What is Education For? On Good Education, Teacher Judgement, and Educational Professionalism

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Introduction: In Praise of the Teacher?

Much of what has been happening recently in educational policy and research in many countries worldwide is having a profound impact on educational practice and more especially on the position of the teacher. Today, many voices from across the policy -, research - and practice-spectrum claim that the teacher is the most important 'factor' in the educational process (Hay McBer, 2000; OECD, 2005; Sammons & Bakkum, 2012 and, for the European policy dimension, Stéger, 2014). While such claims do stem from a concern about the ways in which teaching and schools can 'make a difference,' they are often linked to rather narrow views about what education is supposed to 'produce' — taking their cues from large scale measurement systems such as PISA which continue to focus on academic achievement in a small and selective number of domains and subject areas. Claims about the importance of the teacher are also problematic because they tend to see the teacher as a 'factor' and believe that, in order to increase the 'performance' of the educational system, it is important to make sure that this 'factor' works in the most effective and efficient way possible. The fact that this 'factor' is a human being and, more importantly an educational professional who should have scope for judgement and discretion is all too often forgotten (Ball, 2003; Cowie, Taylor & Croxford, 2007; Keddie, Mills, & Pendergast, 2011; Wilkins, 2011; Priestley *et al.*, 2012).

In this article, I seek first to indicate why I think that teacher judgement is essential in education and what kind of judgements teachers need to make. I do this in the context of a discussion about the problematic impact of the language of learning on the theory and practice of education. Here I argue for the need to refocus the discussion on the normative question of *good* education, rather than on technical questions about effective education or competitive questions about excellent education. This requires that we focus above all on the question of the purpose of education and have an informed understanding of the particular character of how this manifests itself in education, i.e. as a multi-dimensional question. It is only against this background that one can indicate what particular judgements are 'at stake' in education and what this implies for teaching and the teacher. Secondly, I discuss recent changes in the context in which teachers are supposed to enact their professionalism and act professionally. I argue that three tendencies that are often presented as developments in the ongoing professionalisation of teaching and that can be found in different forms and guises in schools, colleges and universities — treating students as customers; being accountable; and replacing subjective judgement with scientific evidence — are undermining rather than enhancing opportunities for teacher professionalism. Taken together, the two lines of the article provide indications as to how teacher professionalism might be regained and reclaimed in the context of the discussion about education and its purpose.

The Learnification of Education

In the past decade I have written about a phenomenon which I have referred to as the 'learnification' of educational discourse and practice (for the term see Biesta 2010; for the wider analysis, see Biesta 2004, 2006, 2013; see also Haugsbakk & Nordkvelle, 2007). 'Learnification' encompasses the impact of the rise of a 'new language of learning' on education. This is evident in a number of discursive shifts, such as the tendency to refer to pupils, students, children and even adults as 'learners;' to redefine teaching as 'facilitating learning,' 'creating learning opportunities,' or 'delivering learning experiences;' or to talk about the school as a 'learning environment' or 'place for learning.' It is also visible in the ways in which adult education has been transformed into lifelong learning in many countries (Field, 2000; Yang & Valdés-Cotera, 2011).

The rise of the language of learning is the outcome of a range of loosely connected developments in the theory, policy and practice of education. These include the critique of authoritarian forms of education that focus solely on the activities of the teacher and conceive of education as a form of control (see, e.g. Freire's critique of 'banking education'; Freire, 1970); the rise of new theories of learning, particularly constructivist theories (Richardson, 2003; Roth, 2011); and also — and this is particularly relevant in the shift towards lifelong learning, although it is not all that is at stake in this shift — the influence of neo-liberal policies that seek to burden individuals with tasks that used to be the responsibility of governments and the state (Biesta, 2006). The language of learning has not only impacted on research and policy, but has also become part of the everyday vocabulary of teachers in many countries and settings (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, in press).

