The Development of the Person: Subjectification and Possible Links to Non-formal Learning Situations and Expansive Learning in Waldorf (Steiner) Education

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Abstract

The development of the person is a core aim of Waldorf (Steiner) education. This article offers a theoretical account of some of the processes involved. Personal development is conceived of in terms of Biesta's (2013) notion of subjectification or self-formation and is located within the spectrum of contemporary Bildung theory. The paper draws on the outcomes of a small-scale practitioner study of students at the end of their school career in a Waldorf (Steiner) school in Germany, conducted and written up as a doctoral thesis in education (EdD) at a UK university. The students in the study associated their personal development significantly more with non-formal learning situations such as projects, internships, drama productions and the class community, than with formally taught subjects. This article offers two possible reasons for the association between development of self and informality; experiences of interruption and discontinuity, and the lived experience of sojourning in authentic communities of practice. It also offers a possible explanation why formal class-room learning may be experienced as estranging, leading to defensive rather than expansive learning. It considers the impact of scaffolded reflection in support of the development of the person.

Keywords

development of the person, Steiner/Waldorf, subjectification, expansive learning, community of practice theory

Introduction

One of the central aims of Waldorf education is enabling the development of the person (Avison & Rawson, 2014). This article reflects on the outcomes of a small-scale, qualitative study that explored students' actual experiences of personal development across the spectrum of formal and non-formal school-related learning situations in a Waldorf school in Germany. The students were interviewed just

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before leaving school and were all 19 years old. At the time of the study, in 2016, I was a teacher in the school and thus took the position of critical insider, paying particular attention to tacit knowledge and taken-for-granted assumptions (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The study undertaken was carried out as a piece of ethnographic, illuminative practitioner research (Rawson, 2018a; Elliott & Lukas, 2008; Elliott, 2013) using qualitative art-based methods (Leitch, 2006) and semi-structured narrative interviews (Kvale & Brinkman, 2008) and was originally written up as a thesis for an education doctorate (EdD) (Rawson, 2018b). The thesis gives a full account of the research design and illustrates in detail the process and outcomes of the data analysis, including detailed illustration of the themes that were constructed.

The research question at the heart of the study was prompted by my concern that a heightened focus on exams was marginalizing the espoused intention of creating learning spaces for the development of the person in my own school and in Waldorf schools generally. This was a concern shared by some teachers, parents and pupils (de Vries, 2016; Grebe, 2016; Hoffmann & Götz, 2016). This new climate has been particularly harsh since the national educational standards and centralized exams have been introduced in Germany (Hopmann, 2008; Grek, 2009; Odendahl, W, 2017; Künzli, 2010). Space does not permit a fuller discussion of this here, but the phenomenon has been widely discussed.

The study showed that these students associated their experiences of personal development more closely with non-formal learning situations such as internships, projects, drama productions and the class community, than with learning in formally taught academic subjects. This is significant because the development of the person is an espoused aim in *all* subjects taught in Waldorf schools, including academic ones (Avison & Rawson, 2014). The impression in some quarters that Waldorf education favours non-academic pupils is not borne out by empirical studies in Europe and the US. All the students in this study are now studying at university (from a class of 36 students at the end of grade twelve, 33 went on to take the Abitur exam, that enables them to access higher education). Indeed, all the evidence from alumni studies from Germany (Ullrich, 2015, Randoll & Peters, 2015), from Switzerland (Randoll & Barz, 2007), Sweden (Dahlin, 2007) and Denmark (Jensen, Boding & Kjeldsen, 2012), all show that a higher proportion of Waldorf students go to university than the national average. The most recent survey, from the US (Safit & Gerwin, 2019), shows that 98% of Waldorf graduates attend college or university, 92% complete a college degree, and 90% get into their top three choices for university. This high percentage is of course linked to the fact that a majority of Waldorf parents themselves have higher educational and professional qualifications, though they choose a Waldorf education for their children because they expect it to address the whole person and foster personal development (Koolmann, Petersen & Ehrler, 2018). Another recent study of Waldorf parents (Barz, 2019) reports that 93% of parents felt that school should not be focused on

passing exams and 90% wanted their children to have a practical, artistic and musical education.

Now a couple of years on from my original study, this article offers a reflection on the outcomes of the study in the form of a theoretical account of the development of the person in school-related learning situations.

Around the world, schools following Rudolf Steiner's (1861-1925) pedagogical approach are variously referred to as Steiner or Waldorf schools. Steiner founded the Waldorf School in Stuttgart in 1919 for children of the workers in the Waldorf Astoria Cigarette Factory (Dahlin, 2017). The terms "Steiner school" and "Waldorf school" are synonymous. Most of the 245 such schools in Germany are called "Waldorfschulen." There are currently over 1,050 Waldorf schools, 1,500 early years' centers and around 500 special educational schools and communities in over 70 countries (www.freunde-waldorf.de). In this study I use the terms Waldorf pedagogy, taught by Waldorf teachers in Waldorf schools using a Waldorf curriculum and I refer to Waldorf discourse or literature. All translations from the German are by the author.

