

Current Concerns

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The EU, Bologna and the next thousand-year Reich ... In Switzerland the road to corrections in school and education is clear

ab. We are reading with some uneasiness, how Bologna came to Switzerland. To trace the single steps and the persons who took them – as *Barbara Müller* has done in her book, “The beginnings of the Bologna reform in Switzerland” – is one thing. The other would be to account for the political-economic process of the ruinous 90s dominated by the American mission to make Europe a vassal from Lisbon to Vladivostok, as *Brzezinski* had illustrated. This would provide the basis to assess the “Anschluss”-intervention into our whole school and education system, and to evaluate it in its political and economic context. The Bologna Declaration was preceded by a so-called “Sorbonne Declaration” of 25 May 1998, that *Ruth Dreifuss* nonchalantly signed for Switzerland. It was about instilling a little spirit into the EU economic project. It reads as follows in the preamble:

“The European process has very recently moved some extremely important steps ahead. Relevant as they are, they should not make one forget that Europe is not only that of the euro, of the banks and the economy: it must be a Europe of knowledge as well. We must strengthen and build upon the intellectual, cultural, social and technical dimensions of our continent. These have to a large extent been shaped by its universities, which continue to play a pivotal role for their development.”¹

Two years later the Bologna Declaration – which is a declaration of intent – was still being worked on in the very afternoon prior to its public signing. No Swiss delegate is permitted to sign such a thing: He has to take the draft back home and submit it to our democratic bodies with the necessary time. He who cannot withstand champagne receptions and gloss-and-gloria performances such as the Bologna signing ceremony, must not represent Switzerland abroad. Interstate conferring has its rules and even more so in our direct democracy.

The following is important: In Switzerland there is no legal basis for the whole *Pisa* and *Bologna* magic. They were *letters of intent*, but no treaties. Switzerland is therefore free to make the necessary corrections. In honor of the Swiss Rectors’ Conference it must be

“[...] they should not make one forget that Europe is not only that of the euro, of the banks and the economy: it must be a Europe of knowledge as well.”

Sorbonne Joint Declaration, 25 May 1998

“We request you not to take any respective obligations in Bologna concerning the Swiss Universities.”

Letter of the Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities of 15 June 1999 to the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDMA)

“A Europe of knowledge ... [is] capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.”

Bologna Declaration, 19 June 1999

said, however, that they had written to the Dreifuss’ department on 15 June 1999, that they did *not* want a *signature*. “We therefore request you not to take on **any** respective obligations in Bologna concerning the Swiss Universities.”² Nevertheless, the Federal Councillor Dreifuss’ secretary signed.

Meanwhile, the general political climate is different. In 2008 the world has become aware of this with the bankruptcy of *Lehman Brothers* and the collapse of the global economy. Europe in particular is in a situation of crisis, which no one would have imagined five years ago. Is this the grand success of the *Brzezinski*-strategy? Shall our children read merely trash and pulp at school to that end and shall the students (and incidentally, all graduates of higher education), just turn learning-morsels into credit-points? Will the ability to think and review sources and data no longer be needed? All that, however, only for the European vassal states; the war-mongering superpowers educate their children in a different manner.

Therefore, we must not miss the next thousand-year Reich in the preamble to the Bologna Declaration:

“A Europe of knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor

for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space. The importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies is universally acknowledged as paramount, the more so in view of the situation in South East Europe.”³

It should serve the “development of the European continent at large.” To this end, the NATO had shortly before “dumped” its uranium charges in Kosovo and in Serbia. And today’s Mediterranean, from Greece to Spain have their own ideas on this matter.

The European cultural space is older than the euro and Bologna. •

¹ *Sorbonne Joint Declaration*, Paris, Sorbonne, 25 May 1998, p. 269/270

² *Barbara Müller. The beginnings of the Bologna reform in Switzerland*. Berne, 2012, p. 156

³ *Bologna Declaration* of 19 June 1999 www.crus.ch

Dual vocational education and training – a blessing for every country’s youth

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

Global corporations headquartered in Switzerland needed young people with higher (grammar school) education and university studies for their jobs, they don’t need apprentices – that’s what an executive of a Swiss companies’ think-tank recently announced. Therefore the academic numbers should be raised “no matter how” in Switzerland as well as in Germany.

As a Swiss vocational school teacher with many years of experience, I must strongly warn against any attempt to diminish the importance of dual vocational education in Germany, Austria and Switzerland – and if only to the smallest iota. Not that I want to deny the “Abitur” (grammar school examination) and university education for some young people, I have an academic degree, myself. But I will not tolerate if someone only hints at claiming that an academic career was in any way of higher value than vocational training and an apprenticeship for the young people themselves or for our economy.

The fact is that the Swiss economy consists at over 90 percent of SMEs (small and medium enterprises), whose importance for our country is far more important than that of the global corporations that are often not even associated with Switzerland but have its headquarters today here and tomorrow in another country or on another continent. It is also true that, in Switzerland, Germany and Austria, youth unemployment compared to other European countries is by far the deepest. This proves that the economy needs no more academics, but that European countries urgently need one thing above all: many cooperatives or other smaller companies who take on the youth and train apprentices. 80 percent of Swiss teenagers undergo and complete an apprenticeship – this could happen elsewhere, too. However, this would require some careful basic groundwork and quite a number of adults who consider it their responsibility to contribute to the training of the youth

In the course of my work at the vocational school I met thousands of apprentices in various professions, who not only

matured to become good and reliable professionals in their three- or four-year apprenticeship under the guidance of their instructors, but have also taken their place as democracy-capable and responsible citizens in their communes and in their associations or other social institutions. Quite a few of my students have even started a further education after their apprenticeship. Others found their satisfaction in training apprentices themselves and to pass on, what they received from their masters and teachers.

Especially at a time in which young people – besides the dangers of alcohol and drug addiction – must survive the numerous new threats by the digital tsunami in order to become mature and social adults, the support they receive in their vocational training company and at their vocational school is of irreplaceable value.

Let us preserve and recommend the dual well-proved vocational training rather than letting us being distracted from this proven path by representatives of neo-liberal doctrines. •

“The cantons are responsible for the school system”

ev. Since the beginning of this year, university education and research, which so far had been subordinated to the *Federal Department of Home Affairs*, and the job training, which had been located in the *Department of Economic Affairs*, have been merged into a new *State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation*. First head of the new State Secretariat is *Mauro Dell’Ambrogio* from Ticino. In the SRF 1-program “Talk of the day” on 9 January 2013 he made a few clarifying statements: He stated that the establishment of the new State Secretariat did not mean a central-

ization of the Swiss educational system and no alteration of the constitutional responsibilities. In Article 62, Paragraph 1 of the Federal Constitution it is clearly stated: “The cantons are responsible for the school system.”

Accordingly Mauro dell’ Ambrogio explained his new job: “This is an internal administrative reform. There is potential for efficiency. But it is not a reform of the education and research system in Switzerland. The system is the same as before. The laws are the same as before. The organization, structures, the cantonal responsibili-

ties are exactly the same.” And later in the interview: “In general education, the cantons are at work, operationally. The federal government simply provides for money distribution between the ETH domain, subsidies to the cantons, international projects, etc.”

He primarily considers his task as “caring that things work, especially that the system is not damaged.” Since: “The system needs no revolution, I think it is not a failing enterprise. Just recently our educational system, our research have been still celebrated as the best in the world.”

“You cannot sign that!”

How seven men instigate the greatest revolution at Swiss universities. The incredible story of the Bologna reforms

by Matthias Daum*

The orchestra plays *Beethoven's* ninth symphony. “Joy, beautiful spark of the gods ...” University presidents and politicians with responsibility for educational matters from thirty countries are crowded close together in the festively decorated Aula Magna. Some move through the four A4 pages that have just been handed out; the music drowns out the rustling of paper. What they are reading confirms their fears: Soon nothing will be the same at European universities as it has been so far.

It is 19 June 1999, a Saturday, when the European Ministers of Education sign a letter of intent at the University of Bologna, which will later be known as “Bologna Declaration”. Among them is a seven-member delegation from Switzerland, led by *Charles Kleiber*, Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Science.

These men set about to incite the greatest revolution at Swiss universities. Bologna is a paradigm shift – particularly in the humanities and social sciences. Where students previously had to acquire knowledge on their own, had to pervade the subject, education will henceforth be served to them bit by bit in module form.

An incredible story – absolutely underestimated in its effect

Today, ten years after the Bologna reform has been implemented at all Swiss universities, a thesis tells for the first time, how “Bologna” came to Switzerland. It was written by the educationalist *Barbara Müller* from Zurich, a proponent of the reform.

It is the story of seven men who trigger off a revolution – and who catch themselves by surprise in doing so. It is the story of an educational reform that has never been discussed in the public at large – but that has changed our idea of education completely. It is the story of a reform of which no one still knows what it will actually achieve. In short, it is an unbelievable story.

Or as *Gerhard Schuwey*, former director of the Federal Department for Education and Science, notes retrospectively: “To be honest, we must admit that the effect has been completely underestimated not only in Switzerland.”

The celebration in Bologna boasts of Italian pomp, dark state carriages, drivers

“With the best will in the world I cannot see anything positive in the Bologna reform,” Kurt Imhof says. “Except that by granting the bachelor degree we also certify superficial knowledge now.”

Prof Dr Kurt Imhof, Institute of Sociology of the University of Zurich

and motorcycle queues. The Swiss delegation is impressed. In the auditorium the ministers are asked by roll call to come to the front to sign. “It would have been inconceivable for the Parliamentary Secretary not to sign, it would have been so compromising,” *Rudolf Nägeli*, who had travelled to Bologna as Secretary General of the German Rectors’ Conference, states now.

“The Bachelor-/Master-System ... not acceptable for Switzerland”

The die is cast. The Swiss Rectors however were very skeptical about the announced reforms. A week earlier, their plenary assembly had declared unambiguously: “Even a brief discussion of the Bologna draft shows that the Bachelor-/Master-System as proposed is not acceptable for Switzerland.”

On the eve of the signing ceremony, the Swiss meet for an informal dinner. The atmosphere is tense, because the invitation to the conference was very short-dated. There was no time for a broad discussion of the ideas. The rectors are worried that from now on policy will dictate the conditions to them. And especially now, after they have secured their independence in numerous referendums. The so far cantonal universities still get money from the state, but now they can decide themselves what they want to do with it. Parliamentary Secretary Kleiber, who dined with the European Ministers on that evening, remembers today: “The rectors came to my hotel. And they told me: ‘You cannot sign this paper!’ And then I told them I would sign, but we could still discuss the issue.”

I decide. I sign. No matter what you think. The Parliamentary Secretary’s attitude was not surprising. “We have no choice,” Charles Kleiber had already said in a one-hour television interview a year earlier. “The universities are now way beyond history; they are prisoners of their archaic structures.” Kleiber takes office as a Parliamentary Secretary in order to change the university system. In advance, he even published a programmatic book – “The University of tomorrow”.

He sees himself as a prince who wakes the sleeping beauty university with a kiss. The trained architect wants to build a new academic world obeying the zeitgeist of the late 90s.

What the Euro is for economy, Bologna was supposed to be for science

More competition, more performance, more efficiency. And above all, more Europe. These are the slogans. What the Euro is for economy, Bologna is supposed to be for science. The great wave of European integration has also affected the education system. And so this story has not begun just since the Aula Magna at Bologna, but in Paris in May 1998, when the world famous Sorbonne celebrated its 800th anniversary, as Barbara Müller shows in her thesis.

The French Education Minister *Claude Allègre* had invited. He had a problem. The report of a government advisor had just delivered a damning indictment of the French universities. They were “confused, bureaucratic and anti-social”. They were a case for reforms. But how could Minister Allègre completely change the universities given the huge opposition on the part of the students and universities, professors, and institutions? Allègre’s idea was: internationalism. If other countries were to reform their universities, the pressure on the French universities would increase.

The aim of the Sorbonne Declaration was a “Europe of Knowledge”. For the first time a credit (scoring) system, semesters abroad, facilitated validation of the various diplomas.

An unnecessary signature provokes a storm of reforms ...

To give the statement more political weight in Europe, France was looking for more cosignatories. Switzerland is also inquired. Although the conditions at local universities have never ever been comparable to those in France or Italy – the quality of supervision of students is better, the study period is shorter, the dropout rates are lower – the former Fed-

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"You cannot sign that!"

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eral Councilor *Ruth Dreifuss* signed the declaration. For good measure, she also submitted the paper to the universities. They were indifferent. "It was a general statement, which you could basically have nothing against," *Nivardo Ischi*, Secretary General of the University Conference, recalls: "The skeptics may have thought: You can agree, the paper will change nothing."

With her signature Federal Councillor Dreifuss provoked a storm of reforms. Following the French pressure is now exerted by the Italians. In Paris, they already announce a new conference. In Bologna. And within these two and a half hours on a Saturday in June, the Education Ministers succeed in doing what the European Commission has not accomplished in four years of negotiating: They agree on a new European university system.

... and a near side note develops a life of its own

"Bologna" would almost have stayed a side note in Switzerland, another agreement, a paper, signed by someone somewhere. Just as Parliamentary Secretary Kleiber promised to the nervous university rectors several times on Friday night before the agreement was signed. The agreement is neither a treaty under international law nor a state treaty. Therefore, it does not have to be submitted to parliament. Even for Education Minister Ruth Dreifuss the conference in the north Italian city of Bologna was not a priority – would she otherwise have sent her Parliamentary Secretary?

