Didaktik Meets Curriculum: Toward a New Agenda

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> […] an American coming to Europe for education, loses in his knowledge, in his morals, in his health, in his habits, and in his happiness. (Thomas Jefferson, 1785)

When Jefferson toured Continental Europe in the late 18th century, he was especially interested in visiting educational institutions like schools, seminars, and universities. As far as we know, and as the quotation indicates, he was not very much impressed. In fact, he believed that the young states of the newly established United States could offer a better education than, for instance, Prussian schools. It is not quite clear whether or not most contemporary American educators shared Jefferson's view, but we do know that his successors from around the 1840s had a completely different view on the European scene. From Horace Mann to John Tilden Prince at the turn of the century, dozens of American educators and politicians went to Europe, first and foremost to Prussia, studying the structure and achievements of the school systems of the old world, admiring their teacher education, and learning from their educational theories. Names like Herbart, Hegel, Froebel, and Wundt became familiar within the American educational community. Key sources and study books were translated, and school models and research tools were copied. However, the American scholars of education of the time remained almost unknown to the 1991 open contemporaries, even if they had toured the mainland of educational discourse, Germany and France.

Whereas the 19th century was so clearly one of educational export from the old world to the new, the 20th century saw quite the opposite pattern. From around the turn of the century, Continental European names, especially German ones, vanished from the American discourse. But in the 1920s,

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[1] In: Gundem, B. B., & Hopmann, S. (1998). Didaktik meets curriculum. In B. B. Gundem & S. Hopmann (Eds), *Didaktik and/or Curriculum* (pp. 1–8). New York: Lang. Conclusion – Didaktik meets curriculum: Towards a new Agenda. Permission for re-publishing granted by Peter Lang Publishers and the authors.

educators in the old world got more and more curious about what was going on the other side of the Atlantic. Obviously, something about "democracy and education," "progressive education," or "scientific curriculum making" could be learned from the United States. Key sources, such as Dewey's early works, were translated into almost all European languages. After the Second World War, curiosity turned into a willingness to learn from the leading nation of the western world, and from around 1965, American educational research swept through the old continent and was especially influential in areas like research on teaching and curriculum studies. Being at an international standard meant being on a level with what was going on in the United States. For some areas, like educational psychology, this is still the case. But in other areas the last decade has witnessed the beginning of a new era. After two centuries of one-way communication, it seems the time is ripe for a period of interchange and mutual understanding. And this turning of the tide is what the dialogue project "Didaktik meets Curriculum" has been about.

Initiated in 1990 by Stefan Hopmann and Ian Westbury, the dialogue project aimed at contributing to this change of perspectives in at least two fields: curriculum studies and teacher education. But unlike most other international projects (like the international cooperation in research on teacher thinking, in the field of curriculum history, or assessment studies, etc.), the project "Didaktik meets Curriculum" explicitly focused on the dialogue itself, using different topics from the field only as examples through which differences and commonalities could be made visible. To achieve this, a series of transatlantic conferences was staged, key sources translated, and joint publications edited (cf. the introduction to this volume)[2].

The conference in Oslo and a symposium at the AERA Annual Meeting in 1996 in New York mark the end of the project group's joint efforts.[3] This chapter is not an attempt to sum up, outline, or examine what was done or written within the project or to discuss the outcomes. The variety of

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[2] The list of references at the end of the chapter contains all joint publications that have emerged from the work of the project group. Besides this, numerous books, articles, and papers closely connected to the project's ideas have been published both in Europe and the United States.

[3] Also, the New York symposium will be documented within the frame of a reader presenting important historical sources of Didaktik and examples of its contemporary use to the American audience (cf. Hopmann, Riquarts & Westbury, 1996).

issues raised and contributions offered would require an additional volume. Likewise, the important outcome of the project is this very variety of papers, written with the purpose of not only presenting a position but also of achieving mutual understanding. Moreover, the dialogue is not finished. It has gained a momentum of its own and led to a considerable number of joint and transatlantic efforts in different fields. However, before talking about this ongoing work and future perspectives, a retrospective discussion of some experiences within the project might be helpful for those who have participated in our activities and those who might be interested in taking part in future dialogues.