What is the problem? Perhaps the briefest way to put it is to say that the point of education is *not* that students learn. Formulating the issue in this way is relevant because many discussions about education (in policy, research and practice) keep using the language of learning in this abstract and general sense.[1] In contrast I wish to suggest that the point of education is that students learn *something*, that they learn it for a *reason*, and that they learn it *from someone*. Whereas the language of learning is a process language that, at least in English, is an individual and individualising language, education always needs to engage with questions of content, purpose and relationships. We must also bear in mind that the word 'learning' can refer to a very wide range of phenomena. Think, for example, of the difference between what it means to learn to ride a bike, to learn the second law of thermodynamics, to learn to be patient, to learn that you are not good at something, etc. This is another reason why the suggestion that education is simply about making students learn or about facilitating their learning is potentially misleading, both for students and for teachers.

The problem with the language of learning — both the language itself and the ways in which it is used and contextualised in research, policy and practice — is that it tends to prevent people from asking the key educational questions of content, purpose and relationships. Rather, they talk in abstract terms about promoting learning, supporting learning, facilitating learning, about learning outcomes, student learning, etc., and too quickly forget to specify the 'of what' and the 'for what' of the learning[2] This indicates that the language of learning is *insufficient* for expressing what matters in education, just as *theories* of learning are

insufficient to capture what education is about. At most such theories provide us with insight into the dynamics of the learning that takes place in educational contexts and settings — provided they do not approach learning in an abstract and general sense, but are aware that learning the second law of thermodynamics is a very different thing from learning to be patient. But such theories in themselves do not give us access to and insight into the construction and justification of these contexts and settings themselves. For this, we need theories of educa*tion* and educa*ting*.

The Threefold Question of Purpose

Of the three questions that are at stake when we try to capture what education is about, the question of purpose is the most fundamental one for the simple reason that if we do not know what it is we are seeking to achieve with our educational arrangements and endeavours, we cannot make any decisions about the content that is most appropriate and the kind of relationships that are most conducive. Some authors have even gone so far as to say that the purpose is *constitutive* of education, which means that education *necessarily* needs a (sense of) purpose. In more technical terms this means that education is a teleological practice, i.e. a practice constituted by a 'telos' — the Greek word for the 'point' and purpose of a practice (Carr, 2003, p. 10).

There is, however, something special about education — which, if I see it correctly, distinguishes it from many other human practices.[3] This is the fact that in education the question of purpose is a *multidimensional* question because education tends to function in relation to a number of domains. In my own work I have suggested that three domains can be found, viz., qualification, socialisation and subjectification (Biesta, 2010, chapter 1; see also Figure 1). Qualification has to do with the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, skills and dispositions. This is important because it allows children and young people to 'do' something — it qualifies them. This 'doing' can be very specific, such as in the field of vocational and professional education, or it can be conceived more widely, such as in general education that seeks to prepare children and young people for their lives in complex modern societies. But education is not just about knowledge, skills and dispositions. Through education we also represent and initiate children and young people in traditions and ways of being and doing, such as cultural, professional, political, religious traditions, etc. This is the socialisation dimension which is partly an explicit aim of education but, as research in the sociology of education has shown, also works behind the backs of students and teachers, for example in the ways in which education reproduces existing social structures, divisions and inequalities. In addition to qualification and socialisation, education also impacts positively or negatively on the student as a person. This is what I have referred to as the domain of subjectification, which has to do with the way in which children and young people come to exist as subjects of initiative and responsibility rather than as objects of the actions of others[4].