The reform, however, develops a life of its own. It bursts into a power vacuum in the Swiss education policy. Politics is losing influence; the universities are becoming more self-confident. The Rector is no longer a *primus inter pares*, but a CEO. The university is a company; the students are its customers. The Bologna reform provides an opportunity to consolidate the new balance of power.

Surprise attack by an "icebreaker"

On 3 December 1999, the Rectors' Conference meets for its plenary session. At the last agenda item 'miscellaneous' *Peter Gomez*, the new Rector of the University of St. Gall, surprisingly took the floor: "Well, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to announce that the University of St. Gallen is implementing the Bologna reform, and indeed completely and rather quickly, and we are reorganizing the entire university structure and are implementing a

radical curriculum reform, and in a year, so next fall, we will already make a start with it."

All attendees were flabbergasted. Everyone was silent. Questioning looks: "What is going on?"

Peter Gomez is the icebreaker, and other universities are following suit. First, the FIT Zurich, the University of Lucerne, then Basel, then the University of Italian Switzerland. "Everyone had the feeling that he had to do something", says book author Barbara Müller: "Some implemented previously planned reforms; others came under pressure to take action. In any case, studies needed to modernize, they could not remain aesthetic and intellectually elitist."

But what is the benefit of Bologna? To date, ten years after the reform had finally been introduced at all Swiss universities, no one can answer this question.

High cost of an aberration

The bare facts are sobering. Only one sixth of all students change university for the master degree. Less than five percent of bachelor graduates go abroad for it. The default rate is only reduced by ten percent. The study periods are only slightly shorter. And until today there has been no research which shows that it has actually become easier for bachelor-/master-graduates to find a job than it was for their predecessors, who studied in the licentiate system. Not to mention the costs that the reform has caused – and which no one can quantify.

There is lamenting at universities anyway, especially in the humanities and social sciences. For them the reform implies the biggest changes.

Kurt Imhof is a firm opponent of the Bologna process. In interviews the Zurich sociologist spoke about bulimia-learning in higher education: "Devour, vomit out, forget." For Kurt Imhof today's "university is the continuation of school by other means". Students do nothing but cramming. The idea that young, rational adults would educate themselves at universities has been buried. The sociologist talks himself into a rage; he swears at the devaluation of his profession, he swears at students who have to be forced to go to the libraries, he swears at the service provider, into which the university has degenerated. "With the best will in the world I cannot see anything positive in the Bologna reform," Kurt Imhof says. "Except that by granting the bachelor degree we also certify superficial knowledge now."

So you ask him: Why did the professors not resist more strongly? Silence on the line. Pause. Then Imhof says: "The secret of the implementation of Bologna is *New Public Management*. Its evaluation programs and performance meas-

urement provided orientation and relieved students and professors of having to orientate themselves. What should be done? "Bologna is an aberration we have to eliminate."

Students incapacitated

Other Bologna critics do not think so. "You cannot roll it back," says *Achatz von Müller*, medieval historian at the University of Basel. "We must not doubt about the principles, but need to think about how we could allow changes in the existing system." Fully open studies, sailing on the open sea of knowledge without a compass had been a problem for von Müller. "The idea of a modularized study is reasonable," he says, "But we have paid dearly for it." Students are incapacitated, they no longer follow their own interests, they only ask: "How many credit points do I need?"

The frustration about the implementation of Bologna also affects declared proponents of the reform. Take for example *Angelika Linke*, linguistics professor at the University of Zurich: "Today Bologna is a completely inflexible system, exceptions are no longer possible. Many decisions are no longer made according to what is reasonable, but what is technically practicable at all under the requirements of computer-based management of teaching and learning."

A mixture of neo-liberalism and planned economy

It is an irony of history that it is precisely a reform that was set up to dismantle the archaic structures in the universities, that now leads to a technologization and ossification of the universities. The implementation of Bologna is a mixture of neo-liberalism and planned economy. In the name of increased competition, the central regulatory power of the rectorates and deaneries is strengthened. And hence their chief behavior. Professors tell how the rector furiously entered their office, after they had criticized Bologna publicly: "You are always so negative!"

When asked why the professors did not resist more strongly, Angelika Linke answered: "Successful revolutions always address the structures, every historian will confirm that."

On 19 June 1999 Charles Kleiber hears his name in the Aula Magna of Bologna. He steps forward, to the table, covered with red velvet: "I told myself, too bad that my name is not Xavier, Xavier Kleiber," the Parliamentary Secretary recalls: "Then I could have written down an X".

From the very beginning Bologna has been a bad joke in Switzerland. •

Source: *Die Zeit* of 19.12.2012

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“The teacher is super-important!”

by Martin Spiewak

Small classes are of no use, not even open lessons. The decisive factor is the teacher. This is what John Hattie is saying. Never heard of him? That's going to change.

A new name circulates in education. You read it in papers and hear about him in lectures. Some of the most important German university researchers can no longer do without him. And soon, it can be prophesied, everybody will know him. People talk about the “Hattie factor” and “Hattie ranking”. And the question is raised, “What does Hattie say about that?” Since in Switzerland some educational colleges and some school representatives in the communes pretend to have never heard about Germany and Austria having to “clear off” the whole reform nonsense, we will contribute some ideas below that cannot be ignored. Anyone who has gone hot in the zeal for reform does well to come down from his tours, abandon the OECD bondage and reflect on how he can return down to earth, i.e. to reality in time. The era of “global nonsense” is expiring.

John Hattie – New Zealander, education researcher, professor at the University of Melbourne – published a book in 2008 that has electrified the educational world since then. “Visible Learning” is the title. Its aim is to provide a comprehensive answer to the most important question of educational research: What is good teaching?

That sounds arrogant, even mad, and it may even be so – a little at least. Because John Hattie did what no one before him has ever tried: to look through all the English-speaking studies about successful learning worldwide, evaluate them and bring them together in a large synthesis of empirical research on teaching. He evaluated more than 800 meta-analyses, i.e. those kinds of studies that summarize the various studies on a certain topic, be it homework or supplementary lessons, vocabulary learning, work with parents or having to repeat a year.

Using statistical tools he created a mega-analysis from this meta-analysis, including more than 50,000 individual studies with 250 million participating students. For the various methods of teaching and learning conditions Hattie then reckoned up a success factor, called effect size. It took Hattie fifteen years of research for his diligence work. In the end Hattie set up a kind of ranking of the most effective educational programs.

“Visible Learning” – the world’s largest database for research on teaching – made Hattie an international celebrity within a short time. The education supplement of

the British “Times” calls him the “world’s most influential education academic”. Others put his book on the same level with major international comparative studies such as *Pisa*. And even critical articles bear titles as the following “Has John Hattie actually found the Holy Grail of educational research?”

However, it is not only the dimension of his megalomaniacal project that justifies Hattie’s reputation or the coldness of his scientific gaze (“there are enough opinions, what matters is measurable evidence”). The greatest explosive force lies in its findings. Since these findings cut across the educational debate in many countries. “We are passionately discussing the outer structures of schools and teaching,” Hattie criticizes. “They range at the very bottom of the list and are not important when it comes to learning.”

Thus, a school’s funding has little influence on its students’ acquisition of knowledge. The situation is similar to the reduction of class size, the favorite solution of teachers for problems of any kind. Small classes cost a lot of money, however in terms of learning outcomes they remain largely unprofitable. Class size ends up on 106th place in Hattie’s ranking. Worldwide the competition between public and private schools is also attributed great importance. However, the school forms differ only minimally when it comes to the learning progress of the students.

A good teacher may not waste time on unimportant things

Anyway, Hattie considers all the talk about best schools “almost irrelevant”. All evidence of his data show, says the researcher, that the biggest differences in the learning progress does not show between schools, but between single classes, and that means between individual teachers. This is Hattie’s central message, which he gleaned from the mountain of data: It is the individual educator who determines what students learn. All the other factors – the general conditions, the type of school or special teaching methods – are rather secondary.

So it depends on the good teacher. It sounds banal, we would say. Everyone knows it, they say. But why does the political world still set their effort on improving learning outcomes with structural reforms? Why does a controversy on methods flourish especially in the German school debate? And how come that all educators themselves play down their significance? Last year the *Allensbach Institute* asked teachers for their importance. 48 percent felt they had little or no impact

The Hattie study

The New Zealand education researcher *John Hattie* has investigated what constitutes good teaching in a study of more than 800 meta-analyses, which combine another 50,000 individual studies. Overall, 250 million students were involved in the studies. His book “Visible Learning” (2008) provides the most complete survey of global education research. Hattie constantly enlarges his database with new surveys. Here are some of the 136 effect sizes that Hattie assessed and rated in his book. They give an indication of the factors that – each by itself – inhibit and promote learning.

What harms

What harms

- having to repeat a class
- excessive television viewing
- long summer vacation

What does not harm, but does not help

- open classroom
- inter-year teaching
- web-based teaching and learning

What helps little

- small class size
- funding
- discovery learning
- homework

What helps

What helps more

- regular performance-related testing
- pre-school tuition
- teacher-guided instruction
- additional courses for talented students

What helps a lot

- teacher feedback
- problem-solving instruction
- subject-specific teacher training
- programs to promote reading
- a trustful relationship between teacher and student

on their students, in contrast to the media, for example. Only a total of 8 percent assigned a “very great” importance to themselves.

Hattie’s findings refute such lack of influence. He also contradicts all attempts to marginalize the teacher in the classroom. For Hattie a teacher must not be a mere facilitator, not an architect of learning environments (“faciliator”). If he wants to achieve anything, a teacher must be understood rather as a director, as “activator” who has his class under control and always keeps an eye on everyone.

“The teacher is super-important!”

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For those affected by the ideas of educational reformism these statements are difficult to digest. Hattie would consider the idea bizarre that it is “best that students shape their learning processes for themselves”, as propagated by the recently established initiative “School on the Move”. In his eyes, other favorite concepts of the school new-thinkers fail as well. This is especially true for “open classrooms” or “inter-year classes”. For both Hattie found almost no empirical evidence that they improve learning.

Neither is it true according to Hattie’s findings that individualization of teaching has a great learning impact per se. “Considering the great hopes that one has associated with the so-called individual development, you should think twice what is actually meant by the term,” warns *Eckhard Klieme*. The Frankfurt school researcher was one of the first in Germany who received Hattie’s great project. For him the results of the New Zealander’s research emphasize especially the importance of structure for all good teaching.

It begins with a strict classroom management. A good teacher should not

waste time on unimportant things, he must quickly recognize when to respond to a disturbance with rigor and when with humor. Even higher on the Hattie-scale ranks the “teacher clarity” i.e. that students understand what the teacher expects them to do. Both conditions of success for effective teaching are greatly underestimated. They hardly play a role in teacher training. In the life of a student whole weeks of time for learning get lost alone by the teachers’ distributing of cumbersome worksheets. Whole hours prove to be ineffective, because the teacher does not make clear from the very beginning what is important in the next 45 minutes.

Structured and disciplined, specialized and always at the center of attention: I know this type of teacher, some may say in Germany; you can find him in every “Gymnasium” (grammar school)! But as much as Hattie rejects the “learning coach”, who then and now makes a marginal remark from the side during lessons, as little is his research suitable to rehabilitate the traditional grammar school teacher who presents the benefits of a comprehensive expert knowledge to his students by means of lectures.

The importance of education

“The social character that the banks urgently need is not the financial hero, who is characterized by ruthlessness, selfishness and recklessness, and certainly not the reincarnation of the baroque person who is paid in gold for each deed and every gesture. The social character of the future is represented instead by men and women who are persons in an empathic sense, equipped with the ability to establish connections, to reflect their own actions and opinions, who allow self-correction, accept the foreign, i.e. women and men for whom the old-fashioned common weal is not a borrowed word. Character - that is a matter of education, an education that immunizes against the unreal, which creates an increased ability to rely on experience, wisdom, moderation and empathy.”

Christian Olearius, Bernd Thiemann: “Bankenkrise. Siechtum mit System” (Banking Crisis. Infirmary in a systematic way) in: “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” dated 8 December 2012

In fact a good teacher controls the classroom, according to Hattie from the first to the last minute. He does this, however – and that is special – always from his students’ perspective. “A good teacher sees his own teaching through the eyes of his students,” says Hattie. How this exactly works, is explained by the New Zealand education researcher in his second book, which was published 2011. In “Visible Learning for Teachers” John Hattie outlines a pedagogy of permanent self-reflection.

It begins with the teacher’s attitude. Far too many teachers, Hattie criticizes, explain the lack of progress in learning by the deficits of their students: the lack of diligence, the wrong talent or lack of support by the parents. Instead, the teacher must ask himself, Hattie recommends, what he did wrong when his class does not make any learning progresses.

Empirics apparently prove Hattie right. Learning progress of students can vary up to one whole grade, depending on who the teacher is. This difference in quality was made particularly evident a few years ago by an experiment in Sweden. Selected teachers had taken over a class in a deprived area whose pupils had largely given themselves up. After a year their mood had changed and they had considerably reduced their learning deficits.

There are no educational magic formulas

Hattie’s ideal teacher is such a super hero, but one who systematically nurtures his self-doubts. He does not only regular-



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“The teacher is super-important!”

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ly control the achievement level of every student, with small tests that often do not take more than two or three minutes. He also makes students systematically judge his teaching. Such students’ statements – “I kept on my task during the whole lesson”, “I knew what I had to learn in this lesson” – can be obtained by multiple choice tests already at elementary level. For Germany, they were developed by the research group around *Andreas Helmke*. “With the right tools, students usually judge fairly and surprisingly accurately about teaching”, says the educational researcher from the University of Koblenz-Landau. Students can also assess well, what they are able to do. In Hattie’s ranking no other instrument shows a greater effect than the systematic self-assessment of students.