Biesta's Notion of Subjectification

Biesta (2013) suggests an analytical tool of assuming all schools have the functions of enabling socialisation, qualification and subjectification. Socialisation is about learning what is necessary to participate in (multi-cultural, post-modern) social life and qualification is about learning the skills and knowledge necessary to participate in civil society and economic life. Enabling subjectification or becoming a subject (a term which Biesta, 2012, p. 13, suggests works better in German as *Subjekt werden*) refers to pedagogical processes and practices that "contribute to the emergence of human subjectivity or 'subject-ness'" (Biesta, 2013, p. 18). Though subjectification can no longer be seen as the attribute of a rational and autonomous individual, it can nevertheless be "connected to the idea of a kind of 'uniqueness,' which comes to light in responsible responsiveness to alterity and difference" (Biesta, 2009, p. 41). Thus coming into being as subject can occur through experiences of otherness, discontinuity or challenges to a person's established worldview, which Biesta (2009; 2015) refers to as a pedagogy of interruption.

Biesta (2013) links this notion to work by Levinas and Arendt. I also find it helpful to go back to Edith Stein's (1917/1989) theory of empathy (*Einfühlung*) as the embodied experience of another person experiencing. Empathy arises in the lived experience that the other is having an experience. The first level of empathy is given to us as bodily presence, what Stein calls an original or unmediated, direct experience (*Originarität*). What is not given to us in this way, however, is the content or meaning of the experience, which is a secondary phenomenon (*Nichtoriginarität*). Stein's aim was to explore "what it means to be a person in a social context and how we ought to live together in the world" (Svenaeus, 2017, p.

743), in other words, the intersubjective origin of subjectivity. In sensory empathy of the other, the subject is drawn into the other's experience. However, the meaning of the other for the subject belongs to a secondary, non-original level of experience. This process, if intensively felt, also generates an embodied experience of self, which is complemented by an original sense of self-meaning. In a chapter titled (in translation) "Empathy as the Condition for the Possibility of Constituting One's Own Individuality," Stein (1917, p. 57) explains that I recognize that I am an I—a psycho-physical individual (p. 57), in that I iteratively recognize the other as an embodied and sentient self and intuitively experience my own otherness. Thus coming into being as a psycho-physical subject, or subjectification, is inextricably linked to intersubjectivity. Steiner (Steiner & Barfield, 2010, p. 82) posited a physiological sense of the other as an I, which he called the "sense of the other as I" (*Ich-Sinn).* This is an experience based on a totality of sensory impressions of the other that mediates the objective experience of the other as *other*, though without the subjective content of the experience as feeling or thought. Steiner speaks of the subject perceiving the other as the physical presence of a sentient being as a kind of confrontation; the organ for this perception is the whole body.

Biesta (2009) explains that subjectification is the opposite of socialisation, in that it enables something new to emerge, rather than reproducing ways of being that are embedded in existing social structures. He highlights "situations we can find ourselves in,…in which we are literally singled out and in which our uniqueness matters" (Biesta, 2013, p. 145). As he puts it, this uniqueness is an event, rather than a quality one can have or claim to know. It occurs in encounters between people that cannot be planned or predicted. These are situations in which the subject is called upon to answer the question posed by life, "so what are you going to do about this—remain who you are or change?" This leads Biesta to argue that subjectivity-as-an-event cannot be produced directly through teaching, but that teachers can create conditions in which it is more likely to occur.

Thus Biesta (2013, p. 23) insists that it is important to ensure that our educational arrangements in schools, "our curricula, our pedagogies, our lesson plans, the way we run and build our schools, and the ways in which we organize schooling in our societies—do not keep our students away from such experiences." Thus schools have a duty not only to provide what "society" wants but also a duty to "resist" this requirement by sometimes actively allowing and even encouraging people to become more autonomous subjects (Biesta, 2015). He argues that in wanting to make education "strong, secure, predictable and risk-free" (2013, p. 3), schools tend to force students into an infantilised position in which everything is controlled right up to the last act—the exams. This defeats the object of education, he argues, which is to enable autonomous citizens to take hold of their own lives in a "grown-up" way, which comes about through open dialogical engagement with what or who is other. Thus the question followed here, after Biesta's reflections, as

to whether and how schools foster the development of the person relates to how they enable subjectification.

The Development of the Person as Bildung
In the English-language Waldorf literature the central aim of the education is the development of the person as a socially responsible individual, capable of making judgements and participating constructively in society (e.g., Rawson & Richter, 2000). The development of the person is also seen in the current Waldorf discourse in Germany (and continental Europe generally) as a process of Bildung, which is understood as,

> a process that goes beyond the organisation of the teaching and learning and engages the human being in her whole personality and which involves the self-cultivation and formation of the person…Waldorf pedagogy aims to support individuation. (Zech, 2018, p. 12)

Following Zech (2018), Waldorf pedagogy in the upper school (ages 15-19) involves teachers enabling transformative learning and the formation of the person through the realisation of their biographical intentions, interests and potential. Topics are chosen and presented in ways that offer opportunities for transformative learning, whatever other curriculum aspects have to be considered. In the Waldorf context this is a process of self-becoming in which the young person generates meaning and identity as an outcome of the learning, whilst at the same time generating the necessary conditions for further learning. In discussing the notion that learning outcomes in school are measured today in competencies, Zech notes

> individuality expresses itself performatively as competence…Thus Bildung, in the sense of the development of the person, goes beyond the development of specific competences and aims to create conditions that underpin every competent behavior and also includes a value orientation that influences how the individual positions herself within the context of her radius of action (*Handlungszusammenhang*) (Zech, 2018, p. 30).

