controversy, whether truth can ever be discovered objectively and the counter-claim that subjectivity is anything but truth, goes as far back as humanity has been philosophising.

A larger crisis was reached when, in the early 1900s, several German sociologists rejected positivism, causing the *Methodenstreit* ('methodological debate') (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Max Weber, influenced by Wilhelm Dilthey's philosophy and George Mead's *Social Psychology*, had come up with his sociology of *Verstehen* ('understanding something in its context') (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002), meaning *Interpretivism*—which was also referred to as 'sociological anti-positivism'.

The turning point, however, came not until the 1960s onward, when qualitative research methodologies emerged in the social sciences, as the natural science model, which was based on positivism, objectivism, and naturalism, was then thought to be too simplistic and mechanistic-deterministic to capture social reality (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). Triggered by Kuhn's ground-breaking *Paradigm Theory* in 1962 (cf. Kuhn, 1962/2012), the decade marked the watershed and academics started to realise that science could not be bias- or value-free (Held, 1980; Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). "Notions of objectivity and universality—whether in science or religion—are neither value-neutral nor universal: they project particular ways of thinking and embody particular values" (Clayton & Simpson, 2006, p. 823).

A hypothesis, even the selection of a particular subject to be investigated, very often reflects the researcher's subtle personal bias(es). Beyond that, the data which have been collected, must, at the end of the day, be interpreted to be understood and made useful (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). As von Foerster (2003) pointed out: "Observations are not absolute but relative to an observer's point of view" (p. 247). Although the researcher may be able to extract specific generalisations from it; still, these cannot be interpreted and applied entirely value-free and undistorted by emotion or personal bias. Nietzsche (1974) reminded us of his insight that the "human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspectives" (sect. 374, p. 336),[40] meaning that the maximal analysis, human intellect can achieve, is merely an interpretation.

Following the above theorisation, I argue that it is virtually impossible to conduct any research that generates truly value-free, unbiased knowledge (Denzin &

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[40] The statement was originally made in relation to intellectual self-analysis, which, according to Nietzsche, could not go beyond interpretation.

Lincoln, 2013) as the object of investigation never truly speaks for itself (Held, 1980); or, as Heinz von Foerster famously stated: "Objectivity is the delusion that observations could be made without an observer" (as cited in von Glasersfeld, 1995, p. 6).

> We rightly think that the pursuit of detachment from our initial standpoint is an indispensable method of advancing our understanding of the world and of ourselves, increasing our freedom in thought and action, and becoming better. But since we are who we are, we cannot get outside of ourselves completely. Whatever we do, we remain subparts of the world with limited access to the real nature of the rest of it and of ourselves. There is no way of telling how much of reality lies beyond the reach of present or future objectivity or any other conceivable form of human understanding. (Nagel, 1989, p. 6)

General academic acceptance of qualitative research, however, was not reached until the 1990s. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) voiced this in stating that "qualitative research is seen as an assault on this [objectivist] tradition, whose adherents often retreat into a "value-free objectivist science" (Carey, 1989, p. 104) model to defend their position" (p. 11). Subjectivity is still disputed today, although the limits and flaws of the striving for absolute objectivity are well known. The limit of objectivity

> is one that follows directly from the process of gradual detachment by which objectivity is achieved. An objective standpoint is created by leaving a more subjective, individual, or even just human perspective behind; but there are things about the world and life and ourselves that cannot be adequately understood from a maximally objective standpoint. (Nagel, 1989, p. 7)

Or, as von Foerster (2003) argued:

> Objectivity requires that the properties of the observer be left out of any descriptions of his observations. With the essence of observing (namely the processes of cognition) having been removed, the observer is reduced to a

copying machine with the notion of responsibility successfully juggled away. (p. 293)

Thus, an objectivist approach necessarily draws a demarcation line towards the surroundings; it disconnects from the context. The characteristics of radical objectivism are trifold: a) microscopic (in scope), b) materialistic (in perspective), and c) personalityless (in reasoning). Critically arguing, objectivism has the tendency to dissect, reduce, atomise, and decontextualise for the sake of 'scientificity'. According to Nietzsche (1913/2009), the aim of normal science has been—and still is—to reduce things down to what is identical to people. Moreover, "excessive objectification", according to Nagel (1989) has led to "implausible forms of reductionism" (jacket text), meaning that, by nature, objectivity "cannot by itself provide a complete picture of the world, or a complete stance toward it" (Nagel, 1989, p. 6).

Another important point, which Ritchie and Lewis (2003) raised, is that, given the severe instability the natural world is currently—and increases to be—in,

> there are now serious challenges to the view that the natural world is as stable and law-like as has been supposed (Gleick, 1987; Lewin, 1993; Williams, 2000). All of these issues raise important questions about the status of 'scientific method' around which so much epistemological debate ... has taken place. (p. 15)

As has meanwhile been established, a work's scientificity is not determined by choice of perspective, but solely through its cogency in exposition. Beyond that, can things that are seen disconnected from time and space be said to be grounded in reality? Does the propensity for objectivity not make investigations an inanimate endeavour? Knowledge derived in the sense of objective science can be unilateral if only a single, pragmatic perspective or method has been applied. While this may be

justified in pragmatic technical research, it cannot capture the human being or social reality in its entirety.

> A succession of objective advances may take us to a new conception of reality that leaves the personal or merely human perspective further and further behind. But if what we want is to understand the whole world, we cannot forget about those subjective starting points indefinitely; we and our personal perspectives belong to the world. (Nagel, 1989, pp. 5-6)

The solution, Nagel (1989) argues, "is not to inhibit the objectifying impulse but to insist that it learn to live alongside the internal perspectives" (jacket text).

Subjectivism and subject/object dichotomy

Subjectivism, on the other hand, aims to emphasise what distinguishes and characterises people. The mind offers the uniquely human ability for us to transcend ourselves and comprehend the world in a detached way from sheer infinite angles of view. Simultaneously, we are all individual beings in a specific place, and with a unique view on the world—a view which, it seems, is just a facet of the whole (Nagel, 1989). We can change our physical location, and we can conceive the world in whichever way we are inclined to at any moment.

Most importantly, as we gain knowledge and experience, our perception changes. This is what differentiates us from a camera, for instance. While a camera may produce an 'objective' image of reality; what we perceive and possibly refine and associate, however, is entirely subjective—because it is inextricably linked with feeling and thinking. Following this, a subjective stance has a viewpoint, and a bias. This implies that in subjectivism, there is no universal truth. In other words, 'subjective' is subject to interpretation: A subjective stance—in fact, any viewpoint

or perspective in general—depends on one's own observation, thinking, ideas, and opinions.

Beyond that, subjectivism holds that objects do not exist as independent realities but only as counter concepts of the observing/thinking subject (cf. subject/object dichotomy) as we interpret the world of objects (and other self-interpreting objects, i.e. 'subject-objects') around us (cf. Apel, 1979). Therefore, interpretations of reality always have to be seen in correlation to the perceiving subject; or, as Nagel (1989) expressed it: "The subjectivity of consciousness is an irreducible feature of reality" (p. 7).

Philosophically speaking, subjectivism takes the pivotal stance that knowledge is existence-dependent. According to 19th-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard,[41] the 'father of Existentialism', this means that "knowledge must relate itself to the knower, who is essentially an existing individual, and therefore all essential knowledge essentially relates itself to existence, to that which exists" (1846/1998, p. 909). In other words, cognition only occurs by humans for humans, and therefore must involve subjectivity. Following this, I assume that all acts of seeing are acts of judgement—and therefore subjective.

Concerning the qualities of subjective research, Kierkegaard made the following point:

> Whereas objective thinking is indifferent to the thinking subject and his existence, the subjective thinker as existing is essentially interested in his [/her] own thinking, is existing in it. Therefore, his [/hers] has another kind of reflection, specifically, that of inwardness, of possession, whereby it belongs

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[41] (1813 – 1855)

to the subject and no one else. The subjective existing thinker is aware of the dialectic of communication. (1846/1992, p. 72)

Perceiving and reflecting upon one's observations and one's previous experiences, and making new correlations, are profound ways of understanding the phenomena of the world and its people. A description of reality becomes objective once actualities are described as accurately as possible from a deliberately chosen, subjective viewpoint. This more personal level of enquiry and interpretation is called phenomenological (from the Greek *phainómenon*, meaning 'that which appears', and *lógos*, meaning 'study').

That means, if a bias is consciously chosen and is always present, it is not a problem. What would be of concern, is where a bias is either consciously obscured (i.e. pretending it was not there) or is not self-evident to the person who has it (i.e. not knowing that it is there). A bias is not a problem when it is recognised, owned, and its ethical implications are being considered—which is the purpose of this section.

While 'subjective' means that the argument carries the researcher's concern, it is not just a personal opinion: With this thesis, I have constructed a nuanced, and well-theorised understanding of the topic at hand, carried out by making reference to what others have argued and by exposing one's line of reasoning; in short, by adhering to the scientific method with ethical scholarly responsibility. This think piece is therefore an informed, subjective interpretation of the topic under study (as is, in my opinion, the case with most qualitative empirical studies).

In other words, by recognising that no objective position is possible; or, for that matter, desirable, in order to consider the contribution of my subjective position I look to what is seen to be the contribution of any piece of phenomenological

research and scholarship. Through a recognition of the subjective position that I have, and through careful study that both informs and critiques this subjective position, I am contributing scholarship on education.

While I have aimed to maintain a perspective as 'objective' as possible, not everyone will agree with or believe my theorisations and, in some cases, someone might not agree with my reasoning. And that is not what subjective research is about: This thesis is not intended to and does not require the reader to 'believe' what I have come to believe as a result of this study and self-constructed learning process. It is not a positivist thesis. This perspective is my perspective at the time; it represents the level of understanding I am at right now.

To me, subjectivity is not a statement of or differentiation in the quality of the argument and its possible outcomes, respectively. The subjective stance highlights (rather than to obscure) that I am a crucial part of this research. In this respect, Sampson (2009, p. 3) pointed out the following:

> On a much broader and more subjective level, private experiences, curiosity, inquiry, and the selectivity involved in personal interpretation of events shape reality as seen by one and only one individual and hence is called phenomenological. While this form of reality might be common to others as well, it could at times also be so unique to oneself as to never be experienced or agreed upon by anyone else.

Following Sampson (2009), I venture to argue that a subjective statement, which is true or real for at least one person, can, in some cases, be a more accurate reflection of reality than a computed—and therefore assumed—mean of many people's opinion. The researcher's input, my subjective capacity in processing and making sense of knowledge, is what gives this study a unique perspective and what makes this new knowledge original. Hence, it is also a unique piece of theoretical art.

Following Ritchie and Lewis (2003) and Smart (1973), in constructivism, the concept of objectivity has been replaced and is being ensured by what has been described as 'neutralist subjectivity', 'empathetic objectivity' (cf. Smart, 1973), and 'empathic neutrality' (cf. Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), respectively. Following the above, I am not claiming transferability. What I do ask with this thesis, however, is for the perspective, which I have developed over the course of this research, to be heard and to be respected.

Up to this point, the theorisation has substantiated the benefits and the necessity for this theoretical-philosophical research to adopt subjectivism as part of it's epistemological framework. As has been argued, subjectivity should be embraced as the situated knower and constructor of knowledge is *a*—if not *the*—crucial part of authentic knowledge (cf. Clayton & Simpson, 2006).

In carefully studying my approach, these are the ideas that were of interest because they reflected the complexity of the topic. In the following, further aspects in relation to subjectivity are discussed. My rationale for a subjective stance is going to be resumed in subsection *Subject/object problem — Conclusion* on page 77 et seqq.

Constructivism and the concept of truth

The question of truth is addressed in the fundamental question of how we relate to the world, thus turning it into an existential conception of truth (Grøn, 2003). Extensively exploring the question of how people relate themselves to truth, Kierkegaard is renowned for his dictum "subjectivity is truth [and] truth is subjectivity" (1846/1992, p. 240). He argued, "truth is only for the individual in that he [/she] produces it in action" (as cited in Grøn, 2003, p. 904). Most essentially,

truth is not just a matter of discovering objective facts, but how one relates oneself to those matters of fact. Kierkegaard elaborated the point that:

> Objectively we only consider the subject matter, subjectively we consider the subject and his [/her] subjectivity, and, behold, subjectivity is precisely our subject matter. It must constantly be kept in mind that the subjective problem is not about some other subject matter but simply about subjectivity itself. (1846/1998, p. 908)

Grøn (2003) explained: "The point is conversely that subjectivity itself is to be determined by the truth. Taking something to be true implies that it should determine the way we relate to ourselves and others" (p. 904). Kierkegaard calls this 'eternal, essential truth', meaning "that which relates itself essentially to the individual because it concerns his [/her] existence" (1846/1998, p. 913). By implication, this indicates that truth emerges if subject and object are recognised and found to have the right relation to each other; or, colloquially speaking: 'All things are relative'. All other knowledge, so Kierkegaard (1846/1998), is more or less accidental and indifferent. Grøn (2003) concluded: "Truth means agreement with reality" (p. 902). I suggest: Truth means finding oneself in harmony with reality. In this regard, subjective truth becomes objective truth, in the very sense of von Goethe, who said: "If I know my relation to myself and the outer world, I call it truth. Every man can have his own peculiar truth; and yet it is always the same" (1870/1906, p. 94); or, in Kierkegaard's words: "Truth makes a human being free" (as cited in Grøn, 2003, p. 904).

This reasoning has also been adopted in constructivism—albeit in a more pragmatic way: According to von Glasersfeld (1984), the traditional concept of 'truth' has been replaced by 'viability', delimited by social and material parameters.

The aspect of socio-cultural stimulus – response

Unlike Piaget, who took the cognitive or rationalist approach as a basis (cf. *Cognitive Constructivism*), Vygotsky understood the construction of knowledge to be situated in the social realm, occurring through an individual's interaction with his/her social surroundings (cf. 'situated cognition'). Hence, the crucial insight that knowledge construction is not disconnected but socially situated and, foremost, dialectical—which led him to frame *Socio-Cultural Constructivism* (Vygotsky, 1929/1977, 1934/1978). This way, a certain relation to (general ontological) reality in an individual's process of cognitive development is naturally maintained. I suggest that this can be understood as some form of social scaffolding.

Alongside the development of epistemological theory, learning theories developed as well, leading to the elaboration of the *Social Learning Theory* (Bandura, 1971; Bandura & Walters, 1963; N. E. Miller & Dollard, 1941). The (learning) theory of situated, intuitive *Constructionism*—in short, learning by (collaborative) explorative doing—(Papert, 1980; Papert & Harel, 1991) added further facets to the socio-cultural argument in the construction of knowledge. Beyond that, Leontyev (1981) stressed the subjective aspect in the process of an individual's active intra-mental building of knowledge still more in suggesting his *Theory of Appropriation*—as opposed to Piaget's *Theory of Assimilation*. Following Leontyev, Bauersfeld (1988) used the term negotiation, emphasising that "learning is characterised by the subjective reconstruction of societal means and models through negotiation of meaning in social interaction" (p. 39).

In doing so, Bauersfeld, Krummheuer, and Voigt (1988) complemented von Glasersfeld's personalised theory as well as Socio-Cultural Constructivism with that of *Interactionist Constructivism*. While von Glasersfeld's focus mainly lay on

individuals' construction of ways of knowing, he did acknowledge that this self-organised constructive agency takes place while the cognising subject interacts with other individuals or groups in society (von Glasersfeld, 1992). Hardy and Taylor (1997) introduced the aspect of intersubjective (communicative) rationality in linking Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action* (1984, 1987) with that of *Socio-Cultural Constructivism*, emphasising the significance of socio-cultural context and interaction.

Intersubjectivity

Knowledge and truth are subjective extracts of reality; yet, they are always a free, creative origination of the human individual. In 1986, von Glasersfeld coined the term 'intersubjective' as a form of 'constructivist objectivity' (von Glasersfeld, 1986). It means that, although knowledge and truth are subjective and although "others are the individual subject's construction, they can nevertheless provide a corroboration of that subject's experiential reality" (von Glasersfeld, 1995, p. 119). That, in turn, means that, given the mental abilities, an experiential-cognitive creation can be re-enacted, re-empathised, and re-constructed in someone else's mind and can thus be comprehended intersubjectively (cf. the *Coherence Theory of Truth*). One experiences oneself as a subject in another subject's empathic experience. In other words: Re-empathised and re-constructed truth is intersubjectivity.

Subject/object problem — Conclusion

Against the afore-mentioned, the subjectivist stance was not only seen to benefit this research; but, being an exploratory theoretical-philosophical study, it provided the creative potential that was most crucial for a philosophical exploration of this kind.

Therefore, amongst other aspects, subjectivism represented *a*—if not *the*—crucial factor and asset for this journey of the creation of original knowledge.

If, on the basis of objectivism, I assumed reality to be static and to exist independent of human cognition, and therefore adopted a reductionist approach for this research, it would resemble a snapshot in time, and I believe, reality would have been misinterpreted—at least within the context of this study. The subjective stance is what makes this thesis unique: I am not summarising existing research, I analyse and make sense of others' contribution. I have processed it myself. Simply said: This research is the take or the perspective that I have been able to come up with on this topic. In fact, I argue that subjectivity gives the criticality of the analysis its value and meaning. This concern has been shared by Nagel (1989): "The attempt to give a complete account of the world in objective terms detached from these perspectives inevitably leads to false reductions or to outright denial that certain patently real phenomena exist at all" (p. 7). To conclude, I subscribe to the point Clayton and Simpson (2006) aptly made: Subjectivity

> is not a rejection of objectivity as much as an acknowledgement that our subjective embodiments are part of knowledge. Subjectivity should be sought, not rejected, because feelings, [intuition,] and values do not *distort* knowledge; they are in fact a *necessary* component of accurate knowledge. Knowledge comes not through the elimination of subjectivity but by examining and being *intentional* about our subjective preferences. [Emphasis in the original] (p. 823)

Therefore, within the scope of this study, objectivity (the relationship between researcher and that being researched) was primarily satisfied by accepting subjectivity in the sense that findings and the process of reasoning were value-

mediated or mediated through the researcher (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), and by applying the holistic paradigm.

To differentiate this clearly, the subjective stance is not an approach, a methodology, or a method. It is part of the combined ontological and epistemological assumptions that I adopted for this work. Following this, there is no approach to be 'carried out'; the subjective stance is my way of seeing, thinking, and making sense. Hence, assumptions, such as those of epistemology and ontology, have paradigmatic qualities. This fundamental assumption applies throughout the thesis.

3.6.2 Epistemological conclusion

In conclusion of my theorisation on epistemology, I agree with von Glasersfeld (1984, 1989, 1990, 1995), as well as Bauersfeld (1988), Bauersfeld et al. (1988), and Hardy and Taylor (1997) concerning the socio-cultural aspects, emphasised in the theories delineated above. The extent to which, the milieu, that is, the natural, human, and social/interpersonal environment, however, influences individual knowledge construction overall, I suggest, might hitherto still have been underestimated.

Following Clayton and Simpson (2006) and Kincheloe (2005, 2008), I take the position that the knower and the known cannot be separated. "We know the world because we are a part of the world [and we have experienced it]. This is not radical relativism. There is a world that is known, but all of our knowledge of that world is embedded and embodied" (Clayton & Simpson, 2006, p. 823).

Following this, I believe that making meaning is a situated, subjective (re)construction of experienced reality; either actively or passively interactive. On the level of making sense and reasoning, the subjective stance is equal to the

constructivist approach. Meaning is constantly reassessed and re-negotiated by oneself, based on social and medial interaction, as well as other overall environmental stimuli.

This said, these interactions can—but need not—take place if, for instance, someone lives in some form of seclusion from the world, whether deliberately or inadvertently. In this case, meaning making is predominantly going to be based on *Radical Constructivism*. In other words, von Glasersfeld's argumentation for Radical Constructivism appears sound if relating to situations such as theoretical research— as in the case of this study.

Regarding the constructivist approach, applied in this study, I have mostly interacted with other people's work 'in theory' but not 'in person'. This said, I nevertheless believe that some form of informing 'theoretical-social' interaction with other people's works, ideas, and personalities has taken place in spirit through literature and media, as opposed to a mere cognitive self-construction of knowledge based on picked up nuggets of information. Thus, the way this thesis was constructed followed a radical constructivist epistemology, advanced by the idea of reciprocal socio-environmental stimulus, and included intuitive inspirations. In brief, that means: All is informative. As regards learning theories, I elaborate on the above aspect in detail in section 10.4, *On the missing socio-environmental aspects of learning* on page 298 et seqq.

A 'constructivist epistemology' replaces the disinterested observer with the situated knower—a reflective and intrinsically engaged constructor. A 'critical constructivist epistemology' replaces the disinterested observer with the reflective (re)constructor (cf. Clayton & Simpson, 2006).

Within the scope of this thesis, I am referring to this construct of epistemology as 'critical comprehensively-interactionist constructivism'. This 'critical comprehensively-interactionist constructivist' epistemology is concurrently local and global in the sense that it explores causal relations between observations of the status quo (i.e. micro-level phenomena), their socio-historic and other contextual coherences on meso level, as well as overarching explanations on a philosophical (macro) level. Applying this holistic approach will lead to anticipated, valuable cognitions, applicable on meta level.

3.7 Methods — Critical theoretico–philosophical deconstruction & emergent philosophical critical–radical constructivism

The problem of outcome-centrism

Concerning the investigative approach, one important aspect was that this philosophical exploration was to be open-ended in order to allow for an 'open space' to capture and embrace new insights and understandings, which can lead to potentially new hypotheses, models, and approaches to education in the 21st century.

Most commonly, however, issues, such as in the realm of education reform, are being approached by applying an outcome-focussed approach to problem solving; often following modi operandi as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3 | Common, outcome-focussed strategies to problem solving (non-exhaustive). Table composed based on Dewey (1938/1998), Harley (1995), Landsberger (2016), and Ting (2014).

Modus operandi	Description
'There is a problem!'	(Problem detection)
↳ 'How should it be instead?'	(Target-state formulation)
↳ 'How do we get there?'	(Target-attainability strategy)
↳ 'Let's do it!'	(Implementation phase)

The problem with this pragmatic Deweyian approach (cf. Dewey, 1938/1998; Harley, 1995; Landsberger, 2016; Ting, 2014) is that the outcome—often being projected targets—has already been assumed; which cuts short the underlying causal contentual question: Why is this or that the case? In other words, these approaches bear the risk that the emphasis lies more on achieving one's already projected goals (hence solving immediate problems) rather than identifying the root of a problem in order to come to an authentic, applicable, long-term solution, based on insight and understanding of the ultimate cause. For that reason, such kinds of 'solutions' are likely to be rather short-term ones.

This observation had led Kuhn (1962/2012) to revolutionarily characterise normal science to be doing "mop-up work" (p. 24) by means of "puzzle-solving" (p. 42). Habermas (1971) called this near-sighted stance to problem-solving 'technocratic'. It created plain third-person knowledge (or at least as objective as it gets). As Henry David Thoreau 42 put it: "The astronomer is as blind to the significant phenomena, or to the significance of phenomena, as the wood-sawyer

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[42] (1817 – 1862), American poet, philosopher, development critic, naturalist, and historian.

who wears glasses to defend his eyes from sawdust. The question is not what you look at, but [how you look and] what you see" (Thoreau & Allen, 1962, p. 237).

3.7.1 Phenomenon-driven exploratory approach

Following the above, in order to approach this investigation in an open-ended way, I first considered it an 'exploration' instead of a problem-solving situation. My aim was to understand the 'big picture' as well as to scrutinise its partial aspects and underlying trends and causes; this exploration was therefore undertaken using a phenomenological-philosophical lens—not in the conventional sense but rather in the literal sense of a non-judgmental, phenomenologically-descriptive 'looking how reality presents itself'. Heidegger (1992) put it like this: "The phenomenologico-philosophical understanding is an understanding of origin, which takes its departure from the concrete figures of life [own translation [43]]" (p. 240). This method has also been promoted by Aristotle, who said: "In this subject, as in others, the best method of investigation is to study things in the process of development from the beginning [i.e. 'ex archês']" (Aristotle, 1944, sect. I.1252a 24-26). This is basically what *Goethean Phenomenology* is concerned with (Seamon, 2005; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; R. Steiner & von Goethe, 1886; cf. von Goethe & Steiner, 1893) as already elaborated on in relation to the holistic paradigm (on p. 58 et seqq.).

Such a phenomenon-driven exploratory approach to research was found eminently suited to review the statuses quo of the fields outlined in sections 1.5 (*Chapter composition*) and 2.1.2 (*Thematic scope*) as it naturally implied a broad—if

[43] Ipsissima verba (German): "Das phänomenologisch-philosophische Verstehen ist ein Ursprungsverstehen, das seinen Ausgang nimmt von den konkreten Gestalten des Lebens" (Heidegger, 1992, p. 240).

not universal—and open-ended perspective; or, figuratively speaking, a 'wide-angle lens'. In doing so, I allowed knowledge to emerge naturally. Beyond that, this quasi-phenomenological approach parallels the holistic approach 'from whole to parts'. For this exploratory research, I have thus adopted a critical phenomenological-philosophical approach.

3.7.2 Critical theory

With this research exploration's objective being to evoke change within the educational landscape, a critical approach in the sense of *Critical Theory*, as developed by the *Frankfurt School* [44] (cf. Habermas, 1971; Horkheimer, 1937/1972; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947/1972), was central. With a focus on the contradictions, struggles, and barriers, existent in present society, critical theory sees its main task as one of "social critique, whereby the restrictive and alienating conditions of the status quo are brought to light" (M. D. Myers, 1997, para. 20) in order to bring about liberation for the individual and help disqualify stances and practices of social domination and alienation (M. D. Myers, 1997). In the words of Horkheimer (1982), the critical theoretical approach aims "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (p. 244) and "provides the descriptive and normative bases for social enquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms" (Bohman, 2010, para. 1). Therefore, to meet my concern for the current educational situation/development with a view to changing it, I chose

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[44] The *Frankfurt School* refers to a school of neo-Marxist interdisciplinary social theory, associated with the *Institute for Social Research* in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, founded in 1923. With its roots in *German Idealism*, Critical Theory's leading thinkers were: Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, Friedrich Pollock, and Leo Löwenthal, as well as Jürgen Habermas in the second generation ("Frankfurt school," 2016).

to apply a critical theoretical perspective. Following this, each facet of review of the current status quo was approached critically—yet open-mindedly and questioningly critical.

3.7.3 Historical–critical stance

I considered it valuable to include the historical development of the aspects to be explored in relation to education. This is in accordance with the philosophy of critical theory, which sees social reality historically situated, created and recreated by people—hence constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political domination (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947/1972). For that reason, the critical-theoretical approach generally included a historical review wherever appropriate. This historical approach pursued the following two aspects:

a) to critically review and reinterpret historical events then, as well as
b) to re-evaluate historic developments from today's perspective;

the latter being meant in the sense of Froude,[45] who poetically said: "We read the past by the light of the present, and the forms vary as the shadows fall, or as the point of vision alters" (as cited in Hoyt, 1922, sect. 281, quot. 13). In this sense, taking a fresh look at historical events from a contemporary context and level of awareness can prove insightful and valuable.

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[45] James A. Froude (1818 – 1894), English historian and novelist.

3.7.4 Deconstructivist criticality

As a form of open-minded in-depth investigation, I have merged the critical approach with the deconstructivist perspective (cf. Derrida, 1981). Deconstruction, as Derrida argued, was not an approach that can be applied procedurally or mechanically—it was actually not a method at all (Derrida, 1988). Derrida (1988) famously stated: "What is deconstruction? Nothing of course!" (p. 5). "Deconstruction *takes place*; it is an *event* that does not await the deliberation, consciousness, or organisation of a subject [emphasis in the original]" (Derrida, 1988, p. 4). Elsewhere, Derrida stated: "Deconstruction is inventive, or it is nothing at all; it does not settle for methodological procedures, it opens up a passageway, it marches ahead and marks a trail" (Derrida, 1987/2007, p. 23). Caputo (2004) used the following characterisation: "Whenever it runs against a limit, deconstruction presses against it. Whenever deconstruction finds a nutshell—a secure axiom or a pithy maxim—the very idea is to crack it open and disturb this tranquillity" (p. 32). More technically speaking,

> 'deconstructive reading attends to the deconstructive processes *always* occurring in the texts and *already* there waiting to be read' (Payne, 1993, p. 121). The deconstructive process comes not from the reader/critic but from the text itself; it is already there, it is the tension 'between what [the text] manifestly *means to say* and what it is nonetheless *constrained to mean*' (Norris, 1987, p. 19). [Emphasis in the original] (As cited in Rolfe, 2004, p. 274)

> Criticism traditionally seeks to establish the authorised meaning of the text, the *original* meaning placed in the text by the author. Deconstruction consists in putting this authority 'out of joint' (Derrida, 1995, p. 25). Deconstruction is the enemy of the authorised/authoritarian text, the text that tries to tell it like it is. [Emphasis in the original] (Rolfe, 2004, p. 275)

There are two stages of the deconstructive process: 'overturning' and 'displacement' (Derrida, 1984). 'Overturning' (or 'reversal') of a binary opposition means "to explore the tensions and contradictions between the hierarchical ordering assumed (and sometimes explicitly asserted) [emphasis in the original]" ("deconstruction," 2016, para. 2). This is followed by a 'displacement' or 'reorientation' of the problem (Derrida, 1984). The point of the deconstructive intervention is "to restructure, or 'displace,' the opposition, not simply to reverse it [emphasis in the original]" ("deconstruction," 2016, para. 3).

However, as deconstructive intervention is usually textually based, this study is not a deconstruction in the literary sense as there was no particular body of literature to be analysed or examined, as already discussed in section 2.2.4 (*The role and meaning of the literature*). The way I have made use of deconstruction was a more popular way, which can be described as "a critical dismantling of tradition and traditional modes of thought" ("deconstruction," 2016, para. 1). In other words, the literature, I have selected, has been approached with 'deconstructivist open-mindedness and criticality' (cf. Rolfe, 2004). In particular, during this exploratory research, deconstructivist criticality has been applied as a form of philosophical analysis (cf. "deconstruction," 2016) regarding the contexts of:

a) semantic and etymological clarifications,
b) historical reviews and (re)interpretations,
c) contextual, thematic reviews and (re)evaluations.

This combination of a scrutinising, critically-deconstructing approach while also employing different perspectives, is perhaps best described with the word 'Socratic' as Socrates was well known to exhaustively twist and turn the issues of his debates until he had scrutinised them from every possible perspective (Plato, 1921),

leading him to well-informed conclusions. I found this combined approach most appropriate as the aim of this study was not to merely construct knowledge by way of adaptation; the creative aspect (or metaphysical thought processes) were to take on a crucial role in this process. In this sense, critical deconstruction, as an approach to in-depth review or analysis, ensured an exploratory nature of enquiry and was paving the way for creative, forward-looking theorising to take place.

3.7.5 Critical constructivism

Combining *Critical Theory* with *Constructivism* leads to *Critical Constructivism*. In being based on Habermas' framework of Critical Theory, a critical dimension is added to constructivism so as to "improve the success of constructivism applied as a referent" (Dougiamas, 1998, sect. 'Critical constructivism').

While epistemology describes "the relationship between researcher and that being researched" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 83) or the (perceived) relationship between knower and known (Norris, 2005), *Critical Pedagogy*, for instance, as well as Critical Constructivism in general, were set up to rethink this very relationship (Kincheloe, 2008).

Critical Constructivism has predominantly been shaped by Kincheloe's (2001, 2005, 2008) political and educational notion. Aware of the multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary nature of educational research, Kincheloe (2004, 2005, 2008), amongst other things, came up with the *Multi-Dimensional Critical, Complex Bricolage* as a pluralistic concept for rigorous, culturally-sensitive, and socially-transformative multi-method research (Paradis, 2013). Against this background, I likewise understand Critical Constructivism as a further development of Radical, Social, and Cultural Constructivism, aiming to identify and transform undesirable,

disempowering developments within social and cultural environments (Taylor, 1996, 1998) as it carries the potential for socio-cultural reform.

3.8   Research matrix (Summary)

In the preceding, the overall research design of the study at hand has been outlined, and a methodological rationale has been established so as to lay open the way in which this research has been approached. Shields and Tajalli (2006) have pointed out that conceptual frameworks are meant to "act like maps that give coherence to the enterprise" (p. 313). I have therefore summarised the preceding chapter in the following 'research matrix' (Figure 5).

Figure 5 | Research matrix; ideationally based on Crotty (1998, p. 4 et seqq.) and Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p. 4).

Holism — Scientific Paradigm

'Critical Comprehensively-Interactionist Constructivism' — Epistemology

Subtle Idealism & Critical Realism (as part of constructivist epistemology) — Ontology

- Exploratory Theoretical Research
- Literature-Based Constructed Argument
— Research Strategy

Grounded/Emergent Critical Theoretico-Philosophical Research — Research Methodology

a) GENERAL INVESTIGATIVE:
- Critical-Historical Review
- Phenomenological Thematic Exploration

b) ANALYTICAL/INTERPRETIVE:
- Critical-Theoretical Argument
- Philosophical Deconstruction
— Research Methods

c) REASONING & CONCLUDING:
- Philosophical Theorising
- Subjective Value Mediation
- Abductive Reasoning
- Critico-Radical Constructivism

In Sum: "Socratic Exploration"

Nature of Research Output

Emergent, subjectively constructed concept/theory, founded on holistic understanding of the topic area

As mentioned in section 3.7.4, the overall approach can be summarised as an inter-perspectival, critical philosophical exploration; in short, a 'Socratic exploration' of the complex of themes of education. Simultaneously, the approaches and foci listed above define the limitations regarding the scope of this exploratory research study.

Methodological characteristics

The combination of research methods and vantage points pursued allowed me to gain a broad, holistic overview, covering the following four intended planes:

a) Multi-perspectival:
- Thematically broadly based and inter-perspectival, respectively.

b) Open-ended:
- Phenomenologically exploratory/open-minded towards the variety of phenomena of the thematic exploration of statuses quo,
- Grounded/emergent open-mindedness/unbiasedness towards contentual development/outcome.

c) In-depth:
- Critical-theoretical problematisation,
- Philosophical deconstruction,
- (Re)interpretive theorisation.

d) Re-conflating:
- Merging of theoretical findings into a big-picture understanding (holistic perspective).

Orientation for transformation

The variety in vantage points also points out the unique characteristics of this thesis. One salient aspect of this combination of methods is its distinct orientation for transformation in that each of its methodological facets pursues a certain agent for improvement and change. Those are:

Figure 6 | Research methods applied and their transformative capacities in accordance with Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p. 12).

Method		Transformative capacity
Critical-historical approach	→	Historical re-interpretation
Phenomenological approach	→	Making sense; open-mindedness as to findings
Philosophical deconstruction	→	Problematising and rearguing of existing understandings
Critical theory	→	Identifying of restrictive/alienating conditions of the status quo
Philosophical theorising/ abductive constructivism	→	Generating of new, innovative coherences

In covering an elaborate range of both thematic breadth and investigative depth, the study can be seen as 'holistic'. Following this, the nature of its research output is 'holistically conclusive' and therefore aims to be a) authentic—in the sense of most meaningful learning experiences, and b) sustainable—in the sense of long-lasting learning experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

The creation of public education — A historical–critical exploration of its coming–into–being

Chapter outline

Chapters Four, Five, and Seven are my comprehensive review and informed understanding of the history of education. This task required me to critically look at different origins of the idea of public education, to critically review its historical development up to and including manifestations of current educational realities.

In this chapter, I began by considering the various ancient roots of public education, followed by an exploration of the influences and turns Western public education has taken since its formation up until the 20th century. The sub-themes of this chapter read as follows:

This review or overview was carried out in a 'holistic' way in the sense that I aimed at taking the historical, political, socio-cultural, and education-theoretical

contexts into account whenever possible and when needed. The chapter concludes with a problematisation of the phenomena and tendencies that were identified.

4.1 Classical Antiquity & New World — Antecedents of public education

Formal education is said to have begun "either millions of years ago or at the end of 1770" (Lenzen, 1994, as cited in *Education*, 2014, p. 12), referring to Prussian and Russian socio-political reforms in the 1770s. These reforms had been introduced by a range of scientists, educators, social reformers, and institutions, such as Ivan Betskoy,[46] Heinrich Pestalozzi,[47] the University of Halle, Germany, and, later on, Joseph Lancaster.[48] Amos Comenius[49] had already laid the ground for these impulses a century earlier.

Earlier concepts and attempts at introducing some kind of formal—often religious and preclusive—education had certainly existed from time to time in various places around the world.

Plato, for instance, might have been the first to conceptualise formal (élitist) Greek education. For his ideal authoritarian state, which he laid out in *The Republic* (Plato, 1969) and *The Laws* (Plato, 1967/68), he created a holistically balanced concept, called *paideia* ('rearing'/'education'), which was based on the central cultural ideal of *arête* ('excellence and perfection'). It followed the ideal of *kalos*

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[46] Ivan Ivanovich Betskoy (1704 – 1795), Russian school reformer.

[47] Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827), Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer.

[48] Joseph Lancaster (1778 – 1838), English Quaker and public education innovator.

[49] Jan Amos Comenius (1592 – 1670), Czech educator and writer—often considered the father of modern education.

kagathos ('the beautiful and good'), corresponding to the Latin *mens sana in corpore sano* ('a healthy soul in a healthy body') (Jäger, 1989).

In the 1st century CE, Judean chief rabbi Yehoshua ben Gamla is said to have established compulsory Jewish education for children over five years of age ("Joshua ben Gamla," 2011). In the 15th century, the Mesoamerican high civilisation of the Aztecs is reported to have run a system of public education (Soustelle, 1970). From as young as five years of age, children of the Aztec aristocracy went to the *Calmecac* (lit. 'the house of the lineage'), which comprised a rigorous monastery education, preparing for the priesthood; and at the age of 15, all youth then entered the *Tēlpochcalli* (lit. 'house of youth') to receive a military education (Hassig, 1995; Soustelle, 1970).

However, if these examples are taken to indicate a public education, that 'public' was either limited to the aristocratic strata of society, or to the male gender, or both.

4.2 Reformation & Early Modern Period – Early Western concepts of public education

4.2.1 Reformation

A major voice to put forward a case for public—albeit strictly disciplined— education was the German church reformer Martin Luther.[50] His famous appeal *To the Councilmen of all Cities on German Land* (Luther, 1524/1969) included a rationale for public education, demanded from those politically responsible, as well

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[50] Martin Luther (1483 – 1546), German professor of theology, composer, priest, monk and a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation.

as a very modern concept of how public education should appear and be implemented in order to enable people to read and make sense for themselves of his recent translation of the Holy Scripture into German language (Luther, 1524/1969). In particular, Luther adduced the following reasons for public education:

a) education as nourishment for the soul;
b) education in the service of the common good for the future of Germany;
c) education in support of parents' task to educate children;
d) the necessity for differentiated, comprehensive education for all from early on;
e) in order to render the complexity of the world accessible to the individual so as to enable people to interpret the world themselves and thus act responsibly (Luther, 1524/1969).

Luther argued that "stupidity reigns, when education perishes [own translation [51]]" (as cited in Pühl, 2009, p. 1). Luther's advocacy soon led Protestant parishes within the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation to introduce compulsory education, with the south-west German Duchy of Palatinate-Zweibrücken being the first territory worldwide to pass legislation and implement compulsory education for boys and girls in 1592 (Seebaß, Wolgast, & Bergholz, 2006). Other German duchies soon followed.

In 1609, the Netherlands introduced compulsory public education, followed by Scotland in 1616 [52] (Rothbard, 1999). These advances were mainly facilitated by the church and further imparted within the family, and basic literacy started spreading amongst common people across Western Europe.

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[51] Ipsissima verba (German): "Dummheit regiert, wenn Bildung krepiert!" (Luther, 1524, as cited in Pühl, 2009, p. 1).

[52] (which had to be reintroduced in 1696 in order to achieve complete realisation)

4.2.2 Early Modern Period

Luther's humanistic educational impulse was soon redirected. Although the *Reformation* had brought about the decline of traditional Catholic education in the 1520s, clerical scholars of both Catholic and Reformed churches still dominated science, research, and doctrine at universities, and Catholic clerical scholars wanted to innovate religious, social renewal by pushing to reform the content, structure, and methods of education (cf. *Counter-Reformation*). According to Ipfling and Chambliss (2016b), most European rulers, on the other hand, had an ambivalent relationship concerning both common people becoming literate and this proceeding under the control of the churches. These concerns persisted over several centuries (Ipfling & Chambliss, 2016b, 2016c). Two hundred years later, West (1994) described the situation in England as follows:

> [In] the first few years of the nineteenth century it was a subject for government *complaint* that the ordinary people *had become literate*. For the government feared that too many people were developing the 'wrong' uses of literacy by belonging to secret 'corresponding societies' and by reading seditious pamphlets. Far from subsidising literacy, the early nineteenth-century English governments placed severe taxes on paper in order to discourage the exercise of the public's reading and writing abilities. ... Moreover, if the government played any role at all in this sphere, it was one of saboteur. [Emphasis in the original] (p. 48)

As a result, in England and Wales, compulsory education was not introduced until the late 19th century. Additionally, early educational theorists, such as Wolfgang Ratke [53] (who originated the theory of the *tabula rasa*), Johann Alsted,[54] and Amos

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[53] Wolfgang Ratke (1571 – 1635), German educational reformer.
[54] Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588 – 1638), German Reformed theologian and academic.

Comenius [55] had very little initial impact as their progressive ideas for humanitarian and universalistic reform of education, at the time, did not find much favour with Europe's autocrats—although their writings had been widely discussed in intellectual circles (Ipfling & Chambliss, 2016b, 2016c).

4.3   Age of Enlightenment [56] — An idea assumes shape

Since the 14th century, the *Renaissance* had brought about tremendous innovation in science and technology all over Europe. In the following century, these technological advances made possible a spreading out and exploration of the most distant tracts of land in the world; the *Age of Discovery*. Following this era, the *Age of Enlightenment* gave the evolution of human thought a further leap forward. Reason became the source of judgement, superseding the medieval belief system, which was based on supernatural revelation.

In its stead, humanity became the new 'God' (Bredvold, 1961). This new thinking was accompanied by new values, such as individualism, optimism, liberty, and religious tolerance. Reality became desacralised and demythologised (Bredvold, 1961). Concomitant with this cultural quantum leap, enlightened ideas also arose in the field of education (Bredvold, 1961).

With the appearance of figures like Comenius, the 'father of modern education', as well as Ratke and Alsted, the pioneering discipline of *Erziehungswissenschaft* (German, lit. 'education as a science') was brought into being. Following this, the field was constantly refined by individual theorists

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[55] Jan Amos Comenius (1592 – 1670), Czech teacher, educator, and writer.

[56] (from ca. 1650 – ca. 1750)

throughout Europe, such as John Locke,[57] who, in picking up on the theory of the *tabula rasa*, introduced the theory of the significance of experiences, *Empiricism*; François Fénelon,[58] who theorised on girls' education; and Jean-Baptiste de La Salle,[59] who focussed on public and teacher education. This said, it took another 150 years until the first chair for pedagogy was inaugurated at the University of Halle, Germany, in 1779. Until then, pedagogy had only been taught as a sub-discipline of theology.

Inspired by Alsted's teachings and Ratke's pedagogical writings, and in acknowledging Luther's efforts in his espousal of public education, Comenius developed the first extensive pedagogic-didactical treatise, the famous *Didactica Magna* (Comenius, 1628-1632/1896), which included an incipient developmental psychology as well as an outline of a philanthropic European system of education. Aware of the implications of peer learning, he argued: "The young must be educated in common, and for this schools are necessary" (1628-1632/1896, p. 213). What he had in mind was one school system for all (Piaget, 1993), free of charge, financed through taxes as well as by the wealthy and noble (Comenius, 1628-1632/1896, p. 147). He pointed out that schooling should be "arranged to suit the capacity of the pupil" (p. 289) and that "the intellect be forced to nothing to which its natural bent does not incline it" (p. 127) in order to "instil a love of learning" (p. 402).

In doing so, he placed child development and individual learning progress at the centre of his pedagogical focus. Comenius explicitly advocated for equal opportunities for both sexes as well as for the inclusion of "the slower and the

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[57] John Locke (1632 – 1704), British philosopher, Oxford academic, and medical researcher.

[58] François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon (1651 – 1715), French archbishop, poet, and writer.

[59] Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (1651 – 1719), French priest and educational reformer.

weaker" (p. 219) as he was convinced that no one's learning "cannot be improved by culture" (p. 219).

Driven by his ideal of *pansophia* ('universal wisdom'), he propounded the right to 'universal education for all' (cf. p. 222), described by his axiom *omnes omnia omnino*, or, the art and aim "of teaching all things to all men" (p. 155) from all points of view and always with view to the whole, "quickly, pleasantly, and thoroughly" (p. 155). In considering schools as the "forging-places of humanity" (p. 363), he believed that all people should be educated to full humanity.

His philosophy was founded on even broader understanding: In *Pampaedia* [60] ('universal education') (1645/1986), Comenius considered society as a whole "sub specie educationis" (lit. 'under the aspect of education') (as cited in Piaget, 1993, p. 2). Through *pansophia*, he believed it was possible to create a *cultura universalis*, a 'general culture' of lifelong education (Comenius, 1645/1986) and thereby achieve a peaceful and just society. In other words, for Comenius, education constituted an essential category of human existence (Burckhart, 1999).

This theorisation leads to the view that, in Comenius, reason and observation—that is, rationalism and empiricism (the theories of his friends and contemporaries Descartes and Locke)—were brought together in a holistic concept of education. I regard Comenius' ideas to be as ground-breaking and as modern today as they were 390 years ago. In conceptualising a transnational public culture (and system) of education, appreciating equality of gender, ethnicity, social status,

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[60] Comenius' handwritten manuscript of *Pampaedia*, arguably the most central piece of his work, had only been discovered in 1935 in an archive in Halle, Germany—after it had been thought lost for over 300 years. The first edition (in Latin and German) was published in 1958.

and mother language, while being inclusive of those who are disadvantaged,
Comenius was far ahead of his time (Piaget, 1993).

4.4   Age of Absolutism [61] — A Prussian invention called 'compulsory schooling'

In contradistinction to England and Wales, where public education was not
introduced until 250 years after Comenius, central Europe took a different approach,
one that was concerned to engage wit—rather than deprecating—public education.
Over the next 100 years, most German territories, for instance, introduced
compulsory schooling, albeit not in the sense of Comenius.

A model worth mentioning in more detail is the Prussian education system. It
was the earliest, comprehensive, and co-educational public education system to be
established, and became one of the most influential ones in history. Initiated under
King Frederick William I in the *Schuledikt* (lit. 'school edict') of 1717 and improved
by Frederick the Great in the *Generallandschulreglement* ('general school
regulation') of 1763, the *Volksschule* (lit. 'people's school') was a tax-funded, eight-
year elementary education, compulsory for every child between 5 and 13 years of
age.

In the meantime, enlightenment thinkers Jean-Jacques Rousseau,[62] Hermann
Francke,[63] and Julius Hecker,[64] reacted to the new rationalism and scientism in
Europe with a practice-orientated, naturalist approach to education, proposing to

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[61] (ca. 1610 – 1789)

[62] Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 1778), Swiss-born philosopher, political theorist, and composer.

[63] Hermann Francke (1663 – 1727), German Lutheran clergyman, philanthropist, and social reformer.

[64] Johann Julius Hecker (1707 – 1768), German Protestant theologian and educator.

develop the human being's inherent qualities and skills (Rousseau, 1762/1921). In Germany, Hecker came up with the concept of the *Realschule* (lit. transl. 'reality school') [65] in 1748. It was a type of grounded, technical secondary school for students aged 10 to 16, with a less demanding academic programme, leading to vocational training for qualified, non-academic professions. The *Realschule* is still part of Germany's education system today (OECD, 2011a).

Influenced by von Schiller, von Goethe, Fichte, Herder, and other leaders of the second round of the *German Enlightenment*, in 1810, the Prussian Minister of Education, Wilhelm von Humboldt,[66] conceptualised the humanistic German *Gymnasium*, an 'academic high school' that reflected his ideal of the term *Bildung* (transl. 'education', lit. 'forming'). Besides cognitive faculties and subject mastery, von Humboldt envisioned "a process of personal development that depends on an education in the humanities. It is centred on the individual and the organic, holistic formation of the individual from the inside" (OECD, 2011a, p. 203); that is to say, an education to cultural and personal maturation—independent of social status (Wittmütz, 2007). However, when implemented two years later, things did not proceed as envisioned by von Humboldt. Instead, a three-tiered school system was implemented, reflecting—and arguably maintaining—the social order of the time. Von Humboldt was disappointed by this system as it did not reflect his ideal of an enlightened education (cf. von Humboldt, 1920). Since then, schooling was based on a comprehensive national curriculum for each grade, and the *Gymnasium* soon included a comprehensive, central school-leaving examination, named *Abitur*

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[65] (a type of grounded, technical secondary school for students aged 10-16, with a less demanding academic programme, leading to vocational training for qualified, non-academic professions)

[66] Friedrich Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767 – 1835), Prussian philosopher, government functionary, founder of the Humboldt University of Berlin.

(OECD, 2011a; Raith, 1969). Over 200 years later, both the three-tiered school system, as well as the *Abitur* exam, still exist today. The adapted version of von Humboldt's *Gymnasium* became Germany's main high school model (OECD, 2011a).