Hattie preaches a culture of “feedback”, and no other term is mentioned more often in his book. He hardly talks about praise, however, and he does not talk about punishment. According to Hattie feedback to students should always be neutral, based solely on the teaching subject. Students wrong answers are really welcome in this concept. Hattie sees errors as the real driving force behind all learning (“the essence of learning”).

The same applies to the teachers themselves. It is true, you may look up in Hattie’s new book what teaching methods have proved to be particularly effective according to his mega-analysis. Among them was “direct instruction”, i.e. the teacher-centered instruction commonly misunderstood as teacher’s monologue. The New Zealander, however, detests each methodological dispute. For him, a good teacher has a wide repertoire of teaching

styles which he tries out – depending on the class, checks them “evidence-based” and – if necessary – dismisses them again. “There are no magic bullets”, says Hattie, there is no educational magic formula.

On the other hand, the New Zealander considers the emotional aspects of learning non-negotiable. Without respect and appreciation, caring and trust, teaching will not succeed, he writes and gives evidence with impressive figures. Even the old-fashioned “love for the subject” experiences a revival with him. “Anyone who has read Hattie will never warn again of a cozy pedagogy”, says *Ulrich Steffens* from the *Hessian Institute for Quality Development* quite mockingly, who concisely summarized Hattie’s key messages in some professional articles in German.

In the local school debate Hattie’s lessons are provocative for all those involved – and at the same time a confirmation. So the first and foremost aim of school should be performance, however Hattie does not care about grades; teacher-centered lessons work, he says, but only if the teacher talks little; teachers have an overwhelming influence who they can only claim if they think about their students each and every moment. Education reformers may be upset about the fact that open teaching is mostly ineffective, traditionalists may be upset that the same applies for repeating a class. And both fractions will hardly fancy that small classes contribute almost nothing to success in learning.

This may please money-conscious politicians. If they read Hattie thoroughly, however, they may feel sick. The researcher explains their actions to be largely ineffective. Hattie’s empiricism suggests that better learning results cannot be organized from the outside; and certainly not in one or two terms of office. As long as education policies only reach the surface of

school, but do not alter the deep structure – i.e. the actual teaching – they will remain ineffective.

The emotional side of learning

The fact that 30 years of school reform in Germany have not left any mark on many classrooms seems to be the best evidence. The teachers’ associations should also take a close look. Good teachers are important. That is what they always said. They have however always kept the logical implication a secret: that there are also bad representatives of their profession, whom we should prompt by all means to do better – or to change their job. Hattie calls the deliberate ignorance to recognize quality differences between teachers a “conspiracy of silence”.

The controversy over John Hattie’s work has not yet reached Germany. That will change. Forthcoming “Visible Learning” will be published in German, in a translation of the *Oldenburg educational researcher Klaus Zierer*. The findings of the New Zealander cannot be transferred one-to-one to the German school reality. The meta-analysis he aggregated is based on English-speaking research, which in turn deals with the Anglo-Saxon education systems. When Hattie classifies school holidays as “harmful to learning”, he refers to the several months of vacation periods in the United States or Australia. In our country, the effect is likely to be far lower.

Hence Klaus Zierer warns against a “Fast Food Hattie”. We should not rely solely on the numerical impact factor, but look exactly at each factor on learning tested by Hattie. Homework has only little effect in elementary schools; in higher classes, however, they well promote learn-

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The “Gesellschaft für Bildung und Wissen, GBW e.V.” (Association for Education and Knowledge), founded in June 2010 has been dealing with the broad guidelines, conditions and consequences of the current comprehensive education reform of schools and universities. It wants to contribute to the public debate on the purpose, content and methods of this reform.

At the recent annual meeting of GBW at the end of January 2013 the proceedings “Deceptions of the teaching reform” were published in the Quarterly Journal for Scientific Pedagogy (issue 3/2013). This edition refers to developments in Europe and also possible ways out are shown.

Two recent posts from members of GBW deal with the question of the ideological backgrounds and enforce-

ment strategies of today’s schools and higher education “reformers”. The first contribution, a lecture by Professor *Jochen Krautz* at the meeting of representatives of the Philologist Association of Lower Saxony in 2012, is titled “Economism in Education: ‘Menschenbilder’, Reform Strategies, Actors” and is published in the journal of the Philologist Association of Lower Saxony, High School in Lower Saxony 1/2013 (www.phvn.de/images/krautz.pdf). The second article, also by Jochen Krautz, is “Concept of Man in Education and Education System”. It is also published in the Quarterly Journal for Scientific Pedagogy (issue 3/2012) and can be found on the internet under <http://bildung-wissen.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Gymnasium-in-NDS-1-2013.pdf>.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“The teacher shall and must be the helmsman of learning again”!

ds. Last time voices multiply which again put the teacher and the teacher’s personality into the center of discussion about what a good school must be like. So the book of *Michael Felten*: “Auf die Lehrer kommt es an! Für die Rückkehr der Pädagogik in die Schule.” (It depends on the teachers! In favor of the school’s return to education.)

After a long period of “educational deregulation”, characterized by structural and methodological debates, the book wants to focus again on the strength of the teacher – and thus on the importance of the adult in education.

Felten’s theses are: “The teacher is the one who has to lead a group of students – in a self-confident and committed manner – and that takes more than nice worksheets and a laptop cart.

The teacher is the one who has to arrange and control the learning processes in a sensible and useful way – open learning methods, however, are effective only in well-defined learning situations.

The teacher is the one who can resolve learning difficulties – not by reduction of standards but by professional insight into the student’s psyche, as part of a hearty and supportive relationship.” School needs a new commitment to pedagogy – to the pleasure of guiding as well as to sensitivity.

According to Michael Felten after 40 years of education reform, the resumé is highly ambivalent as well in regard to the lessons contents. Michael Felten lets the

former director of the Max Planck Institute for Psychological Research in Munich speak, who as early as in 1999 characterized the “errors of the school reformers” with unusual clarity: “They underestimated the importance of knowledge for the acquisition of key skills, they overestimated the ability to self-determination of the learning student; they tried to level off the differences in performance, they mainly wanted to optimize learning quality by changing the organization of school.

In fact learning achievements can only be increases if the quality of teaching is improved, the teaching had to care especially for a better understanding of the contents by the students, and therefore you had to employ a higher level of differentiation, more variety and fewer intermediate marks. Good teaching was said to be that kind of learning organization that conveyed both – intelligent knowledge (with the “direct Instruction” as the most appropriate method) as well as the use of performance skills (particularly useful by a well initiated project work).” (P. 64)

Michael Felten’s book not only uncovers the errors of the school reformers. It is primarily directed forward and gives teachers some good advice with examples and explanations for designing their own lessons. “The teacher shall and must be the helmsman of learning again.” •

Michael Felten, *Auf die Lehrer kommt es an! Für eine Rückkehr der Pädagogik in die Schule*, Gütersloh 2010, ISBN 978-3-579-06882-4

For 28 years Michael Felten has worked as a teacher of mathematics and art in Cologne. He also is the author of instructional materials, numerous books and educational essays in the press and the radio. His publications include: “Kinder wollen etwas leisten” (2000), “Neue Mythen in der Pädagogik – Warum eine gute Schule nicht nur Spass machen kann” (2001), “Schule besser meistern – Kinder herausfordern und ermutigen” (2006), “Schluss mit dem Bildungsgerede! Eine Anstiftung zu pädagogischem Eigensinn.” (2012)



“The teacher is super-important!”

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ing success. In Hattie’s ranking, the average effect size for “homework” is somewhere in the middle.

An open classroom can also be quite profitable – if the students are capable of independent learning and the teachers prepare thoroughly and meticulously watch over its course. However, Hattie’s research shows that both apply rather rarely. And of course, school pursues other objectives than to make students work with intellectual top performance.

Creativity or ability for democracy, a sense for aesthetic and social behavior does not appear in Hattie’s lists as learning objectives. He is only interested in “achievements”, measurable cognitive specialist achievements. They are simply the core business of school.

Hattie’s findings can change the education policy debate in Germany. “No one who talks about school can ignore it,” says *Andreas Helmke*. We must not “fundamentally rethink our education system”, as the initiative “School on the Move” demands. System issues should no longer be raised according to Hattie. The New Zea-

lander puts the teacher back to where he belongs: at the center of all the debate about school. He is primarily responsible for what students learn. He will decide whether school becomes better. “The schools finally should be able to work in peace”, is a popular demand after years of hectic school reforms. It is addressed to our education politicians. But for our teachers it applies equally. •

This article as an audio file in the premium area at: www.zeit.de/audio/

Source: *Die Zeit* of 3.1.2013

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Direct democracy needs good education

The federal Swiss education system – a jewel of diversity in unity

ts. The founding fathers of the Swiss federal state of 1848 knew one thing for sure: a modern democratic society will only live fully by and with citizens who possess a minimum level of education. Of course in the mid-19th Century in Switzerland much was already given what one could make use of: The cooperative structure of the Confederation had provided a training in peaceful problem solving in the course of the centuries, which was unique for its time. The cooperatives, in which each member was equal before the law, were schools of a democratic living together – long before 1848.

The Federal Constitution of 1848, and that has not changed until now, settled the question of education in such a way that the cantons had the educational authority. From this federalist ground a variety of educational legal articles emerged that formulated the high concern in a very differentiated way according to their own traditions. Even today the reader marvels at this great treasure and precious nature of the articles, which are laid down in the re-

spective Cantonal Constitutions and the relevant laws and regulations – a thriving example of the benefits of a community, constructed in a federalist manner from bottom up in which the diversity of the country and its citizens is reflected in a healthy and mutually stimulating competition of thoughts and ideas in magnificent constitutional and statutory references. How skinny read in contrast educational articles in central states that are imposed without regard to tradition, religious and cultural background top down measuring the diversity of human creativity and ingenuity with the same yardstick letting them wither, this way.

Another pleasant feature of federalism is the fact that there is neither uniformity nor the striving for the latter. That is why the cantons adopted the articles dealing with education in different years. Since the cantons let the people confirm their constitutions and laws on their own authority, without asking for permission in federal Berne, the reading of the various educational items also conveys an insight

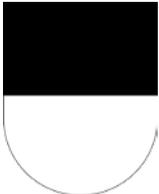
into the historical development and the predominant basic ideas of the respective times of their drafting.

Below *Current Concerns* prints the education articles of all Swiss cantons. May the variety of expressing the thoughts and concerns extort the adequate respect from the reader – the respect for the achievement of the people in the municipalities and cantons, who want to make our youth capable of democracy and immune to propaganda and affections of power. Only Brussel's centralists and educational bureaucrats as well as dealers in education like *Bertelsmann & Co* will not rejoice in Swiss federalism, one of the four pillars of the peace model Switzerland, since it is impossible – with this diversity in unity – to make cash with their absolutely anti-democratic and uniform mash.

The culturally diverse population in each Canton will go on shaping their cantonal constitutional obligation for school and education, depending on their respective priorities. •

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p>Aargau</p> 	<p>Aargau Education Act of 17 March 1981 (as of 1 January 2011) The Grand Council (Cantonal Parliament) of the Canton of Aargau. Having regard to §§ 28–35 and 38bis of the State Constitution, with the intention of providing the Canton of Aargau with schools in which our youth is educated to reverence for the divine and respect for fellow human beings and for the environment, to independent and responsible citizens, to socially competent people, maturing in mind and soul, in which the youth is able to develop their creative powers and where they will be introduced to the world of knowledge and work [...]</p>
<p>Appenzell Ausserrhoden</p> 	<p>Act on Schools and Education (School Act) of 24 September 2000 (as of 1 August 2009) The voters of Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Having regard to Articles 36–38 of the constitution of the Canton of Appenzell A. Rh. of 30 April 1995 [1], decree: Article 2 Goals of Education</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 It is the task of education to promote the development of a self-responsible personality, the will to social justice, the respect for our fellow human beings, in particular for the other gender, and responsibility for our shared world. 2 Together with the parents schools provide an education suitable to the talents and abilities of the learners in a non-violent milieu that is as free of addiction as possible. 3 The goal of education is the promotion of knowledge, skills, ethical attitudes, learning ability and the lifelong readiness to learn. Education should enable people to deliver cultural, social and economic performance.