Bildung is widely understood in current educational discourse as the self-formation of the individual through engaging with her social context and culture (Rittelmeyer, 2012; Løvelie, Mortensen & Nordenbo, 2003; Göhlich & Zirfas, 2007), involving transformative learning (Koller, 2012; Meyer-Drawe, 2012) and including the life-long activity of establishing and maintaining stable identities within the biographical life-course (Alheit, 2018; Faulstich, 2013). Koller (2018) describes Bildung as a process of fundamental change in the way people relate to the world, to other people and to themselves and which is triggered when people are

confronted by problems that they cannot resolve out of their existing possibilities. Biesta's notion of subjectification maps onto the current Bildung discourse well. As one of the few scholars whose range spans the English-speaking and Continental educational worlds (Biesta, 2011), Biesta has contributed to the discussion of Bildung in the English speaking world (e.g., Biesta, 2002a and 2002b), by discussing Bildung in terms of "the educational ambition to call the child's subject-ness into being"(Biesta, 2014, p. 37) and as a process of self-formation and creation of meaning (2016). He speaks of Bildung as a process in which we don't ask, who am I?, which seeks answers to the question of identity, but rather, who are you?, which calls forth our subject-ness (Biesta, 2016, p. 842). Above all, Biesta is aware of the ambivalences and tensions in meanings of Bildung, and indeed contributes to the *dis*ruption of the taken-for-granted meanings of Bildung and teaching (Erziehung).

Bildung is thus understood as an iterative process of transformative learning. It can also be described as a process of becoming (Hodkinson, Biesta & James, 2008). In contrast to traditional, essentialist notions of the subject in Bildung, contemporary versions conceptualise Bildung as a process of becoming experienced through "keeping oneself open to what is other" (Gadamer, 2013, p. 16). It is narrative identity-formation (Faulstich, 2018) and is understood as a performative, iterative and re-figuring process of becoming (Koller, 2018). In his collection of key texts answering the question in an eponymous book *What is Bildung*?, Hastedt (2012) starts with extracts illustrating Foucault's notion of self-formation (also referred to as *care of the self, art of existence, technologies of self*). Self-formation, following Foucault, is not a process of self-discovery, "the self has, on the contrary, not to be discovered but constituted…" (Foucault, 2016, p. 37, cited in Ball, 2019, p. 70). In a chapter entitled *Education as self-formation*, Ball (2019) applies Foucault's ideas to argue that education should provide spaces for the possibility of becoming someone you are not, which is an open-ended, unpredictable, and risky process, through practices of resistance against neoliberal subjectivities—one could say, through practices of *other education*.

As Dahlin (2010) has explained, Steiner's view of the relationship of the individual to society and the role of education resonates with this idea. Steiner's (1985) primary interest in education was social renewal and social change. He argued that if the state or the economy determines what children and young people should become, know and be able to do, this can only lead to the reproduction of the existing social and economic structures, which he saw as the root cause of social conflict and injustice. Education should rather take the "beautiful risk" (Biesta, 2013) of enabling subjectification processes in fully open ways. Steiner placed his faith in the capacities that are latent in the human being. If "what lies within that can be developed…then it will be possible to bring ever new forces into the social

order from the rising generations…[who] should not be molded into what the existing social order chooses to make of it" (Steiner, 1985, p. 71).

As a Waldorf teacher, I work with the notion that each student has an emergent core of being in a state of becoming that is the moving locus of ecological agency, such as in Biesta and Tedder's (2007) sense of a person acting agentically within the constraints and opportunities afforded by the given context. Whilst identity is the performative achievement of the individual across different life situations, subject-ness emerges when she is called into being. The young person has a flexible, often unstable, radius of action. This core is neither essentialist nor fixed but rather emergent (though much traditional Waldorf literature offers a more essentialist interpretation- I have explained my view of this elsewhere in detail, Rawson, 2020). It has, or rather, is potential. Personhood is something that has to be achieved, has to be continuously performed and is therefore in a permanent state of becoming, as Grotlüschen (2014) suggests. Thus the student I encounter in school is not all there is to this person—more will and can emerge. What I meet is a particular, embodied but transient identity. I work under the assumption that the individuality who has adopted or constructed this particular identity has the potential to become something neither of us can know at this moment. Therefore, each young person has the right not to be fixed to a particular identity and judged as such. She needs to know, however, that her subject-ness is welcome.