Besides important contributions to research topics and practical issues, the dialogue has given valuable insights into some conditions and constraints on mutual understanding. First of all, there is the problem of language, not only as a problem of translation, but more fundamentally as a mirror of deep traditions in "talking about education." This issue leads directly to a second problem crucial for the dialogue: the acknowledgment and understanding of structural differences in the way educational discourse and research are organized. Finally, there is the question if and where fields of mutual interest emerged, what should or could be taken on in the future. At the bottom of this question lies naturally the more basic one, whether or not there is a need for a new research agenda within the fields of curriculum studies and teacher education[4].

Didaktikk, Didaktik, Didactique, Didactics, or What are we Talking About?

It was late in the evening at a dinner party following an international conference on curriculum research that an American colleague asked spontaneously: "What on earth is this Didaktik you are always speaking about?" For a continental European scholar of education, this would have been a curious question, as it is virtually impossible to become a teacher or move into the

[4] The conclusions drawn here are naturally inspired and influenced by our colleagues and friends who have participated in the project's development. However, as outlined here, they are, in the responsibility, of the authors alone. All quotations carrying a name but not indicating a publication are taken from discussions and statements that have been made in the course of the project.

field of education without having experienced Didaktik in university courses, in teacher training, at school board meetings, and the like. So, it should not have been difficult for us to answer the question from our American colleague. But it was! In fact, we needed a whole project to come to terms with this question, and we are still not convinced that we have given an adequate or even a satisfactory answer, leaving no doubt about what Didaktik is. This would not matter if Didaktik was not the core of our business, if most of us did not use the word to sum up the focal point of our professional life.

First of all, we had to explain that Didaktik is not what AngloSaxons call "didactics." In English, "didactics" has a somewhat old-fashioned connotation, referring to practical or methodological issues with a pejorative overtone. "Didactic" is someone "inclined to teach or lecture others too much" or "teaching or intending to teach a moral lesson" (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1989). In German or the Scandinavian languages, "to be didactical" can have the same meaning, but in the field of education, the word encompasses much more than a teaching style. The professional knowledge of teachers is called "Didaktik" and most of teacher education deals with "Didaktik." An administrator writing a new state curriculum would call his work "Didaktik'," and the same goes for the researcher doing an empirical study on learning in schools.

We can identify at least three different levels that together define the core components of Didaktik:

- A theoretical or research level, where the word denotes a field of study;
- A practical level, where Didaktik is exercised, comprising among others the whole fields of teaching, curriculum making and schooling; and
- A discursive level, where Didaktik names "the frame of reference" (in the sense of Alfred Schutz' theory of knowledge), as in the case of professional dialogues between teachers and teachers and other groups outside school, discussing school matters or other issues of teaching and learning. In this sense, we speak, for instance, about subject matter Didaktik, the Didaktik of school levels, the Didaktik of lesson preparation, etc.

Institutions naming the core of their business "Didaktik" can be found in the fields of educational research (e.g., Germany' Institute for the Didaktik of Mathematics), teacher education (e.g., departments of general Didaktik

and subject matter Didaktik), school administration, curriculum making, and textbook production, and last but not least, wherever teachers meet, in schools, in teacher associations, or in in-service training courses.

Didaktik is also neither an equivalent of curriculum studies or other familiar branches of the Anglo-Saxon discourse on education, nor just a habit or a practical approach, but is embedded in almost all professional activities dealing with teaching and schooling. It can be characterized as a language, with a vocabulary and a group of "native" speakers, who have a certain kind of professional education and/or a certain field of professional work in common. Historically, this language is bound to a certain structure of schooling and teacher education in which anyone participating professionally in teaching and schooling is expected to be able to explain "the reason for any particular method or practice …in a way, which leaves no doubt as to his sincerity …" (Prince, 1897, p. 273), and this reason has to be an explicitly educational one, based on "Didaktik" reasoning. Within the American discourse, this could be compared to the "language of curriculum," as it is used on functionally equivalent levels and within equivalent institutions. However, Didaktik subsumes "curriculum" as merely one issue beside and interwoven with other issues like teaching and learning, schooling, school administration, etc. Moreover, both languages tend to put their central issues into different perspectives, as some examples taken from the conference minutes of the Kiel symposium of the project group may illustrate (cf. table below).