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p data-bbox="193 219 352 280">Appenzell Innerrhoden</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 219 783 248">School Act of 25 April 2004</p> <p data-bbox="435 282 1506 376">The assembly of voters of the Canton of Appenzell I.Rh., Having regard to Articles 12, 20 par. 1, 46 par. 1–4 and 47 of the Cantonal Constitution of 24 winter month 1872,2</p> <p data-bbox="435 383 544 412">Article 2</p> <ol data-bbox="435 418 1506 763" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Schools support the holders of parental authority in educating the child to be an independent, life-affirming and socially competent person. They are run on Christian principles. 2 They promote the harmonious development of the students' physical, mental and spiritual strength. They provide basic knowledge and skills, access to different areas of culture and induce independent thinking and acting. 3 They educate the students in accordance with the principles of democracy, freedom and social justice within the scope of the constitutional state to be a responsible and tolerant person and citizen. 4 School authorities, teachers and holders of parental authority co-operate in the interest of the child in order to achieve the schools' goals.
<p data-bbox="161 819 379 848">Basel-Landschaft</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 819 1267 848">Act on Education of 6 June 2002 (1) II in force since 1 August 2003</p> <p data-bbox="435 860 1034 920">Effective date: 1 January 2013 (retrospectively); Corresponds to print version: 91 – 1.9.2013</p> <p data-bbox="435 954 1142 1014">The parliament of the Canton Basel-Landschaft decrees: Part One: Basic regulations</p> <p data-bbox="435 1025 571 1055">A. General</p> <p data-bbox="435 1066 549 1095">§2 Goals</p> <ol data-bbox="435 1106 1506 1778" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Education is a comprehensive and lifelong process which promotes people in their spiritual, physical, mental, cultural and social abilities appropriate to their age and which calls for their motivation. The educational system feels obliged to the Christian, humanistic and democratic tradition. 2 The offered types of educational paths are equivalent. Schools, teaching activities and other educational institutions provide the students and the students of vocational schools with the necessary knowledge for their lives and strengthen their self-confidence. Besides, they respect their gender and cultural identity and teach values, which enable them to behave responsibly towards other people and the environment. 3 Students and students of vocational schools contribute to the success of their education according to their age. They respect the rules of schools. 4 The parents account for the education of their children. They promote their motivation and support the work of the schools as well as the teachers and other training staff. 5 The authorities promote the inter-communal and inter-cantonal cooperation in the educational system and contribute to a continuous advancement of schools in their care. 6 Schools and their authorities as well as the departments of educational management, cultural management and sports management take into account the principles of the gender-differentiated educational theory.
<p data-bbox="201 1845 336 1874">Basel-City</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 1845 1155 1874">School Act of 4 April 1929 (actual status: 1 January 2013)</p> <p data-bbox="435 1886 1177 1980">The parliament of the Canton Basel-City, Having regard to §§ 12 and 13 of the Cantonal Constitution of 2 December 1889 [1] decrees the following:</p> <p data-bbox="435 1986 1506 2107">§ 3a.7) The elementary school and the continuing secondary schools have the task to promote the physical and mental development of students in addition and support of family education in such a way that they are able to meet the general human requirements of everyday life as well as the vocational requirements.</p>

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p>Basel-City</p>	<p>§ 3b.8) The elementary school provides pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills for a successful life in society and in the vocational world. At the same time it also supports the students in finding their personal identity in society and developing their ability to lifelong learning as well as to act responsibly towards themselves, the other people and the environment.</p>
<p>Berne</p> 	<p>Elementary School Act (VSG) 19 March 1992</p> <p>The Parliament of the Canton of Berne, Having regard to Article 87 of the Cantonal Constitution [Repealed by the constitution of the Canton Berne of 6 June 1993; BSG 101.1], at request of the governing council, decides:</p> <p>Article 2 Tasks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The elementary school supports the family in the education of the children. 2 It contributes to the harmonious development of the abilities of young people based on the western Christian and democratic tradition. [Version of 5 September 2001] 3 It protects the mental-spiritual and physical integrity of the students and provides for a climate of respect and confidence. [Version of 5 September 2001] 4 It arouses their will to tolerance and to responsible behavior towards people and the environment as well as the understanding for other languages and cultures. [Version of 5 September 2001] 5 The elementary school teaches the knowledge and skills which constitute the basis for vocational education, for secondary education and for lifelong learning. [Corresponds to the previous paragraph 4]
<p>Fribourg</p> 	<p>Act of 23 May 1985 on kindergarten, primary school and the orientation stage – first two years of secondary education (Education Act)</p> <p>The Grand Council (Cantonal Parliament) of the Canton of Fribourg, Having regard to Articles 17, 18, 19, 76 and 77 of the State Constitution; in agreement with the message of the State Council of 17 May 1983; at the request of that authority,</p> <p>decrees:</p> <p>General Provisions</p> <p>Article 2: Purpose and orientation of schools</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Schools support parents in the training and education of their children. 2 They are based on the Christian image of man, and the respect of fundamental rights. 3 They help the child to know his or her country in its diversity, and encourage him or her to open minds to the entire human community. <p>Article 3: Goals of school</p> <p>Schools contribute to the fact that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) children can develop their intellectual and creative skills by helping them to acquire the basic skills and aptitudes; b) children's characters are formed and their judgment encouraged; c) children's physical abilities are developed; d) children's abilities to behave responsibly towards others and towards society are encouraged; e) children's spiritual and religious development is encouraged with respect to the freedom of religion and conscience.

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p data-bbox="220 219 316 246">Geneva</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 219 1090 246">Compulsory Education Act of the Canton of Geneva</p> <p data-bbox="435 250 799 277">Chapter II Elementary School</p> <p data-bbox="435 282 911 309">Article 4: Goals of Elementary Schools</p> <p data-bbox="435 313 1500 376">Due to the respect for the personality of each individual compulsory education has the goal:</p> <ol data-bbox="435 380 1500 855" style="list-style-type: none"> a) to give each student the means to acquire the best knowledge in regard to his/her future activities and try to arouse his/her constant need for learning and educating themselves; b) to help each student develop in a balanced way his/her personality, creativity, and intellectual, manual, physical and artistic skills; c) to ensure respect for the student's choice of education within the scope of necessary conditions; d) to prepare everybody to participate in the social, cultural, civil, political and economic life of the country by consolidating the sense of responsibility, judgment and the independence of the judgment; e) to raise awareness in each student of his/her affiliation to the world that surrounds him, by promoting their respect of others, their spirit of solidarity and cooperation, and their awareness of the importance of sustainable development goals; f) to seek to ensure that the inequality with respect to the academic success of the student is corrected from the early school years.
<p data-bbox="228 913 308 940">Glarus</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 913 1002 940">Education Act (Act on School and Education)</p> <p data-bbox="435 945 1500 1008">(Decreed on 6 May 2001 by the Landsgemeinde – open-air assembly of all citizens of the canton who are entitled to vote)</p> <p data-bbox="435 1012 778 1039">Article 2: Educational goals</p> <ol data-bbox="435 1043 1500 1370" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Compulsory education provides the students with education appropriate to their aptitudes and abilities. 2 In cooperation with the parents, schools promote the mental and spiritual, social and physical development of learners. 3 They awaken an understanding of people and the environment and educate the learners, based on Christian principles, to be independent and responsible members of the community. 4 Schools promote the creative power, a willingness to learn and broadens the learners' knowledge and judgment in terms of an appropriate organisation and mastering of life.
<p data-bbox="220 1406 316 1433">Grisons</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 1406 1500 1433">Act for Compulsory Education in the Canton Grisons (Education Act) of 21 March 2012</p> <p data-bbox="435 1438 991 1464">The Grand Council of the Canton of Grisons,</p> <p data-bbox="435 1469 1500 1532">Having regard to Article 31, paragraph 1 and Article 89, paragraph 2 of the Cantonal Constitution, and in agreement with the message of the Government of 5 July 2011 decrees:</p> <p data-bbox="435 1536 544 1563">Article 2</p> <ol data-bbox="435 1568 1500 2096" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 With due regard to the historical development of the linguistic and cultural identity of the community, schools strive to educate the students to an attitude that is based on Christian, humanist and democratic values. 2 Schools promote the judgment, the creative power, the knowledge and the motivation of children and adolescents. They support them in their development as independent personalities, in their acquisition of social skills as well as on the way to behave responsibly towards other people and the environment. 3 Schools support and complement education within the family. 4 During compulsory education students develop all basic knowledge and skills that allow them to learn for life and find their place in society and in the workplace. 5 Education acquired during elementary education encompasses in particular care and knowledge of the school language, and basic skills in other languages, mathematics and natural sciences, social sciences and humanities, music, art and design, physical activity and health. 6 Schools take account of the interests and needs of children and youth with special needs, with special talents and with foreign-language background.

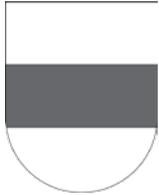
Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p data-bbox="236 219 293 248">Jura</p> 	<p data-bbox="432 219 1038 248">Elementary Education Act of 20 December 1990</p> <p data-bbox="432 253 635 282">Tasks of Schools</p> <p data-bbox="432 286 539 315">Article 2</p> <ol data-bbox="432 320 1501 443" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In cooperation with their families, schools meet the children's needs for instruction and education. 2. They respect the children's dignity, personality and developmental stage. 3. They seek to correct any disparities of opportunity in relation to academic success. <p data-bbox="432 448 639 477">Goals of Schools</p> <p data-bbox="432 481 539 510">Article 3</p> <p data-bbox="432 515 1054 544">Using the various means at their disposal, schools</p> <ol data-bbox="432 548 1501 824" style="list-style-type: none"> a) teach their students to master basic knowledge and to work independently, b) offer children the opportunity to shape their personality, to develop their intellectual, manual and physical skills, to promote their aesthetic and spiritual sensitivity and to express their creativity; c) prepare children to actively play their role in society; d) make children aware they belong to the world around them by developing their sense of brotherhood, cooperation and tolerance; e) make children familiar with foreign languages and enable them to develop their knowledge of some of them.
<p data-bbox="217 851 316 880">Lucerne</p> 	<p data-bbox="432 851 1262 880">Elementary Education Act of 22 March 1999 (as of 1 August 2011)</p> <p data-bbox="432 898 1501 965">The Grand Council of the Canton of Lucerne, having considered the message of the Governing Council of 21 November 1997, decrees:</p> <p data-bbox="432 969 587 999">§ 3 Principle</p> <p data-bbox="432 1003 1321 1032">Public elementary schools are politically and denominationally neutral.</p> <p data-bbox="432 1037 679 1066">II Educational goals</p> <p data-bbox="432 1070 799 1099">§ 4 General educational goal</p> <ol data-bbox="432 1104 1501 1361" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The aim of education is the constant, specific and systematic advancement of knowledge, of skills, of ethically and religiously grounded values, social competence and the ability to learn as well as of each individual's willingness to learn how to meaningfully manage and organize his or her life. 2 Education promotes the ability to reflect, to act and to develop in each individual, in their communities and in society. 3 It empowers people to render services to the community, to help shape social, cultural and economic life, and to prove themselves in it. <p data-bbox="432 1366 783 1395">§ 5 Elementary school goals</p> <ol data-bbox="432 1400 1501 2101" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Elementary schools teach their students basic knowledge, basic skills and attitudes, and promote the development of miscellaneous interests. 2 Elementary schools <ol data-bbox="432 1496 1501 2033" style="list-style-type: none"> a) contribute to the comprehensive development of the individual by promoting spiritual, mental and physical strength, b) are oriented towards – emanating from Western Christian and democratic tradition – principles and values such as freedom, justice, tolerance, solidarity and equal opportunities and guides children towards them, c) promote self-respect, self-responsibility, respect and consideration for others and the social world, as well as equality between men and women and the appreciation of religions and cultures. They raise the willingness and the ability to manage and solve conflicts without violence, d) impart the skills and knowledge that will enable their students to cope with and shape their living conditions, to lay the basis for secondary schooling and for later professional training, and to create their own way of life, e) encourage the capacity for independent, lifelong learning by keeping alive curiosity and the joy of learning, by encouraging individual initiative and expanding the capacity for sane judgment, f) arouses interest and willingness to participate on all levels in shaping a state which serves the common weal, 3 In addition to the family's and the legal guardians' work elementary schools perform the common educational mission, taking social influences into account.

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p data-bbox="201 221 331 248">Neuchâtel</p> 	<p data-bbox="432 221 1501 277">Educational article in the Elementary Education Act of the Canton of Neuchâtel of 28 March 1984</p> <p data-bbox="432 304 504 331">Goals</p> <p data-bbox="432 351 555 378">Article 10</p> <ol data-bbox="432 398 1501 618" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Schools within the compulsory education accomplish the training, in particular by supporting the acquisition of skills necessary for integration into social and professional life. 2 In cooperation with the family they contribute to education and development of the child by developing his abilities, talents and his sense of responsibility. 3 They accomplish these goals through a progressive education, adapted to the children's abilities.
<p data-bbox="201 674 331 701">Nidwalden</p> 	<p data-bbox="432 674 1362 701">Act on Elementary Schools (Elementary School Act, VSG) of 17 April 2002</p> <p data-bbox="432 712 932 739">The Cantonal Parliament of Nidwalden,</p> <p data-bbox="432 750 1501 806">Having regard to Articles 60 and in implementation of Articles 14, 15, 18, 20, 24 and 72 of the Cantonal Constitution decrees:</p> <p data-bbox="432 817 639 844">Article 3 Mission</p> <ol data-bbox="432 864 1501 1245" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Elementary schools: <ol data-bbox="464 898 1501 1088" style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the formation of spiritual, physical and emotional skills of students; 2. promote respect for themselves, for others and the environment as well as social behavior; 3. teach basic knowledge and skills; 4. contribute to the recognition of contexts and promote judgment; 5. strive to awaken and maintain the pleasure in learning and performance. 2 Lessons take into account the performance and the individual talents and interests of the children. 3 Schools support parents in raising their children. School authorities, teachers and parents work together.
<p data-bbox="201 1323 331 1350">Obwalden</p> 	<p data-bbox="432 1323 836 1350">Education Act of 16 March 2006</p> <p data-bbox="432 1368 879 1395">The Cantonal Council of Obwalden,</p> <p data-bbox="432 1406 1501 1462">Having regard to Articles 26 to 29 and 60 of the State Constitution of 19 May 1968 decrees:</p> <p data-bbox="432 1473 687 1500">I. General Provisions</p> <p data-bbox="432 1512 831 1538">A. Scope and educational goals</p> <p data-bbox="432 1559 767 1585">Article 2 Educational goals</p> <ol data-bbox="432 1606 1501 2065" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 In the context of this act, the educational system provides children, young people and adults with an education in accordance with their talents, aptitudes and interests and promotes awareness of the importance of lifelong learning. 2 Public schools: <ol data-bbox="464 1749 1501 1939" style="list-style-type: none"> a) educate towards a behavior that is based on Christian, humanist and democratic values; b) encourage the development of an independent, responsible, tolerant and pensive personality; c) create the basis for shaping the social, cultural and economic life as well as a responsible behavior towards the environment. 3 In fulfilling their tasks, public schools and their authorities comply with the application of a gender-sensitive pedagogy. 4 All persons involved in education cooperate in order to reach those goals.