Summary of the Findings of the Study
A series of themes were constructed through the data analysis that can be related to the personal development of the participants. Almost all of these themes were evidenced in the data sets of every participant. Taken together, they provide a picture of these young people as being capable of constructing coherent narrative accounts of their life-course (Goodson, Biesta, Tedder, & Adair, 2010), showing good biographic awareness (Alheit, 2018) and having realistic anticipations of the near future. It showed that they were able to position themselves in relation to others in different contexts and were able to reflect on this. They were able to put themselves in another's position (embodied sensory empathy) and they showed evidence of resilience in adversity (Jordan, 2013) as well as the ability to recognize opportunities for expansive learning within the given context with some degree of reflectivity (Grotlüschen, 2014). The data also offered numerous examples of specific subjectification events (in Biesta's sense), of young people being called upon to step up and take responsibility and become subjects.

These themes map closely onto definitions of self-competence offered by Götte, Loebell and Maurer (2016), an account of expected learning outcomes in Waldorf schools framed in terms of competences (to facilitate comparison with state curricula). These authors suggest that by the end of the students' time at school, self-competence should manifest in a high degree of agency (referred to in German

as *Autonomie*), the ability to establish coherent and relatively secure identities, the willingness and ability to take responsibility in the social world, being capable of making independent judgements and being able to take a stance in life (Götte, Loebell & Maurer, 2016, p. 352). These outcomes also broadly align with the reported characteristics of Waldorf alumni in the studies cited at the beginning of this paper.

In the discussion that follows I offer a possible theoretical explanation for the preponderance of non-formal learning situations as sites of personal development, and why formal learning situations such as history or biology lessons were not associated as strongly with subjectification.

Discussion

How do we account for the students' strong association of non-formal learning situations with experiences of personal development? Conversely, how do we account for the relative lack of association with formally taught subjects? My questions are: Why is this the case? and Does this have to be so?

Subjectification Through Interruption and Discontinuity

The interviews highlight that the non-formal learning situations usually interrupt the regular processes of institutional learning and confront the students with unfamiliar, unexpected and often challenging situations. This prompts reflection and asks students to take a new stance or re-position themselves. A number of authors make this link too (Higgins, 2010 with reference to both Dewey and Gadamer, Meyer Drawe, 2012 and Thompson, 2009). Such situations may afford subjectification events when the subjects are called upon to take up new positions, take responsibility or make decisions with significant consequences. The salient point is, however, that the learning situations reported by the students are not merely interruptions in routine school practices; they also involve immersion in new practices. New and different practices involve new challenges, new problems to be solved and encounters with different people and may prompt identity questions and adjustments to an existing world view. A new learning situation may prompt subjectivity events if the encounter with the world as other takes the learner out of her horizon (and comfort zone) and opens her to new ones.

The Waldorf class as a community of practice

A Waldorf class fulfils all the requirement of a community of practice, in which learning, meaning, identity, community and practice are woven together (Wenger, 1998). In Lave and Wenger's (1991) original meaning, peripheral participation is about being located in the social world, and "changing locations and perspectives are part of actors' learning trajectories, developing identities and membership" (1991, p. 36). A class in a Waldorf school stays together for at least 12 years (age 6

to 18/19, and many have been in kindergarten together before that) and constitutes a community of practice or a learning community. It is significant that the participants in the study identified the class community itself as the third richest learning situation for their personal development, after drama productions and the 3 week practical in a social institution at the age of 17. It is not surprising, given the social dynamic of this constantly changing learning field over time, in which the students have countless shared experiences inside and outside of school (including many weeklong excursions and field trips), that the class community is a site of learning to be a person.

Sojourning in authentic practices

Learning trajectories change because the location, situation and context change over time and place. This may occur through maturational change over time, institutional transitions but also through new locations of learning. New places involving different practices may afford new learning, new (temporary) identities and awareness of boundaries between the practices (Wenger-Trayner, 2014). The students frequently reported their identification in work experience situations. A teacher explained this from her perspective:

> And normally [after the farming practical in class nine, age 15] you can see that they've very much identified after three weeks: it's "their" farm! And they talk about "our pigs" and "our cattle" and they get a feeling of belonging to this farm. They adopt a new stance, a way of moving and gestures, even their voices sound more like farmhands, like practical workers. And a number of pupils go back—go back in the next holidays—to visit *their* farm again.

The teacher offered the view that during the work placements and projects the sustained intensity of engagement is so much greater than lessons in school can attain, involving the person physically as well as mentally. Spending eight hours at work (on a farm, in a factory or office) doing something unfamiliar can be a more intensive form of participation than sitting in lessons in school. During the practical they immerse themselves in the new context bodily, an experience that stimulates all the senses. New places generally, not only look different, they smell, sound and feel different. They perceive what this does to them far more intensively than they do in everyday familiar situations and it is this intense embodied experience of interruption that comes quickly to mind, as it did in the interviews, when asked about their personal development. This immersion may give them a new horizon and different experiences of self in the world. Interestingly, when they return to school, the roles within the class community have often also changed. Teachers often notice that they seem more responsible, focused and take school more

seriously. Parents too, note that their children seem changed. These changes may not be permanent but they suffice to provide new positions and perspectives, which are sedimented as experience. In Waldorf schools these kind of intensive internships start once the pupils are at least 15 years of age.