Types of institutionalizations of Didactic Cultures (Hopmann 1995b)

Place	Type	Image
1. School (as a place of teacher education)	training on the job	teaching as "Autodidaktik"
2. Normal school	a) basic course b) advanced course c) training course	teaching as imitation teaching as application teaching as method
3. Seminar	advanced course plus …	teaching as a way of living
4. University college	a) preparation of administrators b) preparation of educators c) preparation of second teachers d) counselling, research, and development	teaching as service teaching as educating teaching as introduction teaching as planned behavior

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Place	Type	Image
5. Administration	a) school administration b) planning and development c) INSET	teaching as "Gestaltung"
6. Associations and unions	a) Unions and general associations b) Subject matter associations	teaching as profession
7. Publishers and producers	a) publishers b) producers	teaching as working with material

In that Didaktik has its own vocabulary, direct translations based on a dictionary can be misleading. Bildung, one of the central conceptions of Didaktik is by no means identical with "education"; in fact, the German or Scandinavian equivalents of "education" (Erziehung, oppdragelse, etc.) are often used in combinations like "Bildung & Erziehung," "dannelse & oppdragelse," flagging the fact that these terms refer to different aspects of the educational process. Lehren (læring) connotes something different than "teaching" or "instruction," and Lehrplan (læreplan, læseplan) something different than "curriculum" or "syllabus." To transport the meaning of these concepts into an Anglo-Saxon frame requires at least a footnote, if not a chapter, on what is meant by using these expressions. More specialized concepts like didaktische Reduktion (a certain kind of transforming content into school matter) or Bildungsgehalt (the educational substance embedded in a school content) cannot be translated appropriately without referring to the strands of Didaktik they are placed in and the specific meaning enclosed. The same has to be said about core concepts of the American discourse like "pedagogical content knowledge" or "reconceptualization," which carry concept-based connotations a direct translation would not necessarily mirror. David Hamilton, who participated in almost all of the conferences of the project group and supported its efforts with friendly critique, has repeatedly pointed to the fact that this is also true in those cases where the different languages use words of the same origin, for instance, words emerging from the joint heritage from Greek, Latin, or baroque sources like "curriculum" and "Didaktik" or "didactics." He believes that the history of the words itself, of their use and transformation in history, could be a key to understanding what has been different, even

though, as he added, this might not necessarily reflect, let alone explain, the differences of today. Thus, a dictionary of education would have to be both comparative and historical if the user is to be aware of what certain translations may omit or add to the original.

The language problem could be ignored if one could agree upon "what the matter is," without being misled by the use of certain concepts. But unlike technical languages based on definitions or conventions, the matter itself is constituted by the very language at stake. Thus, even everyday expressions like "content" (Inhalt) can mean very different things, if, for example, an American or a German researcher were to explain the issue of "content coverage" within a comparative project on school achievement (cf. Hopmann & Riquarts, 1995b).

The fundamental language problem cannot be solved; it can only be taken into account. Thus, one important lesson from our project is that all kinds of comparative research have to have a metalevel of communication against which the interchange is screened and checked continuously for potential misunderstandings and mismatches. For each concept with meaning-bearing importance, the chosen or implied range of application has to be explained. In other words, comparative research as well as international exchanges need comparative topics of the kind Aristotle developed to deal with meanings within practical discourse. And just as Aristotle proposed (and Joseph Schwab sought to introduce into the field of curriculum studies), topical knowledge can only emerge from a practical discourse, i.e., from an explicit dialogue between those involved. It would not be sufficient to exchange statements or to translate papers, because only an ongoing "self-referential" interchange between both discourse levels can indicate where understanding is reached or where it is not reached. For this to succeed, international exchange needs a much longer timeline than is typical and much more continuity to secure and enhance the quality of understanding. The never-ending discussions on whether results of comparative projects like the international studies on literacy, mathematics, and science are meaningful and trustworthy indicate that it is not just a question of research ethics but also one of political and cultural importance.