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p data-bbox="220 219 312 248">St. Gall</p> 	<p data-bbox="432 219 855 248">Education Act of 13 January 1983</p> <p data-bbox="432 266 1501 327">The Grand Council (Parliament) of the Canton of St. Gall in application of Articles 2 to 8 of the Constitution on 16 November 1890 decrees as law:</p> <p data-bbox="432 338 683 367">Educational mission</p> <p data-bbox="432 383 539 412">Article 3</p> <ol data-bbox="432 416 1501 669" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Elementary schools support parents in the upbringing of the child toward a life-affirming, efficient and socially responsible person. They are run according to Christian principles. 2 They promote the different and diverse talents and natures of students. They teach them the basic knowledge and skills, provide access to the various areas of culture and guide them toward independent thinking and acting. 3 They educate the students to be responsible persons and citizens according to the principles of democracy, freedom and social justice within the constitutional state.
<p data-bbox="177 728 352 757">Schaffhausen</p> 	<p data-bbox="432 728 815 757">Education Act of 27 April 1981</p> <p data-bbox="432 768 1501 797">The Grand Council (Cantonal Parliament) of the Canton of Schaffhausen decrees as law:</p> <p data-bbox="432 813 539 842">Article 3</p> <ol data-bbox="432 853 1501 1330" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 It is the goal of our education to train good and happy people. Therefore, schools – together with the homes – encourage the ethical and religious, intellectual and physical abilities of the children. 2 In the area of ethical-religious education schools arouse the reverence for creation, the responsibility towards nature, the love of the fellow human beings, a sense of community and the joy of beauty. 3 In the area of mental-theoretical education schools train both the mind and the critical judgment. Moreover, it teaches the basics for later professional training and life in the family. 4 In the area of practical-physical education schools promote the agility and health of the students as well as their manual skills. 5 With the musical-creative education schools awaken the interest and understanding of artistic values and messages, promote and expand the virtues of imagination and the individual means of expression.
<p data-bbox="217 1400 316 1429">Schwyz</p> 	<p data-bbox="432 1400 1166 1429">Regulation on Elementary Education (of 19 October 2005)</p> <p data-bbox="432 1440 1187 1469">The Cantonal Council (Parliament) of the Canton of Schwyz,</p> <p data-bbox="432 1503 1187 1532">Having regard to § 40 point (e) of the Constitution, decrees:</p> <p data-bbox="432 1552 587 1581">§ 2 Principle</p> <ol data-bbox="432 1597 1501 1727" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Public elementary schools focus on an education in Christian, humanist and democratic values. 2 They ensure the same educational opportunities to all children and young people without regard to sex, religion, social and regional origin. <p data-bbox="432 1742 580 1771">§ 3 Purpose</p> <ol data-bbox="432 1787 1501 1995" style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Elementary education provides an adequate basic education according to the pre-dispositions and aptitudes of the pupils. 2 It promotes the development towards independent, responsible personalities and lays the foundations for coexistence in society and democracy, for the social and economic empowerment and responsible behavior towards the environment. 3 Within its educational mandate it cooperatively supports the parents in their education.

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p data-bbox="204 219 328 248">Solothurn</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 219 1182 248">Education Act of 14 September 1969 (as of 1 January 2009)</p> <p data-bbox="435 282 1501 342">The Cantonal Council (Parliament) of Solothurn having regard to Article 47 of the Constitution of 23 October 1887 decrees:</p> <p data-bbox="435 376 868 405">§ 1 Goals of elementary education</p> <ol data-bbox="435 443 1501 703" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="435 443 1501 600">1 Solothurn elementary schools support the family in the upbringing of children toward people who know their responsibility before God and for their fellows and act accordingly. They develop the emotional, mental, and physical skills in a harmonious way, educate the independent thinking and working and provide basic knowledge for a successful life. <li data-bbox="435 611 1501 703">2 Schools respect the freedoms of denomination and conscience. They integrate children of different backgrounds into the community, promote the education of responsibility in our democratic nation and arouse respect for native characteristics.
<p data-bbox="228 772 304 801">Ticino</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 772 855 801">Education Act of 1 February 1990</p> <p data-bbox="435 813 1501 873">After examination of the Cantonal Council's message of 30 June 1987, n. 3220, the Grand Council of the Republic and the Canton Ticino decrees:</p> <p data-bbox="435 884 560 913">Definition</p> <p data-bbox="435 925 539 954">Article 1</p> <ol data-bbox="435 965 1501 1111" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="435 965 1501 994">1 Public schools are an institution of education at the service of individuals and society. <li data-bbox="435 994 1501 1046">2 They are established and administered by the Canton in cooperation with the local authorities. <li data-bbox="435 1057 1501 1086">3 Lessons are taught in Italian and in compliance with the freedom of conscience. <li data-bbox="435 1086 1501 1111">4 Those involved in the administration of schools follow the rules laid down in law. <p data-bbox="435 1122 504 1151">Goals</p> <p data-bbox="435 1162 539 1191">Article 2</p> <ol data-bbox="435 1202 1501 1731" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="435 1202 1501 1317">1 In collaboration with the family and other educational institutions schools encourage the harmonious development of the individual and enable him or her to take an active and responsible role in society and to realize the principles of justice and freedom. <li data-bbox="435 1328 1501 1731">2 By particularly working towards the integration of the social and cultural reality and a perspective of the ongoing education <ol data-bbox="464 1384 1501 1731" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="464 1384 1501 1507">a) schools educate the individual toward a conscious choice of an individual role through the mediation and the critical and scientifically correct processing of the basic cultural elements in a pluralistic view that is historically rooted in the reality of the country; <li data-bbox="464 1518 1501 1570">b) they develop the sense of responsibility and educate for peace, for respect for the environment and the democratic ideals; <li data-bbox="464 1581 1501 1632">c) they promote the citizens' integration into the social environment by means of an effective and sustainable basic education; <li data-bbox="464 1644 1501 1731">d) they promote the principle of equality of men and women, endeavoring to balance the socio-cultural differences, and reducing the barriers that affect the pupils' education.
<p data-bbox="212 1760 320 1789">Thurgau</p> 	<p data-bbox="435 1760 1038 1789">Act on Elementary Education of 29 August 2007</p> <p data-bbox="435 1800 504 1830">Goals</p> <p data-bbox="435 1841 1501 1995">§ 2 Elementary schools promote the children's spiritual, emotional and physical capabilities. In addition to the parents' educational mission they educate the children according to Christian principles and democratic values to become independent personalities who are able to cope with life and feel responsible towards their fellow human beings and the environment.</p> <p data-bbox="435 2007 1501 2067">§ 4 In elementary schools equal opportunities are sought and the children's particular needs are taken into account.</p>

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p style="text-align: center;">Uri</p> 	<p>Act on Schools and Education (Education Act) (2 March 1997, as of 1 January 2008)</p> <p>The people of Uri, Having regard to Articles 43 and 90 paragraph 1 of the State Constitution decrees:</p> <p>Article 2 Educational goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Schools serve the education of students. 2 They support and promote the holistic development of students and strive to educate them to be independent and tolerant people who engage in the community and for the environment in a responsible way. They are committed to Western Christian culture and to democratic principles. 3 They provide the students with a contemporary education that is appropriate to their talents. 4 In order to achieve these goals, schools cooperate with parents, approved churches under public law, social institutions and other professional bodies.
<p style="text-align: center;">Vaud</p> 	<p>Elementary Education Act of the Canton of Vaud, 7 June 2011 (will come into effect on 1 August 2013)</p> <p>Article 5 Goals of schools</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schools accomplish the children's education in cooperation with the parents. They support parents in their educational tasks. 2. They offer all students the best opportunities for development, integration and learning, particularly through work and personal commitment. They aspire academic achievement and equal opportunities. 3. In particular, they assist the children in acquiring knowledge, techniques and methodology to develop and perform their intellectual, manual, creative and physical skills, to shape their ability to judgment and their personality in order to enable them – through their knowledge about themselves and the world around them – to find their proper place in society.
<p style="text-align: center;">Valais</p> 	<p>Act on Public Education, 4 July 1962</p> <p>The Grand Council of the Canton of Valais willing to promote education of the youth, contemplating the need to build the various levels of education as planned; having consulted the articles 2, 13, 15 and 18 of the State Constitution, at the request of the State Council decrees to</p> <p>Article 3</p> <p>2 General tasks of schools</p> <p>The general task of the Valais schools is to help the family in the education and training of their youth. To this end, it strives to cooperate with the approved churches under public law (hereinafter referred to as churches). It strives to develop the moral, intellectual and physical talents of the students and prepare them for their tasks as fellow beings and Christians.</p> <p>Art. 3 bis</p> <p>2 Information, consultation, participation</p> <p>The school authorities maintain the necessary relationships with parents, teachers and their associations as well as with the churches and interested parties through information, consultation, participation or other means. Schools may enlist religious, cultural, economic, political and social circles to participate.</p>

Cantons	Legal regulations of the Cantons' educational mission
<p style="text-align: center;">Zug</p> 	<p>Education Act of 27 September 1990</p> <p>The Cantonal Council of the Canton of Zug, having regard to §§ 4 and 41 lit. b of the Cantonal Constitution [1] decrees:</p> <p>§ 3 Educational mission</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Schools serve the education and upbringing of children in collaboration with the parents and the churches. 2 In this sense, they promote the mental and spiritual as well as the physical development of children and are committed to educate independent people, lively and full of character, based on democratic and Christian principles, who act responsibly towards the community and the environment. 3 Schools teach students the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes for their personal and professional future. Education is focused on lifelong learning.
<p style="text-align: center;">Zurich</p> 	<p>Education Act of 7 February 2005</p> <p>After examination of the motion by the Commission for Education and Culture of 31 August 2004, the Cantonal Council decrees:</p> <p>Goals of education</p> <p>§2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Elementary schools educate to a behaviour that is committed to the Christian, humanist and democratic values. They respect the freedom of religion and conscience and take minorities into account. They equally promote girls and boys. 2 Elementary schools complement the child's upbringing within the family. School authorities, teachers, parents and, if required, youth welfare services cooperate. 3 Elementary schools fulfill their educational mission by shaping lessons and living together in school. 4 Elementary school teaches core knowledge and skills; it leads to an understanding of how things are linked. It encourages respect for others and for the environment, and aims to ensure that children develop comprehensively into independent, socially competent people. Schools strive for encouraging and maintaining the joy in learning and achievement. It especially promotes the desire for responsibility, good performance, judgment and criticism as well as the openness for dialogue. Lessons take care of the children's individual talents and inclinations and provide the basis for lifelong learning.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Quality management by marking schemes dumping Competence to compensate incompetence conceals the failure of school reforms

by Prof Dr Hans Peter Klein*

It has long been all over town: The methods of alleged “quality management” in education do not lead to greater knowledge and skills, rather they conceal the fact that students know less and are capable of less. Ever more beginners, particularly in the natural sciences, lack basic knowledge and skills to successfully take up and complete their studies. However, the kind of trouble caused by ministerial guidelines which teacher teams are facing and let out only behind closed doors, is something the public must know about.

How knowledge and skills develop as the basis of real education and how this can be achieved best during lessons, has been well-known for a long time. Why are teachers not given the freedom to take independent decisions how to organize their lessons according to their professional training? After all, they are the experts.

Performance explosion by competence orientation – a bluff package ?

Since the “PISA shock” politicians and their advisers from the field of empirical educational research claim that quality of teaching could be improved and a better PISA ranking be achieved only by educational standards, competency-based lessons, core curricula, comparative studies and central exams up to central high-school graduation. The logic behind this standardization is simple and not completely wrong. One is looking for a binding standard to measure the dubious status of skills and knowledge of students. May we believe the advocates of these concepts and the supporting press who claim that within a short time an increase in the high-school graduation rate has been achieved and the rate of failing students has been brought down to almost zero, the number of school dropouts, has been reduced underachieving students have been better promoted and their level of performance has been raised; the ability for studying has improved while getting rid of unnecessary knowledge ballast! For year after year the number of high school graduates with the dream grade of 1.0 (or better) rose while failure rates declined against zero. Who feels like grumbling? Peculiar though, the voices of crafts, SMEs and universities do not stop complaining about the lack and further decline of the quality level of school-graduates. Engineers and students of the natural sciences have become scarce

and craft apprentices that are ready to learn and let themselves be trained are urgently searched for. Are these merely the complaints of the diehards and dissatisfied? Or what is happening ?