According to de Bellis (2013) and Rothbard (1999), the Prussian school system was designed to generate loyal bondsmen to the Prussian Crown so as to assert its supremacy in the European world order. Philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who has had considerable input on education in Prussia, stated: "If you want to influence him [the pupil] at all, you must do more than merely talk to him; you must fashion him, and fashion him in such a way that he simply cannot will otherwise than you wish him to will" (1922, p. 21).

Apart from stringent schooling, universal, compulsory military service was introduced, and society was administered by the apparatus of the civil service, the infamous 'Prussian bureaucracy'. As de Bellis (2013) and Rothbard (1999) pointed out, these measures were considered useful by absolutist Prussian rulers with a view to regimenting and controlling common subjects, generating obedient soldiers, as well as eliminating the then dominant Lutheran state church from having an influence in public education.

Taken as a whole, in my view, this means that the idea of public education, which had emerged out of the impulses of the *Reformation* based on universal freedom of belief (i.e. 'biblical humanism'), had turned into an anticlerical *Kulturkampf* (lit. 'culture struggle') [67] with the churches and had gotten diverted into systems of chastising Prussian authoritarianism and compulsion as part of Prussia's

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[67] (as referred to by then German Imperial Chancellor Prince Otto von Bismarck (van Creveld, 2002))

process of nation building. In this sense, King Frederick William I appeared to have managed to—from his perspective—'avert the evil' and exploit an unfavourable situation to his advantage by making education a public matter and by creating a compulsory, nationwide curriculum.

In erecting the *Königlich-Preußische Präparandenanstalten und Lehrerseminare* (lit. 'Royal-Prussian preparatory institutions and teacher seminars') in 1749, Frederick the Great took full control over *who* and *what* was taught at school. This was followed by the *Oberschulkollegium* (a 'bureau for school affairs') in 1787 (Learned, 1914) and finally the *Preußisches Schulaufsichtsgesetz*, the 'Prussian act on the supervision of schools' in 1872, which centralised school administration with the state (Wittmütz, 2007). In short, the matter of public education was now regimented through 'state pedagogy' (Wittmütz, 2007).

Contemporaneously, educational philosophy and educational theory did not stagnate. Educational science experienced a tremendous impetus from the *Enlightenment*. Following Locke's *Empiricism*, the sensualists, such as George Berkeley,[68] David Hume,[69] and Étienne Bonnot de Condillac,[70] emphasised that true cognition was perceived through sensations. The philanthropists Hermann Francke and Bernhard Basedow [71] promoted the concept of *Social Education* (Raith, 1969). German classicist Friedrich von Schiller [72] who—convinced by the 'universal human'—promoted *Aesthetic Education* (von Schiller, 1795). The German idealists

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[68] George Berkeley (1685 – 1753), Anglo-Irish philosopher.

[69] David Hume (1711 – 1776), Scottish philosopher, historian, and essayist.

[70] Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1714 – 1780), French philosopher and epistemologist.

[71] Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724 – 1790), German educational reformer, teacher, and writer.

[72] Johann C. Friedrich von Schiller (1759 – 1805), leading German dramatist, poet, literary theorist.

Immanuel Kant [73] and Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi [74] had the view that the human being is what it is only through education, leading them to the concept of the 'moral human' (Raith, 1969). Pestalozzi stressed the aspect of the natural talents of the child and the influence the environment has on the child (Pestalozzi, 1801/1894). Johann Friedrich Herbart [75] pointed out that education was about 'making known with the world' and not about cramming young people (Raith, 1969). During *Romanticism*, this idea was also seized on by Friedrich Fröbel,[76] who, in distinguishing between different stages of child development, pivoted the attention to the 'harmonic and tender education of the human individual' (Fröbel, 1826).

In sum, the *Enlightenment* had evoked a new consciousness and ways of thinking; the aim was to be 'truly human', and education was seen as the messianic medium of renewal for humanity (Bredvold, 1961). The humanistic and philanthropist momentum of the *Enlightenment* inspired educational theory and philosophy to develop a natural, experiential, social, aesthetic, humanistic, and—foremost—holistically child-centred conception of education (cf. Raith, 1969).

Although Frederick the Great had been educated in the ideas of the *Enlightenment* as a young man and although he had plenty of enlightened thinkers around him, he could not or did not want to implement enlightened reforms in education and society as a whole [77] (Ipfling & Chambliss, 2016c; H. M. Scott, 1990). According to Anderson (2011), this is assumed to be due to what Frederick defended

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[73] Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), German philosopher, central figure in modern philosophy.

[74] Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827), Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer.

[75] Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776 – 1841), German philosopher and psychologist.

[76] Friedrich W. A. Fröbel (1782 – 1852), German pedagogue and educational reformer.

[77] The same was true for Frederick's contemporaries: Peter the Great and Catherine the Great of Russia, as well as Maria Theresa and Joseph II of Austria/Hungary/Bohemia (Ipfling & Chambliss, 2016c).

as 'enlightened absolutism' (also referred to as 'enlightened despotism'), which illustrates that his attitudes were essentially conservative and that he was no great supporter of democracy. Instead, "he consolidated a Prussian ethos of duty, effort, and discipline that, despite some serious negative features, was to become, for several generations, one of the major political traditions of Europe" (Anderson, 2011, sect. 'Significance of Frederick's reign').

In the further course of developments, territories introducing compulsory public education, subsequent to Prussia, were: Austria (1774), Hungary (1774), and Bohemia (1774), followed by Massachusetts (1789), France (1791/1882), Denmark (1814), Italy (1859), and, at last, England and Wales in 1880 (Rothbard, 1999).

4.5　Age of Industrialisation — An early economic digression

There was another influential factor that gave these new educational systems a different twist and mission: Around the turn of the 19th century, just after compulsory education had initially been established in Central Europe, the *Industrial Revolution* was in full swing. The promising opportunity of receiving a regular wage as a labourer in industrial mass production drove many former peasant farmers, craftspeople, and tradespeople to flee the rural areas for the growing industrial centres (Fitzgerald, 2000). They gave up the then common situation of living and working—and thus depending on—the family unit (cf. the 'cottage industry') and swapped their independent, self-determined—yet hard and insecure—rural professions for a workplace in the factory. This process evoked a fundamental restructuring of living conditions and lifestyles all over Europe (cf. 'urbanisation' and 'secularisation') (Fitzgerald, 2000).

This major socio-economic paradigm shift—the consequences of which Karl Marx (1932/2009) later on described as an 'alienation of human nature' and the beginning of humanity's dependency on the capitalist system—was accompanied by wide-ranging social change, and created the impetus for reforms in Western Europe (Fitzgerald, 2000). The new situation of labourers carrying out technical operations, to a certain extent, made it necessary to give workpeople a basic education as well as technical understanding and skills.

Yet, although the rise of industrialisation is often referred to having been the reason for the establishment of formal education, a number of scholars have shown that in most European countries, the level of private, non-obligatory schooling was already comparatively high prior to the beginning of the *Industrial Revolution* (Cipolla, 1969; Mitch, 1983, 1992, 2006; West, 1994). West (1994) stated: "The evidence shows ... that the majority of people in the first half of the nineteenth century did become literate (in the technical sense) largely by their own efforts" (p. 48) and industrialisation's need for basic instruction and literacy, to a great extent, had already been met by preceding developments in the private domain. The link between schooling, as active preparation for the labour market, was only made at a relatively late stage: After 1840, the use of literacy within given occupations increased and rising capitalist interests influenced and reshaped public education (Mitch, 1983, 2006), pivoting its emphasis towards utilitarianism and rationalisation (Weber, 1919/1946).

Experiencing the societal ramifications of industrialisation, Friedrich Nietzsche [78] was to point out the importance of imagination and creativity in

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[78] Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844 – 1900), German philologist, philosopher, cultural critic, and poet.

contradistinction to technology and rationalisation (Raith, 1969). Except perhaps for England,[79] the impact, which the *Industrial Revolution* had on public education, was rather marginal, particularly in comparison with another contemporaneously occurring factor, namely nation state-building, which I address in the following section.

4.6   Era of Nation State-Building — Heyday of the Prussian education machinery

Returning once more to Prussia, from a military-political perspective, the rather unmerciful Prussian education machinery turned out to be very effective: According to the OECD (2011a), Prussian schooling turned the bourgeoisie into obedient troops and the nobility—who, at the time, were said to have grown rather lazy and corrupt (OECD, 2011a)—into excellent, motivated officers. Germany's victories over Napoleon III in the *Franco-German War* of 1870/71 were, for instance, referred to as victories of "the Prussian schoolmaster, and France, driven by the desire for revenge (*revanche*), set about to Prussianise its own institutions [emphasis in the original]" (Rothbard, 1999, p. 29) "with the result that, around the turn of the [19th] century, it was claimed that the French Minister of Education ... could tell you what was being taught in each one out of a hundred thousand classrooms by simply looking at his watch" (van Creveld, 2002, p. 215). As the French example demonstrates, the Prussian 'boot camp' version of schooling served as an inspiring model and was widely adopted around the world, including in Japan (1872) and the United States of America (1918) (Rothbard, 1999; van Creveld, 2002).

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[79] In England, the *Industrial Revolution* actuated the development of a 'national' education, which had hitherto been neglected (Ipfling & Chambliss, 2016c; West, 1994).

Moreover, Prussian-style schooling turned out to be well-suited to push forward many European sovereigns' nation-building efforts: The (perceived) "need to 'foster loyalty to one Kaiser, one army, one navy' (Germany); assist the 'race' in its 'battle for life' (Britain); and prevent 'the power of national defence from lagging behind that of other countries' (the United States of America) [emphasis in the original]" (van Creveld, 2002, p. 217) which, since the mid/late 19th century, had become common inclination all over bellicose Europe and beyond (Cipolla, 1969).

The foregoing exposition and problematisation leads to the view that the introduction of compulsory schooling in Europe, which constituted a radical policy and socio-cultural change, took place 'in reaction to' prior educational developments on private and church-based domains. In this respect, West (1994) argued that, particularly in England,

> we have the paradox of a public managing to educate itself into literary competence from personal motives and private resources, despite the obstacle of an institution called government which eventually begins to claim most of the credit for the educational success. (p. 49)

West (1994) used the image of the power holders "jump[ing] into the saddle of a horse that was already galloping" (p. 173). This view supports that the aspect of compulsory schooling was only introduced once intentions existed to influence and manipulate citizenry in certain ways. In this respect, Sheehan (1994) stated:

> Long a goal of state-builders, compulsory education became a reality when states acquired the resources necessary to put legal compulsion into practice. By thus taking over an important part of the socialisation process from family, community, and church, the state was in a position to influence its citizens at a critical stage in their lives. (p. 786)

By 1900, all European countries [80] had adopted a system of compulsory education (Murray, 2008). The general concept of Prussian education survived two world wars, and many aspects of Prussian education policy are still apparent in many countries' education systems today. In Germany, for instance, student teachers have to pass the *Erstes und Zweites Staatsexamen für das Lehramt* (lit. 'first and second state examination for the teaching office') and are employed as *Lehrbeamte* ('sworn and ranked teaching officers of the state') (EU Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 1998).

4.7 Conclusion

The exposition and problematisation in this chapter has emphasised the following issues and concerns: Present education systems, including the current understanding of facilitating and measuring of education, have been fundamentally shaped by previous historical-political and historical-economic orientations. Based on the foregoing problematisation, I argue that the—at the time still incipient—institution of public education was absorbed by European rulers' political notion of nation building. In order to successfully entrench the vision of the nation state, the necessity arose to draw comparisons between nations and to speak contemptuously of neighbouring countries with a view to producing obedient and loyal subjects (cf. 'nationalism'). This was best realised by subjecting the young populace to compulsory, materialistically-realistic instruction and discipline in schools. The same parallel, I suggest, was true regarding colonisation: European powers applied their

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[80] (with the exception of Spain: 1908, and Belgium: 1920)

education systems in other parts of the world, above all with a view to maintaining the prevailing power relations.[81]

In addition to nationalism, industrialisation's gradual process of mechanising working life, schooling, and society as a whole—which Max Weber later on referred to as 'disenchantment'—in turn, according to Weber (1905/2013), gave rise to a special type of personality with a particular frame of mind: "the worker with a vocational calling" (1905/2013, p. 108).[82] Accordingly, Luther's and Comenius' prudent, altruistic—and therefore noble—motives of making education available to everyone free of charge had been imbued with a compulsory, authoritarian approach and an indoctrinating content—paving the way for the rise of nationalistic theories [83] and the extrinsically conditioning educational approach of *Behaviourism*. Sadly, the intellectual-cultural revival of the *Enlightenment* never really made it into school.

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[81] During the late European colonial period (approx. from the 18th century to the early or mid-20th century), colonial and mission schools often mostly served the purpose of Christianisation and to 'cultivate' these territories by means of linguistic politics.

[82] Ipsissima verba (German): *Berufsmensch* (lit. transl. 'person of vocation') (Weber, 1905/2013, p. 108).

[83] (later on, around the turn of the century, deteriorating to racist theories)

CHAPTER FIVE

'Advancement through education' — Historical–critical review of the progression of Western formal education through the 20th century

Chapter outline

Chapter Five continues the project begun in Chapter Four of a comprehensive,

critical review of the different origins of the idea of public education, its historical

development up to and including manifestations of current educational realities. This

chapter critically explores the influences and turns Western formal education has

taken in its historical contexts over the course of the 20th century. The sub-themes of

this chapter read as follows:

This review or overview was carried out in a 'holistic' way in the sense that I aimed at taking the historical, political, socio-cultural, and education-theoretical contexts into account whenever possible and when needed. The chapter concludes with a problematisation of the phenomena and tendencies that were identified.

5.1   Status quo around the turn-of-the-century

Following the initial implementation of public education systems, the 20th century has seen numerous developments regarding the concept and understanding of formal education. Towards the end of the 19th century, education systems started to become more elaborate, more structured, and more specified in several respects (Walsh, 2005). This was due to two major policy changes: a) a broadening of the curriculum (particularly in English public schools), and b) the introduction of disciplined order, or: *Behaviourism*. Both changes were interrelated and fed off each other (cf. Walsh, 2005).

One advocate of the former was Otto Willmann [84] who, around the turn-of-the-century, argued to adapt curricula to the abilities of the child, suggesting to dissect and structure syllabi into meaningful units of learning (leading to the modern-day European concept of *Didactics*) as well as to take related disciplines, such as psychology and social sciences, into consideration in pedagogy (Lauwerys et al., 2016b).

The year 1900 was also the beginning of the *Scientific-Realist Education Movement*, rung in by Édouard Claparède,[85] who argued that educational principles

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[84] Gustav P. Otto Willmann (1839 – 1920), German Catholic philosopher and pedagogue.
[85] (1873 – 1940), Swiss neurologist, child psychologist, and educator.

needed to be individualised, based on psychological insights (Lauwerys et al., 2016b). With his *Psychologie de l'enfant et pédagogie experimentale* ('Experimental Pedagogy and the Psychology of the Child', 1905), Claparède hoped to provide a scientific basis for education. He can be seen as the precursor of *Cognitivism*; his work was later furthered by his fellow countryman and psychologist Jean Piaget (Lauwerys et al., 2016b).

The broadening of curricula was also a result of concentrated efforts to 'teach boys to be boys and girls to be girls', as has been extensively pushed for in New Zealand for instance, where, according to Daley and Montgomerie (1999), gendering soon expanded beyond the 'twin citadels of control'—the home and the classroom—also into the 'wild space' in between: the streets, yards, and playgrounds (Daley & Montgomerie, 1999; "Gendering school," 2014). This led to the situation that in the early 20th century, the difference between boys' education and girls' education had become much greater than it had been in the late 19th century (Daley & Montgomerie, 1999). A witness from New Zealand remembered: "We grew up like two races apart. Consequently on the few occasions we did meet we were absolutely at a loss" (as cited in "Gendering school," 2014, para. 2).

As a result of the broadening of curricula, such as the introduction of organised and compulsory school sports for instance, the specifying of learning units (implying that subject matters needed to be dealt with in class in a certain amount of time), and the gendering of schooling, the perceived need for disciplined order arose. Consequently, uniformity in clothing was introduced,[86] instruction and supervision

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[86] Although school uniforms had already existed in 16th century England, on a grand scale, they were only introduced in English state schools in the early 20th century to replace ill-discipline. They soon turned into a distinctive characteristic of British (incl. British colonial) education, being replicated by many countries around the world ("History of school uniforms," 2005).

turned markedly stricter in style, and in many countries around the world corporal punishment in the classroom was common (McCole Wilson, 1999). Following Hall (1904), I argue that, while the curriculum had become more diverse (and hence more interesting) on the one hand; on the other hand, schooling's focus had shifted to an industrial model of instruction with behaviourist disciplining. In short, schooling had turned into compulsion.

These imposed developments did not go unnoticed. Thoughts regarding tolerance and equality had arisen in the *Enlightenment* (cf. abolition of slave trade, women's suffrage, etc.). Yet, during the *New Imperialism* period [87] in Europe, intellectual-spiritual life had degenerated to a radical/material low (Poliakov, 1996). According to Poliakov (1996), a prevalent culture of historicism, positivism, and 'hurrah patriotism' had caused thinking to turn nationalistic, anti-Semitic, and racist in many places (cf. *social Darwinism*, 'scientific racism', as well as Herder's *Ethnic Nationalism*). This intellectual decline of Western culture had given rise to *Cultural Pessimism* (cf. the philosophies and cultural criticisms of Arthur Schopenhauer and Matthew Arnold).

5.2   Trailblazers of Progressive Education

As a progressive or counter movement in response to the tightened societal restraints in Europe's authoritarian imperial societies, and in apprehension of the so-called 'ills of civilisation', caused by industrialisation, urbanisation, and materialism in general, various movements for social and cultural renewal—collectively referred to as the

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[87] (ca. 1880s – 1914)

Life-Reform Movement [88]—had already been in full swing since the latter half of the 19th century (Kerbs & Reulecke, 1998; Pogge von Strandmann, Eley, & Retallack, 2004).

However, until the 1890s, the life-reform impulse had only been concerned with lifestyle reform at a private level and had not impacted on formal public education. Concerning children, calls for child labour reforms and early human rights understandings—not least addressed through Dickens' (1838) social novel *Oliver Twist*—had been voiced well before the 20th century (Hart, 1991, 1993; Hart & Pavlović, 1991).

Early precursors of what, with the dawning new century, was to be known as 'progressive education', had started to emerge. Aiming to provide a counterbalance to the materialistic intellectualisation and the notion of a 'school of listening' and 'school of compulsion' that had been taking place in education, these trend-setting pioneers were experimenting with and advocating for different—mostly practically orientated—approaches in education (Janssen, 1996).

The variety of these isolated 18th and 19th-century educational initiatives, that paved the way for the *Progressive Education Movement*, is shown (in chronological order) in Table 4.

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[88] The *Life-Reform Movement* involved movements like the Naturopathy Movement, the Sartorial Reform Movement, the Gymnastics Movement, the Naturism or Free Body Culture Movement, the Nutrition Reform Movement, the *Vegetarian Movement*, the *Animal Rights Movement*, the Movement of the Rural Communes, the *Environment Movement*, the *'New Age' Spirituality Movement*, and others (Kerbs & Reulecke, 1998). Some of them were influenced by *Cultural Pessimism*.

Table 4 | Precursors of *Progressive Education* during the 18ᵗʰ and 19ᵗʰ century (non-exhaustive).

Year	Theorist/Founder	Concept/Initiative Name	Country
1760/84	Thomas Braidwood	Special (Needs) Education [89]	UK, France
1774	Johann Basedow	The Philanthropinum [90]	Germany
1784	Christian Salzmann	The Schnepfenthal Institution [91]	Germany
1805	Johann H. Pestalozzi	Yverdon Castle School [92]	Switzerland
1837/64	Friedrich Fröbel	Kindergarten Education [93]	Germany
1844	Nikolaj F. S. Grundtvig	The Folk High School Concept [94]	Denmark
1861	Edward A. Sheldon	Oswego Plan [95]	USA
1875	Francis Parker	The Quincy System [96]	USA
1880	Paul Robin	Prévost Orphanage [97]	France
1889	Cecil Reddie	Abbotsholme School [98]	England
1893	John Haden Badley	Bedales School [99]	England
1896	Hermann Hoffmann	Schülerwandern [100]	Germany
1897	John Dewey	Project-Based Learning	USA
1898	Hermann Lietz	Landerziehungsheim [101]	Germany
1898	The Fabian Society	King Alfred School [102]	England

[89] (such as a school for the deaf in Edinburgh, Scotland (1760), schools for the visually impaired in Edinburgh and Bristol, United Kingdom (1765), and the Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris, France (1784)—the first school worldwide to teach blind students)

[90] Experimental school for new methods of teaching based on dialogue/play in Dessau, Germany.

[91] Experimental boarding school, dedicated to new modes of educating near Gotha, Germany.

[92] Progressive, experimental boarding school at the castle of Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland.

[93] 'Early childhood education'. The first kindergarten was opened in Bad Blankenburg, Germany.

[94] (a precursor of the concepts of *Community-Based Education* and *Lifelong Learning*)

[95] Teacher-education programme based on Pestalozzi principles, practised at Sheldon's own Primary Teachers' Training School in Oswego, NY—now the State University of New York at Oswego.

[96] A curriculum of child-centred and experience-based learning in Quincy, United States of America.

[97] Progressive, co-educational, libertarian school in Cempuis, France.

[98] Progressive, experimental, independent/public school in Derbyshire, United Kingdom.

[99] Progressive, co-educational, independent/public boarding school in Petersfield, Hampshire.

[100] 'Student hiking' activities at the Steglitz Academic High School, Berlin, Germany.

[101] Progressive, practice-based 'Country Boarding School' in Ilsenburg, Germany.

[102] Progressive, co-educational, independent/public school in London, United Kingdom.

Year	Theorist/Founder	Concept/Initiative Name	Country
1899	Paul Natorp	Sozialpädagogik [103]	Germany
1899	Edmond Demolins	École des Roches [104]	France

Overall, several main impulses can be noted. Firstly, the philanthropist movement in Germany and Switzerland in the late 18th century; then the famous independent, so-called *Public Schools* in England, emerging from the British *Public Schools Act* of 1868 (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1868). These ground-breaking educational developments in Britain (amongst them Cecil Reddie's famous *Abbotsholme School* in Derbyshire, founded in 1889, for instance) evoked the French model of the *École Nouvelle* (transl. 'New School') which was considered 'a new education for the new élites' (Duval, 2010). The French model, in turn, led Francisco Ferrer to conceptualise his libertarian model of the *Escuela Moderna* ('Modern School') in Spain.

5.3   Early progressive educational advocates

Swedish progressive educator Ellen Key was similarly concerned by the developments of 'educational alienation'. In 1900, she proclaimed the 'century of the child'. The revolutionary message of her same-titled book was indeed progressive, especially considering the standards of the time: She proposed that the children of the world shall be made the central societal concern and ambition for the 20th century (Key, 1909). She had the vision that "school has only one great end, to make itself unnecessary, to allow life and fortune, which is another way of saying self-activity, to take the place of system and method" (Key, 1909, p. 257).

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[103] (the theory of *Social Pedagogy*)

[104] Progressive, experimental 'New School' in Verneuil-sur-Avre, France.

Key's appeal was more successful than she had anticipated; *The Century of the Child* became an international bestseller, substantiating and augmenting the rise of a movement of progressive educational advocates and their multifaceted concepts. In order to illustrate the variety of the pedagogies and initiatives associated with the *Progressive Education Movement*, I have compiled them in chronological order in Table 5.

Table 5 | Alternative pedagogical concepts arising in connection with the *Progressive Education Movement* during the first third of the 20th century (non-exhaustive).

Year	Theorist/Founder	Concept/Initiative Name	Country
1900	Georg Kerschensteiner	Arbeitsschulen [105]	Germany
1901	Hermann Lietz	Landschulbewegung [106]	Germany
1901	Karl Fischer	Wandervogel/Jugendbewegung [107]	Germany
1901	Francisco Ferrer	Escuela Moderna [108]/Libertarian Education/ Anarchistic Free School Movement	Spain
1901	Herman Schneider	Cooperative Education	USA
1900s	Kerschensteiner, Baden-Powell, Dewey et al.	Practice-Based Education/ Practice-Based Professional Training [109]	Germany, UK, USA
1903	George Cadbury	Woodbrooke Friends' School [110]	England
1904	Sébastien Faure	La Ruche School [111]	France
1904	Charlotte Mason	Charlotte Mason Education	England

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[105] Kerschensteiner created a system of 'Activity Schools' or 'Vocational Schools' in Germany. It re-established the special status of the German guilds of craftspeople and ensured first-class German craftsmanship up until today (OECD, 2011a).

[106] Further progressive, practice-based 'Country Boarding Schools' founded in Haubinda (1901), Schloss Bieberstein (1904), Veckenstedt (1914), and others (all in Germany), turning into a 'Country School Movement'.

[107] The 'Bird of Passage Movement', later referred to as 'The Bundist Youth Movement', originated in Berlin and soon spread all over Germany.

[108] 'Modern School'; independent, libertarian school in Barcelona, Spain.

[109] (also cf. *On-The-Job Training*, *Work-Based Training*, and *Apprenticeship*)

[110] Progressive Quaker school in Birmingham, United Kingdom.

[111] 'The Hive School', progressive libertarian school near Rambouillet, France.

Year	Theorist/Founder	Concept/Initiative Name	Country
1906	Berthold Otto	Hauslehrerschule/Gesamtunterricht [112]	Germany
1907	Maria Montessori	Montessori Education	Italy
1907	Robert Baden-Powell	Boy Scouting [113]/Learning-By-Doing	England
1910	Paul Natorp, Georg Kerschensteiner	Gemeinschaftsunterricht [114]	Germany
1910	Edith & Paul Geheeb	Odenwaldschule [115]	Germany
1911	Janusz Korczak	Dom Sierot [116]	Poland
1912	John Dewey	The Park Schools [117]/Hands-On Learning	USA
1912	Free Educ. Movement	Taishō Era Free Schools	Japan
1914	Helen Parkhurst	The Dalton Plan [118]	USA
1914	Margaret & Rachel McMillan	Open-Air Nursery School & Training Centre	England
1914	Caroline Pratt	Play School Movement	USA
1915	Armstrong Smith	St Christopher School [119]	England
1916	John Dewey et al.	Idea of Student Voice	USA
1918	William H. Kilpatrick	The Project Method of 'Teaching'	USA
1919	Rudolf Steiner	Steiner/Waldorf Education	Germany
1919	Carleton Washburne	Winnetka Plan [120]	USA

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[112] 'Home Teacher School'; progressive experimental school with the first 'comprehensive classroom' in Berlin, Germany.

[113] (followed by *Girl Guiding* in 1910)

[114] (the concept of communal, co-educational, and interdenominational schooling)

[115] 'Forest of Odes School', progressive rural boarding school near Heppenheim, Germany.

[116] Progressive democratic orphanage in Warsaw, Poland.

[117] (in Buffalo, NY and Baltimore, MD, United States of America)

[118] Progressive educational concept based on individual learning, first introduced in a school in New York City, then trialled in state schools in Dalton, MA in 1918.

[119] Co-educational, multi-faith, independent/progressive boarding and day school in Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom.

[120] Progressive educational concept of ungraded, individualised learning at elementary level (in Winnetka, IL, United States of America).

Year	Theorist/Founder	Concept/Initiative Name	Country
1920	Kurt Hahn	Schule Schloss Salem [121]	Germany
1920	Adolphe Ferrière	École Nouvelle de la Pelouse [122]	France
1921	Alexander S. Neill	The Summerhill School [123]	England
1920s	Dewey, Montessori, Elizabeth Hurlock	Positive Education Theory	USA, Italy
1926	Jiddu Krishnamurti, Annie Besant	Krishnamurti Education [124]	India
1927	Peter Petersen	Jenaplan School Concept	Germany
1930s	M. May & L. Doob, Dewey, Lewin, Morton Deutsch	Cooperative Learning Theory	USA, Germany

5.4   Digression into Wilhelmine imperial Germany

Besides the trailblazing philanthropists and Reddie's progressive model school in
Britain, the *Progressive Education Movement* in Germany originated from the *Life-
Reform Movement*, which strived for social and cultural renewal in Wilhelmine
imperial German society. Out of this movement for life-reform also developed the
impulse and raison d'être for a general 'youth culture', the *Wandervogelbewegung*

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[121] Following 'Salem Castle School', Hahn also founded Gordonstoun, Scotland (1934);
'Kurzschule'/Outward Bound [i.e. Experiential Education] (1941); Anavryta, Greece (1949);
Louisenlund, Germany (1949); Battisborough, England (1955); The Duke of Edinburgh Award
scheme (1956); Rannoch School, Scotland (1959); Box Hill, England (1959); Atlantic College,
Wales (1962); The United World College Movement (1962); Ibadan School, Nigeria (1963); The
Athenian School, USA (1965); The Round Square Organisation (1967); as well as the
International Baccalaureate (1968). He is thus considered the founder of *Experiential Education*.

[122] 'The Bex New School', in Bex, France.

[123] Progressive democratic school in Suffolk, United Kingdom.

[124] Various progressive/holistic, co-educational boarding schools founded over the course of the
century: Rishi Valley School, Andhra Pradesh, India (1926); Rajghat Besant School, Varanasi,
India (1934); Brockwood Park School, Hampshire, United Kingdom (1969); Damodar Gardens
School, Chennai, India (1973); Oak Grove School, CA, United States of America (1975); The
Valley School, Bangalore, India (1978); Bal-Anand School, Mumbai, India (1984); Sahyadri
School, Rajgurunagar, India (1995); Pathashaala School, Chennai, India (2010).

(lit. 'bird of passage movement') [125]—which was a uniquely German phenomenon (as already elaborated on in detail in sect. 1.6 on p. 12 et seqq.). It arose from within German youth before the beginning of the 20th century. The first tentative activities were *Schülerwandern* (i.e. 'high school student hikes') through the forests outside of Berlin, and were organised by university student Hermann Hoffmann, starting in 1896 (Kindt, 1968). Considering the societal restraints children and youth had to submit themselves to at the time, being able to go on hiking and camping trips in the open German countryside was truly revolutionary (D. M. Steiner, 2003c).

In 1901, the *Wandervogel* movement was formally founded by Karl Fischer, a participant at Hoffmann's student hikes (Kindt, 1968). In pointing back to a Romantic life-reform ideology, based on ideals of the *Enlightenment*, according to Blüher (1976) and Kindt (1968), the movement typified a counter draft to industrialisation and the socio-cultural alienation (or 'disenchantment') that had been taking place since the 17th century. This awakening of youth's (and the life stage of youth's) own identity—often described with the metaphor of the *Blue Flower* of the youth movement (Helwig, 1998; Laqueur, 1991)—appealed to many young Germans (girls included) and the popularity of the *Wandervogel* movement rapidly spread all over Germany (Blüher, 1976). In other words, German youth had truly liberated itself (cf. Ferchhoff, 2011).

The *Wandervogel* impulse influenced Lietz's *Landschulbewegung* ('Country School Movement'), the *Pfadfinderbewegung* (the German 'Scout Movement'), and led to the collective movement of the *Bündische Jugend* ('Bundist Youth') after World War I (D. M. Steiner, 2003c). It further inspired the formation of hundreds of

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[125] The aspect of the *Wandervogelbewegung* has already been elaborated on in detail in sect. 1.6: Biographical background and personal motivation leading to the topic on p. 12.

other youth leagues and influenced Hahn's *Erlebnispädagogik* (the concept of 'Experiential Education'), and Rudolf Steiner, who elaborated on the spiritual origins of this youth impulse in several lectures he gave (cf. R. Steiner, 2007a; 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e). Due to the nationwide popularity of youth leagues—in 1932, 4.75 million youth were organised in 117 leagues (Dudek, 2010, p. 371)—the common methods and principles of the *Bündische Jugendbewegung* ('Bundist Youth Movement') were later borrowed and misused by the *Hitlerjugend* ('Hitler Youth') during Nazi Germany (Blüher, 1976).

5.5   Birth of the Progressive Education Movement

Following the development of the life-reform movement and the early youth movement, calls and ideas for innovation of formal education arose, and this is where Ellen Key and other progressivists appeared on the scene. The *Progressive Education Movement*, according to Reese (2001) and Röhrs (1998), was essentially a social and cultural reform movement, and most progressive educational theorists of the time pursued more than solely a reform of education; many aimed to reform society as a whole. This particularly applied to the pedagogies founded after the devastating outcome of World War I (that is Steiner, Hahn, Ferrière, Neill, Krishnamurti/Besant, Petersen, and others), but also earlier ones (such as Parkhurst, Dewey, Montessori, Otto, Mason, Faure, Ferrer, and others).

Another major characteristic of the *Progressive Education Movement*, according to Röhrs (1998), was that the movement had a hands-on attitude; it did not generate detached theories of how education could be better. Instead, most of its theorists derived their concepts from experience, as a result of learning by doing in the institutions, experimental schools, or youth groups they had created themselves

(Röhrs, 1998). This distinctive move to found new schools that were based on different approaches as well as different curricula (compared to what was taking place in formal state education), according to Glotz (1999), was based on the belief that the educational pathway, pursued by the state, may neither be the most suitable nor the only one (Glotz, 1999).

Progressivists argued, for instance, that individual aptitude, rather than social origin, should be instrumental in discerning educational pathways (Glotz, 1999). They claimed that the one-track system of an overly intellectual education based on rote memorisation and disciplining ('spanking pedagogy') may be one-sided and adverse (Glotz, 1999). In my understanding, the *Progressive Education Movement* was the result of the realisation that the then prevalent thinking, culture, and society as a whole—the zeitgeist—could only be changed from within, from the very—unspoilt—wellspring of society; and for this, new schools and a new education were necessary (cf. R. Steiner, as cited in Deuchert, 1987).

This varied, trans-European 'movement for reform in education' (German: *Reformpädagogikbewegung*) stood in marked contrast to von Humboldt's elitist academic vision of schooling. It was arguably the beginning of the distinction between 'state education' (later called 'mainstream education') and 'alternative education'. The foundation for this had been laid by Swiss social and education reformer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi,[126] a century earlier.

Pestalozzi had argued that children needed to be educated holistically, meaning, in balance between intellectual, moral, and physical education; or, in

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[126] Pestalozzi's devoted educational work and diverse initiatives, such as his famous experimental boarding school at the castle of Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland (founded in 1805) or his main didactical work *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* (Pestalozzi, 1801/1894), for the first time, led to childhood being perceived as an independent stage of life.

Pestalozzi's words, "head, heart, and body" should be addressed, drawing upon the "self-power" (both as cited in Ipfling & Chambliss, 2016a, para. 3) inherent in the young human being. Pestalozzi's devoted educational work and diverse initiatives, such as his famous experimental boarding school at the castle of Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland (founded in 1805) or his main didactical work *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* (Pestalozzi, 1801/1894), for the first time, led to childhood being perceived as an independent stage of life (D. M. Steiner, 2003c).

With the *Progressive Education Movement*, the child was back at the centre of attention. According to Röhrs (1998), the movement provoked a great deal of liberation and rethinking in educational science at the time, and has had an evocative and shaping—though not decisive—influence on the development of schooling over the course of the 20th century. General education, for instance, assumed the need for *Anschauungspädagogik* (German, lit. 'graphic or demonstrative pedagogy'), which goes back to the works of Pestalozzi, Fröbel, and Herbart (Lauwerys et al., 2016b). The *Progressive Education Movement* led to universal children's rights being discussed in the *League of Nations* as early as 1924 (League of Nations, 1924). Due to their anthropological foundations, the most comprehensive pedagogical concepts from this period, according to Glotz (1999) and Röhrs (1998), are Steiner's, Montessori's, and Mason's educational philosophies and formulate holistic curricula.

5.6   Developments in the United States of America

In the United States of America, things took a different turn: With the new science of psychology on the rise, American behaviourists Holt [127] and Watson [128] came up with a 'modern' approach to child-rearing so as to generate "children who would be able to cope with the realities of modern life" (Watson & Watson, 1928, p. 10). The rather mechanistic, business-like understanding of a modern American upbringing, they advocated for, meant in effect that breast-feeding was to be carried out in strict intervals and that exposing of 'excessive' love and affection for one's child was not advised if they were to develop 'good character' (L. E. Holt, 1894; Watson & Watson, 1928).

Holt, for instance, stated: "At what age may playing with babies be begun? Babies under six months old should never be played with; and the less of it at any time the better for the infant" (L. E. Holt, 1894, p. 165). "Infants should be kissed, if at all, upon the cheek or forehead, but the less even of this the better" (L. E. Holt, 1894, p. 168). Similarly, Watson and Watson (1928) stated:

> Treat them [the children] as though they were young adults. ... Let your behaviour always be objective and kindly firm. Never hug and kiss them, never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Shake hands with them in the morning. Give them a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinarily good job of a difficult task. ... In a week's time you will find how easy it is to be perfectly objective with your child and at the same time kindly. You will be utterly ashamed of the mawkish, sentimental way you have been handling it [your child]. (pp. 81-82)

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[127] Luther Emmett Holt (1855 – 1924), American paediatrician and author.

[128] John Broadus Watson (1878 – 1958), American psychologist, founder of the school of behaviourism.

Despite severe criticism from several academic echelons for their 'unloving' approach, both Holt's and Watson's advice was widely promoted by the U.S. Government and was well-received by America's middle class, including in paediatric circles (Bigelow & Morris, 2001; Lomax, Kagan, & Rosenkrantz, 1978). Holt's and Watson's behaviouristic approach to child-rearing reigned in the United States of America throughout the first half of the 20th century until it was liberalised by another U.S. American bestseller.

In 1946, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* by Benjamin Spock [129] revolutionised American upbringing once again, advocating for flexibility, the displaying of affection, and trusting in parental instincts and abilities (Spock, 1946). Being the onset of the American 'baby boom', the book came at the right time. Spock's authoritative—yet empathic and permissive—educational style, according to McMillen (2001), was followed by large parts of the American middle class during the second half of the 20th century.

5.7   Developments throughout the second half of the 20th century

During the further course of the 20th century, a variety of progressive, pioneering, and alternative school models emerged. Noted approaches include but are not limited to the following:

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[129] Benjamin McLane Spock (1903 – 1998), American paediatrician.

5.7.1 Late 1940s and early 50s — Post-war era education

Following the *Progressive Education Movement* during the first third of the 20th century, some of its impulses were revived while Europe was in the process of being reconstructed after World War II. Many previously existing progressive schools reopened and proceeded with their work. Further progressive schools were gradually founded.

The 1940s were also the time when Paulo Freire and colleagues conceptualised *Popular Education* [130] in Latin America. In Scotland, Duncan Black developed the *Public Choice Theory in Education* in 1948; and in Denmark, Ella Flatau came up with the *Forest Kindergartens* in the 1950s, followed by Gösta Frohm's *Mulle Pedagogy* [131] in Sweden in 1957.

As far as formal education is concerned, it is important to note that, according to Lauwerys, Swink, and Lawson (2016a, 2016c) and Glotz (1999), most countries—besides rearranging their systems—went back to basic principles and continued to base schooling on previous conventional approaches without drawing from or building on the achievements that the progressive educational impulse had brought about. A change that, according to Viarengo (2007), could be noticed throughout Europe during the post-war era, was an increase in the number of years of compulsory schooling: All European countries increased compulsory schooling by at least one year; with some countries increasing it by up to four years over the following decades. This particularly applied to southern European countries, where levels of compulsory schooling had been comparatively low [132] (Viarengo, 2007).

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[130] (in the sense of 'people's education'; also known as *Community-Based Education*)

[131] (also known as the *Skogsmulle School Concept* ('Wood Elf School Concept') in Sweden)

[132] (i.e. between three years in Portugal to six years in Italy, Spain, and Greece (Viarengo, 2007))

5.7.2 Late 1950s – Sputnik crisis and education-political consequences

Further changes were closely related to the so-called 'Sputnik crisis' of 1957. In the Western world, this incident triggered the realisation that *Space Age* and the 'space race' were occurring, and catapulted the issue of reforms in education back to the top of the political agenda (Dickson, 2011; A. Powell, 2007). As a consequence, a number of Western countries—led from the front by the USA—adjusted their education policies so as to push for higher and better performance in schools and universities (Dickson, 2011; A. Powell, 2007).

One such policy alteration in reaction to the Sputnik launch was the *National Defence Education Act* in the USA, passed in 1958, mobilising one billion dollars to bolster science, maths, and technology education (Flemming, 1960). In the same year, the U.S. Government originated *Gifted & Talented Education*.[133] A few years later, the nationwide *Magnet Schools Programme* was called into existence in the U.S., creating subject-orientated specialist schools with the aim to attract more and train better junior scientists. Following the *Civil Rights Movement*, the programme was also part of the United States' desegregation efforts (incl. measures, such as 'mixed busing', 'affirmative action', abolishing of school prayer, amongst other things) which lasted up until the 1970s (Tyack & Cuban, 2009).

This conservative economic-political move to abandon comprehensive high school education in favour of early specialisation, coupled with more rigour as well

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[133] *Gifted Education* was first conceptualised in the USA after the launch of Sputnik by the U.S.S.R. in 1957, but was only implemented on a broad basis after the *Jacob Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act* of 1988.

as more hours in schooling, was perceived as a regression to basic principles [134] (cf. Adler, 1977)—particularly the introduction of the *Fundamental School Concept* in the early 70s (Jones, 1976).

5.7.3 1960s — Sputnik, Vietnam, and the Free School Movement

The *Magnet School Model*, which Willie, Edwards, and Alves (2002) referred to as a system of "controlled choice" (p. 25), prompted various educators to come up with educational counter drafts. One of the most noted ones, was Alexander Sutherland Neill's (1960) publication *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* which, influenced by the Frankfurt School's *Critical Theory*, represented his educational counter draft of *Anti-Authoritarian Education*.[135]

Interlinked with the United States of America's commitment to the Vietnam War in 1961, further theories in dissent from educational conformism and authoritarianism were put forward in subsequent years. These included: *Voluntaryism Theory* (Murray Rothbard, Ayn Rand et al., USA, 1963),[136] *Unschooling Philosophy* (John Holt, USA, 1964), the *Home Schooling Concept* (Rousas J. Rushdoony, USA, 1960s),[137] *Holistic Education* (var. theorists,

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[134] (in the sense of 'traditional customs of schooling')

[135] (to be differentiated from the antipedagogical attitude of *laisser-faire*. Nota bene: Neill himself referred to his approach not as 'anti-authoritarian' but as 'self-regulation')

[136] Libertarian philosophy goes back to Epicurus (300 BCE), Jesus Christ, Averroës (1100s CE), Spinoza, Locke, Spencer, and others; holding that all forms of human association—including education—should be voluntary.

[137] The superstructure of *Home Schooling* includes various home-schooling styles, some of which have become quite popular over the past five decades. Methods or styles include but are not limited to *Classical Home Schooling, School-at-Home, Unit Studies, 'Eclectic' Home Schooling, The Charlotte Mason Method, The Steiner/Waldorf Method, The Montessori Method, The Multiple Intelligences Approach, DVD/Video Schooling, Internet Home Schooling*, and *The Unschooling Approach*.

Europe/USA, 1960s), the *Service-Learning Method* (Robert Sigmon, William

Ramsey, USA, 1967),[138] *Democratic Education* (var. theorists, USA/Europe,

1960s),[139] and the *Sudbury Valley School Concept* (Daniel Greenberg, USA,

1968).[140] Some variants of these alternative perspectives on schooling were more

radical than others. With the intention of keeping the so-considered manipulative and

adverse effects of society (and schooling) away from children, according to Wright

(2003), they were seen as a reinterpretation of Rousseau's *Negative Education*

Philosophy and were sometimes referred to as *Antipedagogy*.

Within the context of these education-political counter-developments,

educational theory was also advanced by a number of 'neo-progressive' learning

theories, which I have compiled, for better illustration (in chronological order) in

Table 6.

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[138] (this had been propounded by Schneider in 1901 (cf. *Cooperative Education*), by Dewey in 1938, and by others)

[139] (going back to Locke, Rousseau, Tolstoy, Korczak, Neill, Dewey, and others)

[140] Progressive democratic school in Framingham, MA, United States of America.

Table 6 | 'Neo-progressive' educational/learning theories influencing schools during the 1960s (non-exhaustive).

Year	Theorist/Founder	Concept/Initiative Name	Country
1961	Albert Bandura	Observational Learning Theory	Canada/USA
1961	Bruner, Piaget, Papert	Discovery Learning	USA
1960s	Piaget, Dewey, Vygotsky, Freire et al.	Enquiry-Based Learning	Switzerland, Americas, Russia
1960s	Freire, Giroux, McLaren, Kincheloe, Steinberg [141]	Student-Centred Learning	Americas
1963	Loris Malaguzzi	Reggio Emilia Approach	Italy
1967	Bridget Plowden	The Open Classroom Concept [142]	United Kingdom
1960s	Howard Barrows et al.	Problem-Based Learning	Canada

Another development that was induced by the Frankfurt School, was the theoretical approach and discipline of *Critical Educational Science*. In the 1960s, it became the principal paradigm of educational science in Germany (Krüger, 2007; Wulf, 2003). However, its momentum was soon lost after the 'empirical turnaround' in the 1980s (Wulf, 2003).

Following U.S. President Johnson's efforts to eliminate inequality and racial segregation, the introduction of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* in 1965 brought about a government-funded upsurge of alternative educational offers in the educational landscape of the United States, aiming to deliver "equal and meaningful education to disadvantaged and minority students" (Lange & Sletten, 2002, p. 3). Similarly in Germany: Regarding the creation of equal opportunities for children of previously disadvantaged strata of the population, high hopes had been

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[141] Precursors were: Montessori, Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky. Further contributors were: Rogers, Bloom, and Gardner.

[142] (also referred to as *Open Education*)

pinned on a promising new school; the introduction of the *Comprehensive School Model* in 1967.

Against the backdrop of the United States' increasing entanglement in the Vietnam War, the late 1960s bore witness to a worldwide escalation of social conflicts in protest against perceived injustices such as bureaucratic dictation, military action in Vietnam, and capitalism in general. The student uprisings of 1968 mobilised thousands to come out into the streets in protest for more democracy in educational institutions (Kurlansky, 2005). American social critic Paul Goodman (1964), for instance, spoke of 'compulsory mis-education'.

These events reinvigorated the educational debate; they strengthened the support for the societal counter draft of *Anti-Authoritarian Education* and, amongst other initiatives, led to various models of *Democratic Schools*,[143] such as the *Sudbury Valley School* in Framingham, Massachusetts/USA (Raith, 1969). In the 1970s, numerous democratic schools sprung up around the world, with the United States leading the way, followed by Israel, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan, Denmark, and France. Many were based on the famous *Summerhill School*[144] in Leiston, Suffolk/United Kingdom (Alternative Education Resource Organization, 2014), and this was referred to as the *Free School Movement* (Lange & Sletten, 2002).

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[143] The concept of *Democratic Education* goes back to the works of Locke (Locke & Quick, 1693/1889) and Rousseau (1762/1921), as well as Tolstoy and Korczak.

[144] Founded by A. S. Neill in 1921, the *Summerhill Boarding School* is the oldest existing democratic school and has served as an inspiration for most models of democratic schools erected since.

5.7.4 1970s — Rising social concerns and Open School Movement

In the 1970s, educational counter models continued to address societal concerns. Amongst them were Paulo Freire's *Teaching for Social Justice/Anti-Oppressive Education* (Freire, 1970) in Brazil, Ivan Illich's *Philosophy of Deschooling* (Illich, 1971) in Austria, as well as the *Philosophy of Autonomous Education* [145] (attrib. to Karl Popper; cf. Popper, 1994) in Austria and the United Kingdom in 1976. Simultaneously, in 1974, Ray Budde initially came up with the *Charter School Concept* in the USA (Budde, 1974/1988). However, it went largely unnoticed until years later.[146] Other educational concepts included the *Jigsaw Classroom Approach* (Elliot Aronson, USA, 1971), the *Social Learning Theory* (Albert Bandura, USA, 1971), *Verkehrspädagogik* [147] (Siegbert A. Warwitz, Germany, 1970s), the *Continuum Concept* (Jean Liedloff, USA, 1975), *Competency-Based Education* (Gene Hall, USA, 1976), the *Natural Learning Theory* [148] (Tracy Terrell, Stephen Krashen, USA, 1977), and the *Effective Schools Movement* (Ron Edmonds, Michael Rutter et al., USA, UK, 1979).

Following the introduction of *Magnet Schools* in the USA, further alternative models closely intertwined with this concept were put into practice in the USA in the early 70s. Such were: *Schools Without Walls* (Bremer & von Moschzisker, 1971), the *Open-Space* [architectural] *School Concept*, the *Open Classroom Concept*,[149] the *School-Within-a-School Model*, *Multicultural Schools* (cf. Rosado, 1988), *Fundamental Schools* (Jones, 1976), and the *Teaching and Learning Centres*.

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[145] (also referred to as *Autonomous Learning Theory*)

[146] The first charter school law was passed in the U.S. state of Minnesota in 1991.