So, what were we talking about? The reader of the different publications that emerged from the project will find a wide range of issues from teacher education and from the field of curriculum studies. We decided that the best way to come to an understanding would be to ask contributors from

the different backgrounds to speak about what seemed to be the same issue, e.g., about "how to prepare a lesson" or "what kind of ethic in educational research." So, in most cases the same issue was addressed by one speaker from an Anglo-Saxon background, one from a German-speaking country, and one from a Scandinavian country. The differences in how our participants presented their case, where they failed to reach a mutual understanding, and what remained unclear or insecure served as indicators of where "meta-discourse" was needed. Sometimes the results could hardly be recognized as answers to the same question (e.g., the contributions dealing with the ethics and the tact of teaching in this volume and in Hopmann & Riquarts, 1995a). Sometimes the contributors themselves tried to carry on the meta-discourse by reflecting on how the other side might or might not understand what they wanted to present (e.g., the contributions dealing with paradigm shift in this volume). Sometimes there was no difference visible, at least not at the level of presentation (cf. the joint contribution concerning math teaching by Pereira & Keitel in Hopmann & Riquarts, 1995a).

Even though the speakers from different "language back grounds" were chosen from different, often conflicting strands of their home "language" (e.g., reconceptualists as well as followers of more "traditional" approaches to curriculum studies), the "natives" normally had more in common than those coming from different languages who used similar tools and theories (e.g., building their argument on critical theory/hermeneutics or on empirical data from field research). (Unfortunately, the project did not have the money to tape and transcribe the discussions, which evolved on the basis of those experiences and which, in many respects, were the core of the conferences.) Only by following the change in style and language from the first conference in Aarau (1991) to the last symposium in New York (1996), as it is reflected by the different conference volumes, might one sense that those participants who were continuously involved in the project's activities became more and more aware of the implications and fallacies of a transnational discourse on education.

Based on these experiences, one could write an ethnography of international discourse within the field. Issues like rhetoric (how to start a presentation or underline arguments), structure (what kind of argument-related evidence, how important is systematic elaboration, etc.), and tradition (how to relate arguments to the history of the field) would have to be addressed. These differences were especially felt on the occasions when "foreign" contributions

were to be published in "native" journals. The journal editors expected in almost all cases that the language and structure of the papers be adapted to their "native" standards, even though this meant that an important source of information was omitted. Internationally experienced colleagues were able to write their papers according to these requirements, adapting themselves to "American style," "Scandinavian style," or "German style." But—by doing this—a loss of "native flavour" was unavoidable, a serious loss insofar as the "native" traditions at stake reflect the differences in language and understanding. It would go beyond the purpose of this afterword to go to explore this further. Bilingual readers will recognize those differences anyway by comparing the project's publications. However, the bottom line should be mentioned. Analyzing the Kiel conference one colleague told us: "Americans tell stories – Germans explain histories – Scandinavians have had their experiences!"

In Search of Difference

Differences are not always obvious, at least not in educational discourse. Take, for example, speaking about "pedagogy" (Pädagogik, pedagogikk). In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, "pedagogy" means "the art and science of teaching," especially the "instruction in teaching methods" as provided by educational psychology (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1989). For a German or a Scandinavian, "the art and science of teaching" is just one of dozens of subdivisions of Pädagogik (pedagogikk). For them the expression covers the whole field of educational theory and practice. Thus, most professors of Schulpedagogik (skolepedagogikk) would normally not reduce their activities to "pedagogy," but most likely deal with a wide range of questions like the impact of school as an institution, curriculum studies, or school development, issues that at an American university would most probably be the research field of educational sociology or curriculum. The reason for this difference might be found in the different histories of teacher education (cf. Hopmann & Riquarts, 1995b). It is an important issue in that more than half of all German professors of education hold professorships officially devoted to Schulpädagogik.

As in this case, transatlantic dialogue has to take into account that the educational discourse and research are organized quite differently in the

respective traditions. Embedded in these institutionalized traditions are different patterns of argumentation and validity, different rhetorical cultures, and different cultures of theory development. To give just a few examples:

In Germany, almost all professorships of education are directly connected to teacher education (or to other educational professions like social work). For most of these professorship's year-long practical experiences within schools or other educational institutions are required. Graduate schools of education without direct involvement in teacher education are unknown.

It is different in Denmark, where most educational research is based at Denmark's Lærerhøyskole (the Royal Danish College of Teacher Education), an institution of further education for teachers already working in schools. Only one Danish university has an educational department (as part of the department of philosophy, rhetoric, and education), a small one with few resources. In Norway, colleges of education and university departments exist side by side, the latter providing both professional education and graduate studies, but no teacher education (at the university level, this is provided by a special department of teacher training). Where they do not constitute faculties of their own, most university departments of education in Germany are part of the humanities (the faculty of philosophy); in Scandinavia, they have often been combined with the social sciences (sociology, psychology, etc.). There exists no comparative research on how these differences affect research and teaching at the university level, but the contributions to our dialogue project clearly reflect these different affiliations.