If education always *functions* in relation to these three domains, or if education always *impacts* on these three domains, then it means that as educators we must take responsibility for what it is we seek to achieve in each of these domains. Hence, they not only appear as three *functions* of education, but also as three *domains of educational purpose*. I prefer to refer to these as *domains* of educational purpose in order to highlight that in each domain there can be widely different
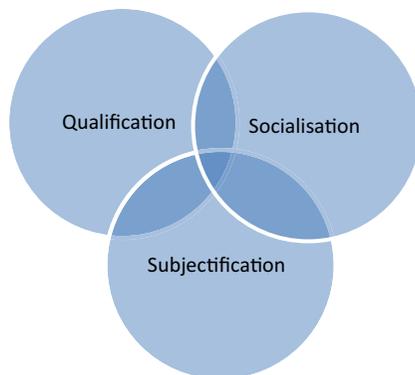
FIGURE 1. The three functions of education and the three domains of educational purpose

views about, for example, what knowledge is and how it can be acquired, or what it means to exist as a human being. Although we can distinguish between the three domains of purpose, they cannot really be separated. Even if we are 'just' trying to give our students some knowledge, we are also impacting on them as persons — to have knowledge will, after all, potentially empower them — and, in doing so, we are also representing particular traditions, for example by communicating that this particular knowledge is more useful or valuable or truer than other knowledge.

Looking at education in this way provides us with a broad conception of what education is for, i.e. we acknowledge that we always need to engage with content, tradition *and* the person. This also makes it possible to see the problem with one-sided conceptions of education. The issue here is not only that such conceptions are out of balance in that they only pay attention to one of the three dimensions, but also that a one-sided emphasis can often have a damaging impact on one or more of the other domains (for an early 'warning' on this problem see Kohn, 1999). This is what we are witnessing with the current emphasis on achievement in the domain of qualification where excessive pressure on students (and teachers, for that matter) to perform in that domain (and within that domain in a very small number of subjects) is beginning to have a negative impact in the domain of subjectification. To put it bluntly: excessive emphasis on academic achievement causes severe stress for young people, particularly in cultures where failure is not really an option.

The Central Role of Judgement

If we look at education from the angle of purpose and acknowledge that the question of purpose poses itself as a three-dimensional question, then this has a number of important implications for the design, enactment and justification of education — implications that are first and foremost relevant for the work of the teacher. What it makes visible is the central and essential role of *judgement* in education.

There is first of all a need for judgement about what we seek to achieve in each of the three domains and about how we can keep these in an educationally meaningful balance. This is not just an abstract question that can be resolved at the highest level of policy or curriculum development. It is a concrete question that comes back again and again in the educational context, not only in a general sense, but also in relation to each individual student. To speak about a possible balance between the three domains should not make us blind to the fact that, although

there are possibilities for synergy between qualification, socialisation and subjectification, the three domains can be in conflict as well. This means that a second judgement that needs to be made — again not only at a general level, but also in relation to each student at each point in time — is how we deal with the 'trade-offs' between the three domains, i.e. what we are willing to temporarily give up in one or two of the domains in order to focus on one of the other domains. It is, after all, legitimate to focus our educational endeavours and the educational efforts of our students for a limited period of time on one particular dimension of the educational spectrum. Sometimes we do want our students to focus on mastering particular knowledge or skills and pay less attention to the domains of socialisation and subjectification. In other cases, we can judge that what matters most for a particular student at a particular point in time is their formation as human beings — and there are reasons why this should sometimes prevail in our educational efforts and practices. But one-sidedness always comes at a price, the price we are willing to pay for a temporary emphasis on one of the dimensions. I wish to highlight once more that the current emphasis in many countries and settings on just enhancing academic achievement — i.e. performance in the domain of qualification — comes at a very high and potentially too high price.

In addition to judgements about what we seek to achieve in each of the domains, their balance and the trade-offs, teachers also need to make judgements about appropriate pedagogy, curriculum, organisation of the classroom, and so on. The reason for this — and this is another peculiarity of the practice of education — is that the means of education are not indifferent in relation to the ends, but are constitutive of them (Carr, 1992). In plainer language it means that students not only learn from what we say, but also from how we do. They often focus more on how we do than on what we say, particularly if there is a (performative) contradiction between the two. Teachers therefore also need to make a judgement about the appropriateness of how they teach and organise their educational efforts. This raises an important issue for the idea of educational effectiveness, as, in education, there is not only the question of whether particular ways of doing are the most effective to reach certain 'outcomes,' but also the question whether they are the most educational ways. Or to put it differently: we need not only to judge the impact of our ways of doing — in the wide sense — on their effectiveness, but also on their educative potential. After all, it may well be that we can increase our students' performance in a particular domain by threatening them with punishment if they do not perform well or by promising them money if they perform well. But the question is whether the messages we convey with this are those we deem desirable for the education of our students.