New quality management – the prescribed leveling of standards

To uncover the cause for this discrepancy and to check the success reports for their truth would now indeed be an important work of research. But so far no one has been appointed to it. Apparently, the euphorics of quality management in the ministries and the KMK (Conference of the Ministers of Education and Culture) of the “Länder” are not interested in examining their own measures of quality management in an open scientific investigation. Upon inquiries at the ministries in one or another “Land”, one receives the reasonable information that such scientific research would certainly be of great interest, albeit only under the premise that the questionnaire, the aim of investigation and the handling of possible results were discussed in advance! It could not be clearer: research, yes please, but only politically and didactically correct! Otherwise, the imported quality assuring concept of formal technique and management doctrine might possibly be at stake, altogether.

A first disillusioning that “competence orientation” was the ostensible solution of all educational problems occurred by the study on the “Abitur” in biology conducted in North Rhine-Westphalia¹, presented below: Non-prepared ninth-graders had passed the final Abitur-examination in biology without any problem. Is this the secret of an unforeseen quality explosion? No, but all the answers were given in the text accompanying the questions, you only had to have some “literacy competence” in order to be able to copy and transcribe them. Expertise? Methodical skills? Wrong! This of course stimulated further, needless to say, undesired investigations. And now look at that: In math as well it showed that common knowledge, reading skills and a certain cleverness for the successful management of this type of competency-based tasks were sufficient for the central exam.² Students of the eleventh-grades of a high school (G9) were able to reach at least the mark “sufficient” in the complex task analysis, without having ever studied the necessary math basics of the twelfth and thirteenth grades that were required. Again, the trick is simple: In a task, which concerns the value of a cyclist’s pulse rate shown in a graph, the student does not have to conduct any arithmetic operations. It is suffi-

cient to describe the course of the curve and to draw the right conclusions from the given factual information with some common knowledge. The detailed work material supplies all information the student needs to correctly answer the question and to achieve the full credit points needed. Knowledge of mathematics is merely hindering, since pupils might assume that they would have to do complicated arithmetic operations for achieving the correct answer. Pupils in countries who are blessed with such exams see through this foul play: They feel they are not taken seriously. Corresponding comments can be read in the web – it was undemanding and pure copying of given texts. Expert knowledge was not required, there was no mathematical expertise demanded, etc.³

Meanwhile it seems obvious that all this is well-known at the top of the ministries of education and culture and no one denies it. Heads of department participating in this school form in some countries are instructed by the corresponding superior authorities in training sessions that pupils’ performance in all central exams are exclusively be assessed by working with the given material of diverse text and graph information. Basic knowledge or additional knowledge capacity which formerly used to be the key factor of the assessment are no longer allowed to be taken into account. Upon cautious inquiry by subject experts of the schools at the corresponding superior department, whether it was not known that almost all the answers were already given beforehand, the consternated teachers had to learn that this was very well known. One would try to make it less obvious in future examinations, was the information. Basically, however, teachers should not worry about it, since it was indeed politically intended.

Educational standards and quality management in the US – a cheating scandal

We have known for a long time what may be caused by a misconceived ‘quality management’. Lately, Professor *Diane Ravitch* from New York, who under *Bush* senior was greatly involved in the enforcement of testing systems, realized and publicly confessed her fatal error. Once being a fiery advocate of standards, tests, free choice of schools and Charter Schools, she openly admits today in her book ‘The Life and Death of the Great American School System. How Tests and Choice are Undermining Education’⁴ that particularly standardization and the including testing

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"Quality management by ..."

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methods have the opposite effect to the one intended by undermining any educational standard. Tests were to direct greater attention towards low quality schools as well as to allow free choice of school for poor children:

"All of this seemed to make sense, but there was little empirical evidence, just promise and hope. [...] But over time, I was persuaded by accumulating evidence that the latest reforms were not likely to live up to their promise. The more I saw, the more I lost faith." (p. 4.) Since the beginning of 2010 and continuing in 2011 the whole of the US was shaken by a cheating scandal of unprecedented dimension. This happened although over the past few years the pleasant improvement of student performance notably in the southern United States was celebrated under the *Obama Administration* as a success of the testing methods, a law, entitled 'No Child Left Behind' that had been adopted under *George W. Bush*; a law that our politicians like to refer to. This law aimed at assuring an adequate level of performance for the largest number of students possible within twelve years and employed financial and personal bonus-and malus-points for well-achieving and poor-achieving schools. The cheating originated in Atlanta, where the questionnaires of those students with insufficient results were sorted out and replaced by forms correctly filled in by the teachers. One resorted to cheating in order to obtain a better position in the national ranking and to avoid sanctions for schools and teachers with poor student results. The press even believed that this was done in a silent agreement with the respective governor since in the USA this method of achieving better ranking positions has developed its own culture taken from the field of sport. Obviously, nobody can evade such ranking in the USA of today. Moreover, better ranking positions yield additional funds and reputation. By now it has been assumed that the series of cheating have occurred in several US states to an unknown extent. The scandal heightened criticism of such testing procedures: "It is this idiotic pressure being exerted on schools and teachers caused by the test results and I believe that those tests not only corrupt the results themselves but also education and schooling as a whole", said the well-known test expert Professor *Haney* from Boston College. Since this cheating scandal at the latest, the "No-child-left-behind"-law is considered as failed.

Educational standards and quality management in Germany – the subtler form of American "cheating".

Whereas in the USA the producers of these test methods tend to demand rising stan-

dards the opposite path is being tread in our own country. Insufficient graduation exams (Abitur) are being retouched at the desk; and centralized nationwide examinations are being softened at selected schools under strict nondisclosure until nobody can fail. Students, parents and the public were made believe that better results had in fact been achieved. Universities indicate that it is not true: A major part of the elementary students is insufficiently qualified for successful studies, especially in the field of sciences. Consequently, the "Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF" (Federal Ministry of Education and Research) that had sponsored the concept of empirical education research, of educational standards, orientation towards competences and all kinds of central and decentralized test procedures with multi-million dollar amounts during the last twelve years, is now spending another multi-million dollar amount in order to tutor the high-school graduates with a kind of supplementary courses. Simultaneously, the pressure on university professors is being raised to make them rigorously reduce the failing rates. Only students who complete their studies in the standard period of studying are funded by the state. The extremely high failing rates at several German universities in particular in mathematics and engineering sciences point to the fact that an ever-wider gap is opening between school subjects which are oriented toward competences and respective university subjects. Apparently, nobody asks for the actual reason: why do mathematics and engineering sciences require mathematical knowledge as a precondition, for which the mathematical and reading literacy of PISA is just not sufficient.

Outlook

It is high time we return to education in its fullest sense, and steer clear from reducing education standards by diluting and lowering standards with carnevalistic didactics and by forcing teachers into the role of mere teaching guides while forbidding them to teach the basics – above all in the field of science, which is neither a priori there, nor easily acquired.

We've known since long how to teach and develop knowledge and skills as the basis of genuine education in the classroom. Why do we not give the teachers the liberty to decide on their own how to conduct their classes on the basis of their knowledge, in view of the fact that they are the experts in their field, and not the empirists and gurus of all sorts, who are currently pulled out of the hat by many a German Land.

Hereby the decisive and sovereign role of the Finnish teacher, who has the liberty to choose from the various teaching methods those he considers appropriate, may serve as an example, as well as the most comprehensive comparative study in this field by *John A.C. Hattie* "Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating

to Achievement" (5) from 2009, which undoubtedly points to the overriding role of the teacher in the education process, a fact that still seems to be ignored in our country. It gets rid of the preconceived idea that solely student-centred learning can bring about better learning results. The results of the study show that the teacher's role as the "activator", giving clear instruction, is much more successful than that of the "facilitator", or learning guide. It is exactly the often criticised "reciprocal teaching", similar to the method of development by questions, which achieves top results. Other interesting findings are the poor results of "problem-based learning". Furthermore the Swiss-German longitudinal study on the quality of classroom teaching of mathematics comes to the conclusion that teaching success can be expected when the teacher disposes of a) a profound and differentiated knowledge of his subject, b) a well-organised lesson-structure, c) the necessary amount of discipline and d) a good atmosphere in class. To the amazement of everyone including the researchers, group teaching led to poorer results. Where is the teacher who could not confirm without reservations that the four points are fundamental? There is no other country in the OECD, which overemphasizes the methods over the results as much as Germany. In contrast to the Anglo-American and Asian countries, and our French neighbours, who all prefer the teaching-to-the-test method, which we would not necessarily like to describe as exemplary. The solution seems to lie in a methodological variety, which makes the lessons also interesting for the students. Instead, the teachers here are being degraded to hirelings of the empirical education researchers and constructors of this so-called better teaching, who have no better idea than to advise teachers to produce assessment programmes – within the frame of the unduly controversial competence development models – which the teacher is permitted to hand out and collect from the students, whereby closest attention needs to be given to avoid any falsification of the quantitative assessment. And more and more we are obliged to answer the question why we continue mending the crumbling ruins of the Potemkin-style education villages against all better judgement. ●

¹ Klein, HP (2010): *Die neue Kompetenzorientierung: Exzellenz oder Nivellierung?* (The New Competence Orientation: Excellence or Leveling?) Journal für Didaktik der Biowissenschaften JföB 1, 1–11

² Klein, HP, Jahnke, Th (2012): *Die Folgen der Kompetenzorientierung im Fach Mathematik.* (The consequences of New Competence Orientation in the subject of Mathematics) Vierteljahresschrift für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik (in print) www.uni-protokolle.de/jforen

³ Ravitch, D. (2010): *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Tests and Choice are Undermining Education.* Basic Books, New York

⁴ Hattie, J.A.C. (2009): *Visible Learning. A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement.* Routledge, Chapman & Hall, New York, <http://www.dipf.de/de/projekte/Pythagoras>

(Translation Current Concerns)

Our children are no force-fed geese

Well-paid teachers as mere computer suckers

by Dr phil Henriette Hanke Güttinger, Psychologist/Historian

The third grade student comes home, drops satchel and jacket in the corridor and marches into his room. There is something wrong, the mother thinks. What's the matter with the bright boy who usually comes to the kitchen straightaway and talks about what happened during the day in school, with the others, or on his way home? At the dinner table *Marco* at last voices his troubles in a mixture of anger and despair: "Now I have to read so many pages in this stupid book and find out what is the best joke. How am I supposed to know that!" The father takes a look at the matter. Quite some pages indeed for a third-grader. "Listen, we just make up a joke of our own to-

gether", the father suggests. Marco shrugs it off: "She would notice, she has read all the books!" Now the father gets concerned: "All the books, what books?" He wants to find out exactly what this is about. His investigations unearth a disturbing scenario.

Reeling off rubbishy programs ...

Quite questionable methods have found their way into primary schools for some time. Instead of reading a reasonable book together with the whole class, figure out its content together in class discussion, thinking and arguing about it, the teachers take the easy approach. They reel off lousy fast food style reading computer programs of-

Curriculum Canton Zurich

"The students shall gain a positive attitude to reading. [...] Silent reading: The main goal of education is to develop the ability and the joy of independent reading."

ferred by private companies. It works like this: Every child chooses a book which is covered by the reading computer program. Having read the pathetic book he or she has to answer 15 questions at the computer. Those are not really challenging ques-

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In stark contrast to the professional mandate ...

hhg. Not only with the use of computer reading programs teachers make themselves comfortable. It works in Math as well, for example, with so-called weekly schedules. Take the following example from a Swiss school.

A good 5th-grader at primary school is gradually losing her enjoyment of school. She does not quite know what homework to do and by what time she has to finish an exercise. Since the summer the class has been doing a math plan instead of math instruction. They are told to work regularly on this plan, but they do not know at what time the tasks must be done. This is also true for the other subjects: "worksheets" is in the plan, the students are asked to serve themselves at the podium. Instructions, as to when the work in each case has to be done, are not given. The parents are asking how they can support their daughter, how they can guide her together with the teacher to make a reliable study plan and to finish the tasks well. But that is not what the teacher has in mind. For some time she refuses to accompany the girl more closely and to check her records, in order to make her learn how to have her stuff "together". Rather, she tells the pupil not to ask her parents, they would not understand anyway, she should turn to their colleagues, instead. She tells her that she will, not help her, by the way, she is to do the work on her own. When asked by the parents the teacher explicitly refuses to provide worksheets with an accurate title and to hand out dates for their completion. It does not matter, she says, if the sheets will be finished on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday. The pupils are to work just "50 minutes on anything" every day. When the par-

ents ask her once again for a cooperation with regard to the mandate of the school, namely, "complementing the educational mandate of parents" to be active, she refuses. Other parents in the class also find that their children never quite know what they are supposed to do, that they don't have a success and are losing their joy to be at school. In the language lesson the students engage in "creative" writing. The individual texts are not corrected by the teacher. At a parents' assembly, she explains: "It's of no use if the children see their mistakes painted red and then will have to correct them." She will convey "strategies" about how the students may correct themselves. The children can help each other while correcting.

... and how the resulting mess is to be tediously corrected again.

An experienced, dedicated elementary school teacher takes over a village school (4th-6th grade) in a rural community from a younger teacher. When handing over it turns out that it had been worked especially with a weekly schedule, group and partner work, there was less classroom teaching and more self-discovered learning. Parents are happy with the change of teachers. Homework and the children's study tasks had always been unclear. The children corrected their math tasks themselves using the teacher-key, corrections by the teacher were rare. Students that could go on to the "Gymnasium" (grammar school) after the 6th class were a rarity. Only very few manage to rise to secondary school. The majority went on to attend the "Realschule", the school with the lowest standards. Often, the teacher did his preparations for the next day during school lessons, so that he didn't

even have to take home his folder at four o'clock.