It is important to bear in mind that the participants do not intend to gain full or permanent membership within the practice, but are visiting with the intention of learning something about the practice and about themselves. Among these "visitors," Fenton-O'Creevy, Brigham, Jones and Smith (2015) distinguish between those who can be termed "tourists," because they have low levels of participation and "sojourners" who participate more deeply and begin to appropriate the new experiences. These authors describe the sojourner status as "a profound opportunity for learning" (2015, p. 45) and also for learning resilience through moving between multiple identities. Sojourning is a transient and temporary form of what social practice theory (Lave, 2011 and also Rogoff, 1995) call *apprenticeship* involving *appropriation*.

The metaphor of sojourning aptly describes the experiences of young people in work experience practicals as well as those in drama productions, orchestra work or projects outside the classroom, which are also very distinct practices that differ from formal school lessons. What they do is probably more important than what they know about these practices afterwards. What they did will have been embodied as meaningful experience. Sojourning in other communities of practice involves boundary crossings, which heighten awareness of identities, positions and dispositions (Wenger-Trayner, 2014).

If sojourning in new landscapes of practice offers new perspectives on one's own familiar practices, positions and identity, does the fact of it being in an authentic or real-life location make a difference? The notion of real-life situations is difficult to define because any situation in which people meet is real, including, of course the classroom. I argue, however, that there is a qualitative difference. Work experience and drama productions, student exchanges abroad, travelling with a circus, walking the Way of St James (a pilgrimage journey), are all situations that put the student into unfamiliar but real life situations—real in the sense that they exist irrespective of educational intentions. Even a play performed in school is different to a lesson, because an audience will be present and the processes of rehearsal and performance are part of the reality of theatrical life. In their individual, unsupervised projects over a year such as making a short film, preparing recipes for a book, making an electric guitar, researching social inclusion (all examples of activities referred to by the students in the interviews), the students encountered challenges that are inherent in the task itself, rather than being part of a pedagogy, not problems thought up by teachers. Working in a restaurant kitchen is authentic practice, whereas doing domestic science in school is a contrived, educational activity we can call "school learning practice." Similarly, working as a

physicist at university is different to learning physics at school, to quote Lave and Wenger's (1991) original example of authentic practice.

However, there are transitions between these forms of practice. Pratt and Kelly (2007) note that school students doing a "masterclass" workshop with research mathematicians in the university may be considered a hybrid community of practice, with elements of authentic practice. Waldorf students participate in gardening lessons in the school garden, do woodwork in a workshop or dress-making in a dressmakers' studio and do black-smithery in a forge, which may also be seen as hybrid communities of authentic practice. When they do so, they cross into a work-based community of practice, in which the tasks involve producing real things that meet genuine needs, albeit, in a school situation. A three week residential practical on a farm is at the authentic end of the spectrum of hybrid practice, though it nevertheless differs, obviously, from being a farmhand long-term. We can call this status, "sojourning in a community of practice."

Rogoff (1995) distinguishes between different planes of learning through participation;

1. Observing and "pitching in" (Rogoff 2014)
2. Learning through guided participation
3. Learning through participatory appropriation

The first stages of participation occur during the class teacher period (ages six to 14), where the primary activity is learning together in a community, in which children initially observe and join in classroom activities. The class teachers are not expected to be experts in the subject; their expertise is rather in teaching learning in a community. The second stage, guided participation, occurs more through instruction in specific skills such as handwork like knitting and learning musical instruments.

Participatory appropriation (stage three) refers to the way people transform their understanding of and responsibility for activities through their participation in specific practices. They begin to make the activity their own, although it is a shared activity. They not only participate by taking part, they partake and thus take part ownership in the enterprise, however temporarily. They are changed through their participation. Participation is not simply copying social practice but consciously learning through practising. It involves ongoing negotiating of new meanings and thus transforming of identities (Wenger, 1998).

We see this kind of learning with subject specialists in the lower and middle school (e.g., handwork, woodwork, gardening, music, foreign languages), in which the teachers are experts and the learning (ideally) involves participating in authentic practices (particularly when this involves crafting activities in nature, as described by Graves, Streuk & Gilman, 2019). This is a phase, in which the term

apprenticeship most adequately applies to school teaching and learning. After puberty the emphasis of the pedagogy in a Waldorf school shifts from this kind of apprenticeship to sojourning in different practices. In the upper school, experts in the various subjects teach in blocks of three to four weeks, sometimes in specialist spaces like laboratories, drama and music studios, sports halls or workshops. Each of these activities comprises sets of specific practices and can be considered as different sites of practice.

