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Gesendet: Mittwoch, 10. Februar 2010 15:33

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Betreff: NERA 2010 - Abstract information 1864190

Dear Anja Kraus,

As previously informed your abstract entitled

The unforeseeable in pedagogical situations as a challenge for didactics

has been selected for presentation at the **38th NERA Congress to be held in Malmö, 11-13 March 2010.**

Your session details

Session name: Network 2 - Session 3

Session date:2010/03/12

Session time: 10:30 - 12:00

Session room: D222

Your abstract number, which will be referred to in the Final Programme and in the Abstract Book, will be sent out in separate email next week together with presentation instructions and duration of your lecture.

Yours sincerely,
Congrex Sweden AB
on behalf of the Organising Committee

The Unforeseeable in Pedagogical Situations as a Challenge for Didactics

Anja Kraus

Works of art are introduced during lessons in school usually in order to mediate ideas and theories about subjective realities. Pictures, sculptures, installations are then meant to be representations of insights or illustrations of the imaginations of learners.



Mostly the teacher or adult editors of textbooks decide on the images to be regarded as representations of the insights of the learners and there is a rather strict selection of images in this regard.

Auguste Rodin: *La Danaïde*, Sculpture, 1900
5.5 in. x 3.5 in. x 2.5 in. Source:

The interpretation of a work of art as a translation of theories in special settings of experience assumedly only fits to art installations, performance art, context art, and other artistic efforts and styles that thematise the character of a work of art.



Robert Smithson: *Sun Tunnels*, Earthwork, 1976, Source:

My hypothesis is that on the basis of such art works or artistic action ways to deal with certain experiences can be traced and revealed. This could serve to generate theories that can be displayed by including all the bodily senses. Such references to art in school could principally be possible every time interdependencies and contexts are to be learnt. To unfold this hypothesis, I will start with pointing out what official plans say about what is to be learnt at school:

The recent displacement of knowledge transfer as the ultimate aim of education by competencies represents a fundamental change in the diverse systems of education. Consequently, the attainment of content knowledge for its own sake has been superseded by the acquisition of skills that can be used in practice where unpredictability plays a major role. (BÖHLE, PFEIFFER, SEVSAY-TEGETHOFF 2004) Competencies help to facilitate active, open-minded, exploratory, dialogical and empathical approaches to situational challenges in society, in school, and in private life. The competence regarded as most important in this regard is the ability and willingness to learn from one's own experiences. This presupposes awareness of oneself, and it requires the ability and sensitivity to be guided by events and occurrences that arise individually in one's personal experience.

Scientists and practitioners agree that learning requires learners to recognize their abilities to adequately engage in the subjects they are learning (that is, their self-efficacy) and hereby subjects must make sense to them.

Sense is never articulated by an isolated element. It always happens among two or more instances deriving from a lateral linkage between circumstances and signs.



Ellen Kobe: *MOMA goes on*, Performance, 2004, source:

Meaning is founded through alliances formed between different elements. According to Bernhard WALDENFELS (2002), differences, contrasts and borders are particularly effective serving as sense making moments. Among other things, such moments can be definitions of words, but sense is not necessarily rationally based. It is a mental state. To explain this we follow the phenomenological concept that cognitive experiences of sense in the modus of a "Eureka!" moment cannot be abstracted from experiences in the real world. The experience of sense is thus a complex mesh of borders, contrasts, metonymies characterised by ambiguities and simulations that derive, as WALDENFELS (2002) points out, from an abundance of colour, sound, light, space, language, etc. (WALDENFELS 2002, S.165) Gernot BOEHME describes his point as follows: "Our eyes are not opposite to the things, they are not only scanning them with the eyeshot, but our eyes are in the things as well as the things are in them. Images not only sketch a world of objects in distance, but also a world in which the emerging of reality becomes visible; defining itself as a kind of subject. [...] We live *in* the world and not *before* the world". (BOEHME 1986, S.293) The measures, meanings, coherences, as well as qualities and values of given facts derive from coordinations of internal and external realities. Thus, if a perception makes sense to an individual cognitive elements are always included as diverse aspects of this perception itself.

Following these theoretical outlines the learning processes, permeated by a constant process of making sense, are to be regarded as highly individualised.