This shows the central role of judgements in teaching — and these judgements are crucially 'of the teacher' (Heilbronn, 2008) because they must be made in always new, unique and concrete situations. I also wish to highlight that judgement about balance, trade-offs, and educational forms are entirely *pragmatic* in the technical sense of the word, i.e. that we can only come to a judgement about how to proceed if we do this in relation to what it is we are seeking to achieve. This is an important antidote against educational fashions and categorical statements, such as that education should always be flexible, or that students should always have transparent knowledge about what is expected of them. This is not something we can say categorically, but depends crucially on what we are seeking to achieve and what we intend our students to be seeking to achieve. Sometimes education

does indeed need to be flexible, personalised, and tailored to individual students, but sometimes it is important for education to be strict, structured, and general, for example when we want to teach our students that, in some domains, it is important to get things 'right' or to act in a prescribed way (think, for example, of teaching pilots to fly an aircraft, or instructing nurses and doctors about how to wash their hands). In some cases, education needs to be centred on the student — for example when we want to promote creative action and generative thinking — but sometimes it needs to be centred on the teacher or the curriculum — again, when it matters to get things right, or when it matters for children to experience what authority means. In some cases, everything we expect from students should be visible and clear to them from the outset, but in other cases it is important to work with a sense of openness and mystery, for example in those domains where we, as teachers, are not in possession of clear insights about how to be or about what is to be done, such as in domains of moral, political or spiritual education.

Pragmatism, Normativity and the Question of Good Education

The need to think of all these judgements as pragmatic judgements — i.e. as necessarily connected to what it is we are seeking to achieve — highlights the problem with notions of evidence-based education that seem to suggest that research evidence can tell teachers what they should do on the assumption that particular forms of research can provide clear and unambiguous knowledge about 'what works.' The issue here is that something never 'works' in the abstract sense but always in relation to a particular purpose or set of purposes. To say, for example, that homework is of no use — a claim apparently supported by research, as reported by Hattie (2008) — is a meaningless statement if we do not specify what it is not useful *for*. And while there may be no positive evidence that homework impacts significantly on academic achievement (which could also be because no meaningful research is available), this does not mean that we should just abolish it, because it could well be that homework has significance and meaning for other domains of educational purpose. After all, to make students responsible for a task outside of the controlling 'gaze' of the teacher may be very important if we want to help them to become responsible subjects, rather than being entirely driven and controlled from the 'outside'. In this sense, I am surprised by Hattie's suggestion — partly made in response to my critique of evidence-based education (Biesta, 2007) — that, although there is more to education than academic achievement, in the end this is what is supposed to matter most (Hattie, 2008, pp. 245–255), thus reinforcing a one-dimensional view of education in which only qualification seems to count.

All this also shows — and this is perhaps the most important point — that in the design, enactment and justification of education we have to engage with normative questions. This is why I have emphasised that it is of crucial importance that we engage with the question of *good* education and do not make the mistake of thinking that it suffices to talk about *effective* education. The point here is that although 'effectiveness' is a value, it only refers to the degree in which a particular course of action is able to bring about a desired result, but it does not say anything about the desirability of the result. For this, we need to embed questions about effectiveness within a large discourse about what is educationally desirable — in other words, what makes education *good*. To speak about *good* education also provides an alternative for another trend in contemporary discussions, which is the

idea of 'excellent' education. The problem with excellence is that it very quickly leads to a competitive mind-set, where some schools or some educational systems are supposed to be more excellent than others. In my view, the duty of education is to ensure that there is good education for everyone everywhere.