In sojourning the teaching is done primarily by the practice itself, though guided by experts. Thus we may need to modify the metaphor of apprenticeship somewhat. Apprenticeship is traditionally followed by a period of travelling as a journeyman/woman. "Journeying" is a process of gathering experience in the world until one is experienced enough to take the master's "exam" and thus become qualified to teach apprentices. This is still how many practical professions are learned in Germany, when *Gesellen* (journeymen/women) undertake their *Wanderjahre*. Thus sojourning is a process of journeying. In German one speaks of *Ausbildung* to designate professional training, whilst the self-formation of the person is *Selbstbildung*. The primary thing being learned in *Selbstbildung* is *being a person-in-the-world*, which is never complete since neither we nor the world stand still. Being a teacher of young people means an ongoing process of journeying for all concerned. Self-formation is a process of journeying through life in a state of becoming; of subjectification.

The role of scaffolded reflection

Student reflection using a portfolio had been introduced in the school used for my study in connection with most of the practicals and projects and was also used in English as a foreign language. Reflection on such experiences may enhance the sustainable nature of the learning. Using Coulson and Harvey's (2012) frame for analysing scaffolded reflection of experiential learning, we can recognise that the scaffolded reflection experienced by the participants in the study built on embodied experiences over many years of daily recall within their lessons (Avison & Rawson, 2014; Rawson, 2019). The students were all used to recalling and discussing their learning experiences. During the internships they kept diaries with tasks (e.g., in the first week, accounts of daily work; in the second week, what they and others experienced; in the third week, inquiry into some aspect of the work process). Following the internships, they had review sessions and made public presentations of their experiences. This approach appears to have borne some fruit, as evidenced by the biographical drawing and interviews that emerged. Following Harvey, Coulson and McMaugh's (2016) model of an ecology of reflective learning, the participants in this study showed varied levels of reflection and reflective learning, though little critical reflection. Nevertheless, their reflective activity may be seen as having enhanced their experience of practice as meaningful activity. My experience

suggests that the ability to reflect in this sense begins around the age of 15, which marks the start of the transition from apprenticeship to journeying.

Formal or non-formal learning situations?

The distinction between formal and non-formal learning situations, which I have used as a convenient form of reference to distinguish between regular timetabled lessons in school and learning situations outside the classroom, is actually unhelpful when it comes to understanding learning to become a person. Lave (2011) has argued against using such binaries, and the "penchant for treating contexts as forms or containers for knowledge…at one pole were formal educational sites holding/producing in individuals de-contextualized, abstract, general knowledge, and at the other pole informal educational sites holding/producing context-bound, particular knowledge that shouldn't generalise" (2011, p. 143). Lave points out that neither "situation" holds up to inquiry. She asks us to consider: "suppose it was not just some designated 'informal' side of life that was composed of intricately context-embedded and situated activity. Suppose there is nothing else?" (Lave, 2011, p. 145). If all activity is spatially, materially, historically situated and continuously in process, then "subjects, objects, lives and worlds are made in their relations" (Lave, 2011, p. 152).

Learning about the world and our position in it, is a process of practising the craft of inhabiting different practices and their conception of the world. It is about moving between and across practices. Learning to become a person is, in Lave's phrase, the process of "becoming apprentices to our own future practices" (2011, p. 156). Becoming a person is not an isolated activity. It is always about being a person in a practice and journeying between practices.

Estranged learning

An implication of journeying between communities of practice and sojourning within them is that it involves high degrees of identification and the experience of meaningfulness for the participants personally. We would not expect this to lead to experiences of estranged learning (Lave & McDermott 2002), but rather the opposite. Alienation occurs when people do not experience that they own the fruits of their activity and it fails to lead to the fulfilment of their learning interests but rather serves merely an external "system." Alienation is thus related to defensive rather than expansive learning: when the activity does not follow the student's biographical learning interests and is often not perceived as opening up new opportunities for agency (Grotlüschen, 2004; 2014). Most of the time, formal schooling requires students to learn prescribed facts and skills, or at least follow the lessons designed by the teachers or textbook. The fruits of their creativity are often not especially valued and are often never seen again (exam work for example). Sidorkin (2004) suggests that "students are forced to produce useless objects that

cannot enter the world of social relationships" (p. 254). Mann (2001) writes that the self of the students is exiled and estranged through the loss of the ownership of the learning process. Students do not write essays out of a need to express their ideas but as "part of a system of exchange" (Mann, 2001, p. 14), in which output and deadlines are more important than process. She suggests that the emphasis on assessment of outcomes, in which the tasks are owned by the teachers and the exam system, may lead "some students to feel alienated from their very selves, struggling to find a voice and a path through which their own learning desire can be expressed and pursued" (Mann, 2001, p. 14). In Lave and McDermott's words

> …the institutionalisation of predefined and fixed stocks of knowledge available for transfer and assessment both depends on and produces the estrangement of learning…learning-for-display in a world of positions distributed up and down a hierarchy of access and privilege is the more salient issue for participants to keep in focus…estranged learning is estranged because it is always done for others who use it for their own purposes (Lave & McDermott, 2002, p. 43).