Constructivist approaches also stress this character of learning processes.

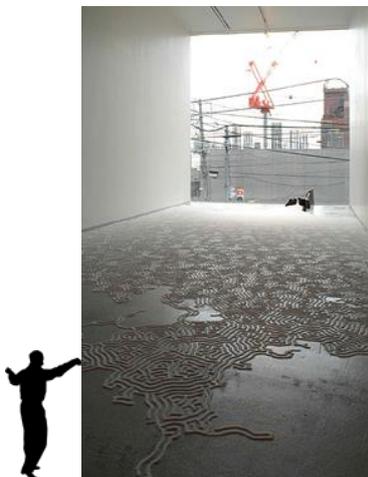
On the side of the teacher to reckon on the individualized character of learning processes requires a highly developed sense for its unforeseeable nature. He not only has to accept divergent results of the same input from different pupils. He also has to pave the way for a variety of solutions to one and the same problem/input/topic in question. Thus, the perspective of the learner and that of the teacher and their dealing with the unforeseeable differ a lot. For pupils it is a great effort to get on with all their existential uncertainties, as for example the lack of knowledge about their future, about things they have to know, about the functioning of social relations in their complexity etc.

Fritz BÖHLE et al. comment that the development of competencies (here on both sides, that of the teacher and that of the pupils as well) shows parallels to artistic practices. (BÖHLE, PFEIFFER, SEVSAY-TEGETHOFF 2004, S.67)

Following him, I suppose that the paradigm shift in the diverse systems of education concerning learning goals entails not only a revision of instructional practices but also a revision of the means of instruction. Here a kind of iconic paradigm shift is to be carried out. Accordingly, the imaging or illustrating of subjects to be learnt, keeping them abstract, are no longer needed; rather, in place

of these abstractions the contexts and settings of learning are in the foreground and are made concrete. Considering this, I set up our hypothesis: contexts of learning based on art works or based on artistic principles can be used in order to emphasize or even to accept the ambiguous, open-ended and contingent aspects of individual experiences.

Interpreting thus works of art as translations of theories in special settings of experience, I here concentrate on artistic efforts depending on the spectator to complete them; that is, it is up to the spectator to make them visible or discernible in general. (ECO 1977) At the same time we take into account that works of art themselves can make something appear. Martin SEEL (2002) describes this as the "staging" character of art works as not only condensing real things, topics, and constellations, but also producing visibility. These processes are evoking an apprenticeship by corporal means of understanding and at the same time they are bring forth theories.



Motoi Yamamoto: *Labyrinth*, salt and cray, 2003

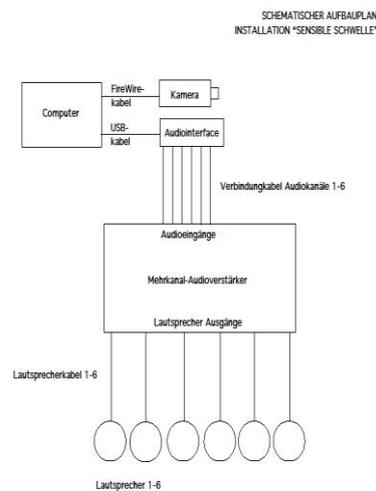
In school such references to the appealing qualities of works of art could principally be used every time interdependencies and contexts are to be learnt. Certain subjects in school may even be more easily learnt in this way. Beside the stimulating aspects of art described above there is another aspect that cannot be ignored. It is the interpretative function that includes a certain, sometimes only slight effect of alienation.

To draw the line to didactics I firstly refer to Christiane BROHL's concept of "displacement", then I refer to Christoph WULF & Jörg ZIRFAS' concept of performativity. I will introduce the latter in the frame of a presentation of an art work, the "Sensitive Threshold", that serves as a means to make translations of theories in special settings of experience possible.