[147] (lit. 'traffic pedagogy', i.e. applied road safety education)

[148] (also known as the *Natural Approach To Learning*)

[149] (a student-centred, multi-grade classroom, comprising students of varying skill levels)

Also, Kerschensteiner's *Continuation School Concept* (cf. Gonon, 2009) from the German progressive education era was seized upon. This phase of development was known as the *Open School Movement* (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Robert Hutchins [150] and Mortimer Adler [151] both repudiated these changes in U.S. educational policy for their 'vocationalism' and 'anti-intellectualism' as well as the system for being fundamentally undemocratic (Adler, 1977). Their efforts resulted in the *Paideia Programme*; a proposal of a classical, liberal-humanistic curriculum [152] (Adler et al., 1984).

5.7.5 1980s — 'Educational expansion' and socio-pedagogical efforts to reintegrate marginal and at-risk groups

The 1980s, according to Fromm (2008), were characterised by the impacting adverse effects of the modern consumer society. *At-Risk Education*, dropout prevention models, and social reintegration were central themes and concerns during the 1980s. *Social Pedagogy* became applied on a broad scale. Following the release of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) in the USA, however, the 1980s represented another return to conservative schooling.

This about-face, as R. Miller (2002) argued, was due to the reason that "the federal government and virtually all state governments, teacher-training institutions, teachers' unions, major foundations, and the mass media have all pushed strenuously for higher standards, greater accountability, more 'time on task', and more impressive academic results" (p. 110). Linn (2000) referred to this decade in the

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[150] Robert Maynard Hutchins (1899 – 1977), American educational philosopher.

[151] Mortimer Jerome Adler (1902 – 2001), American philosopher, educator, and popular author.

[152] (based on the medieval *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*, respectively)

USA as a turn to school and district accountability. Similar policy changes have taken place in other countries several years later, such as the *Tomorrow's Schools* education reform in New Zealand in 1989 (PPTA Executive, 2008).

Following this theorisation, one could argue that, in essence, the accountability reform wave was an effort to contain or absorb the negative impacts of the consumer society. According to Murgatroyd and Sahlberg (2016), R. Miller (2002), and Linn (2000), it can now, in retrospect, be seen as the first feature of a series of reforms that were to change public education systems globally over the next three decades. This reform trend to a new form of educational governance—often referred to as 'global education reform movement'—according to Murgatroyd and Sahlberg (2016), has increasingly become adopted within many education systems throughout the world, including in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and New Zealand, to name but a few. Murgatroyd and Sahlberg (2016) referred to this unofficial movement or trend as an "educational reform orthodoxy" (para. 10).

While the general intention of these reforms was to fix the obvious problems in education systems and to 'raise the bar' in public education (R. Miller, 2002), the approaches, such as standardising teaching, learning, and assessment, creating competition between schools and individuals, and privatising schools, according to, Abrams (2016), Murgatroyd and Sahlberg (2016), and R. Miller (2002), stemmed from competitive market-economic philosophy. Taken as a whole, this analysis leads to the view that the United States' reform agenda to more rigour and competitive accountability in the 1980s can be seen as the first effects of neoliberal-capitalist philosophy on public education systems (cf. Linn, 2000; R. Miller, 2002; Murgatroyd & Sahlberg, 2016). This said, according to R. Miller (2002) and Linn (2000), there

have been signs of that in the 1960s and 70s. I have analysed these developments in detail in Chapter Eight, titled *Global education reform and Finland*, on page 227 et seqq.

In the USA, the reforms, according to R. Miller (2002), caused many parents to seek alternatives in progressive, religious, or Afrocentric schools, or teach their children at home. The late 80s have therefore seen a resurgence of progressive and alternative education, including a wave of new school foundings in the USA, Europe, Japan,[153] and various other countries.

Besides many countries' return to conventional schooling, the effects of the modern consumer society has also led various theorists around the world to come up with new learning theories. Such were: *Autodidacticism*,[154] *Discovery Learning*, *Enquiry-Based Learning*, *Individual Study*, Howard Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (USA, 1983), and, of course, Jean Piaget's *Theory of Constructivism* (Switzerland, 1967). Other concepts included *Purpose-Centred Education* (Audrey Cohen et al., USA, 1983), *I Ur och Skur Pedagogy*[155] (Siw Linde, Sweden, 1985), and *Lernen durch Lehren*[156] (Jean-Pol Martin, Germany, 1985).

Also concerned about contemporary social issues, Henry Giroux (1983), who followed in the footsteps of Jürgen Habermas (1962), came up with the concept of *Public Sphere Pedagogy*; an approach that connects classroom learning with real-world public issues and, in doing so, promotes civic engagement (Giroux, 1983).

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[153] Japan's interest in alternative education was triggered off by rising numbers of bullying, student violence, truancy, social anxiety disorder, and teenage suicide.

[154] (also referred to as *Self-Education* or *Self-Directed Learning*; closely related to *Discovery Learning*, *Enquiry-Based Learning*, *Individual Study*, and Vygotsky's *Theory of Scaffolding*)

[155] (lit. 'in-rain-or-shine pedagogy' (all-weather forest nursery schools); also: *Mulle School Movement*)

[156] (*Learning by Teaching*)

Giroux went on to develop his broader concept of *Critical Pedagogy* (Giroux, 1983; Giroux & Simon, 1989). The idea of school-facilitated *Peace Education* had its origins in Norway and the USA.[157] Simultaneously developed concepts included the *Theory of Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Sue Bredekamp, USA, 1986), the *Specialist Schools Programme* (UK Government, 1988), *Multicultural Education/ Educational Diversity* (James A. Banks, USA, 1989), and the concept of the *Anti-Bias Curriculum*[158] (Louise Derman-Sparks, USA, 1989).

5.7.6 1990s — Education paradox: Inflation of educational qualifications

The constructivist trend in learning theories and the socio-pedagogical trend in regard to social concerns both continued in the 1990s. New theories were the *Constructionist Learning Theory* (Seymour Papert, Idit Harel, USA, 1991), the theory of *Queer Pedagogy* (Mary Bryson, Suzanne de Castell, Canada, 1993), and the *Taking Children Seriously Philosophy* (Sarah Fitz-Claridge, David Deutsch, England, 1994). The concepts of *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy* and *Culturally Relevant Teaching* were advocated for by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b, 2009) in the USA. In the late 90s, the concepts of *Differentiated Instruction and Assessment*[159] (Carol Ann Tomlinson, USA, 1999) and *Minimally Invasive Education* (Sugata Mitra, India, 1999) have been devised.

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[157] Proponents have been: Comenius, Montessori, Herbert Read, Bertrand Russell, and Albert Einstein. Formal school-based programmes were established after the publications by Birgit Brocke-Utne, Norway (1985); Betty Reardon, USA (1988), and Ian Harris, USA (1988).

[158] (transgressing the 'hidden curriculum')

[159] (also known as *Differentiated Learning* or *Differentiation*)

A reappearing trend in relation to previous back-to-nature concepts were environment and ecology-orientated educational concepts, such as the *Forest School Approach* (The Forest Education Initiative, England, 1994), the *Eco-Schools Programme* (Foundation for Environmental Education, Denmark, 1994) and the *Ecopedagogy Movement* (Moacir Gadotti, Brazil, 1999).

With *eLearning* or *Virtual Education*,[160] *Cyber School* and the *Virtual Campus* (var. theorists, USA, 1995) also came the Theory of *Lifelong Learning* (var. theorists, Europe, 1990s).

At the international level, the understanding of education developed into a human right as declared in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948 (United Nations, 1948).[161] The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* of 1989 (United Nations, 1989) finally addressed global targets concerning basic education, such as 'availability' (of free and compulsory education for all children), 'accessibility' (of education to anyone, irrespective of race, gender, social origin, etc.), 'acceptability' (of the standard/quality of education), and 'adaptability' (of education to the best interests of each child) of universal public education (Tomaševski, 2001b, 2001c). It led to the concepts of *Human Rights Education* and *Humanitarian Education* (United Nations, 1995), which were brought forward within the scope of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995 – 2004. Seen as a

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[160] *eLearning* or *Virtual Education* encompasses variants like *Multimedia Learning, Technology-Enhanced Learning, Computer-Assisted Instruction, Multi-Modal Instruction, Virtual Learning Environments* (i.e. 'platforms'), *Cyber-Learning, Distributed Learning, Correspondence School, Mobile Learning,* up to *Online Education* and the concept of the *Virtual* or *Cyber School* as well as the *Virtual Campus/University* (as part of *Distance Learning*).

[161] Several earlier attempts have been made since 1924 (cf. sect. 6.1: *Children's rights in context* on p. 154).

whole, I construe these developments as an outcome of the shared concern for socially-fair educational opportunities of the 1980s at international level.

However, in at least 53 countries, literacy rates are still below 80% today, and are reaching figures below 60% in at least 24 countries of South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. In Burkina Faso, Niger, Afghanistan, and South Sudan, figures lie as low as 30% (Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). The legislative status quo of the 26th Human Right, the *Right to Education*, is analysed in-depth in Chapter Six: *International education-political philosophy — The 'desired condition' and legislative status quo* on page 153 et seqq.

In many places, efforts to create equality of opportunity for children of previously disadvantaged segments of the population have not achieved their goal. The 'inflation' of (higher) educational attainments since the 1980s has maintained the inequality gap—which is referred to as the 'education paradox' (Heid, 1988; Karakayali, 2009); and the PISA Study of 2000—amongst other indicators— confirmed that fact (cf. R. Adams & Wu, 2003; OECD, 2000b; Stanat et al., 2002).

In the USA, the 1990s were the decade of *Outcome-Based Education*, starting with the *National Education Goals* (or '*Goals 2000*'), which were set in the 1990s, followed by the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. Internationally, many—if not most—countries bought into this reform approach and adopted some form of standards- or outcome-based curriculum. By the early 2000s, standards-based education reform had turned into a clear trend.

Post-millennial developments have been analysed in detail in Chapter Seven: *Manifestations of current educational realities — A critical-phenomenological exploration* on page 188 et seqq.

5.8 The progression of Progressive Education — A critical résumé

Glotz (1999) critically argued that progressive education remained a minority idea and had not influenced or changed the structure of societies. This said, the United States of America have certainly been more pioneering and experimental in embracing, trialling, and implementing alternative educational approaches than most other countries. Germany, for instance, has arguably taken a reserved stance in allowing or implementing alternative models on a broad basis after (the experiences of) World War II.

Yet, despite several short-term trials, such as Parkhurst's *Dalton Plan* [162] (1914, USA), Washburne's *Winnetka Plan* [163] (1919, USA), Kerschensteiner's *Continuation School Model* (1900s, Germany; 1970s, USA), and some other practice-based approaches, according to Heinrich (2005), D. M. Kelly (1993), and Lange and Sletten (2002), progressive approaches have, for various reasons, not fully been adopted by mainstream education or as broad alternatives. In addition, the main motivation for the introduction of these new models in the USA, particularly the *Continuation School Model*, was, according to Cordonnier (2010), as a high school dropout intervention.

Education-historically speaking, alternative or progressive educational concepts are not a recent phenomenon but have existed for a long time. They were already evident in ancient Greek times with Socrates' *Maieutic Approach*, his

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[162] Progressive educational concept based on individual learning, first introduced in a school in New York City, then trialled in state schools in Dalton, MA in 1918.

[163] Progressive educational concept of ungraded, individualised learning at elementary level (in Winnetka, IL, United States of America).

Elenctic Method, his *Dialectics*, or Aristotle's *Peripatetic Method* for instance (D. M. Steiner, 2017a), followed by the concepts presented by Comenius, von Humboldt, Pestalozzi, and the progressivists of the 20th century. In other words, I venture to argue that progressive educational proposals are a reoccurring phenomenon—if not a social condition.

The *Progressive Education Movement* showed that different conceptions of education were possible and that alternative approaches to schooling, than those practised at the time, existed. The reason that the movement sparked broader interest in sections of the population, I argue, was that, instead of proposing single methods or approaches, progressive education generated entire pedagogies by way of 'proofing by doing'. Embedded in the wave of life reform consciousness, the *Progressive Education Movement* was arguably a wave of consciousness raising in the field of education. Nevertheless, mainly because of political reasons, progressive concepts have, according to Heinrich (2005), D. M. Kelly (1993), and Lange and Sletten (2002), not made it into schools in a comprehensive way.

On extra-curricular levels, however, progressive educational approaches have been comparatively successful: During the second half of the 20th century—and particularly boosted by the *Open School Movement* in the USA—progressive approaches have found application in various related instructional, therapeutic, reintegrative, or recreational branches of the education sector. Those include but are not limited to:

a) Applications in *Early Childhood Education*,
b) *Home Schooling*,
c) *Arts Education*,
d) *Curative* or *Special Education*,

e) externally provided *Experiential, Outdoor, Environmental,* and *Nature Education* modules (during class trips, summer camps, etc.),

f) general *Youth Work* (e.g. *Scouting*, *Theatre*, *Circus Pedagogy*, etc.),

g) *Library* and *Museum Pedagogy*,

h) *Traffic Pedagogy* (i.e. road safety education),

i) *Social Pedagogy* and *At-Risk Youth Work* (such as *Street Children Education*, *School Dropout Education*, or *Hyperactivity Therapy*, for instance),

j) *Alcohol* and *Drug Therapy*,

k) *Cooperative Education/Practice-Based Professional Training*,

l) *Vocational Rehabilitation* (*Adult Education*),

m) *Corporate Team Building* (*Continuing Professional Education*),

n) *Leisure Tourism* (*Hospitality/Leisure Education*), and—of course—in

o) recreational *Adventure Education* itself.

Due to the fact that most of these programmes had been extra-curricular activities, it led to the situation that by the late 1960s, the alternative education movement had "split into two broad categories: alternatives outside of public education and those within the public school system" (Lange & Sletten, 2002, p. 3).

In this respect, Kelly (1993) argued that, despite good intentions, the public alternative school idea had failed in the USA. Having been stigmatised by mainstream education over decades and used as a "dumping ground for rebels and the academically underprepared" (p. xvi), it kept devaluing its original idea and, in turn, "scar[ed] other students into relative conformity [within the traditional model]" (p. 66)—a situation which has arguably persisted since (cf. Doin, 2012). This account highlights the common misconception that progressive approaches are acceptable anywhere, except in formal education itself—as schooling is still perceived as a matter of 'serious' learning, as opposed to 'playing' or 'experimenting'. In my view, this exposes how ingrained the authoritative instructional paradigm is in public opinion.

This said, in countries that exhibited great respect for nature (as well as for children)—such as in Finland, Sweden, and Denmark for instance—certain holistic/progressive approaches appear to have become a natural component of mainstream education, as demonstrated by Enkvist (2016) and Sahlberg (2010c, 2012a, 2015). This also applies to several countries which have adopted a deferential and integral relationship with their indigenous peoples and their customs, such as in Aotearoa New Zealand for instance, where holistic cultural practices have become part of the mainstream curriculum (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2009).

Today, many schools make use of progressive educational methods, such as active learning, hands-on learning, experiential learning, with a focus on problem-solving and critical thinking, positive education, personalised learning, thematic projects, entrepreneurship-based learning, enquiry-based learning, scientific experimenting, group work, cooperative learning projects, constructionist learning, debate, focussing on social skills, art and handicraft education, drama education/role play, problem-based learning, fieldwork, education for social responsibility, and so forth.

It has also become a trend to 'brand' one's educational approach(es) and philosophy(ies) applied at one's institution, and numerous schools and kindergartens have started to self-identify as 'holistic', 'progressive', 'alternative', 'child-centred', and so on.

Glotz (1999) attributed progressive education another revival in the age of digital capitalism. Indeed, various forms of alternative (private) schools can be said to have emerged since the 2000s (cf. Chapter Seven, *Manifestations of current educational realities — A critical-phenomenological exploration*, on p. 188 et seqq.). I attribute this to a growing demand for individualism, pluralist and sustainability

thinking, intercultural appreciation, and the postmodern context of developing 'creative 21st-century learners'.

On the other hand, due to a multitude of accepted theories and so-called efficient approaches, the definition for 'mainstream' education is becoming more and more blurred and indistinct. This, in my view, is certainly also an indication in the direction of 'blended' ways of learning, which are increasingly common. I therefore argue that mainstream education is no longer 'conservative' in the sense of a classical curriculum and a basic approach, nor is it comprehensively progressive.

Provocatively speaking, mainstream education has arguably turned into a mishmash of prescribed contents and semi-applied approaches within the steadfast, normative, competitive paradigm of 'measurable' education. In other words, mainstream education is arguably losing in character, while the terms 'alternative' and 'progressive' are now used to describe any approach or philosophy that is a little unconventional.

5.9   Conclusion

On the basis of the literature-supported exposition and problematisation, presented in this chapter, I come to the following concerns:

As a whole, the 20th century has witnessed systems of mass education become normality; and varying internal social conflicts taking place around the world, according to Glotz (1999), marked it as 'the century of social change'. These changes included the *Life-Reform Movement* and the *Progressive Education Movement* at the beginning of the century. With the appearance of progressive education, state education was challenged and, for the first time, some governing

powers started to tolerate the existence of 'alternatives' besides the mainstream alignment pursued by the state.

This appearance of progressive education in the form of a diverse movement was an expression that the mainstream model was one-sided; or, in other words, that the conception of schooling at the time was not in accord with child-developmental needs and human nature. In this respect, and on the basis of the research work carried out for Chapters Four and Five, I propose the hypothesis that educational practices (and, since the late 17th century, educational science) existed and developed alongside the evolution of consciousness of humankind, as represented by the respective era (cf. Descartes, 1637/1998; Wong, 1997). This led me to come up with the following table (Table 7).

Table 7 | Historic driving forces shaping public education (non-exhaustive, contrasting overview).

Century	Era	Driving force shaping public education
17th Century	Reformation & Enlightenment	Religious-humanistic motives
18th Century	Absolutism	Political-absolutistic & anticlerical motives
19th Century	Industrialisation & Nation Building	Political-industrial & nationalistic motives
20th Century	1900 – 1950	Political-nationalistic supremacy
	1950 – 2000	Political-capitalistic motives
	• 1950s	• "Technico-economico-scientific" supremacy [164]
	• 1960s & 1970s	• Political & socio-economic motives
	• 1980s	• Political-egalitarian & economic motives
	• 1990s	• Political-integrative & economic motives
21st Century	Knowledge Age	Political knowledge-economic supremacy

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[164] (Derrida, 1992, p. 42)

During the 20th century, most civic societies have broken free from sovereign paternalism, resulting in the establishment of people's democracies; thus, it was a century of human rights and general international law. These major events, international wars, and social conflicts, according to Lauwerys et al. (2016c), brought about a number of changes to education systems and to education policies.

When colonialism was slowly phased out after the Second World War, independent countries arose in Africa and Asia, and with it the concept of a 'third world'. Education was seen as a means to promote development. As an international attempt to eradicate illiteracy, it resulted in a large quantitative increase in the education provided in those countries (Lauwerys et al., 2016c).

An unexpected phenomenon, that I found, was that the changes, made in Western mainstream education policy, were followed by more radical, alternative versions of education in reaction to them. Despite a vehement alternative movement in opposition of moves towards a standardisation and mechanisation of education, traditional schooling has nevertheless achieved its principal goal: It gave rise to a skilled and productive working class, leading Western nations and individuals to promised economic prosperity (cf. the post-war decades known as the 'era of the economic miracle') (Giddens & Sutton, 2013; Lauwerys et al., 2016c).

In many countries, the number of universities doubled or tripled between the 1950s and the 1970s (Lauwerys et al., 2016c). Accordingly, the United Nations have noted that general education, followed by professional education "increases human welfare, and is a decisive factor in enabling people to become productive and responsible members of society" (1997, p. 44).

This was particularly true for the last third of the 20th century: Broader and higher educational standards, as well as basic educational rights, have led to what is

termed 'educational expansion', and culminated in the ongoing inflation of educational degrees (Lauwerys et al., 2016c). These comprehensive developments, according to Lauwerys et al. (2016c), are due to public education having become institutionalised and compulsory mass commodities, as well as the Western world's increasing dependence on technological advancement. Hence, if a leitmotif was to be applied throughout the 20th century, it may be well-described with the words: 'advancement and prosperity through education' (cf. Glotz, 1999).

The latter point, mentioned by the United Nations; that is, whether education has managed to serve as lever in enabling young people access to society, is controversial. According to Buxarrais Estrada and Vilafranca Manguán (2011), the OECD (2000a, 2012, 2013a, 2014a), Tomaševski (2001a), the UNESCO (2012a, 2014), the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011, 2014b), and Wertz (1996), Western education systems still show considerable shortcomings regarding socialisation and enculturation, democratisation, peace education, as well as personality formation. In this respect, Rosado (1988) concluded the following, including a prognosis of the tasks lying ahead:

> The main accomplishment of the 1960s and 70s [was] giving people access to the system. In the 1980s the concern was with 'valuing differences'. In the 1990s the push is for 'managing diversity'. But in the 21st century the focus of schools and corporations needs to be on 'living diversity'. [Emphasis in the original] (1988, para. 29)

Moreover, the above statements are representative of the fact that educational reform over the course of the 20th century was increasingly initiated and driven by economic-political objectives. In relation to the USA, Linn (2000) identified five 'waves' of conservative educational reform that occurred since the 1950s. Those are:

a) "The role of tests in tracking and selection emphasised in the 1950s,

b) the use of tests for programme accountability in the 1960s,

c) minimum competency testing programmes of the 1970s,

d) school and district accountability of the 1980s, and

e) the standards-based accountability systems of the 1990s" (p. 4).[165]

Neoliberal capitalism, which marked a new chapter in the history of economic/capitalist activity, became the new driving force in economic philosophy in the 1970s (Harvey, 2007; Peters, 2011). The 1980s' education reforms, in my view, constituted a first clash between neoliberal capitalist philosophy and public education (cf. Linn, 2000; R. Miller, 2002; Murgatroyd & Sahlberg, 2016). The then newly emerged theory of constructivism, which was expected by many to be game-changing and become the new paradigm in education, I argue, was figuratively swallowed up by the neoliberal about-face in education reform policy; it was a regression back to conservative-style schooling, testing, and accounting for.

Although the constructivist classroom, according to Brooks and Brooks (1993) and Mergel (1998), resembles an unforcedly-encouraging, student-centred, experiential approach to learning, whose positive effects have been shown by a range of studies (see for instance Doğru & Kalender, 2007; Gray, 1997; Guthrie et al., 2004; Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chinn, 2007; J. S. Kim, 2005), it has, generally speaking, never been fully recognised and was, for the stated reasons, already withdrawn from mainstream school practice/curricula at a stage when it had not even been comprehensively implemented yet.

Although the theory of constructivism aroused interest within educational science, constructivism arguably remained just another theory with relatively few implications for formal education. Whether this may have been the case because

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[165] [numbering added]

constructivism did (and still does) not go well with neoliberal capitalist philosophy, is quite possible.

Against the backdrop of the USA's educational U-turn in the 1980s in favour of neoliberal or neo-conservative policy reforms (cf. Linn, 2000; R. Miller, 2002; Murgatroyd & Sahlberg, 2016), this review of developments suggests the assumption that it was a conscious political decision to leave progressive educational concepts out of formal education. The multitude and diversity of new theories and approaches that have been developed over the course of the 20th century—particularly during the last four decades—have shown that lack of innovative ideas was not the problem. The impact of neoliberal capitalism on education is addressed in detail in Chapter Seven: *Manifestations of current educational realities — A critical-phenomenological exploration*, on page 188 et seqq.

In this respect, it seems legitimate to ask, whether it would have made a difference if mainstream education had been more progressive; that is, more holistic, applied, learner-centred, experiential, and enquiry-based; or, in other words, more constructivist than it was? What kind of difference could it have made? This raises questions, such as:

- Would we still need social reintegration programmes for at-risk youths, for bullies, for young people suffering social phobia, and for school dropouts if schools were more socially engaging?
- Would we need hyperactivity therapies/medication if formal education was more balanced, engaging, and exploratory?
- Finally, would we need anger management trainings and alcohol and drug therapies if education was more person-centred?

This said, if one considers the variety of new learning theories that have been generated over the course of the 20th century, it can be argued that it was a century

of educational progress. In addition, many—if not most—of these innovations can be seen as progressive or alternative approaches that go beyond the traditional model of instruction.

To conclude, social and political swings marked a century of challenges to accepted values, thinking, and paradigms, provoking changes in public education toward, what Lauwerys et al. (2016c) called "a more dynamic and less categorical resolution" (para. 1). Lauwerys et al. (2016c) continue to argue that "the institutional means of handling this uncertain world were to accept more diversity while maintaining basic forms and to rely on management efficiency to ensure practical outcomes" (para. 1).

Following Lauwerys et al. (2016c), this problematisation led to the view that education has, to a certain extent, adapted to socio-political developments (such as more heterogeneous student populations, for instance) but has largely retained its basic structures and instructive character. While this may have been politically intended, I also argue that it was due to the fact that the changes made, occurred within the industrial paradigm, dating back to the *Production Age*. From today's perspective, this seems like an *exercitium vanum*, a futile exercise, or an *exercitium ad absurdum*. This problem of circular reasoning, I believe, is what Albert Einstein meant, when he famously stated: 'We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them'.[166] An advanced, postmodern concept of education, in order to be authentic and contemporary, I argue, will need to be grounded on a post-industrial—and therefore a post-traditional—paradigm. Ellen

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[166] (commonly adapted quotation; ipsissima verba: "The world that we have made as a result of the level of thinking we have done thus far creates problems that we cannot solve at the same level as the level we created them at" (Albert Einstein, as cited in Dass, 1974, p. 38))

Key's (1909) call for a 'century of the child', mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, seems as topical as it was over a century ago.

CHAPTER SIX

International education–political philosophy – The 'desired condition' and legislative status quo

Education shall be aimed at *"the preparation of the child for* [a] *responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin"*

United Nations (1989, Art. 29, para. 1d)

Chapter outline

This chapter is an examination of the philosophy that delineates the purpose of education on the international level, derived from the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* that was adopted by the international community 25 years ago, and has become the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history (UNICEF United Kingdom, 2014).

Section 6.1 discusses the historical background, the current legal position of children's rights, and the *Right to Education* in particular. Section 6.2 identifies an evolution to be noticed in the wording of the aims of prior declarations made over the course of the 20th century. From this, I develop the overriding international pedagogical aim and postulated educational principles and standards of a modern, children's rights-orientated education as understood by the United Nations and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in particular (sect. 6.3). Following this, section

6.4 is an in-depth analysis and reinterpretation of these specifications with a focus on their qualitative pedagogical meaning, including their implications. In section 6.5, the findings are problematised philosophically within the broader context and with a view to accomplishing the United Nations' 'desired condition' more authentically and thus more realistically. Section 6.6 examines to what extent the *26th Human Right*—the *Right to Education*—has de facto been implemented in current educational practice in order to arrive at an assessment of the current status quo. This leads to overall conclusions, expounded in section 6.7.

6.1 Children's rights in context

In 1919, after World War I, the League of Nations was established. In 1924, in reaction to children's indiscriminate, devastating life situations in post-war Europe, the League of Nations adopted the *World Child Welfare Charter* (also referred to as the *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924*) (League of Nations, 1924).[167] The charter declared that humanity "owes to the Child the best that it has to give ... and accept it as their duty that ... the child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually [capitalisation in the original]" (League of Nations, 1924, preface & Prin. 1). The *Geneva Declaration* was the first international human rights document to specifically address children's rights. Despite its intentions, the declaration was not granting or validating any rights as such. The document mainly pointed out certain obligations Western society was

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[167] Initially, this children's rights proclamation was drafted by Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of *Save the Children*, in 1923 and adopted by the *International Save the Children Union* in Geneva in the same year, before being put forward to the *League of Nations*.

thought to have towards its children (Diop, 2010; O'Brien, Greene, & McQuoid-Mason, 1996; Verhellen, 2006).

With the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) in 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations (hereafter referred to as *UN*) have declared the *Right to be Educated* the *26th Human Right* (UN, 1948). After the devastating outcome of World War II, internationally speaking, the UDHR was a ground-breaking milestone in the global recognition and appreciation of human rights. With regard to educational rights, the UN's declaration of a right to education in the UDHR succeeded the prior *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924* (LNDRC). However, legally speaking, declarations are ethical 'statements of intent' and are therefore non-binding for their signatories (O'Brien et al., 1996; Verhellen, 2006).

Subsequent declarations included the *European Convention on Human Rights* (ECHR) by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 1950) and the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* (UNDRC) (UN, 1959). However, the good intentions of the UDHR and its subsequent documents only became legal obligations—and therefore demandable rights (O'Brien et al., 1996)—after the passing of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) in 1966 (UN, 1966). The ICESCR reinforced the original ideas of the UDHR, now translated into a legally binding, multilateral treaty under international law (O'Brien et al., 1996). The ICESCR equally applied to children as well as adults. Up to the present day, the covenant has been ratified by 164 states (UN, 2017a).

In addition, the growing awareness of children's rights led to calls for a dedicated children's rights treaty. Subsequently, in 1989, after ten years of preparation, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) (UN, 1989) was

passed, incorporating and conferring the entire spectre of human rights—that is to say: political, economic, social, civil, and cultural rights—onto children and youth [168] in one single document. 192 of the 193 member states of the United Nations—with the exception of the United States of America—have ratified the convention to date (UN, 2017b), making the UNCRC the "most complete statement of children's rights ever produced" (UNICEF United Kingdom, 2014, para. 4) and the "most universally embraced human rights treaty in history" (UN, 2002, p. 5).

With these fundamental 'declarations of principle' having turned into an obligatory international treaty, it was soon followed by a great number of national laws, such as the German *Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz* (transl. 'children and youth welfare act') (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1990), and the British *Children Act 1989* (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 1989), which, until today, form and protect a canon of demandable political, economic, social, civil, and cultural rights for children and youths.[169] In New Zealand, for instance, although the UNCRC never effectuated an embodiment of children's rights in national law, it led to the establishment of the *Office of the Children's Commissioner* in 1989 (Pollock, 2012). In many countries, many non-governmental organisations [170] emerged, taking on the

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[168] (up to 18 years of age)

[169] One such example is the German Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz (transl. 'children and youth welfare act'), which states: "Every young human being has the right to his/her development to be fostered, and to be educated to a self-responsible and socially competent personality [own translation]" (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1990, Ch. 1, §1, para. 1). "Young human beings shall be fostered in their individual and social development in particular [own translation]" (BRD, 1990, Ch. 1, §1, para. 3.1.) and "positive living conditions for young human beings and their families, as well as a child and family-friendly environment, shall be maintained or created in particular [own translation]" (BRD, 1990, Ch. 1, §1, para. 3.4.).

[170] In Germany, for instance, about 110 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have consolidated into the *National Coalition Germany — Network for the Implementation of the UN-Convention on the Rights of the Child* (National Coalition Deutschland, 2014). In New Zealand, for instance, 5 NGOs advocate for children's rights (Pollock, 2012).

role of advocating for, promoting the implementation, and monitoring the observance of the convention (Pollock, 2012).

Counter-arguments and critiques were also made against the UNCRC, including that it was too much a cultural concept of Western Europe and North America, that the concept was too individualistic, with collective and group rights and the importance of the public domain being underrepresented (Lister, 1991). In an educational context, human rights were argued to be too complex for young minds, that it was a form of indoctrination, and that human rights theory over-stressed rights and under-stressed responsibilities (Lister, 1991).

Another argument, according to Lister (1991), was that human rights involved complex, often intractable, issues and that human rights education could give young people a feeling of impotence as opposed to enabling them to take action upon concerns and influence their outcomes. In their ponderousness, however, I argue that the advantages and benefits of the UNCRC and human rights education outweigh the critiques. In particular, most concerns expressed are either refutable or avertible (cf. Lister, 1991).

Interestingly, the universal right to education on the basis of equality and inclusion can already be found in the educational philosophy of Amos Comenius, 360 years earlier (Comenius, 1628-1632/1896, 1645/1986). Due to his extensive work and educational efforts in the light of a European idea, he may well be seen as the precursor (or perhaps the first—unofficial—director general) of the *UNESCO* and the *International Bureau of Education*,[171] respectively (Piaget, 1993).

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[171] The *International Bureau of Education* in Geneva, Switzerland, is an international centre in the area of curriculum development, supporting UNESCO's goal of attaining quality education for all.

6.2   Evolution of children's rights declarations' pedagogical aim

The UDHR of 1948, reinforced in the ICESCR in 1966, declared: "Everyone has the right to education" (UN, 1948, Art. 26, para. 1). Education shall therefore be 'free' and 'compulsory' [172] (UN, 1948). The pedagogical aim of this right has been defined and emphasised insofar as that:

> Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (UN, 1948, Art. 26, para. 2)

> This aim, to 'fully develop the human personality', can also be found in all

prior children's rights declarations. The *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924* (LNDRC) emphasised the means requisite for the child's "normal development, both materially and spiritually" (League of Nations, 1924, Prin. 1).

After the UDHR of 1948, the comprehensive UNDRC of 1959 was created, expressing the pedagogical aim in the following way: "The child shall ... be given opportunities ... to enable him[/her] to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity" (UN, 1959, Art. 2). The same words as in the UDHR were reinforced in the ICESCR of 1966: "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality" (UN, 1966, Art. 13, para. 1).

The latest and most comprehensive children's rights declaration, the UNCRC of 1989, emphasises that "the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to

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[172] "at least in the elementary and fundamental stages" (UN, 1948, Art. 26, para. 1)

their fullest potential" (UN, 1989, Art. 29, para. 1a) in order to "ensure to the maximum extent possible the ... development of the child" (UN, 1989, Art. 6, para. 2).

To be noticed in the documents referred to is an evolution in the wording of the aim, developing from the demand for 'normal' development (in 1924), via 'full' development (in 1948), to 'healthy and normal' development (in 1959), back to 'full' development (in 1966), and finally expressing the aim for the 'fullest' development of the child (since 1989), as shown in Figure 7. Hence, I summarise that the international community's educational aspiration has arguably steadily increased over the past century.

Figure 7 | Evolution of children's rights declarations' pedagogical aim.
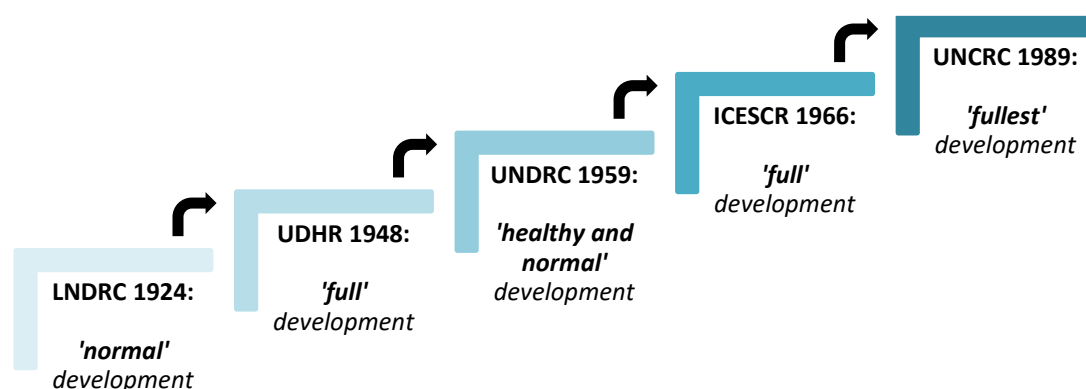
This said, the exact definition of and how 'the fullest development of the child' is to be achieved, is left open. This raises the crucial question: How is 'fullest development' to be defined and understood? Accordingly also: Which shape does modern education have to assume in order to foster young people to develop 'to the fullest'? In order to address this pivotal concern, I first identify the remaining educational indications (or purposes of education), emphasised in Article 29 of the UNCRC.

6.3   The purpose of education

Article 29 emphasises the following purposes of education, stating that education

shall be aimed at "the development of respect for human rights and fundamental

freedoms" (UN, 1989, Art. 29, para. 1b). In addition, education shall aim at

> the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural
> identity, language and values, [respect] for the national values of the country in
> which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and
> for civilisations different from his or her own. (UN, 1989, Art. 29, para. 1c)

Education shall further aim at "the preparation of the child for [a] responsible

life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of

sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and

persons of indigenous origin" (UN, 1989, Art. 29, para. 1d). The final aim,

emphasised in this article is "the development of respect for the natural environment"

(UN, 1989, Art. 29, para. 1e).

Those lines of Article 29 are the only direct reference the UNCRC contains

regarding the quality and content of education. According to this, one might argue

that the content and quality of education are the concerns least emphasised in the

convention. Indeed, its main emphasis focuses on the compulsory, non-

discriminatory, free-of-charge provisioning of schooling for every child (cf.

Tomaševski's *4–As' Framework*).[173] The convention neither mentions 'what' [174] nor 'how' [175] education ought to take place; at least not explicitly.

Necessarily, this raises pedagogical questions, like: How does one nurture the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the child? How does the child develop respect for him/herself, for his or her parents, respect for his or her own cultural identity, language, values, the values of his or her country, as well as for other civilisations? How does one prepare the child for a responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, and tolerance? Finally: How does one develop respect for the natural environment? These particulars seem to be subject—and opportunity—to national interpretation based on cultural circumstances as well as the current state of scientific knowledge. In other words, these questions become the purpose of education.

6.4   Qualitative analysis of the UNCRC's pedagogical aims

As the points, emphasised above, address different spheres of individual development and learning, I would like to differentiate between the following two groups:

a) The first developmental/learning sphere concerns developing one's physical abilities or skills as well as one's mental/emotional faculties to the fullest.

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[173] Katarina Tomaševski (1953 – 2006), former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education of the UN Human Rights Commission, developed the *4–As' Framework*, differentiating between the four key terms: *availability* (of free and compulsory education for all children), *accessibility* (of education to anyone, irrespective of race, gender, social origin, etc.), *acceptability* (of the standard/quality of education), and *adaptability* (of education to the best interests of each child) (Tomaševski, 2001b, 2001c).

[174] (i.e. which curriculum or which specific subjects ought to be applied)

[175] (i.e. which methods of teaching and learning ought to be applied)

b) The second developmental/learning sphere concerns the development of respect in many regards.

The significance and implication of these two highly intertwined developmental/learning spheres, and how they relate to, synergise, and complement each other, is discussed in the following.

6.4.1 The right to develop one's abilities and faculties to the fullest

The first developmental/learning sphere concerns developing one's physical abilities or skills as well as one's mental and emotional faculties to the fullest (that is, if applicable, through to talents). The convention states: "The education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" (UN, 1989, Art. 29, para. 1a) in order to "ensure to the maximum extent possible the ... development of the child" (UN, 1989, Art. 6, para. 2).

Apart from the overarching objective target of the 'fullest development of the child', with regard to education, the above foci are the only indications expressed in the convention. Therefore, these foci have to be seen as the UN's core aims. Concomitant with this is the question of fullest development: These educational core aims are indication, and, at the same time, explanation of what the United Nations consider under 'fullest development'. The definition and implication, which the term carries, is explored and discussed in the following.

Educating to 'fullest development'

What is 'fullest development'? When is a young human being developed to the fullest and how is it achieved? — 'Fullest development' can be understood in quite

different ways. Some may want to understand it in the sense of 'being knowledgeable in a wide range of fields or subjects', others may want to associate it with 'having brought a certain skill to perfection', et cetera. The latter is an example for a qualitative, the former for a quantitative understanding of it.

One's understanding of 'fullest development' depends on one's worldview and conception of the human being. Materialistically speaking, the term 'full' may imply or justify the notion of 'filling (someone) up', assuming that something has been lacking or has been incomplete before—which constitutes a rather bearish or reductionist image of the human being.

A common metaphor is the image of equipping young people with a tool (including the skill to use it). A tool enables us to practise particular tasks and activities (up to perfection), but it may also be delimiting, because a tool is necessarily specialised to certain operations. Following arguments on the development of educational ideas, already identified in previous chapters (e.g. J. C. Holt, 1967; Pestalozzi, 1801/1894), I argue that the respective 'tools' we hand to children will constitute their radius of activity and, in a broader sense, are going to inform their spectre of thinking, acting, and being.

For that reason, any such 'tools' have to be either carefully selected, or include all of them. This said, it is without doubt that one can neither know everything nor can one be skilled in everything. Additionally, in an age of the global knowledge society, it has become legitimate to ask: Do we generally need to know and be skilled in everything? — There must yet be a better way of understanding and defining 'fullest development'.

Approaching the concept from an individualistic perspective, one can first of all say that fullest development implies 'development to the greatest individual

extent possible'; that is to say, to the maximum of each and every one's potentials. This learner-centred approach harmonises with the UNCRC's 'principle of the best interests of the child' (UN, 1989, Art. 3, para. 1).

Interestingly, word usage forbids it to say 'I develop a child'. Correctly, the verb 'develop' should be used reflexively,[176] expressing what the 'subject' has developed by itself (i.e. 'the child develops with my help and guidance'). This is the way Socrates [177] understood education too: He described himself as a 'midwife in the service of learning' [178] (as cited in Plato, 1921, sect. 151b-c), seeing his task in assisting students to develop ideas and concepts out of themselves (D. M. Steiner, 2017a).

Against this backdrop of intrinsic learning, development—and education in general—become subjective and cannot be 'filled in' as one formats a computer for instance; this analysis leads to the view that human development has to evolve and unveil naturally—just like a rivulet finds its own course. According to Myers (2016) and Vygotsky (1934/1978), the learning process necessarily and primarily requires the learner's openness to learn and to develop him or herself further (i.e. an intrinsic motivation) in order for the learning experience to become meaningful and effective. This understanding is also reflected in the Chinese proverb: "Your teacher can open the door, but you must enter by yourself" (as cited in Herzberg & Herzberg, 2012, p. 16).

With the convention stating a focus on the maximum development of the child's "personality, talents and mental and physical abilities" (UN, 1989, Art. 29,

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[176] (reflexive verbs generally require a reflexive pronoun, i.e. *'to develop oneself'*)

[177] Socrates of Athens (469 – 399 BCE), classical Greek philosopher.

[178] Ipsissima verba: "I am the son of a midwife and have myself a midwife's gifts" (as cited in Plato, 1921, sect. 151b-c).

para. 1a), this prompts that learning and schooling, as emphasised in the convention, is understood to be developing various realms on different planes—as opposed to addressing the child solely intellectually. This interpretation suggests understanding 'fullest development' in a multi-layered, holistic, as well as subjective sense.

Plato already stated in *The Republic* that "the direction of the education from whence one starts is likely to determine the quality of what follows" (1969, sect. 4.425b-c), meaning that the quality of education, which a child receives, influences the quality of the child's development and his/her personality. By implication, this means that the child assimilates what it is presented with by its parents and teachers.

If we transfer and expand this idea onto the whole of the child's environment, this is what Vygotsky—2300 years later—came up with as *Social Constructivist Theory* (Vygotsky, 1934/1978). Emphasising the human being's social nature, he argued: "The nature of society must be viewed primarily as the determining factor in human behaviour. The whole concept of the child's cultural development depends on acceptance of this point" (Vygotsky, 1929/1977, p. 67). In my view, this is still applicable today. We know that the environment, to a great extent, contributes in shaping the young child's personality. In Chapter Ten, titled *The changing nature of knowledge — Epistemological and learning-theoretical problematisation* (on p. 287 et seqq.), I come to expand the current definition of environmental influences even further.

Moreover, the goal to enable and facilitate human development to the maximum extent possible, cannot be construed as a definite or static condition, as the concept of *Lifelong Learning* established (Aspin & Chapman, 2000; Hager, 2011). The practising of skills, for instance, only becomes beneficial over time. This analysis leads to the view that development itself is characterised by movement; by

ongoing, versatile movement: inner (mental/emotional) growth processes through individual realisation of external learning experiences. Such internalisations, according to Kolb's theory of *The Learning Cycle* (Kolb, 1973, 1984), are then followed by a change of thinking or attitude towards certain things/people and a change in the way of doing things. With time, this ongoing experiential learning process creates values (Vygotsky, 1934/1978).

In other words, according to Dougiamas (1998) and Vygotsky (1934/1978), values are personal insights that have proven themselves true and viable through individual learning experiences—which, in turn, have often emanated in dialectic with social learning experiences. Hence, the aspect of willing reflection and realisation is of prime importance in learning—just as wilful consent, following Myers (2016), is the crucial precondition in any psychological or psychotherapeutic setting. This line of thought suggests a need to conceive development in a processual manner.

An additional point of view may be that, just as one needs to practise a skill or practise with a tool in order to become good at it, one also needs to become good at 'dealing with oneself', interacting with others, experiencing one's culture, society, as well as animals and nature in order to accept and develop a (preferably loving) relationship to them. This leads over to the second developmental/learning sphere, identified above: the UNCRC's educational emphasis on the development of respect.

6.4.2 The right to develop respect for oneself, one's culture, and the world

Concerning the specifications made regarding the development of respect, I have identified and subdivided them as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 | The UNCRC's specifications on the development of respect, summarised in groups.

- Respecting one's own values (sect. 1c4)
- Respecting one's own identity (sect. 1c2)

Respecting oneself

- Respecting one's parents (sect. 1c1)

Respecting one's family

- Respecting one's language (sect. 1c3)
- Respecting the values of one's nation (sect. 1c5)

Respecting one's community & culture

- Respecting the values of different countries (sect. 1c6)
- Respecting Human Rights (sect. 1b1)
- Respecting fundamental freedoms (sect. 1b2)

Respecting different cultures

- Respecting the natural environment (sect. 1e)

Respecting the world

Following this, one can say that the pedagogical aim of the development of respect relates to the following four fields, shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 | Fields identified which the UNCRC's specifications on respect refer to.

Me

My Family, Community & Culture

Different Cultures

The World
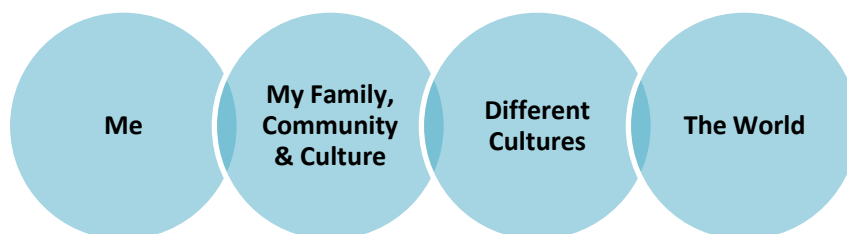
Respect in context

Demirkan (1997) pointed out the importance of respect in our society when he stated:

> I am wishing for encounters in respect for each other. ... Respect is an art of being, an aesthetic of understanding and comprehending. It is the knowledge of each other, the connecting, the concrete. Only someone who respects someone else won't want to rule or defeat him; neither his work nor his environment. Respect is the uppermost human right, a roof for freedom, responsibility, solidarity, love, care, esteem, equality, and fraternity. And it is the moral well of every democratic society. [Own translation] (paras. 8-10)

Respect, being an attitude that depends on the level of acquisition and internalisation by its carrier, comes in different shapes and sizes. This includes utmost or excessive forms of respect and disrespect, respectively. Following Dillon (2010) and Hassner (2016), in Figure 10, I have attempted to capture the various possible shapings of respect in an illustrative scale, with 'indifference' being the inexpressive 'neutral', and 'contempt' as well as 'obedience' (or subservience) being the two extremes on either end of the scale.

Figure 10 | Scale of the various possible shapings of 'respect'/'disrespect', through to extremes.
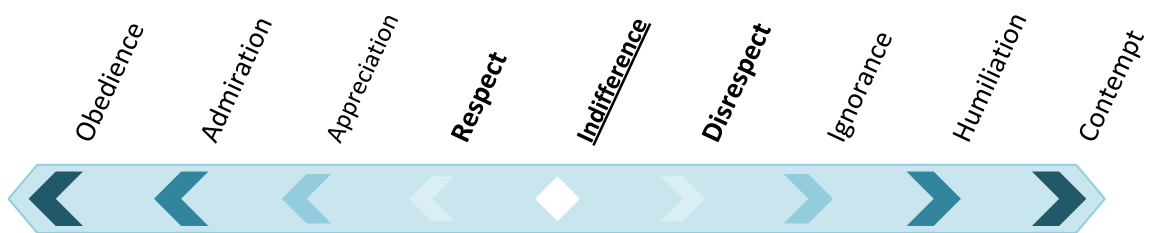
A similar scale can be created to illustrate the multifaceted shapings of self-respect (cf. Figure 11). In this case, following Dillon (2010) and Hassner (2016), 'insensibleness' constitutes the inexpressive 'neutral', and 'self-contempt' as well as 'narcissism' are the two extremes on either end of the scale.

Figure 11 | Scale of the multifaceted shapings of 'self-respect', including extremes.
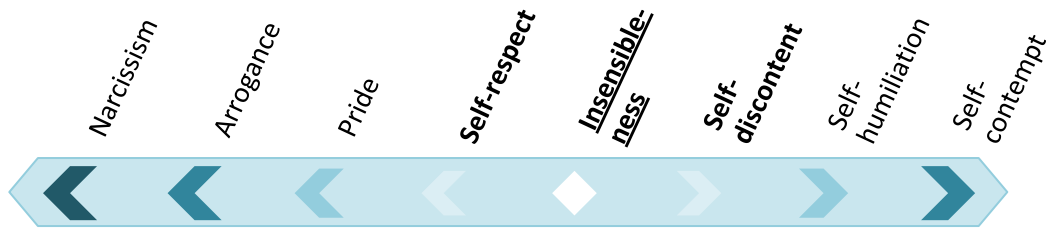
In sum, this analysis leads to the view that, inwardly and outwardly, respect is basically a balancing act between extreme love, or self-love, and extreme hate, or self-hate. In my view, it is about developing the right or healthy inner attitude towards oneself, others, and the world we live in (Hassner, 2016). Problems concerning humiliation and contempt/hatred for oneself or others, according to Hassner (2016), are of contemporary nature, and arguably stem from the concept of modern society itself and are propelled by modern society's driving force, namely, capitalist materialism. Hence, developing respect is not always easy or feasible (Hassner, 2016). Following this, the question is: How does all-encompassing respect develop in a young person and how—if at all—can that be facilitated in a compulsory setting, such as at school?