Judgement and the Democratisation of the Professions

So far, I have suggested that education is a teleological practice; that the *telos* of education is three-dimensional; and that, because of this, there is a need for judgement with regard to the three domains of purpose of education, their balance, the 'trade-offs,' and the educational 'forms.' I have also suggested that these judgements are first and foremost 'of the teacher,' because the teacher is constantly confronted with situations that, in some respects, are always new and hence call for judgement rather than the application of protocols or the enactment of abstract evidence about what allegedly 'works.' If education requires judgement, and if this judgement is 'of the teacher,' then it would follow that teachers have ample space and opportunity to exercise such judgement. Yet it is here that we encounter problems in the ways in which the professional space for teachers is currently being constructed and 'policed' — ways that often limit rather than enhance the scope for teacher professional judgement. This is, of course, a complex area about which much has been written (Gleeson & Gunter, 2001; Gewirtz, 2002; Leander & Osborne, 2008; Priestley *et al.*, 2012; Leat, 2014; Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Soini 2014). I nonetheless wish to make several observations that are meant to help to gain a better insight into (1) the ways in which the space for teacher judgement has changed in recent years, (2) some of the pitfalls that teachers may face and (3) in which direction we might need to go in order to reclaim and restore a space in which teacher judgement is possible.[5]

To understand how the conditions for teacher professionalism have changed over time, it might be useful to start with a 'classic' definition of professions and professionalism (e.g. Freidson, 1994) in which it is argued that professions are special areas of work because they promote human wellbeing; they need highly specialised knowledge and skills; and they function in relationships of authority and trust. These three aspects not only provide a *definition* of the professions — particularly the 'traditional' professions (doctors, lawyers, priests) — but also justify why professions need to regulate themselves rather than be ruled from the 'outside'. But this particular account of the professions can easily be abused, not only with regard to their internal regulation, but also, and more importantly with regard to the relationships between professionals and their clients. It is, after all, quite easy for professional authority to turn into an authoritarian way of operating where 'the doctor knows best' and where clients become the objects of the power exercised by professionals rather than that they can exist as legitimate partners in the professional relationship.

Authoritarian forms of professionalism — and even more so the abuse of professional power — were the main targets of the emancipation movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the student revolts of 1968, and patient emancipation in psychiatry and mainstream health care. This was one way in which the professions were 'broken up' from the outside by the challenge to develop more transparent, equitable and democratic ways of working. A similar impetus also came from the incorporation of the professions into the 'project' of the welfare state, where the services offered by many professions were seen as central to

welfare state provision. This not only opened up the professions to wider questions about public health and the common good, but also — because the professions were to a large extent funded by the public purse — involved the professions in the process of public and democratic accountability. Although these developments did not resolve all the problems at once, they did help to make professions more democratic and more accountable and in this regard did help to steer professions away from authoritarian modes of operation. Hence, they also set a standard for developments in other fields of work (that often sought to claim professional status as well), including the field of education.

Post-Democratic Distortions: The Erosion of Professionality

If these developments helped to push the professions towards less authoritarian and more democratic and accountable ways of working, then it seems reasonable to expect that further developments along these lines will strengthen the democratisation of the professions. Seen from this angle, it would appear that we should welcome and embrace recent developments that emphasise the importance of seeing patients or students as customers who need to be served and satisfied; of making the operation of the professions entirely transparent so that they can be even more accountable; and of basing professional activity on scientific evidence about 'what works' rather than on subjective judgements of individual professionals. While at first sight this may sound plausible and desirable — and demands for a focus on the customer, for transparency and for evidence-based ways of working are often 'sold' in this way — I would like to suggest that these developments may risk doing the opposite of what they claim to do and hence may lead to the erosion of responsible, accountable and democratic professionalism. To give an indication of why this may be the case, I will briefly discuss each development in relation to the domain of education (although similar arguments can be made in relation to other professional domains).[6]