With the new teacher, from the first day on, a close, binding cooperation began with pupils and parents. The new math exercises were worked on together on the blackboard until every student had understood what it was about, and then was able to solve the respective tasks on his own. At the end, the teacher collected the books, put them into his old school trunk and corrected them at his desk in the evening. That way he could check how the students had processed the material, where errors had occurred and what had to be repeated in the next lesson if necessary. He found that many students had some gaps up to huge holes in the math material of the recent years. In the other subjects it was similar picture. It took a major effort from all sides and a lot of patience. The working day of the teacher (six-day week) rarely ended before 22 o'clock. Teaching was worthwhile, as it is codified in the elementary school law. Parents and students were very pleased with the turn. After one year, the majority of the sixth-graders, had achieved the academic requirements for secondary school. But it was also still part of the everyday life of the teacher, to work until well into the evening, in order to follow up lessons and prepare the ones for the next day and promote and stipulate each child.

Conclusion: How our youth comes out of school today and is prepared for their profession and their roles in our direct democracy, is in large part the responsibility of their teachers. If the political will is there, the teachers can be held again accountable to carry out their tasks compliant to the Elementary Schools Act.

"Our children are no ..."

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tions, inspiring thought or creativity in order to advance the children's personal development. The computer program asks stupid questions and offers three possible answers itself. The child just has to tick one of them.

The teachers don't even have to bother reading one of the books themselves. In their solution window the correct answer is already highlighted. On his computer screen the teacher can calculate the "reading capability" of every student i.e. the percentage of correct answers. What and how much the student has actually understood, he wouldn't know that way. In the computer program this is called "administration of individual students" or, if all of them are dealt with, "central class administration". The teacher's response is delivered via computer as well when the student opens a mailbox and reads it. Instead of a small discussion, a caring glance, food for thoughts, an encouraging gesture or some positive constructive face to face criticism all the child gets from the teacher is an "electronic text message". Just looking carefully at these programs makes you shiver. It is disgraceful how children are being denied their human right of education.¹

... instead of high quality primary school teaching

Such reading computer programs can be found throughout the German speaking countries. They are superficial and meaningless. Their producers and distributors are the only ones who benefit from them.

Teachers who use these programs and promote this computerization of the learning process use a cheap way out of their didactic and educationalist tasks which they are obliged to fulfill by both curriculum and the Elementary Education Act. The teachers reel off these programs – and don't even appreciate their students as individuals any longer.

They do not perceive their students as living counterparts any more. Any relationship between teachers and students is cut off. How much the student actually comprehends, where he or she faces difficulties or has unanswered questions, at which point some encouragement may be needed to build up confidence, all this will not even be noticed by the teacher. So the very preconditions to educate and promote the students in their individual development are lacking. This is bound to result in insufficient educational and personal preparation for subsequent higher professional training. Young people, their families and our democracy have to bear the damages.

Rubbish from the US

hfg. The computerizing of our primary schools is not made in Switzerland, but a rubbish import from the USA, caused by Ernst Buschor,¹ former Director of Education of the Canton of Zurich. In 1998 in the canton of Zurich, he established computers via the School Project 21, which also included English at primary schools and mixed-age classes. Note, what the "Tages-Anzeiger" of 19 February 1998 wrote on this event:

"The Project 21 has its model in the US. It (the Department of Education) specifically refers to a school experiment in a government-run high school in Alameda (California). [...] On behalf of the Education Department the consulting firm Arthur Andersen AG, Zurich, tested which of the elements practiced in Alameda could be incorporated into the Project 21. Lacking in the Government response is the following: The 'School of the Future' in Alameda is based on an initiative launched by the San-Francisco-based consulting firm Arthur Andersen in 1991."²

California's "School of the Future" is a school building without partition walls, where about 150 students of different ages must practice self-discovered learning, in the same room and each connected to a computer.³ The Zurich Education Directorate has propagated this type of school most actively.⁴

With the School Project 21 it happened for the first time in the history of public school that a school project was financed by the private sector. The *Johann Jacobs Foundation*⁵ paid one million Swiss francs, a donor club gave two to three million. Even Apple, Compaq, Swisscom and Telecom were engaged.⁶ A profound connoisseur of the situation explicitly warned against this step: "Sponsorship has many faces but only one soul: the long-term profitability for

the donor. In the long term it will pay off for him if he invests in the digitalization of the school."⁷ True indeed, as anyone can check when looking at our primary schools' annual expenditure in the electronics sector.

For the sake of mental and spiritual health of our children and our youth, it's about time to clear off this US electronic waste. Quite apart from the financial resources that would be set free for a good elementary school, which is in accordance to the will of the people (elementary school law).

¹ On the background on Ernst Buschor see: "How American capitalism came to us", *Current Concerns* No. 14 of 2.4.2012

² Tages-Anzeiger, 19.2.1998 quoted in: *Die trojanische Maus, Komitee für eine demokratische Volksschule (The Trojan Mouse, Committee for a Democratic primary school)*, E. Gautschi, U. Scheibler, Zurich 2002, p. 53–54.

³ In Switzerland, learning environments and Mosaic schools are touted as imitation of this model. In Baden-Württemberg, it is found in the green community school again.

⁴ The computer science representative in the school department made a promotion for the Project 21 in a joint presentation with an employee of Arthur Andersen AG at the *Swiss Institute for Information Technologies in Education*. See *The Trojan Mouse*, p. 54.

⁵ Buschor apparently acted in a dual role that he actually would have had to disclose in the sense of honest transparency. On the one hand, he served in a political office as Director of Education. On the other hand he had closest connections to the private sector, and unfortunately it was exactly to companies trying more and more to take their revenues from state education. Note that Buschor announced himself as follows in a lecture in Lausanne: "Professor Ernst Buschor, Vice-President of the ETH Board, Zurich, President of the Board of Trustees of the Bertelsmann Foundation, Gütersloh, trustee of the Jacobs Foundation, Zurich."

⁶ See *The Trojan Mouse*, pp. 54–55.

⁷ Hans R. Dietiker, school administration Winterthur, head of the cantonal "development project for high school computer science at the Zurich primary school," quoted in: *The Trojan Mouse*, p. 52.

Computers ruin the joy of reading

Our laws on primary education reflect the common will of the people and state explicitly that the school's purpose is "encouraging and maintaining the joy in learning and achievement".² This includes the joy of reading. Teachers who read together with their classes – namely texts and books which they themselves are willing to endorse in front of the parents and their fellow citizens – and appreciate and compassionately encourage every single child in their individual linguistic development will experience how less gifted students, too, will more and more enjoy and be interested in reading. This is the recipe for true equal chances in the educational system.

Exactly the opposite happens if teachers hook their children up to computer reading programs. At first alone with their books engaging in imaginary jour-

neys (nobody cares what they are thinking about) they end up being parked in front of a soulless machine reeling off its questioning program. A machine which will not answer any questions itself, which may easily be fooled with some cleverness, and which bursts into praises for the slightest accomplishment. All this is highly problematic for the psychological development of our children. Parents, pediatric psychologists and psychiatrists have noticed that children may lose their joy of learning in entire areas in that process, just like Marco the third-grader. Because he had always enjoyed leafing through a book together with the adults or listening to them reading aloud to him, he was given "Robinson Crusoe". He liked it. But after his experiences in school he was no longer inter-

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ested in reading or listening to texts even at home. In the case of such a vivid, interested child there is a danger of him being put off reading so completely that he just shuts down the whole area of humanities altogether and focuses only on the scientific part. "I just want to do calculus and real things. At least I can learn something that way", was one of his recent statements. But an important area of his abilities will not develop and will be missed later in his professional progress and his further life. The school would be to blame for such one-sidedness. Teachers will have to be trained towards student orientation once again, as it was the case prior to the 1990s. They are no mere computer program suckers of EU, OECD and Bertelsmann. This is not what we want our tax money be spent for.

Germanists outraged about the quality of German lessons

Germanists, who are proud of working on a high level of linguistic style and content in their classes, are dismayed when they visit the schools of their own children. They meet primary school teachers who cannot speak proper German themselves and use for instance only the infinitive to address the students, like "sit chair", "pack satchel", "bring notebook". Their language is neither differentiated nor in command of a rich vocabulary. Or-

After finishing secondary school: neither capable of teaching nor of democracy

hfg. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) express their concerns of not finding any suitable apprentices or trainees any longer, resulting in a shortage of qualified employees in a few years with the corresponding damage to the national economy. The training chief of Larag (Lastwagen-Reparatur AG), which runs its own training center, expressed it as follows: "The middle and better students go to a vocational school, or visit the Canton school, the less competent fail because of our requirements." They lack the necessary motivation, and academic requirements are insufficient. To blame the young people for this deficiency is inappropriate. The teachers are responsible for this since they had them in their care for 9 years and 30 hours per week.

Source: Thurgauer Zeitung on 14.12.2012

thographics is an issue with some of the teachers, too.

Crap literature in primary school

Germanists get angry and upset about the reading examples their children bring home from school, taken out of texts and books classified as literary crap in their secondary school teacher training. Looking at the recommended reading samples in detail one understands the outrage. A book about *Gruselfax* the witch is for instance recommended for grade two with the following summary: "Gruselfax the witch likes everything dark and creepy best. She abhors nice gardens with flowers and butterflies. That is why she brews a terrible witch magic stew with *Klumpi* and *Schniefel*, her assistants, which should destroy anything beautiful [...] Will that make her witch of the year?" Or for third-graders "The wolves in the walls" is recommended, "to scare children and adults". "The wolves, which are sketched incredibly vivid and dangerous, suddenly burst right down on them. They destroy, shake up and threaten the existence, but only until they themselves get chased. Now everything is like it used to be. Until the next time. Lucy is aware of the danger lurking in the walls any time." Such texts are just a disaster for the spiritual and psychological development of our children and may even result in sequelae such as paranoid or psychotic deviations in later life.

Teachers ignore the Elementary School Act

The teacher reeling of his or her computer reading programs does not even realize what he is busily stuffing into his children. That way he ignores the Elementary School Act. Our children are no force-fed geese! They are entitled to have a teacher who "is committed to Christian, humanist and democratic values" – as the Elementary School Act puts it.³ Teachers have to carefully choose their teaching material according to these criteria. They have to stick to educational material evaluated on the basis of the Elementary School Act. Crap literature stands in sharp contrast to that. Spam software which may be downloaded from some private provider for a license has to be kept out of our schools.

It is well-known that children from the second or third grade onwards will pick up contents from their reading texts which will stay with them right onto professional or university training. They will later have an impact on how they feel, think and act, will influence their ethics, compassion and creativity.

Enough with the easy way

Are today's teachers no longer capable to face their classes and directly address their students, enthralling them for style

and content of the German language? It cannot be true that well-trained, well-paid teachers who should impart the tradition of the language of poets and scholars on to future generations prefer to offer computer-sucking language lessons from the bottom sediments of the internet, polish our children off with that and drive them slowly but steadily into stupidity and digital dementia – consult *Manfred Spitzer*⁴ for further reading.

If teachers dispose of their educational tasks by stuffing computerized crap into their students, this is nothing but mental laziness. This easy-going way is no longer tolerated by parents, master craftsmen or authorities. The teachers have to remind themselves of their duty, defined for them by the Elementary School Act. They ought to take this will of the people serious again and put it into practice with care and commitment.

Moreover, a compulsory annual refresher course for teachers – based on the values of our Elementary School Act – should be considered, similar to the ones we know from our militia army. •

- 1 Art. 26(2) *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 1948
- 2 Cf. Part 1: Par.2.4 *Elementary School Act of the Canton of Zurich* of 7.2.2005
- 3 *Elementary School Act of the Canton of Zurich* of 7.2.2005
- 4 Manfred Spitzer: *Digitale Demenz. Wie wir uns und unsere Kinder um den Verstand bringen*. 2012

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What are schools' tasks?

by Roland Güttinger

At present, new types of schools are fashionable: community schools, mosaic schools, houses of learning, learning environments or whatever they may be called. All of them have one thing in common: They operate with positive terms like community, individually aligned learning, accepting heterogeneity – promises they usually do not keep, and which indeed, with regard to these concepts' construction, are very hard to be implemented, even if it were intended. So they are actually a bluff package, pure propaganda. This can well be illustrated when it comes to community education.

It is no accident that in Switzerland's various cantonal constitutions community education is one of the elementary school's main tasks. Community education includes many different qualities, such as listening to each other, responding to each other, serving each other, developing mutual interest, developing empathy for the other's situation, participating in talks and discussions, discussing conflicts and looking for viable, fair solutions, etc.

All these are qualities a person needs to have in a democratically oriented society, without which a mutually supportive so-

ciety cannot develop. The origins of these demands coincide with the birth of our elementary school: At school all residents are to receive so much knowledge and personal development that they will become fellow citizens ready for democracy. This was one of the main requests posed to the elementary school, since with the implementation of this postulate one of the main conditions for the development of a functioning direct democratic state was given. This still applies today – in any case our Constitution makes provision for that.

Hence, the school has the task of promoting this quality of feeling and caring for one's fellows. This is called empathy development, the foundation of a fruitful cooperation, of a constructive class climate. The pupil however brings with him a lot of conditions that may inhibit his development: bad models and examples from the media or the real world, certain retreating and avoiding movements that he developed in his individual life. It is the teacher's task to detect such mal-developments, and to counter them. These are not simply developmental deficits that may always arise in education, but negative role models delivered from outside, like car-

toon characters, monsters and other figures. All of them have a loss of reality in common, which impedes community education and also learning.