Developing 'respect'

Family, friendships, relationships, recognition, social security, social participation, education (in general), the feeling of belongingness, contentment, and the experience of travelling abroad, to name but a few; they all foster the development of respect. Briefly speaking, I suggest that the healthy fulfilment of Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* (Maslow, 1943) strengthens the development of respect. In the following, I

have explored and worked out the basic prerequisites in the development of respect, which I have structured in three sub-items:

a) Respect requires the openness to develop it.
b) The process of developing respect needs to be dialogic.
c) Respect needs to be concretely experienced in real-world situations.

These points have been elaborated in the following.

Openness

In order to accept and appreciate oneself or someone else, it is above all important to be open, rather than prepossessed. In practice, developing respect, according to Arendt (1958/2006), requires openness or open-mindedness for the new (phenomenon, person, culture, or thing). Research suggests that mindfulness classes at primary school level led students to be, amongst other things, more respectful towards each other (Bernay, 2012, 2014; Rix & Bernay, 2014).

Due regard for others' rights has to be unconditional in the sense of Carl Rogers' theory of *Unconditional Positive Regard* (1961),[179] implying that all people have the internal resources necessary for individual growth. In practice, this means: a positive, interested, and non-judgmental attitude, the will and ability to listen, try out, and explore, and the open-mindedness to see, reflect, make sense, and accept the new. By offering an overall acceptance of a human being, according to Myers (2016), it nurtures that individual's self-esteem and growth. Hence, practising respect is also about showing restraint. Following the above, I suggest the following differentiation:

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[179] Rogers (1961) acknowledges that the term was originally coined by Stanley Standal in 1954.

a) Open-mindedness [180] promotes respect, and

b) Mindfulness [181] promotes self-respect (and open-mindedness).

In sum, this comes close to what can be called an open and positive attitude to life. In an educational setting, the key approach to best facilitate an open attitude, I suggest, would be a 'culture of sharing'.

Dialogue

Following the above, respect is responsively object-generated as well as subject-generated. Hence, developing respect is a relational process, constituting emotional and interpersonal experiences. According to Dillon (2010), it only becomes cognitively founded in the form of judgements and beliefs once one's emotional experiences are brought into awareness. If, on the other hand, thoughts and emotions are left lingering in the unconscious, they may, based on ignorance, reinforce negative thoughts and lack of understanding.

Following this theorisation, I argue that respect can best be developed in interaction with others. This begins by exchanging different thoughts and opinions in a discussion, by taking on different roles or viewpoints, by writing essays and taking into account different positions, and by helping or working with others; in sum, by learning to accept different perspectives. I argue that, once it is 'lived', respect reciprocates itself. This aspect, that we 'learn from each other' and thereby effectively 'refine ourselves', expanded by the idea of reciprocal socio-cultural and environmental stimulus, has been elaborated in detail in Chapter Ten, titled *The changing nature of knowledge — Epistemological and learning-theoretical problematisation* (on p. 287 et seqq.).

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[180] (in the sense of outward impartiality)

[181] (in the sense of impartiality towards one's inner self)

Concrete experiencing

To begin with, it is important to note that the aims formulated in the UNCRC do not say knowledge 'about' human rights or knowledge 'about' nature and environment; they say 'respect for' human rights, and so forth. This implies the de facto developing of respect. As research on the formation of respect has shown, respect does not develop on the intellectual plane (Dillon, 2010). Respect comes from knowing, from interacting with, and experiencing something or someone in a positive way, which, once one processes and becomes aware of it, according to Dillon (2010), will be followed by an understanding and subsequent appreciating, valuating, and admiring of that person, group, or thing, including their qualities (cf. 'appraisal respect').

This suggests that respect for others has to be developed practically, by experiencing it. Theoretical knowledge of it, I argue, may not be enough—even if fully comprehended, as: One cannot fully respect what one does not know. By implication, this analysis leads to the view that real respect cannot be taught or instilled; an attitude of respect needs to develop intrinsically, from positive experience, and over time (cf. Dillon, 2010).

This is where the two developmental/learning spheres come back together: Both 'fullest development' and 'universal respect' cannot be taught directly; they can only be cultivated indirectly, over time. This is where constructivism comes in: Following both the theories of *Situated Constructivism* (Vygotsky, 1934/1978) and *Co-Constructivism* (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1934/1962), childhood is a self-directed and self-constructed 'becoming aware of one's own identity', interactively shaped and influenced by one's environment (cf. Bickhard, 1992; Bruner, 1986; Dewey, 1938/1998; Reusser, 2001; Wood, 1998).

How can that be facilitated in formal education? — First of all, I suggest that respect would not be suitable as a subject as such; however, it can be related to in most subjects. While an interactive workshop with experiential aspects, such as role plays for instance, may have a powerful impact and raise awareness, I argue that it would be even more beneficial if it was embedded in the basic scaffold of every lesson, as expounded by Sarna (1996, 1998). Following Sarna (1996, 1998), this can happen on many levels; for example by working in pairs, groups, whole-class, and individually, by sharing opinions; by respecting when other people speak; by discussing issues and deciding things democratically in class; by individualising learning activities and by giving students options to choose from; by encouraging students to express their thoughts and feelings in various creative ways; by creating lessons that integrate students of any race, sex, disability, religion, academic performance, or social background without discrimination; by encouraging mutual help and by preventing abuse or bullying; and by being respectful, open and honest as their teacher; by having a sympathetic ear for students' concerns whenever necessary, and by being fair, positive, understanding, and forgiving (Sarna, 1996, 1998). This allows for respect to be developed intrinsically by each individual. This approach is closely related to Socrates' *Maieutic Approach* (as cited in Plato, 1921; D. M. Steiner, 2017a). The necessity to practically experience respect, as elaborated above, opens up opportunities to be pedagogically creative.

In that respect, no other stage of development, I suggest, could be more suited for this to cultivate than early childhood; during which, inherently, children see and approach the world and its people with an ingenuous, loving nature (cf. K. Adams, 2012; Aitken, 2001; Allen, 2002; Guttenhöfer, 2011; Sorin, 2005; Sorin & Galloway, 2007; Thomson et al., 1995). Hence, non-judgemental openness on the part of the

children already exists. On the one hand, this may be seen as 'childish', but it can arguably also be seen as a natural talent in order to multiply one's already existing love and interest for the world and its people—an inborn (re)action pattern in order to develop self-confidence and resilience. This said, at later stages of development, there are of course other age-appropriate ways to address the matter, as outlined in the *Reardon Model of Human Rights Education* (Reardon, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c), as well as in Shiman (1993), and in Andreopoulos and Claude (1997).

In this respect, I suggest an approach, similar to the 'building blocks' for human rights education, proposed in Flowers, Bernbaum, Rudelius-Palmer, and Tolman (2000), which is also a core principle in Steiner Pedagogy (Kiersch, 2010; Richter, 2016): At early childhood and primary school level, I suggest that respect (in the broadest sense) is best practised/developed by 'doing' and 'living' it, which may be partly unwittingly. At intermediate school level, when students pass through the age of puberty (while still maintaining the initial atmosphere of respectful dealings), I suggest that the topic of respect best reaches students indirectly through the emotional level (i.e. through topics, stories, biographies, or real-life encounters that touch their feelings). At high school level, it is, in my view, most meaningful to address respect concretely by theorising it intellectually and on an even broader level. I have illustrated this approach in Figure 12.

On the basis of such a development-based, basic principle or basic approach, detailed indications and practical suggestions for subject teachers can be developed. Beyond that, a general understanding of how to establish and maintain a respectful atmosphere in one's classroom, should be ensured to be part of every teacher training.

Section summary

These specifications on respect can be summarised with 'learning or accepting to appreciate one's reality'; or, as expressed in the *Chicago Declaration Toward a Global Ethic*, a striving for inner composure, appreciation, tolerance, and love for the world (Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993). In sum, the central keywords around the development of respect are the guided opportunity to positive (socio-cultural/environmental) learning experiences, as one's level and ability to appreciate and respect is an expression of the relationship one has with others, the world, as well as with oneself. In other words, this problematisation leads to the view that the

process of personality development in the light of respect should ideally be identical with the successfully completed processes of socialisation and enculturation.

The goal of developing respect in children, concerning the points mentioned, in my view, is amongst the highest aims, one can set oneself in education. While critics have argued that practising of what, essentially, can be described as 'the right attitude', goes too far (cf. Lister, 1991), I would like to argue the contrary: In choosing to live in society—particularly a democratic one—and in choosing to educate their children in the public education system, parents have already made crucial decisions. Hence, respect can be understood as a fundamental value, a prerequisite in a democratic society, similar to social manners like courtesy, helpfulness, sincerity, sharing, cooperating, apologising, et cetera—all of which have to do with basic respect. Being internationally recognised and having been emphasised in basically all human rights treaties, I argue that developing respect can be assumed to be a desirable attitude with no adverse characteristics.

This said, I acknowledge that it is a thin line between healthy socialisation, enculturation, and learning to respect an authority as opposed to rebuke, standardisation, mistreatment, manipulation and victimisation of students, up to an indoctrinating socialisation. In reality, as has been substantiated by Kennedy and Kennedy (2004), Leone et al. (2003), Hyman and Snook (1999), McEvoy and Welker (2001), Piekarska (2000), Morrison and Skiba (2001), and Reinke and Herman (2002), many young people leave school with disrespect for their school, their teachers, and society—because of the way they have been treated by the education system. This suggests the importance to, apart from subject knowledge,

didactics, and educational theory, also train the teacher personality so that they are aware of and able to represent these values in the right way.

This analysis leads to the view that the UN's foundational indications on the development of respect allow for a broad spectre of pedagogical opportunities to open up (cf. e.g. Andreopoulos & Claude, 1997; Bloch & Merritt, 1993; Flowers et al., 2000; Reardon, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c; Sarna, 1996, 1998; Shiman, 1993), leaving room for local cultural characteristics to be considered in terms of its implementation.

In bringing the two developmental/learning spheres, addressed in sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2, back together, this problematisation has indicated that skill development, the development of mental/emotional faculties, and inner attitude go hand in hand and together shape one's personality. Respect, which includes kindness, tolerance, and modesty, is the precondition for friendships, relationships, and ultimately, happiness. I further argue that, being skilled in an encompassing variety of appropriate 'tools' (in the broadest sense), combined with good, respectful intentions, will lead to the expressed goal of 'being prepared for a responsible life in a free society' based on tolerance, equality, and friendship (UN, 1989, Art. 29, para. 1d). Combined with the personality development as described above, this results in an overall education of the entire human being.

6.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have theorised the *Right to Education* from a qualitative pedagogical perspective. The convention's wording has been analysed and reinterpreted philosophically in an effort to work out how far-reaching the

convention's implications can be understood in a qualitative pedagogical sense, including the freedom it allows for local pedagogical interpretations and adaptations. Theoretical findings suggest that, in order to realise the aims declared in the convention, some form of progressive social-constructivist educational approach, involving situated intrinsic learning experiences, may be appropriate and necessary.

While human rights education is explicitly mentioned, the implications noticeably go beyond 'learning about' the subject matter of human rights. Ever since, children's rights proclamations' foremost pedagogical aim was and is the aim to develop the entire human being, his/her personality and potentials to the maximum extent possible. Development, however, is a complex, multi-faceted—and foremost individual—process, which cannot be imposed on somebody. If it is imposed or forced upon, it may likely cultivate lack of freedom, aversion, and potentially lack of understanding in the young person, and will likely end up far from what 'fullest development' means.

In summary, this education-philosophical interpretation suggests that the UN's aims for 'fullest development of the child' and the 'development of respect' entail the following key implications.

It follows that quality education should be:

a) *Broad and holistic*
Recognising of the fact that human development does not take place in one dimension only, and therefore requires a multi-dimensional or holistic curriculum and approach to teaching/learning in order to introduce learners to a multitude of 'tools' (in the broadest sense).

b) *Learner-centred*
Situated, individualising, and inclusive in approach, respecting and starting where each individual is at, and applying individual capabilities as the measure (also reflected in the way feedback and evaluation is given).

c) *Experience-orientated*

Situated, applied, and open-ended or phenomenological so as to enable individual experiences and intrinsic, critical-, and social-constructivist learning to occur.

d) *Positive and patient*

Nurturing a culture of inclusion and positivity, based on acceptance, respect, trust, openness/authenticity, dialogue, and understanding while appreciating that development is a life-long process and that no stage is final.

e) *Solidary*

Maintaining a culture of inclusion, sociability, sharing, dialogue, discussion, democracy, and compromise.

f) *Environmentally inclusive*

Aiming to include society, culture, and nature as general 'environmental counterparts' and determining factors in the developmental and learning process.

In sum, this theorisation leads to the view that education is about discovering and cultivating one's potentials by being given the opportunity to positive, informative (socio-cultural and environmental) learning experiences, either by oneself or together with others (incl. guided reflection). Following this, I suggest to understand 'fullest development' as both 'having experienced, tried out, and learnt many different things' as well as 'having found one's foundation in life'.

This theorisation has also found that, as a whole, the UNCRC constitutes a framework of overriding values beyond any specific belief system, in the sense that Osler and Starkey (1994) expressed it: "Human rights provide an ethical and moral framework for living in a community, whether this be a class, a school, a village, a city, a nation state, a continent, or the global village itself" (p. 349). This higher aspirational plane, which the UN employs, I argue, guarantees the UNCRC's

neutrality and objectivity. On the other hand, it establishes a sort of 'world ethics' [182] in order to secure the peaceful co-existence and continuity of humanity.

Subsequently, it is eminently important that these fundamental international educational principles are being broken down and incorporated according to local socio-cultural circumstances. Hence, it is crucial that this ethical component, which the convention embeds, must not be lost in the translating of these ideals into practice. Theoretical findings show that, to develop the human being to the fullest of its potentials, is much more far-reaching and implies much greater profundity than a so-considered 'basic' education—as it refines one's basic attitude. In this spirit, Tomaševski (2001b) pointed out that

> the importance of the right to education reaches far beyond education itself. Many individual rights are beyond the grasp of those who have been deprived of education. ... Education operates as a multiplier, enhancing the enjoyment of all individual rights and freedoms where the right to education is effectively guaranteed, while depriving people of the enjoyment of many rights and freedoms where the right to education is denied or violated. (p. 10)

In this respect, I argue that education does indeed hold the key to freedom, equality, social justice and so forth, all of whom combined, in turn, 'unlock' fullest development; or, in the words of Nelson Mandela (2003, para. 13): "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world [for the better]."

Based on the above, I interpret the aim of the convention as highly responsible and truly 'inter — national'; simply by focussing on good, universally human values. If the *Right to Education* is to be taken seriously, the assumptions I have made here should become the basis for every curriculum and its didactical

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[182] (which Heimbach-Steins & Kunze (2007) referred to as 'social ethics')

approaches. In sum, this analysis leads to the view that the UNCRC should be seen as the overarching axiological [183] framework of education. It should become the universally valid standard of achievement—just as human rights form the basis for the constitutions of most UN member states (Shiman, 1993).

6.6   State of implementation of the right to education

Children's rights have never been more advanced than they are today. With the passing of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the most comprehensive children's rights composition ever produced was brought into being. It was subsequently pursued by UNESCO's *Education for All* agenda and implementation targets, which ran from 2000 – 2015 (UNESCO, 2016a). Another effort that included aspects of the implementation of the *Right to Education* were the United Nation's *Millennium Development Goals*, which were also due to be achieved in 2015 (United Nations, 2013). It's successor, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations, 2015) is the current UN resolution for the implementation of the UNCRC (amongst other goals).

As concerns the global state of implementation, which has been monitored in UNESCO's *Education for All — Global Monitoring Reports* (2000 – 2015), results have been—and continue to be—rather sobering (UNESCO, 2004, 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2016b). There appear to be substantial shortcomings, which include figures that have not been able to be changed over several years (UNESCO, 2004, 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2016b). In particular, the reports exhibited the following findings:

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[183] 'Axiology', from Greek ἀξίᾱ (*axiā*, 'value/worth') and –λόγος (–*logos*, 'reasoned discourse/logic') (Fahnestock, 2016; Rahe, 1994), hence, literally the 'logic of value', is the philosophical study of values with respect to 'ethics' and 'aesthetics'.

Early childhood education

In 2010, "around 28% of children under five suffered from stunting, and less than half the world's children received pre-primary education" (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 5). In 2014, amongst 3- to 4-year-olds, "children from the richest households [were] almost six times more likely to attend an early childhood education programme than those from the poorest" (UNESCO, 2016b, p. xviii). Pre-primary education was "free and compulsory for at least one year in only 38 countries" (UNESCO, 2016b, p. xviii).

Primary education

Globally, 61 million children did not have the opportunity to attend school and were not getting any formal education at all (UNESCO, 2012b). In other words, they are deprived of their right to education. Moreover, this number has been stagnating since 2008.[184] "Of 100 children out of school, 47 are never expected to enter" (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 5). As of 2014, "about 25 million children worldwide were not expected ever to attend school" (UNESCO, 2016b, p. 178).

Primary school attainment

The 2012 report also found that amongst the world's 650 million primary school children, 120 million did not reach grade 4, and an additional 130 million failed to learn the basics at school (UNESCO, 2012b). In other words: "As many as 250 million children could be failing to read or write by the time they should reach grade 4" (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 5).

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[184] By contrast, India's national efforts in dramatically reducing the number of out-of-school children have been praised: By 2008, 18 million fewer children have been out of school as compared to 2001 (UNESCO, 2012b).

Secondary education

Over 2008 – 2014, in high income countries, 84% of youth completed upper secondary school compared to 14% in low income countries (UNESCO, 2016b). In other words: "In low income countries, for every 100 of the richest youth who complete upper secondary education, only 7 do so amongst the poorest youth (UNESCO, 2016b, p. xviii). Altogether, in 2014, "263 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school around the world" (UNESCO, 2016b, p. 178).

Parity

In 2014, "63% of countries achieved gender parity in primary, 46% in lower secondary, and 23% in upper secondary education" (UNESCO, 2016b, p. xviii).

Adult literacy and numeracy

In 2014, 758 million adults could not read or write a simple sentence; 114 million of whom were aged 15 to 24, and nearly two thirds of the total number were women (UNESCO, 2016b). Between 1990 and 2010, the number of illiterate adults has dropped by only 12% (UNESCO, 2012b).

In sum, UNESCO (2012b) came to the conclusion that:

a) Improvements in early childhood care and education have been too slow. ...
b) Progress towards universal primary education is stalling. ...
c) Many young people lack foundation skills. ...
d) Adult literacy remains an elusive goal. ...
e) Gender disparities take a variety of forms. ...
f) Global inequality in learning outcomes remains stark. (p. 5) [185]

Concerning the state of implementation today, based on the above figures, there appear to be substantial disparities between super-national education-political

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[185] [numbering added]

aims and legislation, in contrast with educational practice and reality. Tee (2008) described this phenomenon in terms of a gap in the implementation process and the lens through which reality is perceived as a 'policy rhetoric—reality gap'. This theoretic-practical disparity exists with regard to two major aspects:

a) the provision of actual infrastructural basics (such as schools, qualified teachers, books, school busses, a guaranteed school place and guaranteed free education for all school-age children); and

b) the pedagogical quality.

The former divergence between the 'status quo' and the 'desired condition' (a), as developed above, is substantial. The latter, (b), which was the focus of this chapter, has in large part been neglected or has at most been addressed in highly advanced countries.[186]

In addition to that, 'quality' education—although originally defined differently—is often associated with either 'standards', that is, whether sufficient learning outcomes are reached (cf. Pritchett, 2006), or simply 'basic' education. However, as UNESCO (2016b) pointed out, "good quality education should not be equated with, or reduced to, learning outcomes" (p. 188). In 2004, UNESCO defined "literacy, numeracy and life skills, creative and emotional skills, values, [and] social benefits" (p. 36) as quality education (in relation to its outcomes for the learner). In 2016, the outcome of a quality school education has been defined as "learning achievement, critical thinking skills, collaborative skills, values and attitudes (including a better understanding of the world)" (UNESCO, 2016b, p. 188).

As a consequence of the above statistics, besides calling for increased funding, equal and better access to education for socially disadvantaged young

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[186] (or, to use UN classification, *More Economically Developed Countries* (MEDC)).

people and in deprived areas, and increased avail of ICT capabilities (UNESCO, 2012b), the 2012 report suggested the following changes in pedagogical focus and implementation:

a) Secondary school curriculum reforms should focus much more on developing in learners the capacity to solve problems. ...

b) [Secondary schooling] has to strike a balance between technical and vocational and general subjects. ...

c) Make upper secondary education more accessible ... and improve its relevance to work. ...

d) Appropriate recognition should be given to skills gained through alternative learning pathways. ...

e) Provide second-chance education for those [200 million young people] with low or no foundation skills. ...

f) Flexible opportunities should be offered to students who are at risk of dropping out. (p. 42) [187]

Notably, the suggested pedagogical improvements are characterised by their applied, creative, experiential, meaningful, and liberal nature in the very sense of 'quality education'. This analysis leads to the view that the UNESCO's (2012a, 2012b) proposed changes are associated with progressive educational approaches. These would have most likely found the approval of Albert Einstein, who regarded it as "the chief duty of the state to protect the individual and give him [or her] the opportunity to develop into a creative personality" (Einstein, 1960, p. 95). In reality however, I argue that, if at all, these proposed changes will get taken into account only slowly, as they affect the underlying and prevailing paradigm of schooling, as I elaborate in the chapter conclusion, below.

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[187] [numbering added]

6.7 Conclusion

The UN's laudable humanistic aim is still far from being accomplished. In its latest *Global Education Monitoring Report*, UNESCO (2016b) adjusted its projections insofar as that, on current trend, universal primary education will not be achieved before 2042, universal lower secondary completion not before 2059, and universal upper secondary completion not before 2084. Even rich countries, according to UNESCO (2016b), will struggle to achieve universal upper secondary completion by 2030.

Secondly, the entire scope or momentousness of the UNCRC remains in large part unrealised. This chapter's analysis leads to the view that the overarching problem is the following: The paradigm, which prevails in contemporary Western culture, namely materialist capitalism, promotes consumerism, which fuels the competition in the performance society, and this stands in contrast to humanistic-idealistic ideals that carry change, such as those in the UNCRC (for an in-depth analysis of this argument, see Chapter Seven: *Manifestations of current educational realities — A critical-phenomenological exploration* on p. 188 et seqq.). Tee (2008) argued that, based on the underlying dynamics of change and the interaction amongst the various actors at different levels of the system, laudable policy rhetoric may, to a greater or lesser extent, be compromised within the process of translation into practice. The qualitative problematisation of this topic led to the view that I share Tee's concern too.

This gap needs to be investigated and addressed systematically. Whether smaller, more realistic goals would be more sensible, and whether better guidance and improved accountability towards member states would be useful, remains to be

considered. Other ideas might be to promote topics such as 'human rights and world peace ethics' as part of teacher-training programmes, or to establish 'UNESCO teacher-training colleges' in developing countries, whose graduates can act as 'peace teachers' (comparable to 'peace ambassadors').

To conclude on a positive note, given the obligatory legal status the UNCRC has reached in nearly all countries of the world,[188] this high aspiration and favourable ideal the convention brings to expression, no doubt represents the right 'desired condition' to aim for.

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[188] As of 2017, 192 of the 193 member states of the United Nations—with the only exception being the USA—have ratified the convention (UN, 2017b).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Manifestations of current educational realities — A critical–phenomenological exploration

Introduction

In Chapter Five and Chapter Six, I have explored the significant developments, public education has undergone during the 20th century. These developments were significant advances: The role public education has adopted regarding both the 'right' to be educated as well as the 'obligation' to learn and study has become pivotal in and for modern society (Beck, 1986; Tippelt, 2003). The implementation of the right to education nowadays mostly finds its expression in state-run education systems.

In the following, I am giving a general account of the developments with a focus on the 21st century. The intention of this chapter is to explore, articulate, and theorise the underlying broader phenomena that shape and manifest current educational realities—hence the title of the chapter. These phenomena are important to explore to be aware of and better understand the influences and influencers, public education is confronted with, and to develop possible concepts of (counter)action. This exploration led to the following outline of the chapter:

7.1   Manifestations of current educational realities

The scope of interest of the manifestations of current educational realities have been limited to formal schooling systems. I start with early childhood education.

Prior to formal schooling, between 2-6 years of age, nursery school, kindergarten, or pre-school years are very common institutions in industrialised countries. Facilities are often privately run, fee-based, and thus optional. However, in some advanced countries,[189] such as Germany for instance, by law, every child is entitled to attend four years of *Kindergarten* (nowadays full-day-care centres) from the age of two, free of charge—if parents wish to make use of this service. Upon attaining the specified school starting age, school attendance, including the curricula taught, are widely compulsory at the elementary level in most countries and, in some,

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[189] By UN classification, Germany is considered a *More Economically Developed Country* (MEDC).

secondary education is available, with a worldwide average of 8-9 years of education [190] (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014a).

Subsequent to primary education comes some form of secondary (high school) education, followed by tertiary (college/university) education. However, in most developing countries,[191] access to secondary education is restricted as it is often only provided by private high schools which are generally very costly. Thus, for the most part, secondary education is not mandatory in many developing countries (UNESCO, 2016b). The same applies for tertiary education. With the exception at the forefront of the advanced countries,[192] where the social state principle reaches its peak and where university education is free for everyone,[193] obtaining a higher education degree often involves great costs, with tertiary education institutes based on either state-run or privately-owned business models. However, Article 28 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* clearly declares and intends forms of universal secondary education (including general and vocational education) be made available to all, worldwide, free of any charge (United Nations, 1989). As already discussed in the previous chapter, the United Nations continue to work towards this goal (UNESCO, 2016a; United Nations, 2013, 2015).

A breakthrough in acknowledging the individual's Right to Education was the move to *Educational Inclusion* or *Mainstreaming* during the 2000s (var. theorists, worldwide). Other developments in educational models since the 2000s included a further spreading of the idea of the 'environmental school', such as the

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[190] (with the upper and lower ends of the spectre ranging from a comprehensive 14 to a compact 5 years in duration (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014a))

[191] (or, by UN classification: *Least Developed Countries* (LDC) and *Least Economically Developed Countries* (LEDC).

[192] (or, to use UN classification, *More Economically Developed Countries* (MEDC)).

[193] (such as in Central European and Scandinavian nations, for instance)

Enviroschools Programme in New Zealand (The Enviroschools Foundation, New Zealand, 2001) and the *Green School Concept* in the United States (The Green Schools Alliance, USA, 2007). Various other models, promoting new, creative, or alternative approaches to formal or post-formal education, have also emerged. Amongst them: *Creativity Education* (Ken Robinson, United Kingdom, 2006), the *UnCollege Movement* (Dale J. Stephens, USA, 2011), *Thomas Jefferson* [leadership] *Education* (Oliver & Rachel DeMille, USA, 2000), and the *Communal Constructivist Theory* (Marilyn Leask, Sarah Younie, United Kingdom, 2001).

A major influence in the recent shaping of curricula and approaches to education has been popular culture itself. Since the 1990s, digital technologies have escalated—a development described as 'informatisation'. Data interchange around the globe has become faster and easier than ever before. The innovation of the *Information Age*, together with the opening of borders in Europe during the 1990s,[194] according to Kluver (2000) and Şoproni and Horga (2008), markedly stimulated internationalisation. These advancements, in turn, inevitably pushed for alignment of education systems in order to ensure comparability of qualifications with view to enhancing international mobility and thereby graduates' employability (such as in the *Bologna Process* for instance—a European tertiary education reform plan, adopted in 1999) (European Higher Education Area, 2008).

Informatisation has had a tremendous commercial impact around the world. The mid-1990s and 2000s are thus characteristic for the rise of a new economy, the *Knowledge Economy*, a term coined by the OECD in their same-titled report in 1996 (Lynch & Smith, 2005). According to Lynch and Smith (2005) and Lynch (2011), it

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[194] (cf. the *Schengen Agreement* of 1995, which led to the creation of a borderless Europe (European Communities, 2000)

represents the commercial utilisation of information; the production and trading of information in order to generate new 'knowledge products' and information services. The former 'realm of knowledge creation' has arguably transformed and expanded into a commercial 'knowledge processing industry'. One example for that is the invention of the *Massive Open Online Courses*, also known as 'MOOC', in 2008. While MOOCs have the capability to reach virtually infinite numbers of students, and may be a great solution for further education in remote areas, Peters (2013) argued that the highly commercially driven MOOC model was a form of 'disaster capitalism' in higher education with the potential to destabilise the entire tertiary sector. This is to point out that there are ethical and unethical ways of putting this new economy to use.

Following Peters (2013), the knowledge economy has turned information and knowledge into a marketable product—a problem already condemned by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Isocrates, and others, some two-and-a-half-thousand years ago: 'Genuine' philosophers despised the *Sophists* [195] for pursuing 'immoral business with knowledge' and for "merchandising in learning" (Plato, as cited in Kerferd, 2001, pp. 4-5) as opposed to the true 'seeking of wisdom' by means of philosophical contemplation (D. M. Steiner, 2012c).

Formal mainstream education in the 20th century was mainly based on the acquisition of knowledge. According to Lynch and Knight (2011), it has now become a branch of industry—which Lynch and Knight (2011) referred to as the "new learning industries" (p. 10). In arguing that "the term learning industries

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[195] A class of itinerant teachers or intellectuals in ancient Greece, teaching and training the skills of oratory and rhetoric as well as holding classes on various related subjects for the sons of affluent citizens of the Greek city-states, primarily in Athens.

transcends the limitations of a twentieth century 'schooling paradigm', signalling a variety of emerging understandings and technologies associated with learning and which together force a rethink on the what, where, when and how of learning [emphasis in the original]" (Lynch & Knight, 2011, p. 10), and R. Smith and Lynch (2010) have attributed it the potential for an "education revolution" (p. 105).

Alongside educational internationalisation and within the torrent of the new *Knowledge Economy* came the opportunity—and soon after the tendency—to benchmark across the globe. After the TIMSS [196] study had returned some surprising results in 1995, the large-scale PISA[197] study of 2000 revealed quite unexpected results for a number of countries (OECD, 2011a; Wiseman, 2014) and many governments within and beyond the OECD realised that their education systems, according to PISA criteria, may not be as excellent as they had believed them to be, as other participating countries seemed to be doing much better. Thus, for many OECD countries, it became obvious that something needed to happen—the question was *what* and *how*.

Further advancing educational internationalisation, along with the perceived need and pressure to score better in future benchmarking on the international stage, resulted in the realisation that education needed to be 'monitored', 'steered' and 'adapted' more proactively (Day & Smethem, 2009). As a consequence, the 1990s and 2000s have been characterised by numerous policy changes and education reforms around the globe (Day & Smethem, 2009). Reform measures implemented

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[196] *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS); an international student performance assessment conducted by the *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement* (IEA) in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015.

[197] *Programme for International Student Assessment*; a global student performance assessment conducted by the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD) in 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2015.

during the 2000s, which have been similar in a number of countries (cf. Day & Smethem, 2009; Sahlberg, 2015), can be identified and summarised under a number of keywords, shown in Table 8.

Table 8 | Consistent tendencies in educational reform measures worldwide, implemented during the 2000s (non-exhaustive). Table created based on findings presented in the meta-analytical research publication *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons Learned from PISA* (OECD, 2011b).

Area	Educational reform measure
1) Earlier care/schooling	
a) Extending the availability of institutionalised early childhood care;	
b) Expanding educational programmes in early childhood education;	
c) Lowering the school starting age.	
2) Longer schooling	
a) Expanding all-day school programmes;	
b) Increasing schooling hours and/or additional schooling.	
3) Equal schooling	
a) Committing to inclusive education;	
b) Changing the school structure to reduce the impact of socio-economic background;	
c) Support for children with special needs.	
4) Better teachers	
a) Improving the quality of teacher education;	
b) Creating new ways of entering teaching.[198]	
5) Better learning	
a) Reducing class sizes;	
b) Providing individualised approaches and support for all children;	
c) Introducing teacher aides.	
6) Intensified learning	
a) Cramming curricula with more as well as more demanding contents to be studied;	
b) Determining certain mandatory core subjects or subject combinations;	
c) Setting new, intensified focus areas;[199]	

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[198] (e.g. practice-based teacher-education programmes or university/school partnership programmes)

[199] (such as the triumvirate of 'reading, writing, and mathematics')

Area	Educational reform measure

d) Increasing the amount of homework.

7) Standardising schooling

a) Creating out-put orientated national education standards/curricula;

b) Creating centralised assessments based on the standards created.

8) Rewarding achievement

a) Increasing the use of incentives for students.

9) Licencing educational institutions

a) Creating mandatory licensure and certification procedures for preschools and schools as a way of quality assurance.

10) New management models

a) Increasing school principals' autonomy (local control/site-based management);

b) Increasing the use of incentives for teachers ('value-added modelling', 'merit pay').

11) Monitoring and controlling education

a) Creating capacities to gather and analyse performance data;[200]

b) Creating reporting frameworks (such as indicator-based national education reports);

c) Regular participation in comparative international studies (benchmarking).

In order to be able to measure and compare performance, knowledge and learning had to be broken down into a) identical units, that were b) measurable—better known as 'standards' or 'outcomes'. Thus, expedited with the intention of establishing 'equal opportunities' and of 'making education more effective', these policy changes' defining feature eventuated in the formulation and adoption of outcome-based standard curricula in some form or other (Harris & Herrington, 2006; Robinson, 2006; Vogel, 2010; Zeichner, 2010). Greenberg (1992) argued: "This is basically what the entire educational system the world over has done: quantify learning by breaking it up into measurable pieces—curricula, courses, hours, tests, and grades" (p. 24). The intention of wanting to compare student achievement

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[200] (student performance testing, teaching checks, performativity, 'value-added modelling', etc.)

(within as well as beyond national borders), arguably sped up and intensified the process of standardisation. Standardisation operates at the cost of diversity, spontaneity (such as the 'teachable moment'), and individual creativity, as has been shown by Glotz (1999), K. Thomas (2004), Robinson (2006), White and Lowenthal (2009), and Zeichner (2010).

In his analysis of education in Germany over the course of the 20th century, Glotz (1999), for instance, concluded that the German system's prominent strength was its 'diversity' and 'unique, varied culture'. For this reason, according to Glotz (1999), "any standardising academisation would be a weakening [own translation]" (p. 162) of this sophisticated system. Following Glotz (1999) on the predominant concerns for education, I have argued elsewhere, that

> amidst the hype about standardisation, in great effort to 'measure' the value of our education with the intention to score in international 'charts', our schools, teachers, and consequently students ... [are running the risk of becoming] characterless, with the genuine needs of the developing child, such as social interaction or experiential learning, as well as its individual—creative—potentials as a motor for life, being ignored. There is a difference between 'standardisation' and 'standards'. (D. M. Steiner, 2012a, p. 5)

This controversial question—or arguably obsession—to 'quantify' and 'measure' education is further discussed in Chapter Nine.

An outcome-focussed education system needs continuous monitoring to ensure that scheduled outcomes are being reached, and consequences if they are not (see, for instance, Ball (2000, 2001, 2003)). Thus, the reform surge of the standards movement was soon followed by performance-based or 'accountability' reforms [201] in the 2000s (Harris & Herrington, 2006), "adding new measures of outcomes and

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[201] (such as the *No Child Left Behind* accountability reform in the USA in 2002, for instance)

direct consequences for low performance" (Harris & Herrington, 2006, p. 210). In other words, after learning had been standardised by means of 'national standard curricula', teaching became standardised by means of 'teacher professional standards'.

With the innovation of information communication technologies pressuring education systems and policy-makers for modernisation, I argue that public education did not have much of a choice but to jump on the commercial bandwagon (cf. Holley, 2002; McKenzie, 1999).[202] The way out was 'monitoring'. Consequently, the changes most administrations have come to implement were generally characterised by the tendency to establish structures of continuous measurability and external controllability of every agent 'performing' in the system, including both students and teachers (Day & Smethem, 2009). A big stride towards performance monitoring was the introduction of *High-Stakes Testing* in the USA, as the Glossary of Education Reform elucidates: High-stakes testing is applied

> most commonly for the purpose of accountability. ... [meaning] that test scores are used to determine punishments (such as sanctions, penalties, funding reductions, negative publicity), accolades (awards, public celebration, positive publicity), advancement (grade promotion or graduation for students), or compensation (salary increases or bonuses for administrators and teachers). [Bracketing in the original] (S. E. Abbott, 2014, para. 1)

The data collected allowed for federal states, districts, cities, townships, and individual schools to be evaluated and ranked, and a culture of what was to become known as 'benchmarking' arose. The same took place on an international level when national systems of education were evaluated. Following this, educational

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[202] (also cf. McKenzie's (1999) and Holley's (2002) elaboration on 'technology binge')

performance testing and ranking became generally—and arguably undoubtedly—accepted as *the* tool and measure of and for 'quality' in education. Although empirical international educational studies have been carried out since the early 1960s (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2011), international benchmarking has turned into a popular political instrument of comparing and competing with countries for educational 'excellence' and associated economic ascendancy. Subsequent international performance tests during the first one-and-a-half decades of the new millennium included: CivEd,[203] SITES,[204] PIRLS,[205] TEDS,[206] TALIS,[207] ICCS,[208] ICILS,[209] and ECES,[210] amongst numerous state-internal performance tests introduced by many countries around the world. Aziz and Abdullah (2014) termed the present performance ranking practice a "global benchmarking 'obsession' [emphasis in the original]" (p. 499).

7.2   On global 'knowledge wars'

One example of a nationwide realignment of educational policy and call for competition arose in the United States of America. In realising that "in a 21st-century world, education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success—it is a prerequisite" (The White House, 2009, para. 2), in 2009, former U.S. President Barack Obama launched *Race to the Top*, a multi-billion dollar contest staged

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[203] *Civic Education Study*, conducted by the IEA in 1999.

[204] *Second Information Technology in Education Study*, conducted by the IEA in 1999, 2001, and 2006.

[205] *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*, conducted by the IEA in 2001, 2006, and 2011.

[206] *Teacher Education and Development Study*, conducted by the IEA in 2008 and 2013.

[207] *Teaching and Learning International Survey*, conducted by the OECD in 2008 and 2013.

[208] *International Civic and Citizenship Education Study*, conducted by the IEA in 2009.

[209] *International Computer and Information Literacy Study*, conducted by the IEA in 2013.

[210] *Early Childhood Education Study*, conducted by the IEA in 2017.

amongst individual U.S. states in competition for educational funding. It succeeded the *America Competes Act* of 2007. To qualify for the competition, states were required to adopt a set of systemic reforms. Then President Obama proclaimed:

> America will not succeed in the 21st century unless we do a far better job of educating our sons and daughters. ... And the race starts today. ... If you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools—your state can win a Race to the Top grant that will not only help students outcompete workers around the world, but let them fulfil their God-given potential. (As cited in The White House, 2009, para. 1)

Within the overall goal of raising achievement and closing gaps in order to prepare American students to succeed (or, in Obama's words, 'outcompete' others) in the global economy, criteria were:

a) adopting rigorous (internationally benchmarked) *Common Core State Standards* and high-stakes assessments,
b) building data systems that measure student progress and support instruction,
c) improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on 'value-added' performance evaluation,
d) lifting restrictions on charter schools, and
e) turning around the lowest-performing schools (The White House, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

The objectives of Race to the Top have been described as "one of the world's most ambitious education reform agendas" (OECD, 2011b, p. 3). Funding incentives prompted many U.S. states to change their policies in order to make their applications more competitive: 48 out of 50 states adopted Common Core State Standards for K-12 (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). Despite severe criticism (National Opportunity to Learn Campaign, 2010; Peterson & Rothstein, 2010; Ravitch, 2010a, 2010b), the Obama Administration managed to align most

states to nationwide educational standards and assessments and to a nationwide system of measuring learner, teacher, school, district, and state performance. In other words, Race to the Top involved a wiring up and technological 'co-optation' of the U.S. education system into an enormous 'education data system'. This was implemented with regard to centralised electronic controllability and steerability of the education sector. The central question here is, whether predefined outcomes and rigorous quantitative measuring of achievement can genuinely define and increase quality or whether these changes are going to transform an entire sector into some kind of steerable apparatus instead?

Following Ball (2000, 2001, 2003) and Tuinamuana (2011b), I argue, that in standardising/predetermining learning outcomes for students and teachers, in centralising examination procedures, in intensifying the measuring and electronic monitoring of student progress, and in creating external steering (or interfering) structures, individual student, teacher, and school responsibility (including the possibility to creative self-initiative) is being deprived. Everyone in the system is expected to perform—or rather deliver—according to the standards required of them by policy-makers. The reason? If everyone performs exactly as required, arguably, the outcome becomes calculable. Such a focus on only what is calculable shifts the educational gaze from such central and essential tenets as freedom and citizenship. Potentially adverse impacts, such as those of unfreedoms, are discussed in depth in sections 7.5, 7.8, 7.10, and 7.11.

In proclaiming that "in a world where countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow, the future belongs to the nation that best educates its people, period", Obama (as cited in Quaid, 2009, para. 8) took a firm stand. This example of current U.S. policy illustrates that its aim is not only about modernising

and improving its education system; it also represents the United States' political aim and struggle for global economic supremacy (P. Brown et al., 2008).

The implementation of this U.S. policy followed declarations made prior to that in various other parts of the world. The *Lisbon Agenda*, for instance, had already stated that it sought to make the European Union "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Commission, 2003, as cited in P. Brown et al., 2008, p. 131). Likewise, Britain's former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, was quoted as having said in 2004: "If we are to succeed in a world where offshoring can be an opportunity ... our mission [is] to make the British people the best educated, most skilled, best trained country in the world" (as cited in P. Brown et al., 2008, p. 133). Against this backdrop, 21st-century education policy seems like a politically-motivated 'race to the top'. P. Brown et al. (2008) have captured this development, noting that

> it is no longer the qualities of individual students within national systems that are benchmarked, but the quality of these national education and training systems as a whole. ... Nations compete for ideas, skills and knowledge that contribute to economic advantage by 'out-smarting' economic rivals. [Emphasis in the original] (p. 133)

This problematisation leads to the concern that, today, many a country's education sector has turned into a 'high stakes battlefield'—a problem that was to be expected. Peters stated in the early 2000s that "in the age of knowledge capitalism the next great struggle after the 'culture wars' of the 1990s will be the 'education wars' [of the 2000s], a struggle not only over the meaning and value of knowledge both internationally and locally, but also over the means of knowledge production [emphasis in the original]" (2003, p. 165). This understanding and

instrumentalisation or misappropriation of education has had and continues to have its influence on the world. Thus, I describe the 2010s as the 'era of the knowledge wars'.

Against the backdrop of these developments, it becomes clear that education policy has always been a political tool—and, as this problematisation suggested, increasingly so today. In other words, education has arguably never been an end in itself.

In the following, I look at the effects of this at practitioner level in order to articulate and theorise the underlying phenomena that shape the current manifestations of educational realities, and to further develop an approach to education for the 21st century.

7.3   On teacher professional standards

The impact of standardisation, systems of performance control, demanding of accountability, and performance ranking, as Ball (2003) illustrated, is significant:

> It requires individual practitioners to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations. To set aside personal beliefs and commitments and live an existence of calculation. The new performative worker is a promiscuous self, an enterprising self, with a passion for excellence. (p. 215)

To put it another way, the same destiny that students had to acquiesce since the late 1990s onwards in the form of standardisation has now also come upon teachers in terms of performativity. Bloomfield (2006) pointed out that these new policy directions have caused a 'paradoxical dilemma' that teacher education was confronted with globally: the expectation "to provide a supply of passionate, innovative, flexible, context responsive teachers capable of functioning as creative

knowledge producers [who, at the same time, can] ... satisfy the demands of a political and policy climate that favours consistency, effectiveness and accountability" (as cited in Tuinamuana, 2011b, p. 8). This is indicative that the—nearly opposing—character attributes of the 'creative educator' and the 'performing public servant' do not harmonise well, and various studies speak of 'tensions', 'dilemmas' (e.g. A. Craft, 2005) and a "collision of creativity and performativity policies" (Chappell, 2008, p. 94). Indeed, Comber and Nixon (2009) found that many teachers they interviewed

> spoke of ways in which their work was shaped by the corporate discourses of 'reform' and 'quality' associated with standardised testing, the quantification of 'quality', and the disciplinary discourses of surveillance and policing which resulted in their having to complete and lodge endless forms and records. (As cited in Tuinamuana, 2011b, p. 8)

This aforementioned research indicates that, what is referred to as 'teacher professional standards', often has an imposed and enforced element to it and, realistically, is more likely to resemble 'accountability demands' and 'performativity quotas' rather than 'quality guidelines' for teaching practitioners. Jeffrey, Troman, and Zezlina-Phillips (2008) referred to this "new managerialism" (Tuinamuana, 2011a, p. 77) to be generating "a culture of performativity" (p. 2). Overall, Tuinamuana (2011b) came to the conclusion that accountability measures were likely to "impact negatively on the 'quality' that they are designed to effect in practice [emphasis in the original]" (p. 8).

Hence, the reform movement of the 2000s was ambiguous: Although part of the reforms were indeed learner-focussed, in large part, expected outcomes had de facto been predefined and performance monitoring structures for both students and

teaching professionals had been put in place (Day & Smethem, 2009; Zeichner, 2010). The 2000s can thus be referred to as the beginning of the 'accountability era'.

As a consequence of this education-political decision-making and the global concatenation of circumstances (i.e. informatisation that led to educational globalisation, which, in turn, led to accountability reforms and global educational benchmarking), the domain of education has been drawn into a worldwide competition, involving everyone in the sector: the pupils, students, teachers, principals, lecturers, and professors, as well as schools, regions, and nations. This view is based on arguments made by (but not limited to) P. Brown et al. (2008), R. Smith and Lynch (2010), Harris and Herrington (2006), Lynch (2011), and Day and Smethem (2009).

Moreover, the measures of performativity have brought further consequences in their wake: Bloomfield (2006) found that "increasing demands to be publicly 'calculated' will induce on a daily basis in teachers' lives, responses that align more closely to 'getting by' than to the revitalisation of a profession [emphasis in the original]" (as cited in Tuinamuana, 2011a, p. 78). Ball (2003) found that while accountability and performativity measures may constitute an opportunity to success for some, for the majority, they were more likely to "portend inner conflicts, inauthenticity and resistance" (p. 215), driving practitioners to "choreographed performances" (Webb, 2006, p. 203) and "teachers' fabrications" (p. 206) in order to "respond to the flow of surveillance used to monitor them" (p. 206) and "to satisfy accountability demands" (p. 203). In 1991, Smith had shown that external student testing caused "teachers [to] experience negative emotions" (p. 8) as they "believe[d] that scores are used against them (despite the perceived invalidity of the tests themselves) [bracketing added]" (p. 8) and were determined "to do what is necessary

to avoid low scores" (p. 8). Tuinamuana (2011a) referred to this attitude change as a reaction in regard to "playing the game of being a teacher within their own boundaries [emph. removed]" (p. 78). Ball (2003) therefore concluded that "performativity produces opacity rather than transparency as individuals and organisations take ever greater care in the construction and maintenance of fabrications" (p. 215).

Advancing capabilities of new media, coupled with the presumed right to freedom of expression, have reached a point that enabled the public to evaluate schools and universities as well as individual teachers and professors on rating platforms on the internet. This, and certain teacher evaluation models, such as *Value-Added Modelling* (meaning: using students' test scores in order to 'measure' a teacher's effectiveness) have been shown by research to be broadly perceived as societal and occupational 'over-surveillance' and 'over-evaluation' (cf. Baker et al., 2010; D. Goldstein, 2014; M. L. Smith, 1991; T. Walker, 2013).

To summarise the basic developments, governmental control and prudential regulation in education have altogether risen tremendously since the 2000s (de Bellis, 2013; Tuinamuana, 2011a, 2011b; Zeichner, 2010) and transient politics of re-regulation back and forth—arguably nearly after every new study/ranking—have demonstrably upset, outfaced, and disappointed those doing the work in the classrooms in many places (Ball, 2003; Day & Smethem, 2009; D. Goldstein, 2014; Webb, 2006). Hence, it comes as no surprise that the education policy trend of the last two decades has widely been perceived by practising educators as 'over-regulation' (Ball, 2003; Day & Smethem, 2009; D. Goldstein, 2014; S. Thomas, 2008; Tuinamuana, 2011b; Webb, 2006), with teacher job satisfaction in the USA,

for instance, "plummet[ing] from 62 to 39 percent [between 2008 and 2012]" (D. Goldstein, 2014, p. 3).