Is it indeed a good idea to treat students as customers and give them what they want? Does this give them a much needed 'voice' in the educational process and does it therefore enhance the overall quality of the educational endeavour? The reason why this may not be so has to do with a fundamental difference between economic transactions and professional transactions such as education.[7] Whereas in economic transactions we start from the assumption that customers know what they want, so that the main task of providers is to give them what they want, either at the lowest cost or, more realistically, at the best price-quality ratio, the whole point of professional practices such as education is that they do not just service the needs of their clients, but also play a crucial role in the *definition* of those needs (Feinberg, 2001). We go to the doctor because we do not feel well, but trust that the doctor will find the reason and suggest a treatment based on this. Similarly, we go to school, not to get what we already know that we want, but because we want to receive an education. Here, we would expect teachers not just to give students what they know they want or say they want or are able to identify as what they want, but to move them *beyond* what they already know that they want. We want teachers to open up new vistas, new opportunities, and help children and young people to interrogate whether what they say they want or desire is actually what they should desire.[8] To turn the student into a customer, and just work on the assumption that education should do what the customer wants is therefore a distortion of what education is about, a distortion that significantly undermines the

ability of teachers to be teachers and of schools, colleges and universities to be educational institutions rather than shops. This is, of course, not to suggest that students should have no voice in what goes on — as this would turn education (back) into authoritarian modes of operation — but it is crucial to see that the voice of the student and the voice of the teacher are very different voices that come with different responsibilities and expectations.

I do not want to dwell for too long on the second development that has been going on in education for quite some time now, which is the rise of a culture of accountability or, to be more precise, of a bureaucratic rather than a democratic culture of accountability (Biesta, 2010). While accountability in itself is a good and important idea — professionals need to be accountable both to the immediate clientele they serve and to the wider public — there is a crucial difference between democratic forms of accountability that engage in substantive exchanges between professionals and their 'stakeholders' about what, in the case of teaching, good education is and what the parameters for identifying good education are, and the bureaucratic forms of accountability that greatly 'trouble' contemporary education (Sahlberg, 2010). If democratic accountability focuses on what makes education good, bureaucratic accountability has transformed the practice of providing data in order to show how education meets certain pre-defined standards into an aim in itself, where questions about whether the standards that are being applied are accurate and meaningful expressions of what good education is supposed to be are no longer at the centre of the process.

Onara O'Neill's 2002 Reith lectures still provide a highly insightful account of what is wrong with the contemporary culture of accountability. One problem she highlights is that while in theory 'the new culture of accountability and audit makes professionals and institutions more accountable to the public', in practice 'the real requirements are for accountability to regulators, to departments of government, to funders, to legal standards' (O'Neill, 2002). A second problem she highlights is that, while again in theory 'the new culture of accountability and audit makes professionals and institutions more accountable *for good performance'*, in practice 'the real focus is on performance indicators chosen for ease of measurement and control rather than because they measure accurately what the quality of performance is' (O'Neill, 2002). The predicament here is whether we are measuring and assessing what we consider valuable, or whether bureaucratic accountability systems have created a situation in which we are valuing what is being measured, i.e. a situation where measurement has become an end in itself rather than a means to achieve good education in the fullest and broadest sense of the term.

The slightly more recent demand that professional practices should be based on scientific evidence about 'what works' rather than on professional judgement entails a similar distortion of professional practices such as education. There are two reasons for this. One is, as I have tried to show in the first part of this article, that the question of 'what works' is an empty question if we do not ask what something is supposed to work *for*. Without explicit engagement with the question of purpose, the idea that there can be evidence about 'what works' remains a rather empty suggestion — or, and this is more likely to be the case, with the push to base professional practice on evidence about 'what works' a particular idea of what education is supposed to work for is already assumed, either implicitly or explicitly (and more often than not, as I have indicated above, the assumption is that

education should work for academic achievement rather than across the full spectrum of educational purposes).