However, though the notion of alienation is compelling, it is problematic because it implies a normative, non-alienated state of being human that consists of conscious, free and self-determined activity. If there is no original state from which we can be alienated or indeed from which we can recover, then the notion of alienation has no point of reference. Biesta's (2013) notion of subjectification offers a theoretical solution because seen from this perspective, what matters is the extent to which the educational situation affords subject-ness and perhaps the intention of the educators to enable this. As Biesta has argued, there are

> …other ways in which we are being addressed, in which we are being spoken to, in which we are being put into question, ways that come from a different intention—the intention not to determine us, but to call us into life, to call us into our own existence or, with a difficult but nonetheless appropriate word: to call forth our freedom and call us into our freedom (which does not mean to produce our freedom or make us free, but to appeal to our subject-ness…) (Biesta, 2016, p. 824).

Perhaps we can redefine alienation as the lack of situations that "appeal to our subject-ness." Perhaps that is a core task of *other education*, to provide opportunities for subjectification, rather than conformity to norms. There are few things more normative in education than exams. If qualification becomes a form of socialisation and few opportunities are offered in educational spaces for subjectification, then young people are denied the opportunity to experience that

there are other ways of being than those that the hegemonic system determines for them.

Learning through participation in practice involves actively taking part in meaningful activities rather than being a passive recipient of knowledge or tasks: what Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 57) refer to as dyadic learning. It may be that practice that invites participation, is fundamentally less alienating. Practice that leads to the production of useful or aesthetic objects or experiences that the subject can identify with and that invites interaction with other subjects may be more "subjectifying" and less alienating.

Subjectification in the classroom?

The implication is that, if formally taught classroom lessons are to enable subjectivity events, they have to offer opportunities for expansive rather than defensive learning (Holzkamp, 1995). As Grotlüschen (2004; 2014), who has revisited Holzkamp's original theory explains, expansive learning occurs when the learner has reasons to learn that link with her biographical interests, or when she encounters obstacles to carrying out her intentions. Expansive learning means:

> I learn on the basis of my action problem what I need to learn to pursue my activities and to expand my options for action. In order to clarify the term further, it is worth looking at the opposite extreme, namely defensive learning: if I learn defensively, I only do so because I see a threat to my existing world and react in no other way, than by learning (Grotlüschen, 2004, p. 16).

From this perspective, agency in learning is not given but is something that has to be achieved (Grotlüschen, 2014). This can occur through participation in communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) for two reasons; firstly because every person has biographical interests that involve understanding and shaping one's own life within the given constraints (Faulstich & Grotlüschen, 2006). This interest prompts the person's will to expand her scope for action. Secondly, people learn through the experience of discrepancy, for example when routines are interrupted, new people join or when something unfamiliar and different is encountered. A person trying to take actions that further her interests may encounter obstacles. Wenger (1998, p. 97) suggests that learning always occurs in a dynamic between resilience and "perturbabilty" or discontinuity and that this adaptability leads to the emergence of new structures within the community of practice. Indeed, Lave and Wenger's (1991) original notion of legitimate peripheral participation involves modifications of the practice through learning. As Wenger puts it "learning is the engine of practice, and practice is the history of that learning" (1998, p. 96). This enhances identification and identification is the opposite of alienation and thus of

defensive learning. The content of the lessons must be experienced as meaningful and the classroom activities experienced as meaning-making practice.

The teaching also has to provide opportunities for encountering the Other. Epistemologically then, learning must involve a participation in the world in such a way that the person is called upon to form relationships, take responsibility and be agentic. Knowing involves constructing meaning and this means (per)forming a relationship to something or someone that is mutual and respectful and is enhancing of being and becoming. Thus learning becomes transformative when the act of knowing involves being changed by the knowledge process. Learning for the test or for social capital are fundamentally alienating experiences for young people searching for a meaningful role in the world. Learning that is reduced to acquiring existing knowledge and involves little in the way of relationships, is less likely to be engaging, subjectifying and transformative.

The current study offers an example that illustrates in practical terms what may be involved. English as a foreign language (EFL) had the most references in this study to personal development among the classroom subjects. EFL was taught in a particular way in this school (see Sievers, 2017 and 2018, who describes this approach in detail) specifically to encourage expansive learning. Its focus in the high school classes (age 14 to 18) was not on learning the language as such, but rather on engaging the students in themes and activities that interest them, such as identity, gender, childhood and growing up, media and film, social injustice and involves practical activities such as making a film or newspaper, writing short stories or performing a play. The medium for these activities is the foreign language. The students write and 'publish' little books of short stories, they produce their own newspaper, they create film story-boards, write and perform plays, do projects on topics that interest them (one student whose English was weak gave a fascinating talk about time, space and energy because that was his personal interest, two others did a project on female genital mutilation that left teachers and class stunned). Learning is, on the whole, expansive and participatory and uses reflection as a regular tool. In their reflections (that were analysed in the study) the students note that they were motivated by topics that engaged them, though they also felt that they were learning the skills they needed for the exams. EFL was one of three key exam subjects (along with maths and German) in the study school.