7.4   A look at the nature of the discourse

A principal obstacle to over-regulation, for instance through professional standards, becoming accepted is when it is introduced under false pretences. Bloomfield (2006) argued that "standards are presented as 'frameworks of professional guidance and statements of expertise', but at the same time act as 'technologies of control employed in the service of accountability' [emphasis in the original]" (as cited in Tuinamuana, 2011a, p. 78). If introduced in the right way and if commonly accepted and valued by practitioners, standards can act as quality principles and thus can become guarantors for quality. If, on the other hand, standards do not get practitioners' approval (because they appear to be controlling or unnecessary, for instance) they tend to be seen as the 'inevitable evil' and merely act as 'productivity enforcers'—which may not guarantee quality. For example, standards research has now shown that "there is a real dilemma between a desire for 'quality', and a niggling awareness that institutionalising [and enforcing] standards in particular ways may not always bring about this [hoped-for] quality [emphasis in the original]" (Tuinamuana, 2011b, p. 8).

Against this backdrop, Tuinamuana (2011a) argued that accountability reforms have been implemented under the guise of certain discourses. Those were: 'common-sense', 'professionalism and quality', 'managerialism/performativity', 'strategic manoeuvring' (Tuinamuana, 2011a) as well as "liberal-humanist human rights discourses" (Zeichner, 2010, p. 1544), such as: 'Equal Opportunities', 'No Child Left Behind', 'Education for All', 'Quality Education', and others. Both Sachs

(2003) as well as Tuinamuana (2011a, 2011b) have claimed that teacher professional standards and accountability discourses have been led unilaterally and uncritically.

The overarching ideologies from which accountability and standards-centred policies have been derived, according to Tuinamuana (2011a, 2011b), are *Neo-Liberalism* and *Instrumental Rationality*; or what Zeichner (2010) termed "hyper-rationality" (p. 1547)—which corresponds to "the wide influence of ... neoliberal, new managerial, and neo-conservative thinking" (p. 1544) as the prevalent symptom of our times. These ideologies and this thinking, expedited by political agendas, according to Zeichner (2010), have exerted a significant influence on the above discourses. Here, performativity "is a new mode of state regulation which makes it possible to govern in an 'advanced liberal' way [emphasis in the original]" (Ball, 2003, p. 215). This "new managerialism in education is a form of management that emphasises efficiency and effectiveness using techniques and values appropriated from the business sector. It functions in support of a neoliberal economic agenda" (Tuinamuana, 2011a, p. 77). Indeed, this aimed at neoliberal objective of the new 'performative worker' reminds one of a post-industrial continuation of the Prussian *Beamte* (German, transl. 'public officer') (Rothbard, 1999) and Max Weber's *Berufsmensch* (German, lit. 'person of vocation') (cf. Weber, 1905/2013).

The reason that accountability and professional standards reforms became reality in education systems of most countries around the world in such a short period of time, according to Zeichner (2010), was due to the reason that they were premised on and propelled by the economic model that has become prevalent across the globe: "neoliberal corporate capitalism" (p. 1544). Following this, Sachs (2003) and Tuinamuana (2011a, 2011b) have argued that the discourses and reforms,

implemented since the beginning of the new millennium, were driven by economic-political agendas rather than academic-scientific insights.

In 2005, Lefstein put forward his theory of an "instrumental rationalisation of education" (p. 339); and, following the above problematisation, I venture to argue that these measures of standardisation, performativity, and accountability were systematic strategies to establish control mechanisms in order to be able to market public education and regulate it according to market trends. Hence, in accordance with Peters (2003), Sachs (2003), Lefstein (2005), and Tuinamuana (2011a, 2011b), intentions can be described as a 'controllable instrumentalisation' of the education sector with intent to obtain political supremacy on the basis of knowledge capitalism (cf. sect. 7.2, *On global 'knowledge wars'*, addressed on p. 198 et seqq.). Comparison of the principles of standardised, outcome-based education with the characteristics of commercialised learning, indicates important similarities. Notably, knowledge has been broken down into modularised, marketable units. Instead of creating an 'independent educational infrastructure for a knowledge society in the 21st century', as called for by the UNESCO (2005, 2010), neoliberal education policy has arguably turned many countries' education systems into what I call 'laisser-faire-principled education industries'. In other words, what has been a 'public good' has been transformed into 'marketable assets'.

Following the critique of neoliberal education (see for instance Ball, 2001; Ball, 2003; Peters, 2011; Tuinamuana, 2011b; Zeichner, 2010), this new 'market', by its neoliberal economic nature, is indicator-controlled, regulated (i.e. economy-driven and authoritative), has limited 'opportunities' (i.e. predefined, outcome-based standards), and is highly competitive and selective (accountability/performativity measures). This explains why the neoliberal education sector is characterised by an

increasingly pressured atmosphere, essentially promoting an antisocial 'dog-eat-dog' mentality amongst both students and teachers. In 1989, Sykes and Elmore had identified that performativity- and accountability-focussed reforms "contribute to school climates that are profoundly anti-educational" (p. 91). This transformation of learning into marketable economic units, I call a 'neoliberal commercialisation of the education sector' (cf. Noble, 1998). Taken as a whole, it may arguably be viewed as a 'knowledge-capitalistic instrumentalisation of education'. Ironically, in economic terms, it is being accounted for as 'successfully increased efficiency'. However, a legitimate question that this thesis asks is: at what cost? Despite its 'economic value', does this not deviate from the basic premise that education is about learning with the purpose to develop oneself? For that reason, from a critical-pedagogical perspective, these strategic policy redirections since the 2000s can be regarded as highly problematic.

7.5   The concept of 'meeting targets' — Progress or regression?

While it may be beneficial to follow standards that ensure a certain quality (OECD, 2011b; Vogel, 2010), a deeper look at the concept of *Outcome-Based Education* reveals several problems.

Outcome-focussed systems are characterised by hierarchical, authoritative, controlling, and penalising (or, if indicated: rewarding) attributes (Peters, 2011), representing an 'obligation to provide', instead of trusting in a person's abilities, responsibility, creative potentials, and instincts. Hence, wide parts of the neoliberalised economic world can be said to be functioning according to a behaviouristic model, fundamentally based on surveillance and reward or punishment (Peters, 2011). A focus on outcome, as the name implies, predetermines

or 'standardises' the outcome, principally meaning: Everyone has to reproduce exactly the same product. In economic terms, this common approach is referred to as 'management by objectives'.

More closely examined, in outcome-focussed systems, the 'person' that does the job—including 'how' he or she executes it—does not really matter as long as specified targets are being reached on schedule. While this makes sense if one thinks in a materialistic mass production kind of agenda with regards to consistency of quality and so forth; this way of thinking does not make sense in education where the only thing that is meant to be 'produced' is individual development.

Following G. J. J. Biesta (2016), quite the contrary may be the case: In monitoring and supervising teachers, the so-called 'human factor'—including any 'element of uncertainty'—may be eliminated from the schooling scenario. Individuality, it seems, is not intended and therefore not valued in education; thus nipping any potential creative process in the bud. The goal is a smoothly running system of continuous, obedient performance and delivery with as few interruptions as possible. In accordance with Noble (1998, 2003) and Peters (2014), I argue that, today, we are closer to a factory model of education—for teachers and students—than we have ever been before. This has significant consequences regarding teachers' fundamental attitude to work and students' concept of and attitude to learning.

7.6   Restrictions to teaching

An interesting trend in relation to the above is the following: Following Gundem (2004) and Langer, as cited in Pohlers (2015), I argue that, since the 2000s, a tendency towards what I call a 'pluralism of didactics' could be observed;

particularly in the Anglosphere:[211] Teachers are increasingly allowed to teach whichever way suits them best. However, due to the unambiguous nature of outcome-focussed instruction, this apparent freedom of choice of method has its drawback. I believe, it is predicated upon the very quantitative economic premise stated above, true to the motto: 'As long as projected outcomes are being reached, it does not matter how you get there'. This outcome focus has severe repercussions on the quality of teaching as it is setting the wrong parameters. With numerous teaching restrictions, time restrictions, minimum learning and examination targets as well as administrative burdens, teachers are put under enormous pressure to perform.

In an extensive qualitative study on the effects of external testing on teachers, carried out in 1991, Smith found that "testing programmes substantially reduce the time available for instruction, narrow curricular offerings and modes of instruction, and potentially reduce the capacities of teachers to teach content and to use methods and materials that are incompatible with standardised testing formats" (M. L. Smith, 1991, p. 8). C. P. Brown (2010) was able to confirm these results by independently reaching very similar conclusions.

To problematise this further, teachers are at risk to primarily and inevitably mainly be interested in delivering the subject matter; meaning: to cover the required textbook contents with view to producing successful test results. These conditions may also imply that, in class, the teacher might arguably not necessarily be open for new or different views on the subject. In other words, out of necessity, teaching efforts, teaching variety, and therefore teaching quality, are at risk to decrease to the

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[211] A split between the Anglo-Saxon tradition of curriculum studies and the continental European tradition of didactics goes back to cultural differences between the United Kingdom and continental Europe in the 19th century. According to Gundem (2004), these differences have impacted on education in the Anglosphere until today.

least time-consuming minimum so that teachers are able to reach and comply with externally defined targets.

Not uncommon in the economic world of today, this same pressure to perform has forced individuals, proprietors, and companies to resort to potentially unethical practices in order to survive and make ends meet—hence the present-day discourses on corporate social and ethical responsibility and whether economic competition destroys ethical behaviour (Daft & Marcic, 2017; Omenugha & Oji, 2008; Shleifer, 2004; Tran, 2015). The same has started and continues to happen in education (as I have elaborated in sect. 7.3 on p. 202 et seqq.).

Despite a theoretical freedom of choice of methods, the foregoing problematisation leads to the concern that teaching has returned to teacher-centred instruction and testing, based on conservative curricula. This switch back to basics, arguably constitutes a major regress. In my opinion, outcome-based education directs the teacher's focus and attention away from the student's actual learning process; it nips creativity and individual development in the bud. This development is the 'natural' consequence of an outcome-based understanding and system of education (cf. C. P. Brown, 2010; M. L. Smith, 1991). Effectively, pedagogical freedom and choice of methods have been restricted.

As a result of this return to a teacher-centred performance in the classroom, issues like 'classroom management' become necessary in order to keep discipline and order because students are more likely to struggle to engage—a relationship which Bernheim (1898) pointed out a century ago. As significant as has been the impact on teachers and teaching quality, there will also be a long-term effect on students, which I theorise in detail in Chapter Nine: *In touch with reality? — Philosophical problematisation*, on page 256 et seqq.

7.7   The technology 'issue'

In addition to the above, Karich, Burns, and Maki (2014), Latta (2014), Buckingham (2007), Holley (2002), and Tamim, Bernard, Borokhovski, Abrami, and Schmid (2011) have substantiated that teaching is nowadays often overly influenced by instructional technology and e-learning tasks—often mostly depending on the teacher's 'preference'.

Besides benchmarking, I argue that technology use is the second development, which has been comprehensively accepted. Both Holley (2002) and Buckingham (2007) have found that in almost every educational setting, technology use (incl. e-learning tasks at home) are seen to equal 'quality education'.

In 2000, Angell put forth an argument for the contrary, stating: "The world is suffering from a technology binge and a mindless belief in the virtue of IT ... computer technology is often considered culturally neutral, but the reality is, that it is highly value ridden and intellectually imperialistic" (as cited in Holley, 2002, p. 113). Evidence in support of Angell's argument has substantiated in the last one-and-a-half decades: It has by now been fairly well established that both the efficiency and the pedagogical appropriateness of learning-based technologies are very low and, in some cases, non-existent; as evident in a recent meta-analysis (Karich et al., 2014) and a large meta-meta-analysis (Tamim et al., 2011).

Bita (2016) and Richtel (2011) have both substantiated that some prestigious schools around the world have already become weary of the technology craze. The schools for instance argued that the laptops mostly distracted learning and decided to remove them again from their classrooms (Bita, 2016; Richtel, 2011).

While this explanation certainly asks for a more precise differentiation of the issue, a further large-scale study of schooling cultures, conducted in 2013, concluded that it was a collaborative learning-orientated culture that makes a positive difference to student outcomes rather than the promoting of particular digital devices (Anrig, 2013). Anrig found that "none of the studies [on successful schools and good teaching] identify technology as decisive. ... Where technology makes a difference, it tends to do so in places with a strong [collaborative] organisation dedicated to improving teaching and where students closely engage with teachers and one another" (as cited in Rotella, 2013, p. MM26). In places where students' tablet PCs allowed for school-wide interaction, the device managed to enhance student learning; whereas, if students focussed on the device in isolation, the impact was much lower (Anrig, 2013). A similar issue was evident where behavioural regimes predominated. In other words, the relationships between the people in a school, according to Anrig (2013), are of fundamental importance.

Following Anrig (2013), in 2015, the OECD published a comprehensive education report on the topic of instructional and learning technology in schools, titled *Students, Computers and Learning* (OECD, 2015). The report makes certain links between too much technology and falling literacy and numeracy skills. In places, the report is quite explicit about the concerns that have been found: "The report makes clear, all students first need to be equipped with basic literacy and numeracy skills so that they can participate fully in the hyper-connected, digitised societies of the 21st century" (OECD, 2015, p. 202). Some students were reported to being weary of teacher-centred teaching, copying off the board, and ticking answers in quizzes. Besides technical basics, such as how to search more effectively, interestingly, the report points out that young people wanted to be taught new, hands-

on, interpersonal opportunities to problem-solve, to team-work, to do real-world project-based enquiries and so forth (OECD, 2015)—in which technology, according to the OECD, does no doubt have its place. Hence, I agree with Anrig's (2013) conclusion: Technological devices and online resources cannot replace human interaction and cooperation.

This outlook is intended to mention the issue and to point out the concerns with instructional technology use and e-learning, and to delineate the trend—which is the purpose of this chapter, and the thesis as a whole. To evaluate the issue of instructional technology in a more differentiated form, goes beyond the scope of this study, as it could easily serve as topic for a separate thesis.

7.8   A profession's identity at risk?

For this thesis, the foregoing deliberations lead to the question: What is at risk here? In this respect, Zeichner (2010) argued that the reforms of the 2000s have further advanced the "dismantl[ing of] public education and teacher education" (p. 1544) and have caused "to further privatise public education and deprofessionalise the work of teaching" (p. 1544). Indeed, with education mainly focussed on knowledge transfer; meaning: every unit of instruction and the testing thereof having been predefined, I argue that the educator in the teacher and the developmental aspect of the learning process become less important.

If, metaphorically speaking, teaching was seen as a hiking journey in which the teacher was able to choose the route, take breathers, detours, and guide according to the group's ability; this journey has now been replaced by a cable car that is being steered externally, that allows only one steady speed, and only makes predetermined halts. The cabin, and particularly what is being extraverted from it, is permanently

monitored. The teacher only has subsidiary control over both the journey as well as the process. Authority, which was traditionally controlled from within the classroom, had temporarily been shifted to the principal during the 1990s and early 2000s (cf. Lingard, Hayes, Mills, & Christie, 2003; UNESCO, 2015), and now increasingly tends to be controlled by an external authority that prescribes and monitors what is happening inside the classroom (cf. Sahlberg, 2015).

Broadly speaking, personal responsibility (which is closely intertwined with self-initiative) has continually been withdrawn from the teacher (cf. G. J. J. Biesta, 2016). Teacher professional standards and teacher accountability are about demanding account from somebody rather than entrusting somebody with professional freedom. Hence, I argue that a relationship of 'mis–trust' is likely to occur. Harris & Herrington (2006) argued that accountability reforms are based on "the assumption that the successful are rewarded and the unsuccessful are punished, whether they be students, teachers, or administrators" (p. 224). Accountability measures put teachers under considerable psychological pressure to perform and reach given targets. In doing so, I argue on the basis of this theorisation, that a dog-eat-dog mentality or culture of competition and indifference is created and cultivated throughout the school systems—if not evidently then certainly subliminally. Critically speaking, accountability measures have the potential to instrumentalise the teaching profession insofar as that teachers unwantedly become the executors of a commercially-orientated culture of educational interaction. This problematisation leads to the concern that many a teachers' motivation—and possibly foundation— has been or is at risk of being reduced and restricted. In this respect, teaching is at risk of becoming a characterless occupation.

Moreover, whether external control over the learning process is realising the learners' right to develop his/her potentials to the maximum extent possible any better than, provocatively speaking, 'the language of the cane' has previously (not) managed, is questionable. One could argue that corporal punishment has nowadays been replaced by psychological pressure to perform—applied to both students and teachers—whereas behavioural issues are nowadays commonly dealt with by putting students on psychotropic medication as the rise in ADHD diagnoses documents (D. M. Steiner, 2013c). External pressure to deliver puts teachers in an awkward predicament and an awry relationship of distrust between themselves and the school administration seems nearly inevitable.

In the event that teaching, as a profession, is developing into a 'job' that does not involve real pedagogical work any longer, one may provokingly ask: Do teachers still need pedagogical skills or would something like a 'methodical toolbox' be sufficient? What I am trying to say is that the current situation of transforming the teaching profession into an industrial 'work-to-rule' model or literally an 'education by the book' based on the performance principle, poses several dangers. Those are:

a) Educators' driving force—the love for pedagogy or the art to guide and help young people develop to the fullest—may be taken away.
b) Educators' inner compass—or pedagogical intuition—may be discouraged or taken away.
c) Valuable pedagogical moments, such as creative or insightful learning experiences, can become rare as the outcome has already been predefined.

Taken together, current standards, accountability, and performativity measures constitute the danger of depriving teachers of their professional identity; they can make teachers unfree (cf. Day & Smethem, 2009). In particular, such working conditions, according to Anthony (2014), Schabracq, Winnubst, and Cooper

(2003), Bakker and Schaufeli (2000), and Gold and Roth (2013), can cause feelings of powerlessness, loss of control, or helplessness in practitioners, and can lead to dissatisfaction, occupational frustration, loss of meaning and zeal, depression, apathy, and burnout.

At the other end of the spectrum, policy measures can also arouse opposition and (active or passive) resistance (Ball, 2003). Webb (2006), for instance, argued that the choreographed performances and fabrications teachers have adopted (as discussed in sect. 7.3, on p. 202 et seqq.) "were political because they attempted to (re)control, or (re)claim, the discourse of what a 'good' teacher does/is [emphasis in the original]" (p. 203). M. L. Smith (1991) had made a similar claim. The reason for that is that, nowadays, conservative policy objectives can easily clash with the desire for individual fulfilment in the *Age of Awareness* (Romeiß-Stracke, 2006). The self-actualised modern individual, according to Romeiß-Stracke (2003, 2006), wants to see meaning and is seeking responsibility in and for the professional work he/she does. With good reason: Referring to events such as the teachers' union strike in Chicago, USA, in 2012, Anrig (2013) described the latest developments in terms of accountability reform against opposing teaching professionals with the term "education wars" (p. 1) (also cf. Peters, 2012).

7.9   On the commercial university

Crabtree (2010) argued that our current culture and society "more and more equate[d] education with vocational training" (2010, para. 1). What this points to is that, what is called 'higher education', has arguably become the apprenticeship training of the 21st century—not in that it would give an overly hands-on pragmatic education, but in that it has become very basic, generic, and commercially-orientated.

This argument is supported by Alderman (2010) and Bok (2009). The inflation of education, according to Alderman (2010) and Bok (2009), is further reflected in the observation that academic standards at university appear to have been dropping and continue to do so.[212] This was, as argued by Alderman (2010), due to their intricate commercial setup, which caused a clear role conflict. In many places, universities cannot (only) be described as independent institutions of higher education and research; instead, they should (also) be seen as service providers because educational degrees (the 'product' of education) is sold for a fee. Students, on the other hand, are not just students anymore; they are also customers—because they are paying for their education (Abrams, 2016; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Bok, 2009; Lynch, 2003; Noble, 1998).

This backdrop of a business relationship has had and continues to have a fundamental impact on the idea of free higher learning (Abrams, 2016; Bok, 2009; Lynch, 2003; Peters, 2003). In the age of universal education, for many students, choice of studies has become a consideration of cost-effectiveness rather than one of personal interests (Bok, 2009; Peters, 2011).

Likewise, for many commercial universities, increasing student numbers by means of maintaining a constantly high graduation quota (thus gaining them better benchmark rankings and a better reputation) seems to have become more important than focussing on offering highest level quality education[213] in the first place (Abrams, 2016; Bok, 2009; Noble, 2003). From my experience, degree courses, for instance, are increasingly made up of overly generic papers that arguably seem to be

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[212] (with the exceptions of a) non-commercial/feeless state universities and b) commercial élite universities)

[213] (regarding a comprehensive engagement with the subject matter)

more based on economic viability than pedagogical adequacy. I argue that this notion to instruct—rather than inspire—which occurs even in postgraduate education, makes a big difference. This circumstance is caused by the administrative notion to measure achievement by means of outcomes while the individual learning journey is increasingly neglected. This argument is supported by Abrams (2016), Noble (2003), and Bok (2009). From a pedagogical, social, and psychological perspective, such an approach poses adverse effects.

Within the context of mass higher education, standardised degree courses may also contradict with the right to 'freedom of composition of ones studies' [214]—as it exists in Germany, for instance (Krücken et al., 2005; Universität Leipzig, 2009). This is more so the case in the Anglosphere than in continental Europe, where universities still tend to be state-operated. This problematisation leads to the concern that many higher education degrees have arguably lost much of their academic/humanistic aspiration and have become sober, knowledge-centred, rational-scientific training institutions; again, particularly in the Anglosphere.[215] In this respect, higher education is argued to have equally become an outcome-focussed, commercial product (Abrams, 2016; Alderman, 2010; Altbach & Knight, 2007; Bok, 2009; Lynch, 2003; Noble, 2003; Peters, 2011, 2013). In turn, this commercial practice in higher education has been argued to have lowered the value of academic degrees considerably (Alderman, 2010; Bok, 2009; Noble, 2003).

This problematisation leads to the view that, in order to remain relevant, generally speaking, higher education should be qualitatively re-enhanced and should

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[214] Ipsissima verba (German): 'Freiheit des Studiums' and 'Recht auf freie Studiengestaltung', respectively, as enshrined in the German *Basic Law* (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1949).

[215] (where higher education has traditionally been more commercial compared to continental European countries, for instance)

be understood as a 'culture-creating profession' as opposed to a mere performative profession or service occupation. I expand on this idea in more detail in the following section.

7.10 Commercialisation versus academic freedom

The commercialisation of the realm of knowledge has created many new trend-setting as well as profitable professions which prompted many to seek their living in this futuristic industry (Kluver, 2000; Lynch, 2003; Peters, 2011; Şoproni & Horga, 2008). However, the commercial stripping of knowledge, according to Abrams (2016), Altbach and Knight (2007), Bok (2009), and Peters (2011), has created problems. The phenomenon as such is not new. The controversy of whether education was or should be a merchantable matter was famously already extensively debated by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others (as already elaborated on p. 192). As an approach to this issue, I would like to refer to the guiding principle of the French Revolution, the maxim: *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!* (Spicker, 2006). Out of these ideals and in applying the principles of von Goethe's *Morphology* or 'theory of forms' (von Goethe, 1947-1970), in 1919, social reformer and progressive educator Rudolf Steiner developed his theory of the *Soziale Dreigliederung* ('the threefold nature of the social organism'[216]) (Davy, 1980; R. Steiner, 1919/1985). Steiner applied the French maxim to the three tiers of societal life, stating that:

a) Everyone shall be equal before the law—the judiciary entity;
b) Fraternalism shall prevail in economic life—the economic tier; and, most importantly in this respect,

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[216] (lit. transl. 'threefold social order')

c) Freedom shall reign in intellectual/cultural life—the artistic, cultural, humanistic, and spiritual tier (Davy, 1980; Mazzone & Laing, 2011; Spicker, 2006; R. Steiner, 1919/1985; Woods & Woods, 2009).

Moreover, point c) is also the principle upon which the term *Liberal Arts* is based. It goes back to Socrates' pursuit of truth in ancient Greece, followed by Plato's establishment of the *Academy*—hence also our modern-day expression 'academic freedom' (Crabtree, 2010). The third tier is the area of social life which education belongs to. This idea had been argued by von Helmholtz (1878) in his *On the Academic Freedom of German Universities* [own translation [217]]. Later, von Humboldt (1920) incorporated this humanistic idea in his 'educational ideal' (OECD, 2011a; von Humboldt, 1920). Although also disputed, in Europe, it is still common practice that the holder of a professorial chair [218] savours 'academic freedom': the autonomy to search for, publish, and teach the truth one is convinced of, without having to fear any consequences, such as institutional censorship, discipline, or dismissal (European University Association, 1988; Karran, 2007). Academic freedom can therefore be seen as the academic version of 'freedom of speech' (Karran, 2007). With the aberrant exception of the United Kingdom,[219] the overwhelming majority of EU nations have a constitutional protection of academic freedom [220] (Karran, 2007). In order to ensure individual academic freedom, a third of the countries in the European Union also "guarantee the autonomy or self-

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[217] Ipsissima verba (German): 'Über die akademische Freiheit der deutschen Universitäten'.

[218] (including associated academic staff)

[219] Due to the absence of a written constitution in the UK, consequently, "there is no constitutional protection for either freedom of speech or academic freedom" (Karran, 2007, p. 309).

[220] In Germany, for instance, 'academic freedom' is enshrined in the *Basic Law* (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1949). In France, it is established in the *Code de l'éducation* (Gouvernement de la République française, 2015), to name but a few.

governance of higher education institutions" (Karran, 2007, p. 293). Such autonomy, according to the UNESCO (1998), "is the institutional form of academic freedom and a necessary precondition to guarantee the proper fulfilment of the functions entrusted to higher-education teaching personnel and institutions" (p. 28).

Steiner's argument, that freedom shall reign in the intellectual and cultural spheres of life, was not limited to academia though. Teachers, schools, principals, and curricula are pivotal to the intellectual/cultural tier too. Therefore, just as academic staff, teachers too, are meant to be pedagogically independent—or should at least be given ample pedagogical and creative scope for action. This freedom of discretion, I argue, is an essential precondition for an educator to unfold and develop his/her professional identity. It is his or her essential creative leeway and scope for action in order to experience job satisfaction and maintain and increase professional motivation. On an individual basis, such a creative scope for action lays the ground for lifelong learning.

In essence, the philosophical paradigm that is being attributed to education, informs the mentality the system and its parts (are bound to) operate in. If education is run like a business, then students can easily become products and teachers can become executors or even line workers (cf. Robinson, 2008, 2010).

7.11 Summary

The literature-backed problematisation, presented in this chapter, leads to the following perspective and concerns:

The 20th century has seen huge advancements in terms of educational rights as well as a learning process on the part of those that have hitherto been in control of knowledge. Entangled, hierarchical structures of knowledge possession and

dissemination and restricting socio-educational conventions have been broken open. Knowledge, in turn, has undergone a liberation and universalisation; it is no longer the lever of a ruling élite which certain underprivileged groups could historically be excluded from. It has become universal—universally shared and universally available.[221] This achievement, I believe, is due to the advancement of technology as well as to the evolving awareness of humankind as a whole.

Simultaneously, the liberation of knowledge in the 21st century has been economically exploited, which has created new, ongoing problems. Instead of the raw material of 'knowledge', the refined—or, in this case, standardised—product of 'education' has been argued in this chapter to have now become a barrier for certain individuals or groups to be kept excluded from occupational—and thereby from social—advancement; simply because the 'commodity of education', in many places, has become highly expensive. Put another way, the problematisation led to the view that previous structures of societal/institutional control over who was given access to higher education have now been replaced by pecuniary hurdles that determine access.[222] Hence, if, amongst other factors, education is not available and accessible to all, it quickly loses the panaceatic effect it is generally assumed to have (cf. Tomaševski, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c).

This new knowledge market brought with it the necessity

a) to benchmark (so as to produce some form of 'quality label'),
b) to manage the content of education (cf. 'standardisation' and 'outcome-based education'),
c) to manage the people working in the sector (cf. 'performativity' and 'accountability'), and

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[221] (provided people have access to public libraries, computers, the internet, etc.)
[222] (in addition to educational achievement required for admission)

d) to ensure classrooms and students are equipped with state-of-the-art technology (as proof that one's 'service' is up-to-date).

In short, since the 2000s, education systems have transformed into (profitable) education industries.

As the analysis of theory suggested, the main focus of these changes rests on the rigorous mechanisms of surveillance and control. Outcome-based education and high-stakes testing have become an enormous challenge for both students and educators, and conditions for a successful education of the child have intensified considerably. In addition, I have found that the competitive approach to education is accompanied by a number of adverse phenomena (see Chapter Nine: *In touch with reality? — Philosophical problematisation*, on p. 256 et seqq.). Amrein & Berliner (2002), as cited in Sahlberg (2011a), highlighted this fundamental fallacy in stating that

> the ultimate success of a high-stakes testing policy is whether it positively affects student learning, not whether it increases student scores on a particular test (Amrein & Berliner, 2002). If student learning remains unaffected, or if testing leads to biased teaching as it increasingly does nowadays in many parts of the world, the validity of such high-stakes tests must be questioned. (Sahlberg, 2011a, p. 39)

This said, academic or pedagogical freedom and public accountability do not have to contradict each other; they can go together very well, as the example of the Finnish education system shows, see Chapter Eight, particularly in sections 8.7 (*On genuine teacher professionalism*, p. 249 et seqq.) and 8.8 (*The actual paradox: Finland's success and the global trend*, p. 252 et seqq.).

Critically speaking, one could argue that, apart from many curriculum and examination regulation revisions, the abandoning of corporal punishment, the

granting of equal study opportunities to girls and women, and apart from a slight shift from the method of direct intimidation to more subliminal ones, such as spurring children's ambition by offering incentives and the system's pressure to achieve, not too much has changed since the establishment of compulsory schooling regarding the attitude, aim, and didactics by which teachers teach. Although educational theory has changed over the course of the 20th century, the apparatus and the prevailing philosophy of schooling has hardly changed since the 19th century: In large part, schooling is still based on extrinsic motivation—or rather 'extrinsic enforcement'—of learning (Papert & Harel, 1991; Robinson, 2008, 2010), and the problematisation highlighted that schooling is still widely seen as the establishment to teach young people social adaptation by means of constraint.

These issues, and the corresponding question of whether today's developments are actually 'in line with reality', are philosophically discussed in Chapter Nine: *In touch with reality? — Philosophical problematisation*, on page 256 et seqq.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Global education reform and Finland

Introduction

In this thesis, many competing views on the nature and purpose of education are explored, with a view to developing a series of questions and ideas that contribute to both the theorisation and the experience of education. Previous chapters have explored ancient and modern traditions and then shifted to more recent 21st-century educational concerns. These latter concerns are, in this chapter, critically problematised within the context of global educational reform, whose trends I am going to define and analyse, with particular attention to the role of the OECD's PISA studies. In so doing, the education system of PISA winner Finland is analysed in detail in order to create a critical case argument regarding global trends, and conclusions concerning the qualitative improvement of education, teacher professionalism, system structure, and teacher training, are drawn.

Chapter outline

8.1   The age of competitive benchmarking

Since the 2000s, comparative international benchmarking studies, such as the

Programme for International Student Assessment (or *PISA Study*), a global student

performance assessment, conducted by the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation

and Development* (OECD) in 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, and 2015, have become

popular tools to compare education systems around the world. Educational

benchmarking has influenced national education policies worldwide, resulting in an

ongoing global competition for the best-performing system.

Being an economic organisation, it is arguably not surprising that the OECD

looks at education from an economic perspective. In this respect, its PISA

programme has, according to Kissling (2014), been rigorously critiqued and

questioned in terms of an economic organisation's legitimacy and mandate to raise

itself to be the normative global educational authority over grown and culturally-

rooted education systems. Some critics, according to Kissling (2014), have claimed

that OECD's PISA programme was a form of supranational steering of global

educational development with an economic interest. Other organisations, engaging in

the evaluation of educational achievement, such as the independent *International

Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement* (IEA), that was known

for many studies since the early 1960s, have gradually faded into obscurity because of the PISA programme's increasing dominance in the market.

Yet, the multitude of comparative international benchmarking studies conducted since—and arguably the culture of educational benchmarking in general—prompt a number of questions: Firstly, besides providing a ranking list, what is the actual, qualitative, pedagogical outcome? Secondly, what has, generally speaking, been learnt from the outcomes of these studies? Thirdly, which conclusions have globally been drawn and which policy changes have since been implemented as a result of these studies? In this respect, I have examined the salient features of the so-called 'winning PISA countries'.

8.2   A new rock star of global education

The most outstanding performer in the international comparative studies was Finland. Since the introduction of PISA in 2000 and its follow-up studies in 2003, 2006, and 2009, Finland either ranked number one or amongst the top three (Sahlberg, 2011b). Finnish students repeatedly outperformed their peers in as many as 64 other nations in mathematics, science, and reading skills (Sahlberg, 2011b). In the 2006 PISA science results, for instance, "Finland's worst students did 80% better than the OECD average for the worst group; its brightest did only 50% better than the average for bright students" (Levine, 2011, para. 16). Beyond that, Finland was the only country that improved its performance during this decade (Sahlberg, 2011b). In the 2012 and 2015 studies, Finland still maintained its position amongst the top seven.

This success did not come entirely unheralded. During the 1990s, Finland had been a 'top performer' in the *Reading Literacy Study* [223] of 1990/91 and the *CivEd Study* [224] of 1996 – 2000, and performed 'above average' in the *TIMSS Study* [225] of 1999 (Sahlberg, 2011b). Finland's "top performance is also remarkably consistent across schools: Finnish schools seem to serve all students well, regardless of family background, socio-economic status or ability" (OECD, 2011b, p. 117).

In sum, Finland was the declared PISA winner of the entire decade. Its education system is now referred to as the best education system in the world (cf. OECD, 2011b; Sahlberg, 2011a, 2011b, 2015), and Finland has been termed "the West's reigning education superpower" (as coined in Partanen, 2011, para. 1). In the following, I analyse Finland's approach to education in depth and compare and problematise it as a counter example to the development of the global reform trend.

8.3   What has been learnt from Finland's approach to education?

The Finnish education system has been intensely studied and many nations that did not perform as well, sought to analyse Finland's formula for continuous success in detail, and learn from it (Sahlberg, 2015). Consequently, it makes sense to ask: What has been learnt from Finland's approach to education over the past 17 years?

As a result of the PISA studies, policy reform efforts around the world intensified, with a focus on future PISA tests and anticipated improved results. To a

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[223] *Reading Literacy Study* (RLS), conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in 1990 – 1991.

[224] *Civic Education Study* (CivEd), conducted by the IEA in 1996 – 2000.

[225] *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS), conducted by the IEA in 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015.

great extent, these reform measures, according to Day and Smethem (2009) and Sahlberg (2015), appeared to be similar in many places, turning into a reform trend with a certain directionality—which some academics have referred to as 'global education reform movement' (cf. Day & Smethem, 2009; National Union of Teachers [in the UK], 2015; Sahlberg, 2015). However, I see these developments more as a common 'trend' or possibly a 'paradigm' rather than a unifying 'movement' and will therefore refer to this development as 'global education reform trend' instead.

Certain features of this global education reform trend, on the basis of my analysis, can be said to be in harmony with the Finnish system. I have compiled and categorised those consensuses in Table 9.

Table 9 | Global educational reform measures implemented during the 2000s in consensus with Finnish education policy (non-exhaustive). Table created based on findings presented in the meta-analytical research publication *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education: Lessons Learned from PISA* (OECD, 2011b).

Area	Educational reform measure
Early childhood care	
	1) Extending the right to and the availability of institutionalised early childhood care.
Equal schooling	
	2) Committing to inclusive education;
	3) Making changes to the school structure to reduce the influence of socio-economic background (inequality) on student achievement;
	4) Support for children with special needs.
Better teachers	
	5) Improving the quality of teacher education;
	6) Creating new ways of entering teaching (such as practice-based teacher-education programmes and university/school partnership programmes).
Better learning	
	7) Reducing class sizes;
	8) Providing individualised approaches and support for all children;
	9) Introducing teacher aides.
New management models	
	10) Increasing school principals' autonomy (local control/site-based management).
Monitoring education	
	11) Regular participation in comparative international studies.

8.4   Differences between Finland and global trends

Despite the above consensuses, there are crucial differences between Finland and the global trends. In the following, I define and analyse these differences under the categories listed in sections 8.4.1 to 8.4.10 in order to construct a critical case argument in section 8.8.

8.4.1 System parameters & philosophy

Globally, compulsory education is mostly free at primary and secondary level but often involves hidden, socially-selective fees and expenses (UNESCO, 2016b). Tertiary education is generally fee-based commercialised, particularly in the Anglosphere (UNESCO, 2016b). In Finland, the entire education system, from pre-k to PhD, is free for every citizen (Sahlberg, 2011a). This includes learning materials, books, school meals, transportation (in rural areas also including free accommodation near the school), as well as free health care, psychological counselling, and individual guidance; all centrally funded by the Finnish government, irrespective of socio-economic or cultural backgrounds. By law, every child has the right to these services in its school (Sahlberg, 2011a, 2015).

According to Peters (2011), the National Union of Teachers [in the UK] (2015), Harris and Herrington (2006), and Zeichner (2010), there is a global trend to privatise and dissect the education sector (private schools, charter school models, etc.), according to Harris and Herrington (2006) often under the guise of 'parental choice', yet based on selection by ability (i.e. competition and élitism) as well as financial hurdles (cf. Harris & Herrington, 2006; Peters, 2011; Zeichner, 2010). In Finland, on the other hand, there are no private schools [226]—a comprehensive, inclusive, non-élitist public school system serves as the main model (i.e. 'one school for all') (Partanen, 2011). Since the 1980s, the *primum mobile* of Finnish public education policy has been equity; to provide equal educational opportunities to every

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[226] "Only a small number of independent schools exist in Finland, and even they are all publicly financed. None is allowed to charge tuition fees. There are no private universities, either. This means that practically every person in Finland attends public school, whether for pre-k or a PhD" (Partanen, 2011, para. 9).

Finnish citizen, regardless of ethnicity, family background, income, or location (Finnish National Board of Education, 2013a; Hautamäki, 2014; Sahlberg, 2011a).

Internationally, there is the trend to privately fund public education (such as with social-impact bond schemes for instance) (cf. Harris & Herrington, 2006; Peters, 2011; Zeichner, 2010) and thus merchandise public education; whereas in Finland, education is almost entirely [227] publicly funded (Sahlberg, 2011a).

In addition, the educational pathways offered within systems that are more rigid, according to Peters (2011), Harris and Herrington (2006), and Zeichner (2010), are often inflexible and can cause deadlock situations for individuals once an opportunity has been missed. In Finland, the system is flexible and open so that, after vocational studies for instance, one can go back to university or to mainstream academics (Sahlberg, 2015)—providing the peace of mind that one will not miss out on any opportunities due to the structure of the system (Legislative Council HKSAR Research Office, 2014). In other words, the Finnish system puts across the message that 'it is never too late in life for a change in (educational) direction'.

This concept reminds of what Comenius (1645/1986) proposed with his *cultura universalis*—a 'general culture' of lifelong education. As already mentioned in previous chapters, a basic understanding of this kind, I argue, lays the societal ground for lifelong learning (cf. Aspin & Chapman, 2000; Hager, 2011). The progressiveness and the implications of this concept are worth further exploration in the study of education.

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[227] "According to recent global education indicators, only 2.5% of Finnish expenditure on educational institutions (all levels of education) is from private sources compared with an average of 17.4% of total educational expenditure (OECD, 2010a)" (Sahlberg, 2011a, p. 44).

8.4.2 School entry

While globally, the school starting age, according to the OECD (2011b), has generally been lowered down to four or five years of age, in Finland, compulsory education starts not before the age of seven (Eurydice Unit at the Finnish National Board of Education, 2015). Recent research from the United Kingdom supports this policy, suggesting that an extension of informal, play-based pre-school provision and a delay to the start of formal 'schooling' until the age of seven is beneficial from an anthropological, psychological, neuro-scientific, and educational point of view in terms of later academic achievement, child well-being, and motivational outcomes (Whitebread, Basilio, Kuvalja, & Verma, 2012; Whitebread & Bingham, 2013).

8.4.3 'Amount' of schooling

Globally, educational programmes in early childhood education, have, according to the OECD's (2011b) research, been substantially expanded; whereas in Finland, at pre-primary level, "learning through play is essential" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2013a, p. 15). Children explore (individually and collectively) and learn a variety of things in accordance with their age and abilities in an uncoerced way (Finnish National Board of Education, 2013a).

Another global trend, according to the OECD (2011b), has seen the expansion of all-day school programmes; whereas in Finland, students either go home in the afternoons or participate in educational or recreational activities/clubs offered at the school (Sahlberg, 2015). Finnish primary schools are required to offer optional after-school activities (Sahlberg, 2015).

While internationally, schooling hours and additional schooling, as the OECD (2011b, 2012, 2013a) showed, have increased; in Finland, paradoxically, students have the least hours of instruction compared to any other OECD country (OECD, 2011b, 2012). Students typically have between three and five classes per day, with an upper limit of six (Finnish National Board of Education, 2013a). At upper secondary school, students decide on and manage their study time by themselves.

A world-wide tendency, as the OECD's (2011b) research showed, was that curricula have been crammed with more, as well as more demanding, contents to be studied. This was due to:

a) Primary and secondary education being compressed into 12 school years (so-called 'K–12'),[228] and the

b) Shifting from K–12 education [229] to P–12 education;[230] hence transferring parts of learning and the curriculum into a period that was previously assumed to be outside of schooling time.

In Finland, on the other hand, most schools have their own customised (approved) curriculum. There are no strict descriptions of student learning outcomes (such as national standards) that schools have to comply with. National framework curricula provide a guidance only, and schools and teachers have professional freedom (Sahlberg, 2015).

Another global education reform trend, the OECD (2011b) stated, is an increase in homework. In Finland, on the contrary, primary and lower secondary students rarely have more than half an hour's homework per day (Gameran, 2008, as

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[228] (instead of prior 13 years. This was done in order to 'stay ahead' of other countries in terms of graduates' employability etc. (cf. *Race to the Top* etc.)

[229] (i.e. 'kindergarten to grade 12 education')

[230] (i.e. 'pre-school to grade 12 education')

cited in Sahlberg, 2015) and usually no more than an hour a day during high school (Tuori, as cited in Levine, 2011). Moreover, the OECD recently found that 15-year-old Finns basically do not take any private tutoring or after-school academic classes at all (OECD, 2013b). In sum, private tutoring does hardly ever occur in Finland (Sahlberg, 2012a, 2015).

8.4.4 Curricular variety and flexibility

On a global scale, according to the OECD (2011b), new, intensified focus areas (such as the triumvirate of 'reading, writing, and mathematics' etc.) have been set up. Coincidentally, those focus areas are often identical with the targeted test subjects of international student assessment surveys, such as PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, et cetera (Sahlberg, 2012b); whereas in Finland, the curricular focus is the "development of the whole child" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 168). A flexible national framework curriculum enables—and encourages—personalised learning opportunities to be seized, based on individual preference rather than coercion (OECD, 2011b). An 18-subject-broad curriculum values and balances academic as well as artisanal subjects (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015b).

As part of Finland's new *Core Curriculum for Basic Education* (which won the *2015 Silver Future Policy Award*), open-ended, phenomenological, cross-subject 'topics' have been announced to complement traditional subject-specific lessons in Finnish high schools from mid-2016: "In order to meet the challenges of the future, the focus is on transversal (generic) competences and work across school subjects. Collaborative classroom practices … during periods of phenomenon-based project studies are emphasised" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2015, para. 3). The curriculum also mentions that "pupils should be involved in the planning [of these

multidisciplinary learning modules]" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2015, para. 4). The curriculum also leaves "teachers latitude to decide what they will teach and how" (OECD, 2011b, p. 123), including choice of textbooks.

Following Winner, Goldstein, and Vincent-Lancrin (2013), Johnson (2007), Arendt (1958/2006), and Furedi (2011), internationally, curricula are often intellectually based and work-based subjects are often left out of consideration or do not have an influence in the evaluation due to widespread outcome-focussed (national) standards syllabi. In Finland, vocational and academic upper-secondary education have been given equal status; giving students a coequal choice in terms of which educational route to take. This resulted in many students choosing the vocational stream over academics (Sahlberg, 2015). In the 2009/10 school year, for the first time, more students chose to enrol in vocational upper-secondary education than general (academic) upper-secondary school (Sahlberg, 2015). "Vocational education has become a true alternative for many students" in Finland (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 34).

The global reform trend, according to the OECD (2011b) and Sahlberg (2010b, 2012b, 2015), has also seen a determining of certain mandatory core subjects or subject combinations. Again, according to Sahlberg (2012b), those are often related to or identical with targeted test subjects of international student assessment surveys, such as PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, et cetera. At Finnish high schools, to the contrary, students have the freedom to choose their own subjects and are able to set individual priorities, including choice of exam subjects (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015b). Besides an 18-subject-broad, obligatory syllabus, another 9 subjects can be freely chosen and are sequenced by students (Sahlberg, 2015).

Following the OECD (2011b), the international trend involved creating centralised assessment systems based on the national standards; whereas, except for the optional *National Matriculation Exam* at the end of upper-secondary school, "Finland has no standardised tests" (Partanen, 2011, para. 15). Instead, it relies on intelligent forms of accountability, placing "considerable emphasis on student self-assessment, in which students are expected to take an active role in designing their own learning activities and work collaboratively in teams on projects that cut across traditional subject ... areas" (OECD, 2011b, p. 241);[231] and this can start as early as grade one (Finnish National Board of Education, 2013a).

8.4.5 Approach to teacher/student interaction

Internationally, there has been a trend to exchange class and subject teachers on a yearly basis from year one in order to maintain a 'professional' teaching climate. In Finland, during primary and intermediate school, students generally stay with the same teacher for several years so that the teacher can follow their overall development more closely and create a "family-like environment" (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015a, para. 7). At upper-secondary level on the other hand, there are no age cohort-based classes and students no longer progress in years/grades but wholly independently (Sahlberg, 2015).

Internationally, teachers are expected to adhere to (national) directives as concerns their interactions with students, such as a 'hands-off' code of practice (Cushman, 2009) and reporting and controlling frameworks that have been created (OECD, 2011b). In Sweden and Finland, however, class and subject teachers

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[231] Other forms include portfolio assessment and sample-based national assessments (Sahlberg, 2011b).

"exercise an enormous degree of professional discretion and independence" (OECD, 2011b, p. 123). Teachers are encouraged to interact with students guided by intuition and based on their pedagogical knowledge and experience (Cushman, 2009; Sahlberg, 2009, 2010b, 2015), engendering significant responsibility for both teachers and students (OECD, 2011b; Sahlberg, 2015).

On global reform level, the focus is on 'classroom management' (i.e. teacher-centric, objective-based teaching philosophy); whereas in Finland, both teachers and students are allowed significant responsibility/pedagogical autonomy in the structuring, facilitation, and evaluation of students' learning processes (OECD, 2011b; Sahlberg, 2009, 2010b, 2015).

8.4.6 Approach to learning climate/learning philosophy

The global education reform trend, according to the OECD (2011b) and Sahlberg (2011b, 2015), involves selection, tracking, and streaming of students, often from very early on; whereas in Finland, there is no selection, tracking, or streaming of students during primary education; it was abolished in 1989 in favour of a social/peer learning experience (OECD, 2011b; Sahlberg, 2015). The process of schooling is based on the realisation that educating young people "is a collaborative process and that cooperation, networking, and sharing ideas [amongst students, teachers, schools, as well as the community] … will eventually raise the quality of education" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 149). In doing so, "teachers create a culture of cooperation in their classrooms" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 149).

Across the globe, education reform has focussed on creating output-orientated national standards/curricula (OECD, 2011b), "setting clear, high, and centrally prescribed performance targets for all schools, teachers, and students .... to

ensure coherence and common criteria for measurement and data" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 149). In Finland, on the other hand, curricula are school-based and can vary from school to school and classroom to classroom (Sahlberg, 2015). Learning is personalised. This is ensured by a "clear but flexible national framework for school-based curriculum planning. Encouraging school-based and individual solutions to national goals in order to find the best ways to create personalised learning opportunities for all" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 149).

As opposed to focussing on the out-put (i.e. 'teaching to the test'), "teaching and learning focus on deep, broad learning, giving equal value to all aspects of the growth of an individual's personality, moral character, creativity, knowledge, ethics, and skills. The aim of schooling is to find each student's talent" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 149). At high school, students are expected to take charge of their own learning: They draft individual education plans and complete them according to their own timeframe and at their own pace. In the academic track, there are neither set classes nor a grade structure in upper-secondary school (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015b; OECD, 2011b). "Without a grade structure, each student proceeds at his or her own pace within the modular design of the system" (OECD, 2011b, p. 241).

8.4.7 Approach to student engagement/evaluation of the learning process

According to global trends, an educational culture of competition, based on assessment and evaluation (marks, centralised standardised testing, high-stakes testing etc.), has increased (OECD, 2011b). Similarly, there has been increasing use of incentives for students' accountability (OECD, 2011b); that is to say, coercion to

learn and pressure to perform and achieve. In Finland, to the contrary, according to Sahlberg (2009, 2010b, 2015), there is no coercion. Learning is based on cooperation (i.e. the principle of unrestraint), using innovative (open-ended) approaches (Sahlberg, 2009, 2010b, 2015). Since the 1990s, Finnish "education authorities have relied on school-based evaluation to monitor students' performance" (Legislative Council HKSAR Research Office, 2014, p. 6); Finland's slogan is, "Real winners do not [have to] compete" (Paronen, as cited in Sahlberg, 2011a, p. 96). Students are not evaluated by the use of numerical grades before 5th grade (i.e. 11 or 12 years of age) (Sahlberg, 2012a, 2015). According to Sahlberg (2007, 2010a, 2015), standardised and high-stakes testing is not applied in the education system at all.