Christiane BROHL (2003) develops the didactic strategy of "displacement" by taking "Land Art" as a starting point and on the basis of the principle of a reciprocal interpretation of the work of art and situational contexts. With this strategy which is at the same time a teaching principle, BROHL (2003) shows that art interferes and intervenes in actual discourses and current semantic fields. The "displacement" as a method can reveal these effects that cannot always be articulated as certain figures. As a method "displacement" is thus a possibility to allow novelties to merge into familiarities, in reference to WALDENFELS the "extraordinary seeps into the orderly" (WALDENFELS 1999, S.167). WALDENFELS also speaks of an "iconic epoché" (WALDENFELS 2004, S.226). Thus, linkages between facts that did not exist before become possible.

I would suggest that the strategy of “displacement” could be generally implemented for the application of art works for interdisciplinary projects in school. I will give the example of *Sensitive Threshold* that makes it possible to outline the didactic use of art in nearly all respects as described here.

The idea of *Sensitive Threshold* refers on one hand to the idea of a radio drama or to the idea of an audio-guide used in a museum to make topics such as history, politics, culture, and sports, audible by means of spoken texts and sounds. On the other hand, it refers to the fact that one can move in virtual realities, causing effects by walking or putting the hands up. Both aspects (audio-guides and virtuality) merge into the concept of a sound installation.



Anja Kraus: *Sensitive Threshold*, sound installation, 2006

A camera assesses six areas near the entrance of a school. When a person steps into one of these areas a sound file is activated, stepping into another area he activates another sound file. By the combination of different sound files activated by different persons a kind of audio-guide is generated (strictly speaking, the work of art itself is on display). Moving their bodies and “touching” sounds learners can pick up the presented topic in emotional, imaginative, or cognitive ways. In the frame of a project that could be used in nearly all subjects in school learners produce their own audio-guides by choosing a subject, finding a way to make it audible and collecting the sounds by using the Internet or an MP3-Player. Thus, the project “Sensitive Threshold” includes the following phases:

1. Working with the translation of associations or thoughts into sounds,
2. combining different sounds to express a certain subject,
3. examining the sounds in the foyer by moving around and touching them *in the air*.

Individual experiences stand in the centre of every phase of the project. Caused by these the topic is undergoing shifts during the process of the project that can be examined and reflected. Other pupils will work with the sound installation made by their peers. They will for example develop an

exhibition on the presented topic, they will do free writing, deepen some aspects of it by doing research etc.

Since July 2007 the project has been implemented at different schools to evaluate it scientifically. By means of the interactive possibilities in *Sensitive Threshold* some topics have been developed by the pupils of Rütli school (Hauptschule) Berlin in Germany. These are Sounds of Everyday Life, Dying and Death, Atmospheres of a Metropolis, Love, the Temperate Zones of Africa, the Sounds of footsteps, Amber, the Middle Ages.



How the *Sensitive Threshold* works:

Rough visualization of the topics: "India" und "How sounds love"

The didactical principle behind this project is the so called performative play. Performative acts in principle mean what they perform: I give you my hand and greet you. I lean from behind over the shoulder of a child working at the table and turn towards him as a tall person. I experience my spontaneous leaning over the shoulder of a child as dominant, caring, affectionate without having anticipated this. The effect of an action is revealed by the context in which the action takes place. It is sometimes surprising the acting person himself. (FISCHER-LICHTE 2001, S.20) Christoph WULF & Jörg ZIRFAS write: „A performative perspective abandons a general and total method and way of grasping reality and replaces it by a radically qualifying interpretation that is adapted to the contexts themselves. Hereby a plurality of idiomatic gestures and contextualising phenomenologies is produced.“ (WULF & ZIRFAS 2007, S.9) Our actions as well as our talking are thus regarded in relation to their situated effects. These effects form the distinctions that are decisive for our decisions. (Vgl. BOURDIEU 1987) When, for example, I play that I am the child sitting at the table and a tall person imitates my leaning over the shoulder, I might realise some aspects of the situation I formerly did not realise. Thus, in performative actions certain aspects of a situation can be revealed and in our acting a „creative metamorphosis“ (KRÄMER 2004, S.20) of the perceived world can take place. In my example: I might realise for example the distressing dimension of the situation for the child just by the situational acting itself.

By using a work of art as a translation of theories in special settings of experience several displacements take place that facilitate active, open-minded, exploratory, dialogical, and empathical approaches to situational challenges in society, in school, and in private life, using art

works. It is expected that this approach will smooth the progress of the ability and willingness to learn from one's own experiences.

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