That education needs to 'work' with reference to a number of domains, that what may 'work' for one domain may not necessarily also 'work' for the other domains and may actually create an adverse impact, and that even strategies that are proven to 'work' need to be judged on their educational 'quality' (see what I have said above about punishment and bribes) are issues which are not regularly considered when it is suggested that education should become evidence-based (Biesta, 2007). The logic of making education 'work' is often based on quasi-causal assumptions about the dynamics of educational processes and practices rather than on the acknowledgement that education 'works' through language and interpretation, meaning-giving and meaning-making, and thus through processes of communication and encounter. Also for these reasons the suggestion that education should be based on scientific evidence about 'what works' comes with assumptions that may be valid in such domains as medicine and agriculture — Slavin's favourite examples (Slavin, 2002) — but not in the field of education.

Conclusion: Reclaiming Teacher Professionalism

If we wish to reclaim a space for teacher professionalism and educational professionalism more generally, it is important to see current developments in the field of education for what they are and not for what they pretend to be. It is important to see — and make visible to the profession and the wider public — that these developments do not enhance teacher professionalism or good education, but constitute a threat to the strive for good education and meaningful professional conduct. While part of the strategy for reclaiming professionalism in education requires a detailed analysis and critique of the ways in which the space for professional judgement is being constructed and confined, it is also of crucial importance that teachers and the educational profession more widely have a clear sense of what their profession is actually about. That is why we also need a robust and thoughtful account of the specific character of education which needs to go beyond the fashionable but nonetheless problematic idea that education is about learning and that teaching is about the facilitation of learning. Rather, we need to acknowledge the teleological character of education — the fact that education always raises the question of its purpose — and account for the fact that the question of educational purpose always poses itself in relation to three different domains. Hence, the ongoing challenge is to maintain an educationally meaningful balance between these domains. This challenge lies at the heart of accountable teacher professionalism.

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NOTES

1. It is difficult to give concrete examples, not because there are too few but because there are too many. Much research literature tends to refer to learning in a general and abstract sense, often implicitly bringing in assumptions about what good and desirable learning is without reflecting on them. There is a similar tendency in policy documents. A telling example of the use of the language of learning from policy close to teaching is the General Teaching Council for Scotland's *Standards for Registration* http://www.gtcs.org.uk/web/Files/the-standards/standards-for-registration-1212.pdf.

2. An additional problem with the word 'learning' — at least in the English language, but not only there — is that it can refer both to an activity and to the outcome of the activity. This is why several authors have suggested that we use different terms for the activity, such as 'studying,' 'practising,' 'making an effort,' and the like, or Fenstermacher's suggestion to refer to student activity as 'studenting' (Fenstermacher, 1986).

3. I would suggest that practices such as medicine and law are also characterised by a *telos*, but in these cases the *telos* is one-dimensional such as, in the case of medicine, a focus on the promotion of health and, in the case of law, a focus on the promotion of justice (which does not mean that there are no discussions about the meaning of health and justice or the question of what it means to promote them and how this can be done best).

4. I have chosen the term 'subjectification' partly to distinguish it from the question of identity, which, in my view, belongs to the domain of socialisation, as it has to do with the ways in which we identify with and are identified by existing traditions and practices. Subjectification, on the other hand, addresses the qualities of being a subject — qualities that in modern educational thought are often captured in such notions as autonomy, independence, responsibility, criticality and the capacity for judgement.

5. Within the confines of this article I can only give the nub of the argument; for more detail see Biesta (in press).

6. The discussion must be brief and can therefore not be as sophisticated as I would like it to be. For more details, I refer the reader to Biesta (in press).

7. Feinberg's 2001 essay on choice, need-definition and educational reform, provides an extremely clear analysis of the problem.

8. On the educational importance of the transformation of what is desired into what is desirable — a question that has to do with the educational theme of a 'grown up' or mature existence — see Biesta 2014; see also Meirieu 2008.

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