Instead, Finland introduced "intelligent forms of accountability, including self-assessment and inspection, portfolio assessment and sample-based national assessments" (Sahlberg, 2011b, p. 132). Teachers independently create tests and apply individualised grading in the form of reports (Partanen, 2011). Hence, "assessment in Finnish schools is a classroom responsibility" (OECD, 2011b, p. 123). Even the high school leaving examination is optional and not necessarily required for university admission [232] (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015b; Sahlberg, 2015).

On a world-wide basis, according to the OECD's (2011b) research, there has been a trend to gather and analyse performance data (student achievement testing, performance testing, etc.); whereas in Finland, "periodically, the Ministry of Education tracks national progress by testing a few sample groups across a range of different schools" (Partanen, 2011, para. 16).

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[232] Moreover, the exam is based on problem-solving skills rather than subject mastery (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015b).

8.4.8 Approach to staff management

There has been an international trend to increase school principals' power to control and power of discipline (local control/site-based management) (OECD, 2011b); whereas Finland practises genuine professional treatment of staff: Teachers "exercise an enormous degree of professional discretion and independence" (OECD, 2011b, p. 123). In Finland, the benchmarks are called cooperation, pedagogical freedom, and trust in one's personnel (Sahlberg, 2015).

The global trend has also seen an increase in the use of incentives—or pressure to perform—for teachers (test-based accountability, 'value-added modelling', 'merit pay' etc.) (OECD, 2011b); whereas in Finland, test-based accountability is not applied as a lever to maintain teacher performance at all (Sahlberg, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2010d, 2011c, 2015). Instead, Finland invests in professional autonomy or "trust-based responsibility" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 149), and provides access to "purposeful professional development throughout their careers" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 13). This approach has helped turn teaching into a rewarding, prestigious, and much sought-after profession in Finland (Sahlberg, 2015). "Accountability is [understood as] the remainder that is left when responsibility has been subtracted" (Hargreaves, 2009, p. xvi).

World-wide reform trends have focussed on creating capacities to gather and analyse performance data (student achievement and performance testing, teaching quality checks, performativity, test-based accountability, teacher/principal evaluation (cf. 'value-added modelling') and so forth) (OECD, 2011b); whereas in Finland, teachers are hardly ever formally evaluated (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015c; Finnish National Board of Education, 2013b). "There are no

lists of best schools or teachers in Finland. The main driver of education policy is not competition between teachers and between schools, but cooperation" (Partanen, 2011, para. 19).

8.4.9 Approach to teacher education

Internationally, particularly at competing, commercial universities, there has been a trend to an arguably little selective 'all welcome' approach. According to O'Driscoll et al. (2015), Chan, Fong, Luk, and Ho (2017), and Nusche and OECD Directorate for Education (2008), undergraduate teaching degrees, and undergraduate degrees in general, are all too often composed of generic, knowledge-heavy papers that lack in practical relevance, child/learner centricity, and holistic development of the teachers' personalities.

In contrast to this, Finland runs research-based high-quality teacher-education programmes, embedded in up to 25% of practical observation and guided classroom training in preparation for a high degree of professional autonomy (Sahlberg, 2011c). This results in "many young Finns gravitat[ing] toward teaching because they regard it as an independent, respected, and rewarding profession" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 127). A (publicly financed) Master's degree is the basic qualification to teach at any Finnish school, and aspiring teacher applicants are carefully selected (Sahlberg, 2015). "Therefore, the Finns probably have the most competitive and academically challenging teacher-education system in the world" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 13).

8.4.10 Quality assurance measures

The OECD's (2011b) research showed that, in consequence of a developing global trend to accountability, mandatory licensure and certification procedures for preschools and schools have been created as a way of quality assurance. Secondly, school inspection systems (external accountability) have intensified (OECD, 2011b; Sahlberg, 2015), and thirdly, reporting frameworks (such as indicator-based national education reports) have been created (OECD, 2011b). In Finland, no census-based performance/achievement data is available (OECD, 2011b; Sahlberg, 2015). Thus, "it is not possible to compare [Finnish] school performance or teacher effectiveness in the same ways that it is measured in the United States or Australia" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 121). "The only external testing in comprehensive schools is done on a sampling basis and is designed to provide information on the functioning of the system as a whole" (OECD, 2011b, p. 123). Quality assurance is based on steering instead of controlling:

> The ideology is to steer through information, support and funding. ... The system relies on the proficiency of teachers and other personnel. There is strong focus on both self-evaluation of schools and education providers and [sample-based] national evaluations of learning outcomes. ... Education providers receive their own results to be used for development purposes. The main aim of the national evaluations of learning outcomes is to follow at national level how well the objectives have been reached. ... Consequently, the results are not used for ranking the schools. (Finnish National Board of Education, 2013a, pp. 13-14)

8.5   Achievement and an apparent paradox: Finland's minimalist approach

In looking at the characteristics of the established Finnish education system—most of which have been in place since the 1970s, 80s, or early 90s (Sahlberg, 2011a)—the findings that have emerged are unexpected and surprising as nearly all of Finland's salient features are contrary to what one would expect to find: Finland's approach to schooling is holistically individualised, trust- and initiative-based, and appreciative of the life stage of childhood. It represents an educational culture that cares for and encourages the individual. In this regard, "almost half of Finnish 16-year-olds, when they leave compulsory education, have had some sort of special education, personalised help, or individual guidance during their time in school" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 14).

The principles that Finnish education is based on are humane and ethical— while the formal instructional part is kept to a minimum: Compared to most OECD counterparts, Finnish students (as well as teachers) spend least hours at school (OECD, 2014a). Coercion to achieve does not exist, nor does standardised or high-stakes testing (Sahlberg, 2007, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2015). Likewise, privatisation has not found its way into Finnish education (Sahlberg, 2015). The Finnish system teaches students to construct and be responsible for their own learning based on interest and choices offered (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015b; Sahlberg, 2015).

In many respects, the Finnish approach seems either paradoxical or an educational miracle. How can it be possible, some may ask, to achieve excellence with such uncoerced, casual effort? Nonetheless, as far as PISA is concerned,

Finland is a winning system; a system in which "young people learn [demonstrably] well and where performance differences among schools are small [as each PISA study since 2000 has shown]—and all with reasonable cost and human effort" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 13).

Interestingly, one of Finland's top policy experts said: "As a nation of modest people, Finland never actually intended to be best in the world in education" (Sahlberg, 2011a, p. 41). Since the 1970s, Finnish education policy was geared to "having a good school for every child rather than ranking high on international education tables" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 13). These, in a way humble and complaisant motifs, are clearly part of Finland's success; what may appear like a paradox to many, simply follows the qualitative aesthetic law of 'less is more'.[233]

8.6   The Finnish formula for success

Finland's education reforms began in 1968 with the discontinuation of its selective, two-tiered school system in favour of an integrated comprehensive school model. Following this, in the 1980s, it stopped 'streaming' students; and in the 1990s, it abandoned the administrative apparatus of ministerial school inspectors (Levine, 2011). When instituting its new system almost 35 years ago, Finland pursued the idea that

> every child should have exactly the same opportunity to learn, regardless of family background, income, or geographic location. Education has been seen first and foremost not as a way to produce star performers, but as an instrument to even out social inequality. (Partanen, 2011, para. 24)

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[233] The proverb was first used by poet Robert Browning in 1855 in describing the Renaissance painter Andrea del Sarto in the same-titled dramatic monologue.

It proved to be successful: The example of Finland's repeated wins in PISA has shown that it is possible for a nation to develop most young people into well-educated individuals by teaching them to cooperate, take responsibility, share, and trust others instead of teaching them that success is defined through outcompeting others. Partanen (2011) similarly concluded:

> Finland's experience suggests that to win at that [global education] game, a country has to prepare not just some of its population well, but all of its population well, for the new economy. To possess some of the best schools in the world might still not be good enough if there are children being left behind. (Para. 33)

Therein also lies Finland's formula for success: The PISA studies confirmed that Finland is achieving academic excellence by not following the standardised, competitive, commercialised approach to public education and by defying the neoliberal capitalist logic of 'bigger, better, faster, more'. Instead, it managed to generate academic excellence through its specific focus on equity (Partanen, 2011; Sahlberg, 2015).

In other words, education-political rhetoric like 'No Child Left Behind', 'Putting Children First', 'Education for All', 'Equal Educational Opportunities', or 'Preparing Students for Success'—slogans that have become a farce in many parts of the world—are reality in Finland. Finland has demonstrated that its minimalist approach to educational administration has the capacity to outperform.

Although PISA claims to measure how well young people "are prepared to meet the challenges of the future [which PISA refers to as 'literacy'], rather than how well they master particular curricula" (OECD, 2014b, p. 3), this statement is

debatable. If PISA was to measure other areas of learning and development [234]—which it currently does not—I argue that Finland might likely surprise and 'outperform' other countries even more.

8.7   On genuine teacher professionalism

The decisive factor in the Finnish formula for success, according to the OECD (2011b) and Sahlberg (2010d, 2011a, 2011c, 2015), are its teachers. In Finland's reform process, "it was assumed very early ... that teachers and teaching are the key elements that make a difference in what students learn in school" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 49). Consequently, Finnish teachers are amongst the best trained in the world: In order to teach in Finland, no matter whether at primary or upper secondary level, a Master's degree is required (Center on International Education Benchmarking, 2015d). This level of training is necessary because Finnish educators—instead of performing accountability targets—savour extensive professional autonomy (OECD, 2011b; Sahlberg, 2009, 2010b, 2011c, 2015).

Following these liberties, since the 1990s, teacher professionalism in Finland has developed an increasingly high level of quality, standard, and collegiality. Sahlberg (2015) elucidated, that, in doing so,

> the prevalence of powerful teaching methods and pedagogical classroom and school designs increased. A new flexibility within the Finnish education system enabled schools to learn from one another and thus make their best practices universal by adopting innovative approaches to organise schooling.

[234] (such as cross-disciplinary learning transfer, creativity, critical thinking-ability/critical opinion-forming, personality development, coping skills/sense of coherence, independence, aesthetic perception/skills, musical, craft, and artistic skills, talent, imagination, interpersonal/social skills, emotional intelligence, ethical navigation, performing arts, physical skills (sports, dance etc.), global/environmental awareness, sustainability thinking, as well as spiritual capacities and so forth—i.e. the human being in its holistic entirety)

It also encouraged teachers and schools to continue to expand their repertoires of teaching methods, and to individualise teaching in order to meet the needs of all students. (pp. 49-50)

Hence, the teacher graduates, the education system produces, need to be proactive, responsive, and creative, as well as pedagogically skilled; that is, they need to be self-sufficient educators. Finnish teacher-education programmes are therefore research-based and consist of up to 25% of practical observation and guided classroom training (Sahlberg, 2011c). Moreover, Finland's credit of trust towards its teachers starts with these programmes which are entirely publicly funded (Sahlberg, 2015).

Concomitant with that, teaching in Finland is a prestigious and a well-paid profession, and "many young Finns gravitate toward teaching because they regard it as an independent, respected, and rewarding profession" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 127). Aspiring student teachers are carefully filtered in an extended qualification process (Sahlberg, 2010d, 2015) with only around ten per cent of applicants being admitted (Finnish National Board of Education, 2013b). Sahlberg (2015) designated the Finnish model "the most competitive and academically challenging teacher-education system in the world" (p. 13). Lastly, those who are fortunate enough to join the profession, generally remain teachers for life (Sahlberg, 2011c).

This is the opposite of the trend that has been happening in many—if not most—countries around the world: Universities, influenced by nation-individual policies, have developed commercially driven, generic models of teacher education (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Gal, 2005; Garm & Karlsen, 2004; Kishan, 2007; OECD, 2011b) that often lead to prospects of a career of standardised teaching and accountability measures—ambiguously referred to as 'professionalism'

(Tuinamuana, 2011a, 2011b). This has already been noted by Garm & Karlsen in 2004:

> Two trends are striking; firstly, teacher education is now more narrowly focused upon measurable skills and professional training with less emphasis on broader educational issues. Secondly, the focus on outcomes and external control is becoming more dominant. Schools and teacher education seem to be important elements in the new market economy and are governed by the same rationality and rules. We can see the impact of the new global market orientation in the national discourses on teacher education. (p. 742)

The OECD (2011b) added to that the rather alarming observation that:

> Recruiting high-quality teachers is not of much use if those who are recruited are so frustrated by what they perceive to be an inadequate system of initial teacher education that they will not participate in it and turn to another profession. Or if they become school teachers, but are so turned off by the bureaucratic forms of work organisation they find there that they leave teaching for some other occupation. (p. 252)

In attributing teacher quality to the kind of professionalism teachers are faced with, Sahlberg (2015) encapsulated Finnish success in this very plausible equation:

> As long as teachers' practice is not trusted and they are not respected as professionals, talented young people are unlikely to consider teaching as their lifelong career. Even if they do, they will likely leave teaching early because of the lack of a respectful professional working environment. (p. 190)

As problematised in section 7.3, *On teacher professional standards* (on p. 202 et seqq.), direct consequences of standardisation are behaviours referred to as 'teaching to the test' and the phenomenon of 'teacher fabrications' in order to satisfy bureaucratic surveillance (cf. Tuinamuana, 2011a, 2011b). I argue that, by implication, this form of self-responsible educational practice, that we find in Finland, restores the primary meaning of 'professionalism' and satisfies the human

need for self-fulfilment and self-actualisation (cf. Abraham Maslow's *Theory of Self-Actualisation* (1943)). In other words, the education culture, the Finns have developed to perfection, is a 21st-century renaissance of the idea of self-actualising professionalism merged with pedagogical engagement—as one can see, a win-win situation for teachers, learners, and society.

8.8   The actual paradox: Finland's success and the global trend

Despite the general consensuses, listed in Table 9 (on p. 232), nowadays differences between Finland and the global education reform trend are wide-ranging and crucial: As elaborated in section 8.4 (on p. 232 et seqq.), almost 30 systemically-important aspects are in direct contradiction to the Finnish approach. This becomes apparent in the following contrasting juxtaposition (Table 10):

Table 10 | Global education reform trend and the Finnish approach to education. Table adapted from Sahlberg (2015, p. 149).[235]

Global education reform trend		The Finnish approach
Competition between schools, teachers, and students	➤ ◄	Collaboration amongst schools, teachers, and students
Standardised learning	➤ ◄	Personalised learning
Focus on literacy and numeracy	➤ ◄	Focus on the whole child
Test-based accountability	➤ ◄	Trust-based responsibility
School choice	➤ ◄	Equity of outcomes

What is noticeable here is that the global education reform is the opposite to that in Finland. The latest trends in policy changes, implemented around the world,

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[235] [Table adapted with permission of the publisher. Copyright © 2015 by Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY. All rights reserved.]

are antithetical and contradictory to demonstrably successful policies and practices in place in Finland (cf. Partanen, 2011; Sahlberg, 2011b, 2011c, 2015).

This appears to be the actual paradox: Although PISA has become *the* global measuring stick for education (Breakspear, 2012), Finland's sublime success seems to be almost ignored. While it stands to reason that the Finnish model cannot be directly transferred to any other country without local adaptations, little seems to have been adopted as a result of Finland's performance in PISA. Although Finland's outstanding performance has been taken cognisance of, reform actions around the world since 2000 appear to have been aimed in the opposite direction. Sahlberg (2015) similarly argued:

> All of the factors that are behind Finnish success seem to be the opposite of what is taking place in the United States and much of the rest of the world, where competition, test-based accountability, standardisation, and privatisation seem to dominate. (p. 14)

This appears to entrench a fundamental disparity in educational philosophy— a disparity recognised by Partanen (2011) and Sahlberg (2015). It is indicative of an incongruity and misinterpretation of empirical cognition and logical consequential reaction. This seems to be some kind of 'post-fact phenomenon' insofar as that conventional ways of schooling, along with their respective philosophy, are so deeply embedded in our social institutions that they have become nearly impossible to be changed. Moreover, the Finnish case argument shows that certain fundamental educational principles, that have been assumed to be true about human learning and development, should no longer be taken for granted.

8.9 Summary

Sahlberg (2011a) argued that "public education systems are in crisis in many parts of the world" (p. 4) and are increasingly challenged in many Western and other developed countries "because of endemic failure to provide adequate learning opportunities to all children" (p. 4). And, "tough solutions are not uncommon in these countries: Tightening control over schools, stronger accountability for student performance, firing bad teachers, and closing down troubled schools are part of the recipe to fixing failing education systems" (p. 4).

The reason for Finland's success, according to Sahlberg (2015), is that "the education community in Finland has remained unconvinced that these globally fashionable directions in improving education would be good for Finnish schools" (p. 49). Following this, "none of the elements of [the global education reform trend] ... have been adopted in Finland in the ways that they have been within the education policies of many other nations" (Sahlberg, 2015, p. 148). Based on Finland's experience, Sahlberg (2011a) stated: "There is another way to improve education systems. This includes improving the teaching force, limiting student testing to a necessary minimum, placing responsibility and trust before accountability, and handing over school- and district-level leadership to education professionals" (p. 5). In short, the Finns have realised that developing the capacities of schools and teachers was far more important than "testing the hell out of students" (Grubb, 2007, as cited in Sahlberg, 2015, p. 166).

This chapter has argued that Finland has created a learner-centred education system that sets itself apart from what has found its way into the education systems of most countries in the world. With its all-encompassing, comprehensive model of

public education, Finland has put the human being—both the student and the teacher as a professional—at the heart of education. This system, as represented by its highly-qualified, dedicated agents in the classroom, exposes a remarkable respect for the human individual and its potentials. At root, I argue that the Finnish school system is less of a 'system' than a vibrant 'education culture' within a liberating general framework. It arguably constitutes the implementation of the idea of the *Learning Communities* and *Communities of Practice*, respectively (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2003).

With its humanistically-liberal and progressive approach, Finnish education is right in the sense of the Enlightenment and arguably one of the most child-orientated and child-appropriate state school systems that have ever existed—an approach, I argue, based on analysis of their work in Chapters Four and Five, Comenius, von Humboldt, Fröbel, Dewey, Kerschensteiner—amongst others—may have liked.

In sum, this analysis brought forth the understanding that the Finns have achieved a truly pedagogical approach to education—instead of allowing it to be engulfed by a neoliberal commercial one. This Finnish education culture likely gives us a hint how education systems could flourish if progressive approaches had been implemented on a large scale in the past. Secondly, in creating an understanding of schooling that equally respects and values all learners, Finland has demonstrably evened out social inequality. It has created a system that works for *all* children. I suggest that Finland may well be considered the first country where the *Right to Education*, as contemplated by the United Nations (1948, 1989), has been fully implemented, and could thus become something like a 'UN model country' as concerns the *Right to Education*.

CHAPTER NINE

In touch with reality? — Philosophical problematisation
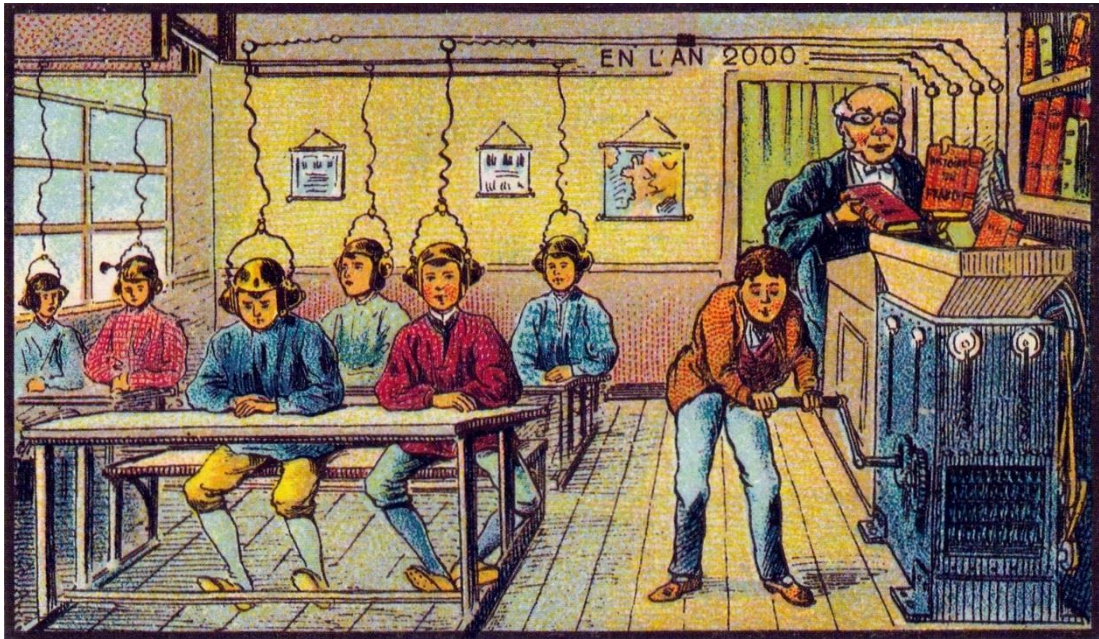
Figure 13 | Jean-Marc Côté [attrib.] (1901). *À l'école—France en l'an 2000, XXIe siècle* (Transl.: 'At school—France in the year 2000, XXIst century') [Retro science fiction art, Paris, France].[236]

Chapter outline

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[236] [Public domain item. Digitised by V. Vizu. Retrieved from the Wikimedia Commons database https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:France_in_XXI_Century._School.jpg]. Image description: "Created in 1899, Jean-Marc Côté's vision of a classroom in the year 2000 illustrates the long history of technological fantasies about education. The students are connected to a network by transmitters placed on their heads, although they sit at desks in disciplined rows, all faced towards the front, while the teacher feeds them books via a kind of mechanical mincing machine" (Buckingham, 2007, p. ii).

9.1 Introduction

Education in postmodern, achievement-orientated knowledge societies, according to Gilbert (2005) and Grotemeyer et al. (1995), is becoming increasingly complex, difficult, and crucial. A successful school education, followed by the completion of a tertiary degree or training, is widely regarded as not only a necessity in order to function in postmodern society, but also a definition of a successful life (Lynch & Knight, 2011). Amongst other things, this is due to the requirements of a highly skilled and specialised workforce, but also the societal promise of a raised standard of living (Lynch & Knight, 2011).

Chapter One and Chapter Six provide evidence and examples of what could be seen as the 'general' view of the basic role of education. In this view, education is regarded as imparting certain skills or performances, believed to be necessary to function in society (United Nations, 1948, 1989); or, more simply said, to 'get on with life'. Jiddu Krishnamurti (1981) put it like this: "The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole" (1981, p. 15). In order to get on with life, I argue, life has to make sense; one has to see meaning in life. This leads to the pragmatic question: Are current school systems teaching young people how to get on with life, how, for instance, to lead a meaningful and satisfactory—hence successful—life? Whether this objective is nowadays being met, is questionable. To consider this question is the purpose of this chapter.

9.2   Current practice reality in education (Recapitulation)

In Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight, I argued that, as a result of informatisation and the new knowledge economy, several waves of educational reform have transformed the education sectors of many countries into (profitable) education industries, causing crises of conscience for teachers, mental/emotional stress for students, and pressure to perform for both. In essence, following Lauwerys et al. (2016c), Murgatroyd and Sahlberg (2016) and D. M. Steiner (2013b), the changes involved:

a) benchmarking (so as to produce some form of 'quality label');
b) managing the content of education (cf. 'standardisation' and 'outcome-based education');
c) managing the people working in the sector (cf. 'performativity' and 'accountability');
d) equipping students/classrooms with state-of-the-art technology (as 'proof' that the educational 'service' provided is up-to-date).

Following this, contemporary education systems are widely characterised by three main aspects: standardised curricula, outcome-based education, and, less frequently, high-stakes testing (Lauwerys et al., 2016c; Murgatroyd & Sahlberg, 2016; D. M. Steiner, 2013b). In the following, I explore the question whether these developments in educational policy and practice, are in touch and in line with societal necessity, or, in other words, with reality. I also ask whether these developments make sense and whether they are in the 'best interest of the individual' as well as the local and the international community (cf. United Nations, 1989), as already discussed in Chapter Six. These questions are problematised philosophically.

9.3   The philosophy of schooling — An ancient ideal?

Philosophising about reality and schooling in a time of compulsory, outcome-driven education systems, appears to be a contradiction. As problematised in Chapter Seven, over the past four decades, neoliberal-capitalist philosophy has impacted on most societies not only in an economic way, but also on other sectors of society—such as education. It has also been argued that *Neoliberalism* may, in some places, have replaced the concept of society as a whole (see for instance Bale & Knopp, 2012; McLaren & Tristan, 2013; Peters, 2011; Zabala & Davis, 2014; Zeichner, 2010). As I theorised in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight, neoliberal education policies have led to an instrumental view of education—and, in particular, of school as an instrument of education—in many places (Bale & Knopp, 2012; Peters, 2011).

Such a means – ends orientation and instrumentalisation of the education sector according to economic-capitalistic principles (as discussed in sect. 7.2, *On global 'knowledge wars'*), according to Peters (2011) and Bale and Knopp (2012), undermines the need and justification for education philosophy to question why we educate the way we educate; it obviates the need to ask philosophical questions. With the status of the new economic—and arguably societal—paradigm, questioning a (seemingly) well-functioning system, such as that of neoliberal, outcome-based schooling—is a challenging task to undertake. Nevertheless, to question the very evident and real instrumentalisation of education and point to alternatives that may have a long and deep history, is precisely the purpose and contribution of this thesis.

Schooling is called schooling because it is about training certain faculties in preparation for real life 'out there' later on. The best preparation, some say, is to be 'thrown in at the deep end' fairly early. But is schooling—which derives from the

ancient Greek term *scholē*,[237] meaning 'leisure' ("school," 2016)—not also called schooling because it is meant to provide some form of protective ground, an 'experimental playground' to carefully try out and find out about one's strengths and work on one's weaknesses before being released into the reality of the—sometimes harsh—world of today?

The ancient Greeks understood schooling as the development and practice of culture. Davidson (1892) referred to "cultured leisure ... in contradistinction to the instruction given for business [in ancient Greece], which is necessary and has an ulterior aim" (p. 182)—at least for the aristocratic elite of the Hellenic society. This understanding was grounded in the *paideia*, the holistic liberal arts curriculum of ancient Greece.

This ancient ideal of an 'art of study' continued to exist during the Roman Empire in the form of the *liberalia studia* (Lat., the 'liberal pursuits'). It survived the Middle Ages in the form of the *trivium*, the three essential disciplines that lead to truth: grammar, logic, and rhetoric (*trivium*, Lat., 'a place where three roads meet' (C. T. Lewis & Short, 1879), which formed the foundation of a medieval liberal arts education. Combined with the subsequent study of the quadrivium,[238] it culminated in the famous 'seven liberal arts' of classical study—then considered most essential for a free person in order to actively participate in civic life (Crabtree, 2010).

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[237] The modern word 'school' derives from the classical Latin term *schola* (also *scola*) which stems from the ancient Greek term *σχολεῖον* (*scholeion*), from *σχολή* (*scholē*, 'spare time, leisure', later on, 'conversations and the knowledge gained through them during free time; the places where these conversations took place') ("school," 2010; "school," 2016).

[238] (consisting of arithmetic (number), geometry (number in space), music (number in time), and astronomy (number in space and time))

9.4   Phenomena and repercussions

Nowadays, the educational reality for many children, as evidenced in previous chapters, is in stark contrast to the above ideal: Passing through the standardised education system today is increasingly demanding for children and youth, and academic pressure has risen substantially (Alexander & Hargreaves, 2007; Hurrelmann, 2003; Krenz, 2010; Lynch & Knight, 2011). The notion to extensively measure education—potentially at high stakes—according to Krenz (2010) and Alexander and Hargreaves (2007), has put increased pressure on children to cope, compete, and succeed amidst the challenges of a necessarily impersonal and often abstract, intellectual education and system.

This pressure is applied at an increasingly earlier age (Krenz, 2010), reaching all the way down into early childhood education (ECE) in the form of national 'standards pre-school curricula' and kindergarten 'graduations'. E. Miller and Almon (2009) established how quickly 'free play' is quietly disappearing in kindergartens and early childhood centres, making room for various 'guided' learning programmes, and 'edutainment' activities in order to be prepared for what comes next in school.

According to E. Miller and Almon (2009), this has led to an intellectualisation (or academisation) and a technisation of early childhood, neglecting the importance and the potential of self-directed free play activity—according to Maria Montessori (1912/1964) the actual 'profession' of a child. Following this, E. Miller and Almon (2009) argued that the appropriateness of ECE programmes was decreasing, as programmes were increasingly less child-orientated and less suited to the actual needs of the young child.

A study on the condition and future of primary education in England, carried out by Alexander and Hargreaves of the University of Cambridge in 2007, concluded:

a) that children are under intense and perhaps excessive pressure from the policy-driven demands of their schools and the commercially-driven values of the wider society; ...

b) that the primary school curriculum is too narrow and rigid;

c) that both the curriculum and children's educational careers are being compromised by national tests, especially the Key Stage 2 SATs;[239]

d) that some government initiatives ... may constrain and even disempower [children] rather than enable;

e) that the task facing teachers and other professionals who work with children is, for these and other reasons, much more challenging now than it was a generation ago. (Alexander & Hargreaves, 2007, p. 37) [240]

In many cases, according to Lynch and Knight (2011), the entire school experience can be described as a high-stakes gamble in itself, due to the fact that successful completion is a must.

Under the influence of other environmental factors of today's fast-moving life-styles, this 'socio-cultural pressure' comes to expression in children and youth in a variety of adverse contemporary phenomena. According to Prenzel et al. (2007), it includes (but is not limited to) sleep disturbances, stress, attention deficiency, and behavioural disorders (such as ADHD), school tiredness, school phobia, truancy, school refusal, depression,[241] anxiety, withdrawal, aggression (incl. bullying), often

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[239] *Key Stage 2* is the legal definition for Year 3–6 of schooling in the UK (i.e. students aged between 7 and 11). *SATs* stands for *Standard Assessment Tasks* and refers to a series of educational assessments in accordance with the *National Curriculum* in the UK (HM Government, 2013).

[240] [Listing in the original; numbering added]

[241] Psychological phenomena are often accompanied by various somatic symptoms such as anorexia or bulimia (or 'consumption binge' in general).

accompanied by alcohol abuse, drug-taking, vandalism and other risk-seeking activities, up to self-harm or shooting rampages at the most extreme.

In New Zealand, for instance, each year, around 10,000 young people leave school with no or little formal qualifications (New Zealand Department of Statistics, 2001). The 2012 *OECD Indicator Report* noted that an average of 26% of all 25-64-year-olds (amongst OECD countries) have never completed upper secondary level schooling. In New Zealand as well as Australia, the percentage lies at 27%, in the United Kingdom it is at 25%, and at 14% in Germany (OECD, 2012). The 2006 *Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey*, based on the *International Adult Literacy Survey*, further illustrated these results: It showed that 51% of New Zealand's working population has poor numeracy, 65% have poor problem-solving skills, and over 40% have literacy skills that lie below the minimum level seen to be required to participate in modern life (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008). In other words, the failure quota in New Zealand concerning the most essential (as well as most emphasised) school subjects lies between 40% and 51%, respectively.

These figures are reflected in UNESCO's (2012b) *Education for All — Global Monitoring Report:* The report found that, amongst the world's 650 million primary school children, 120 million have not reached grade 4, and an additional 130 million have failed to learn the basics at school (UNESCO, 2012b). In other words, "as many as 250 million children could be failing to read or write by the time they should reach grade 4" (UNESCO, 2012b, p. 5).

The 2016 *Global Education Monitoring Report* found that upper secondary school completion rates (between 2008 – 2014) ranged from 84% in high-income countries, compared to 14% in low income countries (UNESCO, 2016b). In 2014, 758 million adults globally could not read or write a simple sentence; 114 million of

whom were aged 15 to 24, and nearly two thirds of the total number were women (UNESCO, 2016b). Figures that are more detailed have already been presented in section 6.6.

These figures, which have been ascertained by the international community—the same body who set themselves the goal to eradicate the educational shortcomings in the world—signify quite an irony: Given that we are talking about the very basics of basic education, which is arguably quite a long way away from what I have, in previous chapters, described as the meaning and experience of quality education, such figures make evident that, the way we practise education, does not work for quite a few young people. To point out this irony, the discrepancy between theory and practice or between rhetoric and reality, is a pivotal purpose of this thesis.

These dropouts and those who, for various reasons, did not manage to function in the current understanding of delivering and measuring of education, are referred to in the education-political discourse as 'educational losers' (Quenzel & Hurrelmann, 2010) or 'the forgotten half' (Murray, 2008, p. 147). I question how letting young people down in this way (very likely with lasting impacts for the rest of their lives) can be reconcilable with young people's human right to a 'development to fullest potential', and wonder, are personal identity crises not bound to occur if one passes through such a system?

Following this, New Zealand universities have come to offer beginning students free basic courses in reading comprehension,[242] grammar and writing,[243] as

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[242] (such as: 'analyse the question', 'reading preparation & strategies', 'efficient reading', 'reading critically', 'use of internet sources', etc. (cf. AUT University, 2013))

[243] (such as: 'essay writing – getting started', 'writing process tools', 'report writing', 'referencing & plagiarism', 'paragraph structure', 'proofreading & grammar', 'grammar editing', etc. (cf. AUT University, 2013))

well as numeracy and mathematics [244] in order to better 'prepare' them for their studies at university. Another exigent field seems to be around 'effective self-organisation': So-called *Study Smart Courses* offered range from 'time management', 'listening skills & note-taking', 'memory skills', 'how to study effectively', to 'introduction to critical thinking', as well as 'group work', and 'oral presentations'.

Given the fact that these well-meaning services are offered free of charge, they are, from an instrumental understanding, evidence of the shortcomings of education—those shortcomings, which universities are struggling with in their students. In short, the missing skills are reading, writing, and mathematics—the so-called *three R's* that have been particularly emphasised during school years. Hence, it is legitimate to ask what these nine, ten, or twelve years at school have been spent on and whether the introduction of measurable and comparable performance standards such as *No Child Left Behind* (USA), the *National Curriculum* (UK), the German *Bildungsstandards* (lit. 'educational standards'), or *National Standards* (New Zealand) are appropriate and expedient in terms of preparing young people for life?

9.5   In touch with reality?

The present situation reveals that, amongst all efforts to standardise education, not even the fundamentals seem to 'have arrived' in preparation for the real world 'out there'. To emphasise this theorisation: Even when considered in its most simplistic,

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[244] (such as: 'study skills for maths', 'number patterns', 'integers', 'integer operations', 'problem solving', percentages', 'simple formulae', 'time', 'calculator skills', 'decimals', 'metrics', 'estimation', 'ratios involving percentages', 'simple statistics averages', 'graphs', 'order of operations', 'fractions', 'fraction division', etc. (cf. AUT University, 2013))

means – ends, performative, outcome-focussed, instrumental orientation, education is too complex to achieve what it aims to achieve in terms of skills and performances production: As elaborated above, in at least 51% of the cases, the education system has been teaching 'past' the student, which has most likely had an adverse impact on their lives. This suggests that the learning and developing individual has either been forgotten or lost along the way on their journey through the education system.

Therefore, one should ask the question: To what extent does the child's legal right 'to develop his/her potentials to the fullest' go along with the practice of enforced pressure to learn and achieve, including punishment and disappointing feedback when making mistakes, having to repeat school years when failing to keep up with others, and so forth? This perspective, I argue, exposes an anti-social aspect of our current concept and understanding of schooling (cf. Dunlap, 1929; Illich, 1971; Papastephanou, 2013). To put it another way, there is a theoretic-practical disparity, a divergence between the currently practiced 'status quo' and the 'desired condition' (as problematised in sect. 6.6).

To illustrate this dilemma in economic terms: Although the UNESCO has estimated that per US$ 1 invested in education and skills, as much as US$ 10 to US$ 15 can be generated in economic returns (UNESCO, 2012a); I argue that no business venture would either be conceivable or affordable with a default rate of 51% over an interval of 12 years (cf. Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, 2012). Even Plato, 2,500 years ago, assigned only three years to the learning and practice of reading and writing; precisely from age 10 to age 13 (Plato, 1967/68, sect. 7.809e-810a). In other words, following UNESCO (2016b), to a high degree, today's education systems are failing to prepare far too many young people for at least a basic life in modern society.

Observing these phenomena is what raised my guiding question: How can formal education be renewed so that it engages the whole person intrinsically, and hence better relates to the learner and his/her motivation for life? This stands in stark contrast to the widespread current practice of trying to make the student 'fit in' and respond according to a standard or the requirements of a certificate.

Beyond that, for those who make it through the system, the questions remain: Have they learnt anything useful, relevant, and formative (in the humanistic sense), or have they been dispossessed of a large part of their creativity, idealism, aesthetic perception, and self-confidence? According to Spence (2009), the UNESCO (2012a), Gidley (1998), and Rinehart and Kahn (2000), many young people are struggling to find meaning in life and their profession and are rather 'blundering along' instead of working on realising their preferred profession.

This modern attitude stands in marked contrast to the ancient Greeks who followed the motto "mēdén ágan" (lit. 'nothing in excess') (Pausanias, 1918, sect. 10.24.1) as inscribed at the *Temple of Apollo* at Delphi. However, this dichotomy of 'work versus real life' or, in other words, 'the evil comes before pleasure', has arguably also had its effect on the school system: In order to 'enjoy oneself' and 'have fun', one needs to have 'earned one's stripes' first. This notion of 'holding on to knowledge' and distributing it only to those who 'deserve' it, I argue, following Weis et al. (2013) and Fuller (2015), is a remains of previous eras that is not forward-looking.

9.6　Long-term impact on students

As devastating as has been the impact on teachers and teaching quality, as elaborated in Chapter Seven, is going to be the long-term effect on students, as I problematise in the following: *Outcome-Based Education* operates on the principle of instruction and testing, followed by assessment, which, typically, has either a rewarding or a punishing effect. Hence, the driving force to succeed is not children's intrinsic 'love of learning'; it is an extrinsically triggered 'pressure to achieve', generating a 'fear of failure and punishment' as argued by, but not limited to, Margolies (2013), Wang and Shah (2014), DeCaro, Thomas, Albert, and Beilock (2011), Cassady (2010), Kohn (1999b, 1999c), A. McDonald (2001), Putwain and Best (2011), Putwain and Symes (2011), Martin (2010), and Polesel, Dulfer, and Turnbull (2012). Philosophically speaking, I argue that an educational approach, that is focussed on outcomes, is an oxymoron in itself: How can one claim to be developing the human individual, if the result of this process has already been predetermined? Individuality development should be an open-ended process: As M. Craft (1984) and Bass and Good (2004) pointed out, the term 'educate' derives from the Latin *educare* ('to bring up', 'rear'). It is, however, derived from *educere*, which has the meaning of 'bringing out' and 'leading forth' ("educate," 2016); hence its possible meaning 'to lead someone out of his/her ignorance'. In this respect, there is a crucial distinction in how education can be understood: It is the historic controversy of 'filling in' versus 'bringing out' (cf. Bass & Good, 2004; M. Craft, 1984).

The above theorisation, and the problematisations presented in Chapter Five and Chapter Seven, substantiate the view that outcome-based education has catapulted schools and teachers back into the long-known paradigm of 'filling in'.

Following Brabeck, Jeffrey, and Fry (2016), Robinson (2010), Kohn (1999c), and Gelitz (2013), many of today's mainstream schools can generally be characterised as institutes of knowledge transfer that mainly apprehend learners on the basis of their academic performance. The child's individuality, attitude, and creativity is only getting developed passively (Brabeck et al., 2016; Gelitz, 2013; Kohn, 1999b; Robinson, 2010). Interestingly, in relation to the etymology of the term 'educate', The Century Dictionary remarks: "There is no authority for the common statement that the primary sense of education is to 'draw out or unfold the powers of the mind' [emphasis in the original]" ("educate," 2016).

From a philosophical perspective, predefined outcome-centred education implies that truth exists the way it is printed. That is what young people are expected to learn and know. And with the outcome of this learning process being predetermined, critically speaking, it also implies that there is no need to engage in a discussion on what and why this or that is learnt and what this knowledge means—at least the discussion is not encouraged in this way. Hence, I argue that the principle, underlying outcome-driven education, works along the lines of: I tell you what reality/truth is—no need for questions to be asked. In my view, this is a fundamental problem of perspective, a divergence between aspiration (policy rhetoric) and actuality (practice reality). The task of this philosophical thesis is to critically identify and put into question these very contradictions and divergences.

Following this theorisation, in outcome-driven education, the common proverb 'the way is the goal' does no longer apply: The educational 'journey' (of teacher, class, and individual student) is no longer crucial—the 'outcome' is now the main focus; meaning, the 'destination' has become more important than the 'journey'. Following this, a child's way of solving a problem, for instance, becomes

of little interest, as only the outcome counts in school (cf. multiple choice exams, high stakes testing, etc.). This pass/fail thinking, I argue, is mainly accounted for by the current system's need for measurability and comparability of education (see for instance: Brabeck et al., 2016; Cassady, 2010; Illich, 1971; Kohn, 1999b; Margolies, 2013; Papastephanou, 2013; Polesel et al., 2012; Robinson, 2010; D. M. Steiner, 2013b).

Following Ball (2001); C. P. Brown (2010); Illich (1971); Kohn (1999b, 1999c); Maurer (2013); Papastephanou (2013); Polesel et al. (2012), the consequence of conditioning young people in a materialistically outcome-focussed, competitive culture of education is that they are very likely to adopt such ways of thinking. To exemplify this, an educational childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood in the light of multiple choice tests, might arguably contribute to an approach to life that is based on the belief 'life is a matter of luck'. Another critical example is the notion to let students sit exams, write essays, and solve quizzes under time pressure. This practice has only value from an economic perspective but not from a qualitative learner-centred or learning success-based point of view.

Following Ball (2001); C. P. Brown (2010); Illich (1971); Kohn (1999b, 1999c); Maurer (2013); Papastephanou (2013); Polesel et al. (2012), I argue that the experience of a school system potentially determines one's mental-emotional health in the future—a truth which Socrates taught two-and-a-half thousand years ago, when he stated: "The mind is everything; what you think you become" (as cited in Plato, 1983, sect. 'The psychology of fate and of free will'). Transferred to formal education, I suggest that a contemporary perspective could read: 'what you are taught to think and how you think, you become'.

A learning atmosphere of this kind, according to Ball (2001); C. P. Brown (2010); Illich (1971); Kohn (1999b, 1999c); Maurer (2013); Papastephanou (2013); Polesel et al. (2012), has a subliminal impact on young people's individual conceptions of: life, work, society, social coexistence, civic engagement, democracy, politics, and so forth. Simply said, that means, if you are raised in the idea of competition, this is the way you are going to think and act. Following Ball (2001) and Illich (1971), this leads to the view that the paradigm, that underlies the education system, informs the climate that prevails in schools and arguably in society-as-a-whole.

If young generations are taught (be it directly or indirectly) according to the watchword: 'You will be fine as long as you do what is asked', it generates school graduates that may not be very capable on both a personal and a social level (see for instance Arendt, 1958/2006; Hymel, Schonert-Reichl, & Miller, 2006; Lleras, 2008; Mahmoudi, Jafari, Nasrabadi, & Liaghatdar, 2012; Wenger, 2003). I believe this is what Eisenstein (2013) meant, when he said:

> When we become aware of how the school system is a conditioning agent to instil in children obedience to authority, passivity, and tolerance to tedium for the sake of external rewards, we begin to question school performance as a metric of well-being. (Eisenstein, 2013, chapt. 15, para. 9)

Beyond that, following Rolin (2014), Miettinen (2013), Dewey (1916), and Becker and Cuperus (2010), teaching for performativity and expecting citizens to act according to the democratic idea and engage in the active co-creation of society, are actually contradictory positions. Outcome-driven schooling is likely to be the generator that produces performative workers and orderly citizens; and so is an overly intellectual, impersonal, competitive, and enforced schooling likely to generate a dissatisfied, self-interested, and unconcerned kind of society that may not

affirm public and democratic ideals on a large scale (see for instance Becker and Cuperus (2010), Cruz (1987), Dewey (1916), Illich (1971), Fromm (2010), and Ball (2001)).

This problematisation leads to the view that the current instrumental concept of schooling, constrained by the performative paradigm of an achievement-orientated society, implicates anti-social aspects that inhibit—rather than to foster—community formation (cf. Ball, 2001; Cruz, 1987; Fromm, 2010; Hahn, 2000; Illich, 1971; McEvoy & Welker, 2001; Reinke & Herman, 2002; Rosenfeld, 2010; von Friedeburg, 2002; Vygotsky, 1934/1978). In sum, this analysis leads to the concern that outcome-driven education arguably fosters an increasingly indifferent 'dog-eat-dog' society.

To sum up, based on the forgoing problematisation, on could argue that the ultimate output model does not work in terms of developing young people in a meaningful way. Presenting young people with finished concepts is, in a way, a deterministic approach and worldview. It implies: You are welcome to have an opinion but it is us who determine the facts. There is, plainly speaking, no better way to take the fun out of learning than that; and I believe that there is no more effective way to cast out children's love for learning. The adverse consequence of young people internalising an outcome-driven mentality, as I see it, is that they may not (be able to) take pleasure in the process or experience of learning itself anymore—both within and beyond the school context.

If we call for self-actualised individuals in a socially-responsible 21st-century society that is founded on the democratic idea, then a direct implication is for education to become open-minded and dialogic in terms of outcomes—which may be particularly interesting with regard to the post-fact realities, nowadays society is

confronted with (cf. President Trump's creation and conviction of 'alternative facts' and the like), as well as other trends (such as racism, xenophobia, and the current 'triumph of autocracy' in many places in general).

9.7 Sizing the competitive knowledge society's educational challenges

As already mentioned in section 9.3, the best preparation for life, some say, is 'to be thrown in at the deep end' fairly early. This approach arguably describes the reality of our current education systems quite well. The competitive notion to 'tar everyone with the same brush' and see what comes out of it is well described with the widespread saying 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger',[245] which is famously attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche, and dates as far back as to Sophocles. Apart from the widespread understanding that stricter discipline never hurt anyone, there may also be further aspects that need to be considered, given this behaviourist thinking.

The question is whether a 'school of hard knocks' makes sense or whether it is a misconception and is inappropriate. Litt (2012) presented a paper called *Why you have to fail to have a great career*. He argued that failure provides the ultimate learning experience necessary for professional success. Similarly, Dewey (1933/1988, p. 142) wrote, "failure ... is instructive. The person who really thinks learns quite as much from his failures as from his successes". And Skinner (1971) argued that "failure is not always a mistake; it may simply be the best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying" (p. 153).

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[245] Ipsissima verba: "That which does not destroy me makes me stronger" (Nietzsche, 1888/2007, p. 5) and "that which does not kill him makes him stronger" (Nietzsche, 1911/2004, p. 13).

However, Shpancer (2010) scrutinised Nietzschian wisdom and argued that "if you are stronger after hardship, it is probably despite, not because of the hardship. The school of hard knocks does little more than knock you down, hard ... we are not stronger in the broken places. What doesn't kill us in fact makes us weaker" (para. 10). He further referred to developmental research, showing that traumatised children were more—not less—likely to be traumatised again. Similarly, children who grew up in a tough neighbourhood, so Shpancer, became weaker, not stronger: "they are more, not less, likely to struggle in the world" (Shpancer, 2010, para. 11).

He concluded, "mayhem and chaos do not toughen you up, and they do not prepare you well to deal with the terror of this world. Tender love and care toughen you up, because they nurture and strengthen your capacity to learn and adapt, including learning how to fight, and adapting to later hardship" (Shpancer, 2010, para. 14).

Shpancer's argument makes sense: Imagining plunging children in at the deep end from early on so that they experience what 'real life' is about, might not do them well at all. Many children's school time, I argue, can be described as an adverse and, in some cases, traumatic experience: Amongst many indications that substantiate Shpancer's point, are developments such as the sudden (and controversial) rise of children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity 'Disorder' (D. M. Steiner, 2013c), which currently accounts for 6.4 million (11%) of 4-17 year-olds in the USA alone (Visser et al., 2014). The global prevalence figure amounts to 7.1% (R. Thomas, Sanders, Doust, Beller, & Glasziou, 2015).

Another example is the number of school shooting rampages. Analyses of school shootings have shown that permanent high pressure to perform at school is one of the major causes that leads students to commit such deeds (Elstermann &

Buchwald, 2009). Internationally, school shooting rampages at youth age have rapidly increased from 9 instances in 1974 to 108 in 2007 (Elstermann & Buchwald, 2009). There are many other psychological and behavioural phenomena to refer to, such as bullying, student violence, truancy, social anxiety, teenage suicide, and so forth.

Following Shpancer (2010), as well as Brabeck et al. (2016), Cassady (2010), Kohn (1999c), and Robinson (2010), children need to experience positive, inclusive, and supportive learning environments, and need to receive recognition and individual successes. As Berkeley (1710/2008, p. 28) said: "To be is to be perceived". If children are constantly met with disappointment and failure, they begin to feel inferior (Duchesne, McMaugh, Bochner, & Krause, 2013; Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004).