My sense is that for subjectification to occur in formal lessons (as communities of practice), the students have to come to the point where they can "unpack their cherished world views and 'comfort zones' in order to deconstruct the ways in which they have learned to see, act and feel" (Zembylas, 2015, p. 166). Ball (2019) comments that this means recognising students as "ethical beings capable of reflection, decision-making and responsibility for their identity and their social relations" (p. 81). The teacher too needs to take a risk, step back and down from the ownership of power/knowledge, which is inherent in the role, and enter the space of

"discomfort" in which she is "never to consent to being completely comfortable with one's own presuppositions" (Foucault, 1994, p. 448, cited in Ball, 2019, p. 80). Teachers may know more but they must exercise this knowing in a way that the effects of dominance are minimised and they must exercise their mastery in ways that enable students to exercise and realise their autonomy and self-mastery. As Rittelmeyer (2012) comments, Bildung involves a dynamic balance of leading and leaving free.

I have recently been observing a grade 11 (17 years old), three week teaching block (taught every morning for two hours) in a Waldorf school in China on the sages of the so-called Axial Age (Zoroaster, Confucius, Mozi, Laozi, Buddha, Plato, Aristotle etc.). After the teacher introduced the theme in the first week, in the second and third weeks each day two students took over the lesson for over an hour, introducing "their sage." They did this in different ways, including short presentations on the biography and historical context, role play, discussion based on selected texts, group work on tasks related to the theme and posing questions arising from their philosophy to the rest of the students. Taking the sages as their starting point they raised questions relevant to their life situation today. These young philosophers engaged, for example, with Mozi's critique of Confucius' notion of filial loyalty ("what would you do if you discovered your father was selling drugs?"), or Laozi's notion of effortless action ("he who does nothing can do everything"), or does Plato's cave allegory mean we cannot know anything for certain?, or how can one develop Aristotle's practical wisdom? There was lively discussion about the role of Confucian philosophy in China's New Way. They addressed these themes from their own, largely non-reflexive positions as post-modern, social media-savvy idealists.

The point is not the stringency of their philosophical analysis, but the active engagement of all the students in existential issues of identity, justice, truth, self-development and the common good. The evidence of this block is that, with some guidance, grade 11 students are able to take their learning in hand and generate learning situations in which transformative learning and subjectivity events may occur. The reflective written feedback they gave me (in English) suggests that this "formal" lesson may have been a site of expansive learning and perhaps subjectivity events. Interestingly, this class is the pioneer class in a developing school that espouses the intention of teaching in a Waldorf way until grade 12 and then preparing students for *Gaokao*, the key exam that enables access to higher education. This may be a naïve assumption but it seems to be accepted as such by the students, perhaps lowering their sense of alienation and raising their expectation of expansive learning.

Conclusions

I am suggesting the metaphor of sojourning in and journeying between authentic practices can help us understand the relevance of non-formal learning situations for the development of the person. This may involve boundary crossings between communities of practice with corresponding challenges to identities. Authentic situations may also provide encounters with others and experiences of discontinuity and interruption. Such experiences may constitute subjectification events. I am also suggesting scaffolded reflection may support this process.

Biesta has suggested formal teaching (his example is maths) can prompt subjectification events by enabling students to "gain a more autonomous or considered position towards tradition…or we might explore the moral possibilities of mathematics..." (Biesta, 2009, p. 43). Zech (2012) argues for the development of historical consciousness and the power of judgement through history lessons, and no doubt the case can be made for all other subjects. However, I have argued that if the students' motivation in formal subjects is mainly extrinsic and defensive and is primarily linked to achieving grades and passing exams, this may limit the possibilities for subjectification. This study suggests that the methods used to encourage the learning of English as a foreign language described here, foster expansive rather than defensive learning, which may be less estranging. Such learning offers encounters with the other, even in the classroom. The foreign language itself may be experienced as an Other. This learning engages young people in hybrid communities of practice: learning to be a writer, journalist, film maker. If the students can experience fruits of their own creativity and productivity and these are valued, their learning is likely to be more expansive than defensive. One is not doing it for the teacher or for the grades: it is intrinsically worth doing (see Sennett's (2008) notion of craftsman/woman-ship). This probably occurs with *performance* of writing, communicating, drama, etc. Likewise performance and presentations involve close identification with the material, as does project work, especially self-chosen themes, executed with autonomy. Choosing which pieces of work students present in a portfolio or display enhances ownership and ameliorates a sense of serving a system. The experience in the Chinese Waldorf school suggests intensive participation and ownership of lessons also prompts expansive learning.

If these are the preconditions for subjectification and this is important, then teachers can start by honestly asking how much school learning is actually extrinsically prescribed, planned, implemented and assessed and how much reflects students' intrinsic and biographical learning interests. School learning can be reduced to the acquisition of existing "certified" knowledge or it can provide opportunities through "expansive teaching" to open up a student to the world in all its ambivalence as other. In the process of doing so, students will have the possibility of constructing new shared and individual knowledge in a process that is transformative for the individual and others.

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