School reflects our society. Divergent values, conservative, religious, modern, overburdened, wayward life-plans meet and are manifest in the children's attitude towards life and learning. Pupils, who have been calmed down with TV or medication in their early years, are greatly challenged and also at risk by this task of community building. However, they must not be left behind, either.

The foundation for this sense of humaneness, the foundation of any active community is, of course, laid in the family. The kindergarten follows, in which the first steps towards the greater community are taken, and finally school, where the emerging class community has to face the task of targeted and scheduled learning together. Every teacher knows what it means, if he cannot build on what should have been laid in the preceding levels. Where preparation in the family for common life fails or is insufficient, a lot of

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On the lazy tour in our vocational schools

hhg. As early as 2001, the "Institut für Lehrerbildung und Berufspädagogik, ILEB" (Institute for Teacher Training and Vocational Educational Theory) the Education Department University Office of the Canton of Zurich, propagated "learning in a virtual classroom." On the part of the government, teachers here receive instructions on how to cross their legs and make themselves comfortable and at the same time force-feed students electronically without having to be present. Here is the offer: "How can I give a good lesson without being in person in the classroom? – Become a Web Teacher. An introduction to web-based lessons not only for male and female language teachers."¹

As one apprentice showed me as an example from his course material it works like this: The students receive some written documents on the subject "Society", which is divided into sub-themes such as family, education, social networking, responsibility, prosperity, environment, etc. The students' task is to create a blog entry (20 complete sentences) to one of the sub-themes and to attach a suitable link. In addition, the

student should comment 5 blog entries of classmates in complete sentences. I let the apprentice show me some blog entries with his comments. They showed that the issue had neither been worked on with the students, nor elaborated. So a apprentice wrote about "prosperity": "When I look for myself and others do so as well, it means looking for everybody." Or this example: "When I have all the financial means to buy whatever I want, it means there is affluence." Such statements, larded with spelling mistakes, are the proof of the teachers' guild's shortcomings, no longer fulfilling their tasks. When I asked where the teacher's comment on the blog entry was, and what he had said with regard to the spelling, the apprentice replied: "He makes no comment."

This is shameful for our vocational schools which should actually develop and complete the democratic competences of young people.

¹ ILEB, – Education Department University Office of the Canton of Zurich, Offer 2/2001, page 23, quoted in "The Trojan Mouse, *Committee for a Democratic basic primary and secondary school.*" Eliane Gautschi, Ursula Scheibler, Zurich 2002, p.63

With "gamification" advancing digital dementia

hhg. On the education website of the Technical College of Higher Education Northwestern Switzerland and the Teacher Training College (file reference 15.12.2012) it becomes obviously: The computerization in our schools and the digital dementia coming along with it, is being taken to extremes: The latest crackpot idea is that video games are to be integrated into lessons. The Teacher Training College of Solothurn has established an extra "game-classroom" (Game Domain): "In Switzerland the Teacher Training College is accepting a pioneering role with reference to 'Game Domain'. Future and present teachers learn to render the potential of games suitable for teaching." And a lecturer in media education is topping it: "An integration of playful elements into the school routine is called 'gamification' by the game research. This allows a teacher to use the learning-related aspects of the entertainment culture games, without neglecting the fun factor."

Source: *Aargauer Zeitung* of 15.12.2012

“Strategies of Life” “Provisions in the Fauna”

thk. The illustrated book “Strategies of Life – Provisions in the Fauna”, published by the Swiss insurance cooperative “Mobilar” in cooperation with the Zurich Zoo acquaints its readers with the reality of (animal) life. The titles of the individual chapters alone, such as “Living nicely in the animal kingdom”, “All about breeding” or “Life and survival in the crowd” document that in some areas animal and human behaviors are not that far apart.

Animals and man endowed with reason are basically orientated towards the environment and its reality and draw their common conclusions from their experience most of the time. Animals have the advantage of not being exposed to manipulations by private or political interests. They rely only on themselves, their instinct, their experience and the members of the species. While reading however, the question arises what we humans may learn from the animals that are exposed to a vast number of threats in the wild. On our journey through the present work we learn that this is quite a lot.

In the long period of their existence, animals have developed complex strategies that ensure their common survival. In the preface of the illustrated book, *Markus Hongler*, the CEO of the Swiss “Mobilar”, is getting to the heart of it, “Strictly speaking, nature is a single terrific ‘insurance company’”. The dangers animals are exposed to are manifold and often life-threatening. All the more important for all

“We human beings have turned away from our roots in nature. New risks threaten our lives and those of our families. We are, however, not spared to thoroughly estimate these new risks and to take precautions against them. What has emerged in evolution over millions of years and proved well, cannot be all that bad. Why don’t we watch animals how they take provisions (...) in all areas of life? (...) Hence, the wording still counts: Provision is better than cure.”

Alex Rübél, Director of the Zurich Zoo
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

living beings is to be capable of developing an adequate protection of their lives. “Each species fosters its own provisions, precisely geared to its specific needs in order to survive in that rough nature”.

And we as human beings, how do we behave? At times, one seems to discover that this healthy and natural degree of realism that mankind is endowed with in the extreme got lost through excessive prosperity and carelessness in the course of the past decades. (See box)

This way, people in our country still live for the day. They are barely aware of the fact that the positive achievements of today like sufficient nutrition, effective medicine, good education, an excellently functioning democracy and peaceful coexistence were achieved by our forefathers, under both, much enthusiasm and passion as well as under biggest efforts and deprivation and ultimately under threat to their own existence. They have passed this utterly valuable heritage on to us in trust of

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work is left to the school that can rarely be properly compensated for. And the same applies to the tasks of kindergarten, of primary school and the upper school. They all have to perform their specific tasks, so that the young person finds his way in the larger community, is able to develop friendships, and cooperation becomes possible, and that interest in the tasks of society is so far developed, that he wants to learn an appropriate profession to become an indispensable member of this community wheelwork.

An important element in this process is the children’s learning together with other pupils and with their teacher. The teacher knows which way to go, during the hour, the day, the week and the school year. He conceives of the difficulties ahead, he knows the pitfalls of the subject, he knows for sure the steps of gradual introduction and he knows that despite great heterogeneity, all of his students are in fact capable of understanding and solving the properly maturity-orientated tasks by themselves within a certain period of time. Of course, in this context, the right teaching materials play an important role, but that is another chapter to be considered.

In this learning process of studying together, the classroom community, partic-

ularly in form of class discussion, is of enormous importance. This does not work without careful listening, to what one’s classmates say, as well, confirm or correct, in case you understood something else; not without asking questions if uncertainties remain, without exposing oneself to possible solutions, without allowing oneself to be told or explained something by others. This delicate process is so complex and extensive that its importance is often underestimated. But without this interaction among everybody, this ability to stand on common ground, the community does not come about.

Above we tried to outline an optimal process that in the situation of the class demands the teacher’s highest expertise: an absolute mental and emotional alertness and awareness, care in advancing, prudence in dealing with each individual, over-viewing the dynamics in the classroom and the interpersonal processes among the pupils. Individual efforts can often lead to misunderstandings. Clumsiness, insulting comments must not only be perceived, but properly interpreted or corrected. Feedback has to be given very carefully and individually to the point, and the adult’s joy about the shared progress must always be perceptible.

It is obvious that this task does not succeed equally well every day. First of all, you can always do better or differently and

also as a teacher you are always learning something new. This constitutes the fascinating and fulfilling component of the profession, however, every day one is motivated to improve oneself at this demanding task together with the pupils. Secondly, we educators need support and further training in this field, – seriously and deeply dealing with the phenomenon of the individual student and of course with our own personalities. Here we never stop learning, and this is something with which we can also learn to live well.

If we now think of the new types of schools, it is just there that the task of shared working and learning is avoided by the extensive use of computers, of ready-to-use learning programs – no matter how sophisticated they are – of the very frequently propagated individual learning, when everyone is doing something else. True, this is perhaps the most difficult element of school management, because among other things, the disciplinary problems have to be solved. But personal shortcomings cannot be circumnavigated by any change in structure, by any “reform” indeed; with this one can only avoid one’s own personal development. It is a pity – because we have the best job, there is on earth: In constant exchange with young people tackling the great questions of life and society, and preparing them as well as possible for these tasks. •



picture keystone

Marmots live in extended families

There are several good reasons to get together with other member of the species in a residential community. Herbivores must respond appropriately to the ingenuity of the carnivores, otherwise, sooner or later, they are lost not only as a single animal, but also as a species. It is important to develop an appropriate defence against any kind of aggressive strategies. The safest way to protect oneself from aggressors is not to be discovered by them. Many animals retreat for this purpose back into a quiet corner, where they are also sheltered against wind and weather. Preys invest even more into their security strategy by providing a shelter for themselves, be it a cave, or a protective casing like a snail shell, a caddis fly larvae, a seashell or a turtle shell.

Underground labyrinths

Alpine marmots spend a major part of their lifetime below the ground. They are well-equipped diggers with a muscular, compact body and long, thick claws, which are worn-out by their burrowing. With the four-toe-paws earth and stones are loosened and with the five-toe-hind feet hurled backwards and transported out of the burrow. The "Munggen" often loosen

the bigger lump with the help of their teeth. As a result massive underground constructions grow and their size can be estimated reasonably by the excavated material that grows in front of the burrows to considerable knolls.

In the subterranean corridors and hollows their most dangerous predator, the golden eagle, can not chase them. However, in the marmot families there are no special guards warning their fellow species by whistling, although this is stubbornly claimed. When there is danger ahead, especially those animals are whistling which are in front of the burrow and can immediately take shelter, while the others are running for their lives. With different whistles they can inform their species about the degree of danger and probably also about who the attacker is. Although golden eagles nosedive towards the intended targets, marmots still have great chances to save their skins.

Family groups of up to twenty members share a burrow. At the end of September they disappear beneath the ground for six to seven months and cuddle closely in their hay padded sleepy hollows. Mainly the young and the not optimally nourished adult

animals who could not store enough fat during the summer to avoid freezing to death benefit from the hollows. In extreme cases their body temperature drops to 33° Fahrenheit, but increases shortly at regular intervals to almost 103° Fahrenheit. The biological fathers and male siblings take care of the young marmots. For *Walter Arnold*, who explores the Alpine Marmots in Berchtesgaden National Park and in Avers Valley in Grisons, this was a surprise: "In contrast to the males of most mammals, marmot fathers are painstakingly caring about the welfare of their offspring and the elder brothers appear to be growing into a role as helpers. A marmot female would be unable to cope with caring for her offspring during hibernation, after the exhausting bearing and suckling. Even one pair of parents on their own has a problem to get their siblings through the winter. Only the hibernation in the extended family, in which the energetic cost of warming the young is spread on many related animals, assures the marmots' survival of a severe winter in the high mountains."

Extracts of the book "Strategies of life" p.59/60

(Translation Current Concerns)

“Strategies of Life”

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preserving and maintaining as well as defending it against external and internal assaults.

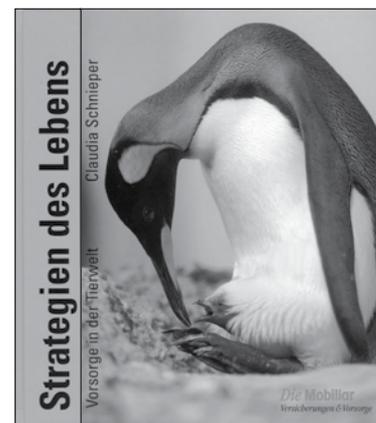
In the animal world, preserving life is paramount. *Alex Rübel*, director of the Zurich Zoo, who is in daily close contact with his animals, reports first hand in the preface that “countless patterns are designed to eliminate the risks or minimize them at least.” Preserving the species is paramount. According to Alex Rübel, “The first circle concerns social behavior, family life, the encounter with the fellow animal, reproduction and bringing up the young. The second circle is about food supply. The often underestimated third circle regarding cost, is about avoidance of the alien thus taking provisions so to speak so that no harm is done to oneself or to one’s own offspring.” Doesn’t this remind (us) of some basic principles that are also decisive for the coexistence of human beings? The generation model, the militia system, our direct democratic commonwealth in the sense of community autonomy, comprehensive education, youth protection, sustainable agriculture, military defense . . . ?

The persuasiveness that we humans need, seems to be self-evident for some

Animals have developed ingenious strategies to sustain life and to pass it on to the next generation. Some invest in pomp and splendor, others in solid structures. They move on several thousand miles and fast for months, so that their descendants grow under optimal conditions. The cold and times scarce of nourishment are defied with provisions and deep sleep. Whether in the Alps or in the tropical rainforest: Prevention as a survival strategy has also proved effective in the animal kingdom. Sometimes it makes sense to organize in a crowd in order to outsmart predators. Others save energy with unique methods of locomotion or take it as cozy as possible for the same purpose. And if all that is not enough, Mother Nature opens the

animals as for instance the blood breast baboons. “The better they [the group of animals] are organized and prepared for surprise, the more successful life is for the singular individual as well as that of the entire group.”

In very appealing texts and marvelous pictures, the author *Claudia Schnieper* recounts the life of animals in countless examples. From the smallest insect to the



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bag of tricks: bluffing and cheating is allowed when it comes to saving one’s own skin ...

Blurb of the book

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

15-meter grey whale, a mammal of our seas, that shows a distinct social behavior.

For someone who wants to be inspired by the animal world and who wants to learn from other big or small terrestrials, this book is an indispensable treasure. Whether birds, insects, fish or the well-known “Mungga” (marmots) – all animals are somehow fascinating and are part of Creation. •

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