This problematisation suggests the assumption that the prevailing (traditional) concept of today's mainstream education does not comprehensively cater to prepare young people for life in a complex, pluralistic, individualising, postmodern society where social interaction, strength of personality, critical thinking, and the ability to make decisions are crucial criteria.

9.8　Finding the right 'measure'

"It is … advisable that the teacher should understand, and even be able to criticise, the general principles upon which the whole educational system is formed and administered. He is not like a private soldier in an army, expected merely to obey, or like a cog in a wheel, expected merely to respond to and transmit external energy; he must be an intelligent medium of action."

John Dewey (1895, pp. 14-15)

Concerning the evaluation of learning, in order to 'measure' something, a certain scale, lens, or framework is needed. A scale allows one to make comparisons. If I then compare my measurements against a predefined expectation—'standard'—I am able to make judgements. However, the factors of this equation are relative ways of perceiving; they are abstract theoretical frameworks in order to make sense—which is acceptable as we arguably need to use frameworks to explain the world and make sense of its phenomena. However, any evaluation scale is an abstraction from reality and may not encompass the entire spectre of reality. If one wants to measure something, one already has to have a desired outcome. This is expressed in the kind of measuring tool one applies. This theorisation leads to the view that one is mainly measuring the quantity of one's already preconceived result.

In a similar respect, Fyfe (2011) argued that "if the tool you have is a hammer, it is tempting to treat problems as nails" (para. 6). That means in other words, to a certain extent, measuring is always prejudiced or prepossessed. Hence the ongoing infamous debate on whether an objective truth can exist—which, itself, has arguably persisted ever since.

Publishing in academia, for instance, is mostly about collegial feedback (Casanave & Vandrick, 2008; Macfarlane, 2016; J. McDonald & Cater-Steel, 2017;

Saracino, 2004). Following J. McDonald and Cater-Steel (2017) and Macfarlane (2016), we expect to be given constructive, formative feedback and suggestions on a par with our colleagues. Here, negative criticism and grading is not appreciated (Casanave & Vandrick, 2008; Macfarlane, 2016; J. McDonald & Cater-Steel, 2017; Saracino, 2004). From this perspective, and despite the field's competitive nature and pressure to 'publish or perish' (Macfarlane, 2016), one can argue that the idea of the *Communities of Practice* has been positively implemented into practice (Macfarlane, 2016; J. McDonald & Cater-Steel, 2017).

What can, beyond controversy, most likely be agreed on, is the aim that young people should be given the best possible start in life in order to develop their faculties, skills, potentials, and their personality to the fullest. This objective lies in the interest of the individual, the society, the state, and it is in consonance with current international human and children's rights agreements as already discussed in Chapter Six.

'Measuring education'—in its simplest understanding—may merely mean 'measuring the knowledge that has been acquired'. However, knowledge, as such, is confined to the intellectual realm and does not include physical skills, talents, experiences, social skills, creativity, emotional intelligence/skills, musical, artistic, or aesthetic skills, as well as spiritual capacities and so forth, which could be summarised under 'the human being in its holistic entirety'. Following the above problematisation, I argue that measuring education in the 21st century needs to equal 'measuring development'.

According to Wenzel (2012), Greenberg (1992, 1995), and Kohn (1992, 1999a, 1999b, 2011), it has been long established that competition and comparison— even marks as such—are not appropriate means to foster genuine qualitative and

intrinsic development. I believe that development itself is characterised by movement, by ongoing, versatile movement. It cannot be understood as a static condition as the concept of *Lifelong Learning* (Hager, 2011) emphasised. The acquisition of capabilities like so-called 'core skills' or 'key competencies' are well-known catch words; however, the realisation to look beyond the horizon of intellectual subject study, I believe, is forward thinking and an auspicious start.

Einstein was convinced that "everybody is a genius" (as cited in M. Kelly, 2004, p. 80). However, individual potential first needs to be recognised, valued, and fostered. To illustrate this, Einstein added: "if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid" (as cited in M. Kelly, 2004, p. 80). I thus strongly believe that, if we do not look for or are not interested in children's talents, and impose our finished concepts instead, those manifold potentials will ooze away and will not be developed. This reasoning follows arguments made by—but not limited to—Dewey (1916, 1938/1998), Einstein (1960), Robinson (2006), Fröbel (1826), Pestalozzi (1801/1894), Montessori (1936, 1912/1964), R. Steiner (1898/1989), Maslow (1969a), the UNESCO (2012a, 2012b), the United Nations (1989), Brooks and Brooks (1993), D. M. Steiner (2012a), Sahlberg (2010c, 2015), Sarna (1996, 1998), and A. Craft (2005). Rudolf Steiner (1898/1989), for instance, expressed this argument in the following way:

> We do not have the task to pass on our convictions to our succeeding generation. We shall encourage them to use their own power of judgment, their own perceptivity. They shall learn to look into the world with open eyes. Whether or not we doubt that what we hand on to youth is true, does not matter. Our convictions are only valid for ourselves. We teach them to the youth in order to tell them: This is how we see the world; find out for yourselves how it appears to you. *Abilities* shall we arouse as opposed to transmitting *convictions*. Not in our 'truths' shall youth believe, but in our

personality. Adolescents shall notice that we are *seekers*. And onto the *paths of the seeking* we shall guide them. [Own translation;[246] emphasis in the original] (R. Steiner, 1898/1989, pp. 233-234)

Another image, which illustrates this well, is the fact that there is no point in teaching a two-month-old to walk—the concept of walking, at this stage, is simply not applicable; in fact, it is irrelevant for them at this age. This is to say that education should always be developmentally appropriate.

Following the above, I argue that any 21st-century educational assessment and evaluation should be individualised, holistic, flexible, and, foremost, positive. Assessment should be geared to account for any sort of individual learning progress and development as well as knowledge. This position is also apparent in the UNCRC: Becoming knowledgeable of certain 'subjects' is not the primary focus of education (as elaborated in sect. 6.4). The UNCRC's educational focus is clearly on 'individual development' rather than 'knowledge acquisition'.

Following this problematisation, I suggest that education should take place as unpersuasive, non-preceptive, and hence as open-minded as possible in order to help young people become 'self-supporting' and 'self-sufficient' individuals in the future. I contend: The more young people experience 'society' and 'the state' during their education as positive, supportive, and as an institution that makes sense, the more

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[246] Ipsissima verba (German): "Wir haben nicht die Aufgabe, unserer heranwachsenden Generation Überzeugungen zu überliefern. Wir sollen sie dazu bringen, ihre eigene Urteilskraft, ihr eigenes Auffassungsvermögen zu gebrauchen. Sie sollen lernen, mit offenen Augen in die Welt zu sehen. Ob wir an der Wahrheit dessen, was wir der Jugend überliefern, zweifeln oder nicht: Darauf kommt es nicht an. Unsere Überzeugungen gelten nur für uns. Wir bringen sie der Jugend bei, um ihr zu sagen: So sehen wir die Welt an; seht zu, wie sie sich euch darstellt. *Fähigkeiten* sollen wir wecken, nicht *Überzeugungen* überliefern. Nicht an unsere „Wahrheiten" soll die Jugend glauben, sondern an unsere Persönlichkeit. Dass wir *Suchende* sind, sollen die Heranwachsenden bemerken. Und auf die *Wege der Suchenden* sollen wir sie bringen [emphasis in the original]" (R. Steiner, 1898/1989, pp. 233-234).

positive their impression and approval, their public spirit, and their civic or political engagement in furthering society will arguably be. Research on the effect of negative emotions, such as sadness, fear, and anger, has substantiated that negative emotions and memories of particular events (especially fear and anger), make it highly unlikely for those affected to think positively and revisit such circumstances again (Temkin Group & Mattersight Personality Labs, 2016).

Isolated, sporadic measuring in education can only provide a snapshot of an ongoing process. Based on the foregoing analysis, I argue that traditional ways of measuring knowledge are not adequate to capture the spectre that learning and development encompass. According to Robinson (2010) and Kohn (1999a, 1999c, 2011), theoretical concepts have evolved and advanced but barely our educational practices and customs. As Greenberg (1992, 1995), Robinson (2010), and Kohn (1999a, 1999c, 2011) have argued, our school systems are stuck in the routines and habits of preceding paradigms.

Instead, 'measuring' in education should ideally turn into 'capturing progress and development' as well as 'celebrating progress and development'. In order to get there, I argue, it is important to emphasise the training of pedagogical skills, and support ongoing collegial reflection on one's pedagogical practice from one's experience. In short, 21st-century teachers need to be versatile and experienced pedagogues, perceptive, empathetic 'developmental companions'—which, in my view, goes far beyond the concept of the teacher as an instructor who is knowledgeable in certain subjects. Robinson (2006) pointed out that evaluation and feedback needed to be authentic:

> What we do know is, if you are not prepared to be wrong, you will never come up with anything original. ... And by the time they [children] get to be

adults, most kids have lost that capacity. They have become frightened of being wrong. ... We stigmatise mistakes. And we are now running national education systems where mistakes are the worst thing you can make. And the result is that we are educating people out of their creative capacities. Picasso once said ... that all children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up. I believe this passionately, that we do not grow into creativity, we grow out of it. Or rather, we get educated out if it. (Robinson, 2006, para. 6)

Learning successfully to 'get on with life', implies acquiring a basic set of faculties and skills and receiving an adequate socialisation and enculturation. Kierkegaard (1846/1998), for instance, held the view that life was not a problem to be solved, but a reality to be experienced. In this respect, I argue, based on the problematisation presented in this chapter, that the best preparation for 'real life' is to 'prepare oneself' in every best possible respect; and this implies a facilitation or a scaffolding of one's subjective-constructivist 'experience of reality'. This, I believe, is the task of education.

In Chapter Ten, I argue that, today, we are at the edge of a transition from a knowledge-based paradigm to a skills-based and development-based paradigm. Following the analysis, presented in Chapter Ten, I argue that our current measures (and ways of measuring) are less and less adequate and less and less sufficient to cater for the educational needs of today. Memorisation and mere possession of knowledge is much less important than it was, for instance, fifty years ago. We also have to be clear that information is not yet knowledge and knowledge is not yet an education (cf. Behrens, 2007). Nowadays, varied skills, experience, and the developed overall personality is what arguably increasingly matters (cf. Chapter Ten).

Consequentially, the succeeding stage to strive for and liberate the education system, according to Christensen (2015a, 2015b), Robinson (2006, 2010), Zigler (1978), and Kohn (1992, 1999a, 1999c), strongly indicates towards developing the whole, individual, free human being, with an emphasis on pluralist entirety, based on the uniqueness of the human being in all its multi-layered complexity. To sum up this section, captioned *Finding the right 'measure'*, in one sentence, I say: If learning and developmental progress is to be quantified at all, then, in order to get near an authentic way of assessing in education, I agree with Protagoras' claim [247] that the holistic human individual has to be the measure of all things—not an external standard.

9.9   Conclusion

In the above theorisation, I have presented arguments, suggesting that *Outcome-Based Education* does not principally ensure quality learning experiences, the development of critical thinking, creativity, or pedagogically valuable personality development. Following my argumentation, the philosophical problematisation substantiated the claim that outcome-based instruction constitutes a qualitative-contentual impoverishment of the learning process in a 21st-century context; with its overall framework arguably promoting conformism and a performative work attitude.

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[247] The ipsissima verba of the famous *homo – mensura* ('man – measure') statement is: "For he [Protagoras*] says somewhere that man is 'the measure of all things, of the existence of the things that are and the non-existence of the things that are not' [emphasis in the original]" (as cited in Plato, 1921, sect. 152a).
  * Protagoras of Abdera (ca. 490 – 420 BCE), pre-Socratic Greek philosopher.

Instead of outcome-focussed measures, student-focussed measures of teacher professional standards would be more appropriate as they would benefit both the teacher as well as the student. Didactically, teaching and learning should become more open-ended as opposed to the reeling off of uncompromising subject units. A trailblazer in that regard is Finland, whose *New Core Curriculum for Basic Education*, effective since August 2016, focusses on "transversal (generic) competences and work[s] across school subjects. Collaborative classroom practices, where pupils may work with several teachers simultaneously during periods of phenomenon-based project studies are emphasised" (Finnish National Board of Education, 2015, para. 3). These multidisciplinary learning modules are designed and implemented locally, and students are expected to participate in their planning (Finnish National Board of Education, 2015).

Other examples, and most likely the origin of learning in open-ended 'themes', are the *Main-Lesson Model* in Steiner Pedagogy (Kiersch, 2010; Richter, 2016) and the *Independent Activity* in Montessori Education (Jacobson, 2007; Montessori, 1912/1964). With these approaches, real-world topics can be explored phenomenologically, from different perspectives, open-endedly, and independently as well as by means of engaging in group exploration. Findings or perspectives can be brought together and presented to the rest of the class, followed by a discussion, later on. Rather than being lectured some kind of 'absolute truth' by the teacher, in this form of 'social opinion-forming process', students learn that:

a) very often, there is no right or wrong and no sole perspective;
b) every perspective and opinion is valid and valuable.

This is applied social constructivism. The problematisation, presented in this chapter, highlighted that there is a substantial difference between 'discovering

coherences on one's own' and 'being instructed about them'—even though they may contain identical (amounts of) information (cf. the theory of *Intrinsic Learning*). Following this theorisation, the notion of 'moulding collective beings', I argue, is based on an outdated behaviouristic paradigm. Contemporary life in the 21st century asks for individuality to be accepted and appreciated. By implication, this means to accept diversity and to adopt a non-linear thinking.

This step in the development, I suggest, has already occurred in various other spheres of life, such as the legal realm (cf. 'individualised jurisdiction'), the field of recuperation and socio-psychological counselling (cf. 'volitionally-consented therapy'), the field of consumer services (cf. 'personalised experiences/services'), and, lately, also in online sales (cf. 'dynamic pricing'). In the field of information and communications technology, for instance, individualisation, that is, the digital consumer experience, has arguably advanced from a 'one-size-fits-all platform' via 'user-friendly' to 'personalisable' to 'highly intuitive' and to 'humanified' (i.e. a level of individual personalisation that matches the lifestyle of that person) (cf. A. Abbott & Kavanagh, 2017; Spanakis et al., 2016). In short, this leads to the view that 21st-century life is aiming and asking for individualisation; to make things meaningful to the individual. This, I argue, is also the task for education.

Critically speaking, the current ideal is an orderly society that does not interrupt public performativity. While peaceful coexistence should indeed be the goal of every social living together, the notion and extent of social control is due to how society has been structured historically, and is deeply rooted in education, as problematised in Chapter Four. *Critical Pedagogy* and *Anti-Bias Education* (cf. Derman-Sparks & A.B.C. Task Force, 1989; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1983; Giroux & Penna, 1979; Giroux & Simon, 1989), for instance, see these structures reflected all

the way down to the style of children's colouring books, where boundary lines predefine where to colour in, sometimes even including the names of the appropriate colour to be used. Such books, I argue, are outcome-focussed. While they may lead to a beautiful, conventionally-coloured outcome, they arguably engage the child's imagination and creativity only marginally. Subliminally, however, such exercises tell the young child to 'stay within given limits'.

While rules and order are no doubt important aspects for young children to learn, these notions, I provocatively argue, are the remains of a historically-rooted, fear-laden society; anxious that somebody (or an entire segment of society) might challenge the established course of events, which could affect social stability. In my view, that is also where the idea of uniforms for school children, referred to as 'levelling', comes from, and there are many other factors and examples that can inhibit individual development.

To sum up, this problematisation leads to the question whether young people's potentials, such as creative skills, the ability to scrutinise and think in bigger pictures, and the capacity to come up with something original—as emphasised in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* for instance—can actually flourish in systems that are based on and driven by performance and outcome? On the basis of the theorisation, presented in this chapter, and in answering this question, I suggest that the disadvantages and limits to the performative paradigm may arguably be greater than hitherto believed, and that outcome-based education principally bears the risk to inhibit or disallow for individuality. In this respect, I agree with Krishnamurti's [248] concern that "it is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a

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[248] Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895 – 1986), Indian philosopher, theosophist, and writer.

profoundly sick society" (as cited in Derlega & Janda, 1979, p. 274), and thus close by suggesting the following scenario: If we were to swap outcome-based measuring and our performance-driven horizon of expectations; that is, the 'paradigm of extrinsicality'—in both schooling as well as society-as-a-whole—for a trustful handling of the individual's intrinsic willingness to achieve and motivation for success in life (as addressed in sect. 9.8), our societies might arguably become more stable, that is, inwardly more complacent and outwardly more peaceful, than they are today (as elaborated in sect. 6.4 and 6.5). I suggest that personal inner peace and comprehensive appreciation can only be achieved if the individual's goals and achievements become the measure (cf. Protagoras' *homo – mensura* statement (as cited in Plato, 1921)).

CHAPTER TEN

The changing nature of knowledge – Epistemological and learning–theoretical problematisation

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

Xúnzǐ (commonly adapted proverb) [249]

10.1 Introduction

As problematised in section 6.4.2, the way we teach and educate children reflects the values and ethics of our societies (e.g. Alexander & Hargreaves, 2007)—in fact, a teacher's (subjective) values and ethics are argued by Clayton and Simpson (2006) to be both an inevitable and necessary component of education. Over the last one-and-a-half centuries, the understanding of schooling and the prevailing perception of educational theory and philosophy—a theoretical construct often considered the 'education paradigm'—has evolved; at least in theory (Lindgren, 2013). This may arguably be seen as an indication of the direction of the development of human consciousness (cf. Hailman, 1874; Lindgren, 2013; Polito, 2005). In the following, I

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[249] Xúnzǐ ('Hsün-tzǔ') (312 – 230 BCE), Chinese Confucian philosopher. The proverb given is the commonly adapted citation of the text. Its ipsissima verba words: "Not having heard something is not as good as having heard it; having heard it is not as good as having seen it; having seen it is not as good as knowing it; knowing it is not as good as putting it into practice" (Xúnzǐ, 1990, sect. 8.11, p. 81). A revised interpretation is: "Tell me and I [will] forget. Show me and I [will] remember. Involve me and I [will] understand." Also: "You cannot understand until you walk a mile in someone else's shoes."

recapitulate the path of development of this paradigm as a whole (the models of which have already been addressed within their historical context in Chapter Five) in order to reveal the very nature of the 'education paradigm', and to theorise its potential for the future. This led to the following outline of the chapter:

Chapter outline

10.2 Recapitulation: The evolution of the educational paradigm

10.2.1 Behaviourism

In the early 20th century, public education was influenced by *Behaviourism*, which had been coined by Watson [250] in 1913.[251] Watson was convinced that all human behaviour originated from environmental stimuli and could be explained without consideration of internal mental states or consciousness (Duchesne et al., 2013; Lauwerys et al., 2016b). In short, everything an organism does, was seen as a behaviour (cf. *Radical Behaviourism*) and human beings were seen as collective,

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[250] John Broadus Watson (1878 – 1958), American psychologist, founder of the school of behaviourism.

[251] Strong trends had already been emerging in biology and psychology since the late 19th century ("behaviourism," 2016).

passive recipients of instruction who responded to external (environmental) stimuli (cf. *Stimulus – Response Behaviour* by means of positive/negative reinforcement) (Duchesne et al., 2013; Lauwerys et al., 2016b). Accordingly, schooling was a unitary, mechanistic 'casting of moulds', with the teacher in charge and control of all aspects of the instructional process, including its outcome, and regardless of the young individual's personality (cf. Pavlov (1903, 1927), Thorndike (1903), Skinner (1974), amongst others). This state, according to Lindgren (2013) and Polito (2005), depicted the general situation and common understanding of schooling (and arguably the stage of consciousness of mankind) at the time.

10.2.2 Cognitivism

What followed, was the cognitivist understanding of instruction. Deriving from *Gestalt Theory* (cf. Bode, 1929), cognitive theories date back as early as the late 1920s. Based on the advancing understanding of the mind's information-processing capacities and the importance of prior knowledge in learning, the cognitivist movement was a response to the behaviourist approach (Duchesne et al., 2013; Lauwerys et al., 2016b). Behaviourism was increasingly found too limiting as a developmental concept since it failed to explain certain social behaviours. Influenced by Piaget's developmental psychology (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), and contributed by Vygotsky & Bruner's *Social Constructivist Approach* (Bruner, 1960), Gagné's *Conditions of Learning Theory* (1965), Scandura's *Structural Learning Theory* (1970, 1973), Schank & Abelson's *Script Theory* (1977), Reigeluth's *Elaboration Theory* (1979), Merrill's *Component Display Theory* (1983), Baldwin's *Theory of Cognitive Development*, and Gagné, Briggs & Wager's *Nine Events of Instruction*

(1988), cognitivists now looked beyond behaviour to explain an effective brain-based understanding of material (memory, knowing, thinking and problem solving):

> Cognitive theorists recognise that much learning involves associations established through contiguity and repetition. They also acknowledge the importance of reinforcement, although they stress its role in providing feedback about the correctness of responses over its role as a motivator. However, even while accepting such behaviouristic concepts, cognitive theorists view learning as involving the acquisition or reorganisation of the cognitive structures through which humans process and store information. (Good & Brophy, 1990, p. 187)

Seeing the learner as an information processor (often allegorised with a computer) whose actions are a consequence of thinking, cognitivists' focus lay on functional optimisation of information assimilation, processing, and outcome (Good & Brophy, 1990). Learning was seen as a change in the learner's current schemata, the symbolic mental constructions (i.e. knowledge) that the brain imposes on perceiving the world (Good & Brophy, 1990). With Miller and Dollard's *Theory of Social Learning* (1941) in the 1940s, followed by Bandura and Walter's *Social Cognitive Theory* (1963) in the 1960s, cognitivism finally replaced the by then thought of as simplistic behaviourist learning model as the dominant paradigm, adding the component of organising information from simple to complex (i.e. the knowledge-based curriculum) to be taught in the classroom.

10.2.3 Constructivism

Cognitivism was followed by the constructivist approach to schooling (for which cognitivism represented a basis), expressing a very different understanding of how learning should take place. In its basics, *Constructivism* in education is comparable

with most progressive educational theories, and vice versa. Constructivists see learning as an active, creative process that originates with the learner. The teacher guides this process with a view to extend the learner's *Zone of Proximal Development* (Brooks & Brooks, 1993). Constructivism is generally attributed to Piaget [252] since being based on his *Constructivist Learning Theory* (1977) as well as on Kelly's [253] *Personal Construct Theory* (1991), amongst others [254] who paved the way.

10.2.4 Humanism

Propounded by Maslow (1962, 1968a, 1968b, 1969a, 1969b, 1970), Rogers (1964, 1969), Knowles (1968; 1955, 1959), Holt (1964) and others in the 1960s; eventually, educational theory resulted in the *Humanistic Paradigm* [255] (DeCarvalho, 1991). With its core values focussing on human potential, human freedom and human dignity (Rogers, 1969), *Humanism* distinguishes human beings from other species (such as animals, which are thought to have inferior capabilities) (Edwords, 2008). Relying on scientific reasoning, modern humanistic philosophy [256] rejects all supernatural perception [257] (Huitt, 2009).

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[252] Jean Piaget (1896 – 1980), Swiss clinical psychologist.

[253] George Alexander Kelly (1905 – 1967), American psychologist, considered the father of cognitive clinical psychology.

[254] Amongst the precursors of (pedagogical) constructivism are: Giambattista Vico (1668 – 1744), Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), John Dewey (1859 – 1952), Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952), Władysław Strzemiński (1893 – 1952), Lev Vygotsky (1896 – 1934), Heinz von Foerster (1911 – 2002), Jerome Bruner (1915 – 2016), Herbert Simon (1916 – 2001), Paul Watzlawick (1921 – 2007), Ernst von Glasersfeld (1917 – 2010), and Edgar Morin (1921 –).

[255] (to be distinguished from *Humanism* as a philosophy, and *humanism* as an instructional approach in education)

[256] (also referred to as *Naturalistic Humanism*)

[257] (with the exception of "a small, but important group" (Huitt, 2009, para. 4) of humanists, who made a case for a theocentric approach within humanism, as opposed to the atheistic

In contrast to Skinner's radical behaviourist notion of *Operant Conditioning* (1938), claiming that all behaviour was the result of the application of consequences (Domjan, 2010), in *Humanism*, above all, people are assumed to be inherently good, to exist as autonomous beings with intentionality and values, to be true to themselves and capable of self-realised development (Huitt, 2009). Learning is effectively viewed as an intrinsic growth process, a personal act of self-actualisation with the learner seen as an individual with affective and cognitive needs (cf. Maslow's (1943) *Hierarchy of Needs* [258]). Thus, the learner is looked upon as a whole—at least with regard to development over time (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). With its core values deriving from the *Renaissance* and from *Existentialism*, learning is student-centred and personalised. The educator is seen in the role of a facilitator as part of a cooperative, supportive environment (DeCarvalho, 1991).

This stands in contrast to cognitive psychology for which discovering knowledge and constructing meaning through the processing of information is believed to be the central aspect of human learning. Piaget's *Theory of Cognitive Development*, in fact, differentiated human beings from animals only in so far as that "a mature human being acquires the ability to engage in abstract symbolic thought" (Huitt, 2009, para. 5).

10.2.5 Summary and problematisation

Reflecting on the above overview, an evolution of educational paradigm development can arguably be recognised (Figure 14). Beginning with the notion of

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understanding of the dominant anthropocentric naturalistic humanism (Huitt, 2009). Mayor proponents thereof were Maritain (1936, 1952) and de Chardin (1959))

[258] (also referred to as the *Holistic Learning Theory*)

'moulding a collective being' in *Behaviourism*, via 'instructing a distinguished rational being' in *Cognitivism*, followed by 'facilitating knowledge construction' in *Constructivism*, to 'educating individuals' in *Humanism*.

Figure 14 | Evolution of the educational paradigm (conceptual model).

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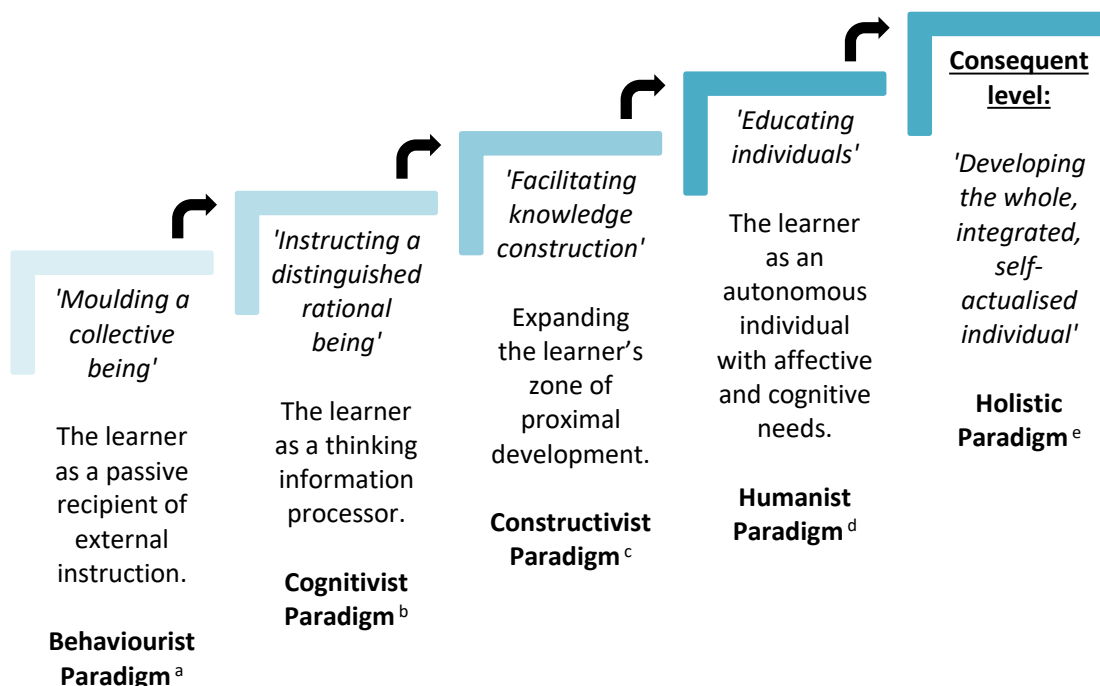
[a] (L. E. Holt, 1894; Pavlov, 1903, 1927; Skinner, 1938, 1974; Thorndike, 1903; Watson & Watson, 1928)
[b] (Bandura & Walters, 1963; N. E. Miller & Dollard, 1941)
[c] (G. A. Kelly, 1991; Piaget, 1952, 1977)
[d] (J. C. Holt, 1964, 1967; Knowles, 1968; Knowles & Knowles, 1955, 1959; Maslow, 1962, 1968a, 1968b, 1969b, 1970; Rogers, 1964, 1969)
[e] (Christensen, 2015a, 2015b; Forbes, 1996; Maslow, 1969a; Zigler, 1978)

Looking at this evolution as a whole, one could argue that educational theory and philosophy have considerably advanced over the course of the 20th century—at least in theory. Following this theorisation, the education paradigm may be argued to edge its way towards individualism, with the consequent level of this conceptual advancement, according to Christensen (2015a) and Zigler (1978), to strive towards being the meaningful self-actualisation of the individual in all its multi-layered

complexity, integrated in a pluralistic world. In short, the free and mindful human being. Following Christensen (2015a) and Zigler (1978), I argue that, today, we are at the edge of a transition from a knowledge-based paradigm to a skills-based and development-based paradigm. Following this reasoning, a *Holistic Paradigm*, as described by Christensen (2015a, 2015b), Zigler (1978), Maslow (1969a), Forbes (1996), Robinson (2006, 2008, 2010), and others, may be suited to represent a powerful, succeeding stage of paradigm development.

With the above elaboration of existing theories being a conceptual model or a theoretical construct, it is arguable whether these have indeed turned into what Kuhn (1962/2012) defined as 'paradigm'; that is, an undemonstrated belief, accepted by convention, in an overarching conceptual system (i.e. worldview). Such an education paradigm would prevail in educational philosophy, theory, policy, and practice, for the simple reason that it is contemporary and has most widely been accepted in the field. In short, a paradigm is the model that makes sense to most people.

I argue that, after *Behaviourism* and *Cognitivism*, and maybe including some form of *Cognitive Constructivism*, none of the remaining theories have fully reached the state of a paradigm. This may be due to other factors (such as political ones, for instance) having influenced education and educational science (as discussed in Chapter Five). Beyond that, *Behaviourism* and *Cognitivism* have both been critiqued for exhibiting illiberal and restrictive characteristics (Freire, 1970, 1985; Greenberg, 1995; Illich, 1971; Papastephanou, 2013). From today's perspective, I would describe *Behaviourism* as a conservative way to educate, and *Cognitivism* as a conventional way. In the following, I theorise why, I think, (socio-cultural) *Constructivism*, merged with *Humanism*, has the unrealised potential for a powerful

21st-century paradigm in education and why this paradigm could indeed be called the 'holistic paradigm'.

10.3 On the overall implications of *Constructivism* for education

In continuation of my elaborations on epistemology in section 3.6, titled:

Epistemology — 'Critical comprehensively-interactionist constructivism' (p. 63 et seqq.), I now expand these considerations to education.

The conceivable implications of *Constructivism* are seminal, as I elaborate in the following: Looking at *Constructivism* from an evolutionary perspective, the task to make meaning, and thereby, to create knowledge; and ultimately the decision over truth and reality—formerly an absolute privilege held in safe custody by either adepts, the church, sovereigns, or the state—has now been handed down to the individual (Fuller, 2015; Weis et al., 2013). Although mostly referred to in a technologic-economical context (cf. 'information revolution', 'digital revolution', 'knowledge market', 'knowledge economy', etc.), it has also been a liberation or a renaissance of knowledge for the individual. Following my elaboration in section 3.6, I argue that the constructivist epistemology constitutes the liberation of the human mind. Finally, we are at a stage where the human mind is allowed to 'make up its own mind'—at least theoretically.

Philosophically speaking, the radical constructivist and critical constructivist perspectives, as represented by von Glasersfeld (1984, 1990, 1995) and Kincheloe (2005, 2008), as well as *Socio-Cultural Constructivism* (Habermas, 1984, 1987; Hardy & Taylor, 1997) and its derivates, which go back to *Social Constructivism* (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Leontyev, 1981; Vygotsky, 1929/1977, 1934/1978), arguably helped make the pluralistic world become reality. The constructivist

epistemology reflects and, more importantly, it facilitates and respects the diversity and the pluralism of our modern world, allowing for multiple realities (as well as multiple perspectives on these realities) to be given voice to and to exist side-by-side.

In assuming freedom of opinion as a given, the philosophy of *Constructivism* appears to imply that there is no 'right or wrong' and that every (conclusively reasoned) perspective is legitimate and ought to be valued (cf. sect. 3.6, *Epistemology — 'Critical comprehensively-interactionist constructivism'*). *Constructivism* acknowledges that there are many different ways that lead to knowledge and understanding (as also reflected in the *karakia* ('prayer') by Ruka Te Korako et al. (2003) on p. iii). In other words, *Constructivism* fosters continual dialogue.

While Dougiamas (1998) argued that "the large diversity of flourishing public opinions in today's society on nearly every conceivable topic is evidence that a range of viable constructs are possible to allow survival and growth in the world" (para. 33), it is beyond dispute that not all human-made constructs are viable, realistic, or healthy. Humans make sense of what they perceive and experience, based on the individual mental faculties they possess.

As Dougiamas (1998) explained, "from a radical constructivist perspective, communication need not involve identically shared meanings between participants. It is sufficient for their meanings to be compatible (Hardy & Taylor, 1997). If neither of the parties does anything completely unexpected to the other, then their illusions of identically shared meaning are maintained (von Glasersfeld, 1990)" (para. 34).

However, if we assume Bachelard's statement, mentioned on page 64, stating that "nothing proceeds from itself .... [, that] all knowledge is in response to a question .... [and that] all is constructed [own translation]" (Bachelard, 1938, p. 14), I

argue, there is an aspect which has not been considered: What may work very well for inspired, self-actualised scholars like Piaget, Vygotsky, von Glasersfeld, and others, might not necessarily apply to ordinary or less educated people, simply because: If there is no question, things remain a) unquestioned, b) unanswered, c) subliminal, and d) abstract (intangible). In short: If there is no question, there will be no construct. This creative precondition, to be able to realise and ask questions, is dependent on one's motifs, level of awareness, and interest in the world; or, in one word: curiosity. Another scenario is this: If there is already an answer, there may be no need for a question. In this case, it is about mental agility or open-mindedness.

In sum, depending on one's inner motivation, the construct that is being created (including its foundation) may not be very stable. In my view, it all depends on one's motifs and convictions. This, I argue, can be explained by the fact that *Constructivism* is an epistemology and not a paradigm. As an epistemology, *Constructivism* needs an overarching, informing worldview, which provides the underlying ethics of a paradigm.

For *Constructivism* to remain within viable realms, besides the aspect of socio-cultural and environmental interaction or scaffolding, a healthy ethical foundation is necessary. While people's worldviews do—and justifiably should—differ, a holistic perspective (in the sense of the paradigm of *Holism*, independent of religion), I suggest, has proven to be a very beneficial combination, simply because coherence is (one of) the principal aspect(s) in *Constructivism*, rationally, socially, naturally, globally, ethically, and metaphysically.

10.4 On the missing socio-environmental aspects of learning — A theory

"We learn about the world and ourselves from the moment we are born and continue to do so throughout our lives" (Salzberger-Wittenberg, Williams, & Osborne, 2004, p. xiii). In other words: Learning is life. The child's personality, which I summarise as the child's 'way of being', is fundamentally shaped by the child's ability to make sense: its way of experiencing the world and him-/herself, as well as its means to process such experiences (Good & Brophy, 1990; Neill, 1960; Whitebread et al., 2012).

The young child favourably accepts and soaks up its environment like a sponge soaks up water. Its greatest gift, in my view, is that the child does not judge its surroundings, nor does it judge the people in it. In this respect, the quality and outcome of this process is up to the child him-/herself and the quality and amount of upbringing and guidance it receives before and during its childhood (Good & Brophy, 1990; Neill, 1960; Whitebread et al., 2012).

On the other hand, this process is strongly influenced and shaped by the child's environment. Vygotsky (1929/1977) has shown that development cannot be separated from its social context. Bruner (1986) elaborated on this, stating: "Most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture. It is not just that the child must make his knowledge his own, but that he must make it his own in a community of those who share his sense of belonging to a culture" (p. 86). In sum, determining influences are:

a) which environment(s) the child is confronted with,[259]

b) how the child has learnt to experience his/her environment, how it sees reality,[260]

c) which processing and coping strategies the child has acquired,[261]

d) which support it gets from his/her family and environment.

Moreover, the way in which the child experiences and makes sense of the world, can either be positive, negative, or possibly neutral. However, an important precondition for the learning experiences discussed here is that they have to be principally positive in order for an appreciative, personal relationship to the person or thing to emerge (cf. *Positive Pedagogy* [262] and *Positive Parenting*—which both derived in part from *Positive Psychology*). In Buddhist wisdom, for instance, it is said that, while painful sensations stimulate aversion against a person or thing, pleasant sensations stimulate a craving for its causing agent. Neutral sensations (i.e. feelings or mental effects that remain in the unconscious), on the other hand, stimulate ignorance (Feng, 2013, personal notes).

Keeping in mind that life is a self-organising process (Hüther, 2014), meaning that, if my counterpart does not respond to me in a meaningful way, it becomes either indifferent or negative to me and I grow either indifferent/ignorant or start harbouring self-doubt. If the response is negative, it evokes forms of anxiety (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004). One's level and ability to appreciate and respect is an

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[259] (such as the amount of noise, media, or TV; the amount of self-directed play, nature, colours, social environment, etc.)

[260] (such as welcoming, friendly, and supportive, or reserved, indifferent, disinterested, hostile, etc.)

[261] (either directly or indirectly)

[262] Montessori Pedagogy, for instance, is mainly based on the positive psychology principle of creativity.

expression of the relationship one has with others, the world, as well as with oneself (as argued in sect. 6.4.2).

Philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner referred to this dialogic interaction as a necessary "collision with the outside world" (1975, para. 3)—a sort of resonance effect from one's environment and fellow human beings in order to develop a relationship to them, and to distinguish oneself from them. This maturing process leads up to the moment when the child's self-consciousness awakes and it refers to him-/herself as 'I'. Even later on in life, so Steiner, "this 'I'-consciousness can be maintained only by means of 'collisions' [emphasis in the original]" (1975, para. 3). In this respect, Mead (1927/1982) made the point, stating: "We do not assume there is a self to begin with. Self is not presupposed as a stuff out of which the world arises. Rather, the self arises in the world" (p. 107). Steiner's 'theory of collisions' is a natural way of 'bringing to awareness'. At root, it is very similar to Kolb's theory of the *Learning Cycle* and makes learning experiences automatically meaningful to the learner; hence it is an active process [263] (Reusser, 2001).

What Mead and Steiner described in relation to interpersonal experiences, I argue, also applies to the physical/natural and the animal world. If we think of exercising in a gym for instance, whichever movement we make, it is an overcoming of physical obstacles. And yet, unless we exercise with heavy weights, common movements, like walking, running, cycling et cetera, are not experienced as surmounting difficulties, they are actually fun. I suggest that the same applies for socialisation, leading me to the following definition:

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[263] (while also keeping in mind the power of indirect/subconscious learning)

Socialisation is a personal process of negotiating and forging one's own way forward within the community and overall environment one is part of; in short, socialisation is social overcoming; an overcoming of the resistance that society offers. This applies for human beings—who can adapt their behaviour/reaction accordingly—as well as animals, nature, and inanimate, physical things. They all offer us some kind of 'collision' or, at least, an 'encounter'. As Dewey (1938/1998) suggested, this may potentially also be the case on a mental level:

> The environment, in other words, is whatever conditions interact with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had. Even when a person builds a castle in the air he is interacting with the objects which he constructs in fancy. (1938/1998, p. 42)

Following the above argumentation, it becomes explicit that the overall environment—the social, cultural, educational, and natural environment, the animal world, the man-made environment, as well as one's own imaginations—actively influence the child's development.

While what we perceive and experience may be subjective; however, in any case, it also has a point of origin—personal or impersonal, natural or alienated, that represents or personifies certain knowledge or simply exposes a certain *modus existendi* (German: 'Seinsweise'/i.e. 'mode of being'). For that reason, knowledge is always a co-construction between the perceiver and the exposing or transmitting social and physical surroundings; both active and implicit—hence the theory of *Social Constructivism* (cf. Fosnot, 2005; B. Kim, 2001; Lemke, 1993). In other words, knowledge and reality are largely subjective—yet an interconnected subjective—construction of our experiences. This means that:

> Instead of an inaccessible realm beyond perception and cognition, it [reality] now becomes the experiential world we actually live in. This world is not an

unchanging independent structure, but the result of distinctions that generate a physical and a social environment to which, in turn, we adapt as best we can. (von Glasersfeld, 1990, p. 23)

That means in short: Socialisation is dialectic. By incorporating environmental influences in the broadest sense in an individual's constructing of knowledge, this concept goes beyond both the idea of *Social* and *Radical Constructivism*. This theorisation leads to the hypothesis that we develop in mutual response to the subjective overall reality—the lifeworld—that surrounds us, and everything in it matters. I would like to refer to this hypothesis as the 'lifeworld resonance hypothesis'. It leads me to suggest that the impact of socio-environmental interaction has hitherto been underestimated in educational contexts.

Following Vygotsky (1929/1977), by implication, development and learning can therefore only be understood through humans' social nature. In accordance with both the theories of *Situated Constructivism* (Vygotsky, 1934/1978) and *Co-Constructivism* (Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1934/1962), early childhood is thus a self-directed and self-constructed 'becoming aware of one's own identity', however, it is interactively shaped and influenced by one's environment (cf. Bickhard, 1992; Bruner, 1986; Dewey, 1938/1998; Reusser, 2001; Wood, 1998). In other words: In which reality the child lives, how it sees reality, and how it deals with the reality it experiences, this is what shapes the child's way of being. That means in sum: We become who we are shaping ourselves and are being shaped to be by everything that surrounds us.

This theorisation leads to the view that 'meeting the world'—in both a social as well as an explorative sense—are most crucial learning experiences for the developing child. Sorin and Galloway (2006) mentioned: "When we construct safe,

nurturing and sanitised environments for children, we separate them from their own knowledge and disconnect them from their own experiences of life" (p. 16).

This insight closely relates to Dewey's (and subsequent others') *Constructivist Learning Theory* (Dewey, 1938/1998; Wood, 1998) and has been re-confirmed by *Socio-Cultural Constructivism* (Vygotsky, 1929/1977, 1934/1978) as well as recent attachment research (cf. Neraal, 2008; D. M. Steiner, 2013c). Hence, it is apparent that a young child's surroundings need to be protected and everything should be in a way which is suitable and appropriate to the age of the developing child. This starts with a quiet, warm, and light environment, fresh air, the language that is used around the child, the stories that the child is told, the books it has, the social interaction it gets, the toys it has to play with, and so forth. The young child needs to grow up in a protective and, foremost, supportive, sociable environment and, as attachment theory confirms, it needs consistent and authentic carers to build a relationship to, as well as others and peers to relate to (Abraham, 2007; Ainsworth, 1989; Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974; Bowlby, 1958, 1988; Neraal, 2008). My 'lifeworld resonance hypothesis', as a kind of 'all-encompassing developmental theory', can be understood as a tool in itself, and children need to actively practise and become skilled with this tool.

The same, I argue, happens on a larger scale too: In society, everyone and everything constantly socialises everyone. This applies on individual (micro) level as well as on strand (macro) level: Individuals, children for instance, are socialised by parents, siblings, grandparents, kindergarten, school, friends, et cetera. Groups, such as university students, pregnant women, farmers, self-employed persons, fathers, religionists et cetera, as well as society as a whole, are socialised by ongoing socio-political debates and changes. It can be looked at as an evolving spiral. In other

words, society constantly literally 're – forms' itself and thereby creates a new social order. Simmel, for instance, preferred to speak of 'socialisation processes' as opposed to 'society' (Baali, 1988). Understanding society as a process, rather than a static condition, is a concept that I find more graspable: Socialisation is an ongoing, evolving spiral.

Thus, human socialisation and enculturation, as well as constructionist learning in general, largely takes place in the form of active or passive 'socio-environmental scaffolding', followed by constructivist self-moulding. It can be compared to water: Water exists in various different constitutive states; it adjusts its constitution (or is being adjusted) according to environmental surroundings. What is uniquely human, however, is the fact that we can consciously choose to adapt, reject, or alter our state (of mind).

In this respect, German brain researcher, Gerald Hüther, recently made the point that 'society, too, conduces in the shaping of one's brain' (Hüther, 2014). The theory of *Behavioural Epigenetics*, meaning that everything environmental impacts on our cells, supports this theory too (G. Miller, 2010; Moore, 2015; Powledge, 2011). In this respect, it would not be surprising, I hypothesise, if a society's social structures and social organism, including values and morals, would latently provide the construction plan for the basic neurological structures of our brain.

With regard to the animal kingdom, Berger (1967/2011) made the crucial distinction that animals have no other option than to exist within a given world or specialised environment, determined by their instinctual constitution. This is why there is practically no variation between animal generations. Humans, on the other hand, according to Berger (1967/2011), are 'underspecialised' and are not guided by instinct. Humans' relationship to the world is yet undetermined when they are born.

In this respect, humans are 'unfinished' at birth. This gives them the ability—and the task—to actively shape and create their own world and thereby 'become the human individual who they are'. This relationship must be established on an ongoing basis.

In short, the most salient of the human being's faculties is the ability to reflect upon situations and consciously alter one's thinking and behaviour; it is to learn and adapt, based on meaning, derived from one's lifeworld (Abraham, 2007; Berger, 1967/2011). Berger (1967/2011) concluded that developing personality and appropriating culture are part of an individual's biological development. How can you find yourself and define yourself as an individual, if not through people, through society? Are we not becoming rather indeterminate and featureless, once we are isolated from society, once the reflection we receive, this 'social bounce-back effect' is removed? Tanabe (2004) affirmed this question, arguing the following:

> Maurice Leenhardt coined the term *cosmomorphism* to indicate the state of perfect symbiosis with the surrounding environment, which characterised the culture of the Melanesians of New Caledonia. For these people, an isolated individual is totally indeterminate, indistinct and featureless until he can find his position within the natural and social world in which he is inserted. The confines between the self and the world are annulled to the point that the material body itself is no guarantee of the sort of recognition of identity which is typical of our own culture. [Emphasis in the original] (Tanabe, 2004, para. 6)

Aristotle (1944) mentioned this too, when he wrote "each individual when separate is not self-sufficient, he must be related to the whole state as other parts are to their whole" (sect. 1.1253a).

In addition to that, there is increasing evidence that learning also occurs on levels, broader than the scope of the individual. Going back to the *Culture Epoch Theory* (Dewey, 1911; Johanningmeier, 2009), learning also accompanies us as a

community, a culture, a nation, an ethnicity, and as the human species at large. This is arguably reflected in the advanced civilisations, humanity has passed through (such as the high culture of Egypt or of the Maya, for instance) as well as in the cultural movements major regions have undergone (such as the European Renaissance or the European Enlightenment).

In this respect, I argue that the evolution of human consciousness is based on the experiences, humanity has had throughout the course of history; and that consciousness has developed through knowledge (Dewey, 1911; Johanningmeier, 2009). In fact, philosophically speaking, is that not also the broader meaning of teaching history; to illustrate that humanity is in constant progress and that society is a dynamic process, as argued by MacIver and Page (1949)?

The theorisation, presented here, gives new meaning to the school: Students are not just taught in groups for financial reasons. I argue that the main reason for public education is the opportunity to grow and refine oneself by means of the resonance of the group and its members. This 'comprehensive socio-environmental resonance effect', which I term the 'lifeworld resonance theory', is arguably often not adequately embraced. Concerning education, it implies to value discussion, dialogue, and personal formative feedback over the actual subject matter (instead of mere marks). In this respect, the topics, and the curriculum overall, are only the 'fodder for conversation'. They may lead to new information being absorbed and possibly to new insights, but the actual development takes place in the intellectual engagement with the (peer) group.

Following this problematisation, I argue that humans are 'wired to be social'; we depend on our fellow human beings around us to thrive. If the total environment is a major factor in human development, the question is: What can we do to optimise

that? By implication, the 'lifeworld resonance theory' or 'lifeworld interaction theory' means that quality socio-environmental learning experiences (both pedagogical and non-pedagogical/coincidental) support a healthy human development. Hence, I venture to argue that the pivotal factor in education is neither the amount of knowledge, the quality of knowledge, or even the choice of subjects; it is about how we (learn to) process knowledge.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Towards post-traditional education

"The dignity of the developing human being consists in being allowed to be one's own 'standard' [own translation]*"*

Susanne Thurn (2004, p. 419)

Introduction

This chapter completes my philosophical exploration into education for the 21st century. The insights and theorisations, gained in this inter-perspectival review and problematisation of education, are pooled, and, following the main thesis, constitute part two of the contribution of this thesis. Core issues are identified in the form of 'challenges for modern education'—constituting part three of the contributions of this thesis. While in this chapter, the key ideas from preceding chapters are brought together, this chapter does not represent an 'end result'. Rather, it constitutes a reflection and conjoined overall picture that rounds off the in-depth investigation of each chapter—where the actual, qualitative, contentual results are to be found. The contentual chapters are the main and foremost contribution of this thesis (i.e. contribution, part one). Finally, overall implications for authentic (in the sense of 'meaningful') and sustainable (in the sense of 'lasting') 21st-century education are derived and framed—which constitutes the fourth part of the contribution of this thesis. This composition led to the following outline of the chapter:

Chapter outline

11.1 Retrospect

Investigating a topic, as old, broad, far-reaching, and complex as education, was a vast undertaking, and transcended my usual categories of thinking and understanding. While education is crucial in order to take part in society and be successful in life, the overarching question was: What constitutes 'good' education that meets the requirements of individuals and society in the 21st century? In order to gain an insight, as broad and applicable as possible, I chose to approach this topic from a variety of different—yet interrelated—perspectives.

The historical review in Chapter Four and Chapter Five argued that, throughout history, education has been understood in many different ways. While it can be said that the initial idea of schooling had been conceived altruistically, formal education has not unfolded its potentials in this way. The problematisation led to the view that, from the beginning, progressive ideas for humanitarian and universalistic forms of education have not found favour with Europe's autocrats at the time. In reaction to educational developments on private and church-based domains, compulsory schooling was only introduced once intentions existed to influence and manipulate citizenry in certain ways.

Following this, I have considered ways in which the institution of public education was soon absorbed by European rulers' political notion of nation building. This was realised by subjecting the young populace to compulsory, materialistically-realistic instruction and discipline in schools. Compulsory schooling was briefly guided by industrial needs for skilled labourers, and was later influenced by the prevailing economic paradigms. As a whole, the influence of the *Industrialisation* on the public education system was argued to be marginal.

In conclusion, Luther's and Comenius' altruistic motives of making education available to everyone free of charge, had been imbued with a compulsory, authoritarian approach and an indoctrinating content—paving the way for the rise of nationalistic theories and the extrinsically conditioning educational approach of *Behaviourism*. The intellectual-cultural revival of the *Enlightenment* never really made it into school.

Critically speaking, I argue that the present-day construct of reinforced, compulsory, public education, in compliance with competitive, national curricula, developed out of an absolutist thinking, following nationalistic interests. This kind of

thinking informed the curriculum that was taught and shaped certain methods of instruction that may have been appropriate in order that the student, in the words of Fichte (1922), "simply cannot will otherwise than you wish him to will" (p. 21). Hence, the notion to instruct in order to 'fill the vessel' has little to do with genuine, meaningful and lasting learning. The theorisation led to the concern that such an authoritarian or will-breaking approach is not appropriate today—if it ever was. Genuine learning, my studies emphasised, nowadays has to take place in an open-ended way.

The 20th century witnessed systems of mass education become normality. The emergence of progressive education was a challenge for state education. Its appearance implied that the mainstream model was one-sided and arguably not in accord with child-developmental needs and human nature. However, it led to governing powers starting to tolerate the existence of 'alternatives'.

Mass education gave rise to a skilled and productive working class, which led Western nations into the 'era of the economic miracle' and individuals to promised prosperity. Universities' enrolments doubled or tripled between the 1950s and the 1970s, leading to an 'educational expansion', which culminated in an ongoing inflation of educational degrees. With *Neoliberal Capitalism* becoming the new driving force in economic philosophy since the last third of the 20th century, educational reform has been argued to have increasingly been initiated and driven by economic-political objectives.

The theory of *Constructivism*, which gained popularity in the 1980s, and which was expected by many to be game-changing in education, was figuratively swallowed up by the neoliberal about-face in education reform policy. As the problematisation argued, it was a regression back to conservative-style schooling,

testing, and accounting. *Constructivism* ended up having relatively few implications for formal education and was just one of many new theories and approaches that have been developed over the course of the last century. This development suggests the assumption that, despite the innovation, progress in this direction did not fit with political intention. Until today, the relationship between state pedagogy and progressive education remains divided—arguably because of the differing worldviews that underlie the concepts.

As discussed in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight, neoliberal education policies have led to an instrumental view of education—and, in particular, of school as an instrument of education—in many places (Bale & Knopp, 2012; Peters, 2011). As problematised in Chapter Seven, *Neoliberalism* may, in some places, have replaced the concept of society as a whole (see for instance Bale & Knopp, 2012; McLaren & Tristan, 2013; Peters, 2011; Zabala & Davis, 2014; Zeichner, 2010).

With the status of the new economic—and arguably societal—paradigm, questioning a (seemingly) well-functioning system, such as that of neoliberal, outcome-based schooling—was a challenging task to undertake. Nevertheless, to question the very evident and real instrumentalisation of education and point to alternatives that may have a long and deep history, was precisely the purpose and contribution of this thesis.

The changes, public education has undergone in the previous century, have been argued to have occurred within the industrial paradigm, dating back to the *Production Age*. Hence, I interpret the changes, that took place, as adjustments rather than advancements. I suggest that an advanced, postmodern concept of education, in order to be authentic and contemporary, will need to be grounded on a post-industrial—and therefore post-traditional—paradigm. This problematisation leads to

the view that, while education has adapted to socio-political developments and assumed a less categorical attitude that accepts diversity, it has largely retained its basic structures and instructive character so as to ensure practical—measurable— outcomes.

The 20th century was also a century of human rights. In Chapter Six, I have analysed the *Right to Education*, as defined in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989), from a qualitative pedagogical perspective. My analysis suggested that, ever since, children's rights proclamations' foremost pedagogical aim has been and is the aim to develop the entire human being, his/her personality and potentials to the maximum extent possible. Development, however, is a complex, multi-faceted, and individual process and cannot be imposed on somebody. If it is imposed or forced upon, it was argued to cultivate 'unfreedoms', aversion, and potentially lack of understanding in the young person, and will likely end up far from what 'fullest development' means (in the sense of the UN).

The aim, to develop the human being to the fullest of its potentials, as I theorised, is much more far-reaching and implies much greater profundity than a so-called 'basic' education. Implementing the right to education in the true sense of the wording beyond the basics,[264] implies more than information. It requires a focus on what Tomaševski (2001b, 2001c), in her *4–As' Framework*, called 'acceptability' of the standard and the quality of education, and 'adaptability' of education to the best interest of each child.

My theoretical findings suggest that, in order to realise the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child's* qualitative breadth, a different view or philosophy and a

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[264] (such as the provision of and access to education)

different approach to education is required. The key characteristics for quality education, which I developed in sections 6.4 and 6.5, are:

a) *Broad and holistic*
Recognising the fact that human development does not take place in one dimension only, and therefore requires a multi-dimensional or holistic curriculum and approach to teaching/learning in order to introduce learners to a multitude of 'tools' (in the broadest sense).

b) *Learner-centred*
Situated, individualising, and inclusive in approach, respecting and starting where each individual is at, and applying individual capabilities as the measure (also reflected in the way feedback and evaluation is given).

c) *Experience-orientated*
Situated, applied, and open-ended or phenomenological so as to enable individual experiences and intrinsic, critical-, and social-constructivist learning to occur.

d) *Positive and patient*
Nurturing a culture of inclusion and positivity, based on acceptance, respect, trust, openness/authenticity, dialogue, and understanding while appreciating that development is a life-long process and that no stage is final.

e) *Solidary*
Maintaining a culture of inclusion, sociability, sharing, dialogue, discussion, democracy, and compromise.

f) *Environmentally inclusive*
Aiming to include society, culture, and nature as general 'environmental counterparts' and determining factors in the developmental and learning process.

In sum, this theorisation leads to the view that education is about discovering and cultivating one's potentials by being given the opportunity for positive, informative (socio-cultural and environmental) learning experiences, either by oneself or together with others (incl. guided reflection). This is in the very sense of

Albert Einstein, who regarded it as "the chief duty of the state to protect the individual and give him [or her] the opportunity to develop into a creative personality" (Einstein, 1960, p. 95). Following this, I suggest understanding 'fullest development' as both 'having experienced, tried out, and learnt many different things' as well as 'having found one's foundation in life'. In that regard, a progressive, social-constructivist educational approach, involving situated intrinsic learning experiences, appears to make the most sense.

Concerning implementation, the scope or momentousness of the UNCRC remains in large part unrealised. The overarching problem is that the paradigm, which prevails in contemporary Western culture, namely materialist capitalism, promotes consumerism, which fuels the competition in the performance society, and this stands in contrast to humanistic-idealistic ideals that carry change, such as those in the UNCRC.

Seen from a broader level, this higher aspirational plane, which the UN employs, arguably guarantees the UNCRC's neutrality and objectivity; and it establishes a sort of 'world ethics' in order to secure the peaceful co-existence and continuity of humanity. Hence, the UNCRC should be seen as the overarching axiological[265] framework of education. It should become the universally valid standard of achievement—in a similar way to how human rights are forming the basis for the constitutions of most UN member states (Shiman, 1993).

In sum, the 20th century has seen significant advances in terms of educational rights as well as a learning process on the part of those that have hitherto been in

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[265] 'Axiology', from Greek ἀξίᾱ (*axiā*, 'value/worth') and –λόγος (–*logos*, 'reasoned discourse/logic') (Fahnestock, 2016; Rahe, 1994), hence, literally the 'logic of value', is the philosophical study of values with respect to 'ethics' and 'aesthetics'.

control of knowledge, as developed in Chapter Seven. Entangled, hierarchical structures of knowledge possession and dissemination and restricting socio-educational conventions have been broken open. Knowledge, in turn, has been argued to have undergone a liberation and universalisation; it is no longer the lever of a ruling élite, which certain underprivileged groups could historically be excluded from. It has become universal—universally shared and universally available.[266] This achievement was indicated to having mainly been due to the advancement of technology as well as the evolving awareness of humankind as a whole.

Simultaneously, the liberation of knowledge in the 21st century has been economically exploited, which has created new, ongoing problems. The standardisation reform wave, beginning in the late 1990s, led to outcome-based standard curricula in most countries. The downside: Standardisation means mass processing, and has been argued to operate at the cost of diversity, spontaneity (such as the 'teachable moment'), and individual creativity. After learning had been standardised by means of 'national standard curricula', teaching became standardised by means of 'teacher professional standards'. At the same time, international benchmarking had turned into a popular political instrument of comparing and competing with countries for educational 'excellence' and associated economic ascendancy. This political ambition, interlinked with the ICT industry's call for modernisation, urged many education systems to become standardised, electronically 'measurable', and thus comparable.

Following this, instead of the raw material of 'knowledge', the refined—or in this case standardised—product of 'education' has now arguably become a lever for

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[266] (provided people have access to public libraries, computers, the internet, etc.)

certain groups to be excluded from occupational—and thereby from social—advancement; simply because the 'commodity of education', in many places, has become very expensive. Put another way, previous structures of societal/institutional control over who was given access to higher education have been argued to have now been replaced by pecuniary hurdles that determine access.[267] This new knowledge market brought with it the necessity

e) to benchmark (so as to produce some form of 'quality label'),
f) to manage the content of education (cf. 'standardisation' and 'outcome-based education'),
g) to manage the people working in the sector (cf. 'performativity' and 'accountability'), and
h) to ensure classrooms and students are equipped with state-of-the-art technology (as proof that one's 'service' is up-to-date).

In short, since the 2000s, education systems have transformed into (profitable) education industries.

As problematised, the main focus of these changes pivoted on the establishment of rigorous mechanisms of surveillance and control. Today, educational performance testing and ranking has become generally and—arguably—undoubtedly accepted as *the* tool and measure of 'quality' in education. These developments have produced a new epicentre and driving force of the education sector, creating a new reality in education.

Outcome-based education and high-stakes testing have become a challenge for students and educators. In addition, the competitive approach to education, as problematised in Chapter Nine, has been argued to have been accompanied by a

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[267] (in addition to educational achievement required for admission)

number of adverse phenomena. Critically speaking, I argue that the 'philosophy of outcomes' has become the new, prevailing paradigm in education—which I termed the 'paradigm of extrinsicality'—and I question whether this new gauge is in the interest of and has any benefit for the learner, the teacher, and society.

This said, academic or pedagogical freedom and public accountability do not have to contradict each other, as the example of the Finnish education system highlighted (Chapter Eight).

Taken as a whole, it has been argued that, apart from many curriculum and examination regulation revisions, the abandoning of corporal punishment, the granting of equal study opportunities to girls and women, and apart from a slight shift from the method of direct intimidation to more subliminal ones, such as spurring children's ambition by offering incentives, not too much has changed since the establishment of compulsory schooling regarding the attitude, aim, and didactics by which teachers teach.

Present education systems, including the current understanding of facilitating and measuring of education, have been fundamentally shaped by previous historical-political and historical-economic orientations. Although educational theory has changed over the course of the 20th century, the apparatus and the prevailing philosophy of schooling has hardly changed since the 19th century: Many critics of the school system argue that schooling is still based on extrinsic motivation—or rather 'extrinsic enforcement'—of learning (Papert & Harel, 1991; Robinson, 2008, 2010), and the problematisation highlighted that schooling is still widely seen as the establishment to teach young people social adaptation by means of constraint.

In my comparative analysis between global education reform trends and educational practice in Finland (Chapter Eight), I have argued that there is at least

one winning alternative to the outcome-focussed model that prevails around the globe. As the analysis of policy and theory highlighted, predominantly, the global education reform was substantiated to be the opposite to that in Finland: The latest trends in policy changes, implemented around the world, are antithetical and contradictory to demonstrably successful policies and practices in place in Finland.

11.2   Challenges for modern education

The idea of education, as a stepping-stone to facilitate the development of young human beings, can be said to be part of humankind's greatest achievements. This said, the problematisation led to the view that, from its conception until today, education has never been implemented in the way it was conceptualised: unbiased— not in the sense of absolute objectivity but in the sense of value-neutrality and open-endedness—with a view to liberating the human being and to set free the maximum of the individual's potentials. The historical exploration highlighted that public education has always been influenced in some way or other.

Because human education is not a simple, mono-layered matter, this is a most complex and delicate issue; simply because a multitude of aspects and layers have to be considered. Without doubt, education is much more than a checklist of subject matter to be imparted. The main challenges for today's education, I have been able to identify through the theorisation argued, are listed in the following. These arguments and theorisations, including concrete suggestions for implementation, or links to concrete suggestions for implementation in the respective chapters, are part of the contribution of this thesis.

11.2.1 Remaining relevant

The problematisation led to the position that there are immense challenges lying ahead of public education, with the most central question being: Is the current competitive, industrial model of measuring education sustainable?

Education is by no means self-evident. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority, for instance, is planning to conduct New Zealand's high school leaving exams, called NCEA, entirely online by 2020 (Johnston, 2015). Following this, within the next decade, we may already see physical high schools disappear in some places. Whether attempts to digitise the facilitation of education are going to live up to the social and individual needs, which education has a responsibility to live up to, is questionable. In other words, this investigation has led to the view that, under the present course, education is at risk of making itself obsolete. From a radical neoliberal-capitalistic perspective, this would, in my view, be the subsequent stage of an outcome-based education system: handing the responsibility to educate oneself entirely down to the individual [268] with the qualitative pedagogical process being neglected completely.

During the 2000s, the contemporary education-philosophical discourse was characterised by theorisations of whether and how to 'catch the knowledge wave' (Gilbert, 2005). Now that we have an idea of (some of) its potential, and know of (some of) its problems and dangers (Peters, 2013, 2014), it has become clear that the magnitude of this ICT-driven paradigm change has and will continue to revolutionise all areas of life. It is by no means going to be limited to the economic sector (Connolly, 2013; Lundahl, 2012; Peters, 2011; Zabala & Davis, 2014). I would even

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[268] (and his/her legal guardians, respectively)

go so far as to say that in the near future we may enter something like the 'age of the digital humanity' as a new form of existence. In short, the knowledge wave or knowledge economy, that is currently underway, is going to be game-changing, and education will have to adapt and assert its place within such an anticipated super-paradigm of digital humanism.

Following elaborations in section 1.2, in order to maintain its actuality and relevance, education, and the philosophy that goes with it, needs to constantly resubstantiate itself to address the plethora of inconstant factors that continuously influence it. Hence, in order to remain relevant in the future, school education must make an effort in enhancing the development-nurturing, social, and interpersonal educational dimensions of schooling; and, in doing so, must assert itself against the drivers of knowledge-economic policy trends. The best way for schools to remain relevant is to convince through quality education. Quality education is not achieved by implementing predefined units but by granting professional scope for action, which leads me to the next point.

11.2.2 Advancing an independent educational infrastructure

The investigation argued that, instead of creating an independent educational infrastructure for a knowledge society in the 21st century (cf. UNESCO, 2005, 2010), most countries have allowed their education sectors to be knowledge-capitalistically co-opted and instrumentalised for reasons of economic ascendancy. These developments have turned many education systems into 'marketable assets'. This new 'education industry' is indicator-controlled regulated, has limited 'opportunities', and is highly competitive and selective. Education sectors have

become characterised by an increasingly pressured atmosphere and an array of associated problems and consequences for students, teachers, and society.

The problematisation led to the concern that current educational policy is too politically and commercially influenced. An outcome-based, commercialised education system, as addressed in Chapter Seven, is bound to depend on factors, which may not always be pedagogically meaningful, or in the interest of the child, the teacher, or society-as-a-whole. In other words, if the system is focussed on circumstantial priorities, such as benchmarking, surveillance and regimentation, or excessive assessment, it becomes unsustainable and terms like 'quality education' and 'academic excellence' become a farce.

As the comparison with Finland illustrated, for an education system to function at its best, it should be as little dependent on external influences as possible, and on as little monitoring as possible from within. Instead, it is indicated that responsibility should, to a great extent, be handed to the teachers so that the main driving force is the teachers' intrinsic motivation as they get creative and take charge of their professional work. This, I suggest, is when education becomes interesting and turns into genuine pedagogical work. In this way, as the Finnish example substantiated, teachers become their own standard for quality.

This is the same principle, which, for instance, applies to the independent press—it is fully state funded but it is completely free in the work it does and the contents and foci it adopts; no exertion of influence is going to take place. It is a form of decentralised trust-based accountability which could be called 'grassroots professionalism'. In short, trust in the individual and granting of professional responsibility are attributes for genuine quality.

The theorisation led to the view that this should also be the infrastructure aimed for in education. In order to do so, education, and schooling in particular, need to be embedded in the societal system in such a way, so that education has the capacity to continually resubstantiate and modernise itself. In other words, that means an 'education culture', characterised by personal responsibility and collegial self-evaluation on teacher level, as well as far-reaching self-reliance on school level regarding administration, personnel management, school concept and curriculum development, school evaluation and school accountability—all based on mutual trust and respect.

Systemic changes of this kind (as elaborated in-depth in sect. 8.7 and 8.9) would help make education systems more authentic and sustainable than they currently are, and would contribute in deinstitutionalising and deinstrumentalising schooling. The theorisation also suggested that it would help turn teaching into a rewarding, prestigious, and sought-after profession.

11.2.3 Moving from standardisation to standards

The problematisation highlighted that there is a fine line between standardisation and standards. If, what is called a standard, operates at the cost of diversity and individuality, and aims to measure everything and everyone with one generic scale, it has to be seen as normalisation and qualitative impoverishment. Human learning and development does not (always) proceed in linear ways; in many—if not most—cases, it can be a 'rocky road'. Hence, I suggest that genuine standards need to be capable of capturing the entire spectre of human capability and development.

If one takes note of how today's labour market has changed regarding the opportunities to fulfil oneself and earn one's living by means of starting one's own

dream business (cf. start-ups, influencers, self-made entrepreneurs etc.) or to come to a career of fame and fortune, I argue that the saying 'follow your talents' is as relevant a rationale for today as never before.

For that reason and in order to meet the contemporary needs to develop self-actualised world citizens of the 21st century, 21st century education should aim to develop the whole human being in its entirety and 'to the fullest of its potentials'—as worded in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* of 1989.

Apart from an intellectual and physical education, this should also include social, relational, mental/emotional, ethical, spiritual, and cultural education, as well as aesthetic (artistic/creative) development 'to the maximum of one's abilities' as well as a wide range of practical skills (including digital-technological literacy).

Not until governments view children through a problem-focussed lens as opposed to a solution-focussed lens (that involves the obligation to provide/perform), will we start to see the necessary changes towards what I called a 'comprehensively-interactionist constructivist classroom' (as developed in sect. 3.6 and 10.3) take place.

To do so, indications suggest curricula need to be intrinsically learner-centred with topics being studied when they are developmentally appropriate. Performance evaluation should equally shift from a one-measure-fits-all notion to individualised and personalised ways of evaluating learning and development. If a standard leaves room for individual expression, then it can be a motivator and a quality enhancer.

Secondly, educational standards need to be patient, need to give second chances, allow pedagogical solutions 'outside the box' and so forth. I mean to say that there needs to be a certain flexibility in standards that takes into account the human condition. In fact, I argue that standards need to allow freedom—because this

is the condition under which human creativity can flourish. In practice, that means that standards need to be individually construable. Metaphorically speaking, standards should only be trail markings; the journey itself—as well as the outcome that is reached—should be mastered individually (or with peers) and should leave open every conceivable approach and allow adjustment for every level of ability.

While standards should comprise a certain theme or frame, the concrete topics and the way by which to translate them, could be left to be chosen by the students themselves. This puts students right at the centre of educational happenings and provides them with a credit of trust and positive responsibility. Positioning children at the heart of their legislation is going to see their participation, protection, and provision rights (in accordance with the UNCRC) respected and made visible. In other words, as Thurn (2004) argued: "the dignity of the developing human being consists in being allowed to be one's own 'standard' [own translation]" (p. 419).

This also shifts the focus of teaching to the teacher's pedagogical skills: to make sure every student is challenging him-/herself, and is being challenged, adequately. Therefore, in my view, the goal of the standard should be to lead the individual to success, and that is how standards should be perceived: as guarantors for personal development and success. In this respect, the concept of the *Kernkompetenzen* (lit. 'core competencies') in Germany, for instance, is a step in the right direction.

11.2.4 Fostering open-ended learning

Moving towards qualitative educational aspirations, such as those discussed in Chapter Six, is another challenge for 21st-century education. Although in recent years, there has been a development to support the learner where he/she is at; my

investigation has led to the concern that, in order to put the child at the centre of educational events, a reorientation away from outcomes and high-stakes testing towards an anthropocentric philosophy and a more enjoyable, experience-orientated approach to learning is necessary.

From an ethical-existentialistic, post-material perspective, a key approach, indicated for education in the 21st century, has been argued to be 'learning experiences'. The opposite to outcome-centredness is open-endedness, meaning that concepts are not presented in a finished manner; instead, the topic is presented in a phenomenological way, leaving room for students to have their own experiences, observations, ideas, and opinions about it. The topic is explored and discussed in an open-ended way and while the discussion in the class may come to the same result as the textbook, students have actively participated in the shaping and coming to grips with the topic and have arrived at their own conclusion. Hence, they have constructed this knowledge themselves. It is a way of social opinion forming.

I argue that this simple change in approach can make all the difference between absorbing or boring lessons. It fosters critical and creative thinking skills, communication skills, listening skills, tolerance and respect for someone else's opinion, to name but a few. On a higher level, the pedagogical qualities of this learning style—which, by the way, is applicable throughout all age-group levels—support the fostering of

a) authenticity (in the sense of 'real and meaningful learning experiences') and
b) sustainability (in the sense of 'intrinsic and enduringly formative learning experiences') in the learner.

Another implication of this phenomenologically-explorative approach is that it does not revolve around the notion of entertainment and consumption (of

knowledge) which puts the student in the position of a passive receiver. Instead, this approach is about active engagement, experiencing, and enjoyment of the topic. Hence, phenomenologically-explorative learning can act as a counterbalance to the ways of the consumer society. It can also have the effect of fostering a culture of authenticity and sustainability within the education system as a whole.

I believe, these are qualities, Jean Piaget was talking about when he said: "The principal goal of education in the schools should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done" (Piaget, 1953, as cited in Kohn, 1999c, p. 116). If 21st-century education does not value and foster such creative and social values in children, they will be understood as secondary and may likely become secondary in those children's lives. Following that, there is the risk for these values to become secondary in society.

11.2.5 Towards a holistic educational ethics

The investigation led to the position that, traditionally, holistic perspectives have arguably never been part of educational research or educational science. Due to the discipline's sophisticated specialisation into all sorts of branches, educational research has become fragmented and has arguably lost the view of or vision for the whole. As problematised in section 3.6.1, this development was arguably evoked by the misconception that an impersonal (educational) science was objective. While branches of science may discover new coherences, the consideration, whether and how this aspect can be integrated into the whole in a meaningful way, is often skipped. Instead, discoveries are being branded and commercialised right away and that is how all sorts of gadgets, programmes, and approaches end up in school in a non-holistic accumulation. Commercial educational and education-technological

research has created an educational industry that has a directive impact. Instead of an independent, research-based community, the education sector has become a market-reactive industry.

Ultimately, the discipline's fragmented, mostly non-holistic, approach to educational research may have been a major obstacle to progressive change. This analysis leads to the concern that a more potent, holistic, post-traditional paradigm is needed that can stimulate collaboration between disciplines (inside and outside of education), between pedagogies, and between systemic subdivisions, which must become more open, open-minded, and inclusive. Integrating a more systemic, integral, or holistic perspective in educational philosophy, theory, research, policy, and practice, is going to be a challenge for education (and its neoliberal drivers) but it is also going to be crucial in order for it to remain relevant.

11.2.6 Towards a well-founded education system

Another concern, the problematisation led to, was that education should not take place in a 'vacuum'. Instead, it should be fully integrated in society, culture, and the environment so as to make it authentic. In order to become authentic, as already elaborated, education has to become independent. It should not be driven by business-like objectives and it should not be controlled and steered by external indicators. Instead, education should primarily be founded on pedagogical principles. Such a framework of principles, I argue, should not be limited to learning/teaching theories, pedagogical approaches, or even a particular pedagogy. It should, similar to a research framework, include all levels necessary that inform something like a personal philosophy of teaching. For that reason, I have transferred Kim's (1995,

1996) model of the *Levels of Perspective*,[269] and Crotty's (1998) *Scaffolding of the Social Research Process* to education, creating what I call the 'pedagogical planes of reference' (see Figure 15).

Figure 15 | 'Pedagogical planes of reference'; ideationally based on Kim's *Levels of Perspective* (1995, 1996) and Crotty's *Scaffolding of the Social Research Process* (1998), respectively.
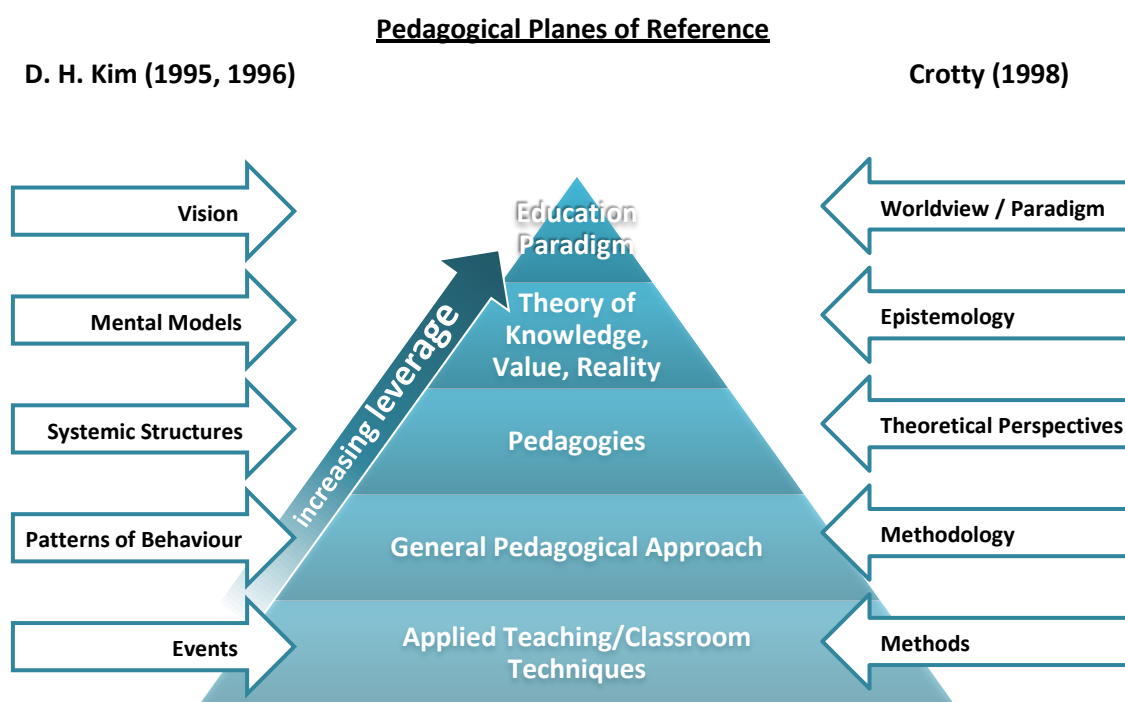
This model could be used as a scaffold for 'professional philosophy of teaching and learning' statements that are common in the final year of some teacher-training programmes. Such a model, which is basically based on one's ethical-philosophical convictions and pedagogical beliefs—as opposed to externally defined outcomes—can set a genuine standard of quality and personal responsibility (D. M. Steiner, 2016). Thinking about these things, puts the personality of the prospective teacher in relation to all they have learnt during their training. It helps student

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[269] (also referred to as the *Vision Deployment Matrix* (cf. D. H. Kim, 1995))

teachers consider the theory, and apply it to all planes of the model—which arguably goes beyond an abstract/disconnected 'events' level that is primarily concerned with teaching techniques and the imparting of the subject matter. The proposed 'pedagogical planes of reference' could set the framework for principle-informed decision-making in education.

The problematisation of outcome-based education systems led to the concern that teachers are running the risk of being disconnected from the upper visionary planes, just as the 19th century industrial worker had been disconnected from the whole production process by only performing the very same operation. While this may have sped up the production time, and made labour more 'efficient', it was a spiritual impoverishment and a degradation of the human individual. Karl Marx (1932/2009) famously described it as an 'alienation of human nature'.

Under accountability, performativity, and what is called professionalism, I argue, based on the problematisation presented in section 7.8, that many of nowadays mainstream teachers are running the very same risk of losing their professional identity because they have been overly channelled into performative roles. With the primary focus and measure having been pivoted onto subject matter, teachers are not involved with the pedagogical whole, the development of the individual. It also means that they do not have to worry about the process, any problems, or the outcome ('the product') either—simply because they are not responsible for it. As long as they deliver, they are fine.

That is arguably why things, such as the foundational planes, which the 'pedagogical planes of reference' relate to, have lost in importance, and are not all that relevant to teachers today. As problematised, this has led to the situation that the learner, the young individual undergoing the process of schooling, has faded into the

background. While this is a general view, it is still adequate in illustrating how much education has become a form of assembly-line production-like process. If we have the intention to improve education, I suggest, we should seriously consider deinstitutionalising the school system and, instead of the need to teach to the test, there may, as a result, be time to focus on genuinely-pedagogical—that is, the development-nurturing, social, and interpersonal—dimensions of schooling.

11.3   Reflection and contribution

"One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things."

Henry Miller (1957, p. 25)

11.3.1 Overview

With this research, my intention was to draw an overall picture of how the idea of education has developed and has been implemented over time and where we are at today. My focus was to lie on the challenges (i.e. the problems, concerns, and biases) of formal education by way of giving examples and by drawing from my own experiences and observations, and by bringing in other people's concerns as reflected in their research.

At the onset of this research investigation, I established the initial research assumption that 'education can be improved' to better relate to the realities of life and the capabilities of the human being in the 21st century, as well as to remain relevant in the future in general (cf. sect. 1.2). In doing so, I identified a niche-in-research and established an initial basis for this investigation. The refined research

question read: 'How could education in the 21st century ideally look and why' (cf. sect. 1.4).

It was crucial for me to maintain a broad perspective in order to be able to capture a comprehensive picture and not focus on specific aspects only. That means, a key point to this thesis was to engage in the kind of questioning that is open to novel approaches, that helps original approaches emerge. For this exploratory study, I had therefore set the following qualitative, progressive parameters (cf. sect. 1.4). The study should be:

a) in the broadest sense (i.e. philosophically);
b) as seen from a holistic (i.e. coherent) perspective;
c) to be most beneficial for the individual's development;
d) while, at the same time, in the best interest of society as a whole.

This led to a phenomenologically-descriptive exploration and problematisation, much interlinked with the researcher's personality and unique subjective perspective in the theorisation of this topic.

While exploratory research may not always provide conclusive solutions, its aim, according to Saunders et al. (2009), is to better understand the nature, causes, and effects of the topic of research. This is exactly what this thesis has achieved to deliver:

This research challenged the trodden paths of arguing and doing education by critically problematising previous and contemporary theory and practice on a philosophical level. This approach, as developed in section 3.7, included questioning, deconstructing, revisiting of original ideas, and looking at historical developments, in order to better understand the prevailing contemporary alignments of education and

their underlying motives and to bring to awareness the potentially restrictive aspects of the status quo. This led to:

a) <u>Disambiguations</u> of (basic) terms on philosophical level;
b) <u>Re-interpretations</u> of historical and present developments, policies, practices, theories, and understandings;
c) <u>Re-definitions</u>; that is, new understandings on the basis of new coherences that have been able to be constructed;
d) <u>Generation of hypotheses</u>, theories, methods, and concerns with direct implications for implementation.

In doing so, this thesis has explored and theorised new nexuses and alternative perspectives on education with a view to initiating positive change for the future, and to help eliminate the bases of alienation and domination (cf. Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). In particular, the research provided problematisation on a philosophical level to fundamental education-theoretical questions, such as:

a) Has the education system kept pace with educational theory/philosophy as well as societal necessity?
b) Is formal education in the best interest of both the individual and society?
c) Is formal education sustainable in the way it is practised; or: how is school education going to remain relevant in the future?

The theorisation substantiated that justified, alternative ways of interpreting most aspects of public education (that is, educational governance, system philosophy, curricular variety, learning philosophy, didactics, evaluation of the learning process, staff management, and teacher education) to those currently applied, exist. The problematisation particularly emphasised the detriments brought about by decades of neoliberal education policy and conservative reforms. Wherever applicable, implications for practical implementation in the classroom, on curriculum level, or on the level of system structures have been discussed, so as to maintain the direct

connection between theory and practice. The concerted theorisations can be seen as an alternative concept to the current approach to education and can be used to contextualise education accordingly.

As already indicated, the result of this thesis does not come in the form of ultimate answers, proof of right or wrong, or even assertions of likeliness. The insight to recognise the multi-faceted problem of contemporary education and to suggest that one solution is to amplify the engagement with this problem; is the basic achievement of this thesis. As such, it is non-directive. This treatise provides a comprehensive, contemporary, scholarly positioning that reflects my concerns as a teacher and educational researcher. In furthering the scholarship on the future of education, this thesis is intended to offer a contribution in perspective to the research community, to knowledge, and, in a wider sense, to society.

11.3.2 On the importance of asking questions

The purpose of this thesis was to scrutinise, to problematise, and to challenge the very evident and real instrumentalisation of education, to unveil its discrepancies between rhetoric and status quo, and point to alternatives that may have a long and deep history. To question why we educate the way we educate; or, in the wider sense, to emphasize the need to ask philosophical questions, fundamentally values and helps to innovate our societal concepts. In other words, the nature of an exploration is to explore and to challenge the ordinary and well known. To critically engage with the above purpose is what this thesis has done: the challenge—or provocation—*is* the contribution of the thesis. As emphasised by G. Biesta, Allan, and Edwards (2014), this is an important, ongoing contribution to the education-

theoretical and education-philosophical discourse. In doing so, the thesis contributes to knowledge.

11.3.3 On research philosophy

The originality of this theoretical treatise is first and foremost comprised of its unique philosophical method: an inter-perspectival, open-ended, phenomenological approach to qualitative theoretical research. That is to say that, technically speaking, the originality of this research is provided by its original approach in a discipline, based on a synthesis (of particular, unoriginal approaches) that has not been attempted before.

The personalised, open-ended, and open-minded, exploratory approach provided a particular way of exploring the (hidden) dimensions and coherences of this complex, perpetually changing, man-made construct: the interwovenness of factors, such as (but not limited to) knowledge, learning, information, individual development, right to education, curriculum, teaching, didactics, classroom management, accountability, measuring, policy, and society—all bundled in a system called education.

This unique, individualised approach of doing theoretical research, which I termed a 'grounded/emergent critical theoretical-philosophical exploration and argument/theory construction' (cf. sect. 2.2.3 and 3.7), combined both breadth of perspective and in-depth problematisation of the core issues in order to attain holistic and meaningful results. This methodology is novel to both philosophical research in general as well as the topic in particular.

The theorisation and construction of this methodology took place on a theoretical-philosophical level and has got contentual quality itself—which turns the

methodology into a unique think piece. Following this, the elaborations on methodology as well as the methodology as such are a contribution to knowledge.

11.3.4 On the thesis as a whole

With this thesis, I have questioned the construct of schooling—its roots, aims, policies, and realities from a critical-philosophical perspective. I have challenged the paradigm(s) that underlie the prevailing educational status quo with their often-traditional assumptions from a broad basis and have provided new or clearer understanding of past and present motives, and future conceptions of education.

In doing so, this thesis as a whole provides a comprehensive rationale for a post-traditional understanding and concept of education that has not been presented in this form before. Following this, I have made an original contribution to knowledge and to ongoing academic discourses.

11.3.5 On knowledge construction

As elaborated in section 2.2.4, the literature was a source of information, knowledge, wisdom, and inspiration. It contributed to an informed discussion and the construction of new knowledge. The challenge of this study was that it was composed of constructed knowledge, based on argument and reasoning, and engagement in the discussion—not quantified or deducted knowledge.

One thing, this exploratory approach has taught me, is that, as Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) put it, "everything possesses an unfulfilled potentiality" (p. 19) and that, by simply exploring and contemplating an issue and other people's ideas about it in depth, new coherences arise and new knowledge is created—a method which,

even during my school time in the 1980s and 90s, was rather spurned than encouraged.

This was the key advantage of this research: it 'con – structed' new knowledge—rather than 'ex – tracting' it from polls and statistics. The process was almost inverted; knowledge was created continually, and from the beginning—in the very meaning of 'constructivism'—which holds that every contribution can be valuable in that it 'adds to the picture'—as opposed to 'reductionism', which is interested in extracting truth. With this thesis, I engaged in theorisation and, thereby, I constructed new coherences by problematising and synthesising relevant existing knowledge and ideas.

Following this, the thesis' main strength and value lies in its contentual engagement; that is, its qualitative discussion and its theorisations—in contradistinction to an outcome-focussed or quantitative thesis. In this respect, theoretical research is purely contentual; that is to say, the thesis itself *is* the investigation and the contribution, simultaneously. In other words, the (research) journey was the reward. This methodological principle has been applied right from the beginning throughout the thesis. This way, the thesis maintained the character of an evolving work of philosophical art (cf. Dick, 2002).

For that reason, the so-called 'contribution' of this thesis can only be summed up to the extent accomplished in sections 11.1, 11.2, and 11.3; otherwise, due to its purely qualitative/contentual nature, one would have to repeat the whole thesis once again.

11.3.6 On temporality

Each chapter of the thesis led to particular insights and theorisations, resulting in a comprehensive picture of the topic at the end. While theorisations and conclusions may reconfirm the significance of something on the one hand, each investigation of a topic also adds new coherences as it includes new aspects.

The most obvious one of which is the advancement in time. The theorisations and conclusions represent the researcher's state of making sense—my subjective scientific convictions—based on the research literature available (that is, the state of the discourse) at the time. Hence, this thesis is a snapshot in time—an attempt at coming to grips with the topic I set out to investigate.

Even in the case that certain arguments may have been made in the past; being able to resubstantiate them from a similar—yet contemporary—perspective, reflects new contexts, renewed topicality, and new issues. This reasoning is backed by the extensive body of research that has been carried out with the objective to reaffirm or disprove previous/existing research or hypotheses. In other words, knowledge does not come about out of context; it comes as a knock-on effect, a chain reaction. In constructing this thesis, I have respected and made utilisable this very nature of knowledge.

On that account, I am asking for this thesis to be respected as an artwork of perspective in time—based on the developments that have taken place inside and outside of the field of research, as well as the researcher's level of development and insight at the time. Following this, the temporality of this thesis' contribution to the discourse is another important aspect that contributes to its originality.

11.3.7 On subjectivity

As theorised in section 2.2.7, *The significance of an individualised methodology*, and section 3.6.1, *The subject/object problem and its relation to truth*, the core of the methodology of this phenomenologically-descriptive, theoretical-philosophical exploration and problematisation, was closely interlinked with the researcher's background, personality, and his unique subjective perspective in the theorisation of this topic: Within the scope of this study, the relationship between researcher and that being researched was satisfied by accepting subjectivity, and by claiming and owning a subjective stance in the sense that theorisations and the process of reasoning were value-mediated or mediated through the researcher (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The subjective stance was not seen as an approach, a methodology, or a method. It was part of the combined ontological and epistemological assumptions that have been adopted for this work. Following this, there was no approach to be 'carried out'; the subjective stance *is* my way of seeing, thinking, and making sense. The process of reflecting, evaluating, determining, researching further, reflecting, re-evaluating and determining, on an internal, theoretical level, was constantly taking place.

The theorisations and conclusions represent the researcher's state of making sense—my subjective scientific convictions—based on the research literature available (that is, the state of the discourse) at the time. Hence, this thesis is a snapshot in time—an attempt at coming to grips with the topic I set out to investigate. This personalised stance turned this study into a unique subjectively-argued think piece that reflects the researcher's insights and voices his concerns in

the most authentic—yet scientifically appropriate—way. In other words, if I had not had the opportunity let this research evolve naturally and shape it according to my own insights and convictions, it would, most certainly, have never led to these results.

Following this, the application of a subjective stance signifies a unique take on the topic to be investigated; meaning that, only I could have produced this thesis in the shape and manner at hand.

11.3.8 On personal development

In addition to the above, the exploratory process of writing this thesis has also been a very informative and fruitful journey of learning and development, and has been remarkably transformative for me personally.

In the sense of the quote by H. Miller (1957) at the beginning of the section, saying that "one's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things" (p. 25), this research journey led me to a deep understanding of the various dimensions of the topic of education and its coherences, and to rich philosophical insights in general. Being a subjective theoretical piece of work, the researcher's intellectual growth—that is, my transformation—was an important objective of this kind of investigation that was not to be neglected.

In doing so, I believe, I have obtained "advanced specialist/discipline knowledge that makes an original contribution to a particular field of enquiry and as appropriate to local and global communities" (AUT University, 2014b, p. 8) by way of demonstrating "independence of thought" (AUT University, 2014b, p. 7), as defined in the requirements for a doctoral degree at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT University, 2014b).

Following this reasoning, apart from making this journey and its results comprehensible to the generality, it has already fulfilled its principal task of constituting a process of individual further development for its originator.

11.3.9 Index of key concepts and implications

As the precedent sections of this chapter have illustrated, this thesis has made contributions on various contentual levels. To wrap up this reflection, in Table 11, following hereafter, I have tabulated a list of the key concepts I have developed (including their implications) in order to provide a final overview of the achievements of this thesis, and to illustrate in which ways it is original.

Table 11 | Index of key concepts (developed by this thesis) that can contribute to the future of education (incl. implications).

1) <u>Theory of methodology</u>
   This thesis provides a contribution to the theory of theoretical-philosophical research by means of an original approach which I termed 'exploratory theoretical research' (as developed in Chapter Two and sect. 11.3.2), including direct implications for implementation by means of unique, original approaches to doing theoretical-philosophical research, termed:

   a) 'content-shaped research design' (as developed in sect. 2.2.3);

   b) 'thematic triangulation' (as developed in sect. 2.1.3); and

   c) 'inter-perspectival grounded/emergent critical theoretical-philosophical exploration and argument/theory construction', which I termed in brief 'Socratic exploration' (as developed in sect. 2.2.3, 2.2.6, 2.2.7, 3.7, and 3.8).

2) <u>Theory of knowledge</u>
   This thesis provides a contribution to the theory of knowledge by means of an epistemology which I termed 'critical comprehensively-interactionist constructivism' (as developed in sect. 3.6 and 10.3), including direct implications for implementation (cf. point 9)a) below).

3) Contribution as a thesis as a whole

This thesis provides a contribution of the thesis as a whole; namely, a comprehensive rationale,

a) highlighting the overall importance of the issue of education (in the past, present, and future) for a number of different reasons;

b) identifying and putting into question the contradictions and divergences between aspiration or 'desired condition' (i.e. policy rhetoric) and actuality or status quo (i.e. practice reality or state of implementation) that surfaced in every chapter;

c) making a case for a more authentic understanding of education; and

d) a comprehensive rationale for a forward-looking post-traditional concept of education that meets the needs of the individual of the 21st century.

4) Disambiguations of terms

This thesis provides various contributions by means of disambiguations of (basic) terms on philosophical level (occurring in nearly every chapter).

5) Re-interpretations and redefinitions

This thesis provides a contribution in reviewing and re-interpreting of historical developments and ongoing practices, leading to redefinitions of terms; that is, new understandings on the basis of new coherences that have been able to be constructed (as accomplished in Chapter Four, Chapter Five, and Chapter Seven).

6) Case arguments and counter examples

This thesis provides a contribution in challenging prevailing understandings, policies, and practices by constructing case arguments that offer counter examples (as accomplished in Chapter Six and Chapter Eight).

7) Highlighting a comprehensive perspective

This thesis provides a contribution in working out the importance of looking at education in a comprehensive way (as accomplished in sect. 4.3, 4.4, 5.5, 5.8, 6.4, 6.5, and 9.8).

8) Outlook on education

This thesis provides a contribution (in accordance with the research question) in

terms of a comprehensive outlook of how education could and should ideally look as seen from a qualitative, learner-centred perspective, and what it should offer each child (this correlation to practice has been explored in every chapter).

9) <u>Theorising new approaches</u>

This thesis provides a contribution in theorising existing educational approaches, in rediscovering and retheorising historical approaches, and in suggesting new theories and methods/approaches for direct implementation, such as:

a) the Lifeworld Resonance Hypothesis (as developed in sect. 10.4);

b) the Pedagogical Planes of Reference (as developed in sect. 11.2.2);

c) Grassroots Professionalism (as developed in sect. 11.2.2);

d) Holistic Constructivism (as developed in sect. 3.6);

e) Phenomenologically-Explorative (Open-Ended) Learning (as developed in sect. 11.2.4);

f) the Overarching Axiological Framework of Education (as developed in sect. 6.5 and 11.1).

10) <u>Voicing concerns</u>

This thesis provides a contribution in working out the concerns about the instrumental view of education and schooling most modern societies have adopted (cf. Chapter Seven and Chapter Nine).

11) <u>Pointing out potentials</u>

This thesis provides a contribution in substantiating that the potential of authentic schooling is far from being exhausted (cf. sect. 5.9, 6.5, and 9.8).

12) <u>Continuing education</u>

This thesis provides an important contribution concerning continuing education because this theoretical study provides readers with up-to-date knowledge about specific topics and themes (cf. Cook et al., 1997; Polit & Beck, 2004).

11.3.10 Concluding words

The insights I have gained from studying the historical and contemporary development of education has drawn both a somewhat disillusioning as well as an inspiring picture of education. Disillusioning in terms of the modification, misuse, and alienation, the idea of education has suffered throughout history; and inspiring insofar as that there are many—new, as well as old—ideas about education that are very powerful, alive, and hopeful. Education, in order to be expedient, can only have one goal: the success of the learning and developing individual.

In saying this, I would like to close with a quote that dates back to the 1620s; penned by none other than Jan Amos Comenius [270]—most likely to be considered the father of modern education. He wrote:

We are all citizens of one world. …
We are all equally human.
Let us have but one end in view,
The welfare of humanity;
And let us put aside all selfishness
In consideration of language, nationality, or religion.[271]
The schools are the forging-places of humanity.[272]

I wholeheartedly share Comenius' vision of creating schools—and teachers—that possess the qualities to act as the forging-places of humanity, and I hope, this thesis contributes to realising this vision by a further step.

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[270] Jan Amos Comenius (1592 – 1670), Czech educator and writer—often considered the father of modern education.

[271] (Comenius, as cited in Peter, 1977, p. 76)

[272] (Comenius, 1628-1632/1896, p. 363)

11.4   Future research

Many of the themes discussed here will be a matter for further contemplation in the future. Some theorisations have raised questions that may be worth pursuing within the scope of future research:

a)   One overarching question that came up was: Can/should the state (and its schools) be critical of themselves or should schools have to assume that a state's systems (such as *Capitalism* for instance) are right in the way they are (i.e. is a neutral state possible)?

b)   How might a framework curriculum, that includes meaningful holistic standards (such as those worked out in this thesis), be constructed?

c)   Can the Finnish education system be exported to other countries, and what are the crucial criteria to make the system work?

d)   What can we learn from Comenius' curriculum today? Did he mention or practise certain methods that we may have forgotten about?

Know that our truth and your truth may not be the same.

We all have our own journey to make

And many are the trails that lead to wisdom. ...

There are old trails that lead on to new worlds.

It is time to gain inspiration from the past

To guide us into the future. ...

May the wisdom of old be a force for good,

Today and tomorrow, and in all our tomorrows. ...

May you journey far in peace and understanding.[274]

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[273] (transl.: 'closing prayer')

[274] This *karakia* ('prayer') has been adapted from Ruka Te Korako et al. (2003, pp. 5-13).

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