Even more striking are the differences in the field of curriculum control. In most European states there is no doubt that the state has the right to set curriculum guidelines for both schools and teacher education (cf. Hopmann, 1990). Most states have established state research institutes to get the necessary research and development work done. The guidelines themselves are, in most cases, written in close cooperation with experienced teachers and combine state control with a "license" for teachers or teacher educators to make their own plans within this framework. As the predominant mode of curriculum control since the mid-19th century, this pattern gave birth to Didaktik: it was and is the language by which state administrators, principals, teachers, and all others involved in the process of education could communicate about how to work within the framework. The requirement to teach within the frame of social expectations laid down in the guidelines supported the development of professional abilities to fulfill these expectations by a vast variety of instructional designs and contents, and that is what subject matter Didaktik is about. Locally- or teacher-based curriculum decision-making leads naturally to another set of abilities, in that the questions decided upon by state-issued guidelines now have to be taken up at the school level. However, in many cases the choice

of a schoolbook (which has traditionally been a more important issue within the Anglo-Saxon pattern of schooling than in Continental Europe) or the achievement expectations laid down in assessment tests or the entrance requirements for subsequent education substitute for the decisions made in the continental pattern by state-issued guidelines (cf. Ben-Peretz, 1990). How much "freedom" teachers are allowed within one or the other pattern may be very much the same or completely different, but in any case, it leads to different kinds of teacher thinking (cf. Biehl, Hopmann & Ohlhaver, 1996).

One implication of these institutional traditions is that the relation between academic research and practice has developed quite differently. The American field of curriculum studies, for example, has a strong tradition of university-based developmental projects, providing complete curriculum guides including all the necessary teaching material. However, one has to be aware of that this kind of academic research has had almost no impact on what is going on in curriculum development in schools, in school districts, or at the state level (cf. the contributions of Frances, Klein, and O. L. Davis in this volume). In recent years many curriculum theorists have distanced themselves willingly from school, understanding the curriculum discourse as an intellectual "journey" and not a field of first and foremost practical activities (cf. William Pinar in this volume). This is completely different in Germany. A recent survey by Biehl, Hopmann, and Ohlhaver (1996) indicated that almost all university-based activities in the field are closely connected to practical work in curriculum development, schoolbook writing, etc., mostly in indirect cooperation with state administrations, state institutes, and the teachers themselves. The most influential curriculum theories unanimously agree that curriculum development is a social process within the society and its school system in which academic research should play a supportive role (cf. Gundem, 1992, 1995; Hopmann & Künzli, 1994). Thus, one German professor of education who participated in our discussions and plays a significcant role in German discourse on curriculum making called the reconceptualist approach as presented by Pinar irresponsible and totally unacceptable to morally serious scholars of education. In fact, neither American-styled curriculum development by university departments nor academic curriculum discourse without practical affiliation has ever played a significant role in Germany (except for a few years around 1970; cf. Hopmann, 1988). Whereas the Norwegian situation resembles mostly the German tradition (with less involvement of the academics), the curriculum field in Sweden has until recently been shaped by a strong tradition of cooperation between research and state-run curriculum development.

Americans tell stories—Germans explain histories—Scandinavians have had their experiences; " these differences are probably directly connected to the history of institutional affiliations and the embedded history of methodological preferences.

Coming from a tradition shaped by subjects like theology, philosophy, and history, the average German professor of education has to build any basic argument on teaching, schooling, or learning on the history of educational thinking. It is quite usual to start an argument by going back to Schleiermacher, Herbart, or Comenius, even if the topic at stake is not a historical one but an issue of today. Like their Scandinavian colleagues, German scholars of education are again and again astounded by the almost history-free research and theory development presented by their American colleagues. And it is not very difficult for them to show that many of the leading curriculum theories and models of today are "re-inventions of the tool," remakes of ideas developed way back in the history of educational discourse. Take, for example, Max van Manen's surprise that the "tone" and "tact" of teaching have been an issue of continental educational theory since the days of Schleiermacher and Herbart (cf. van Manen in Hopmann & Riquarts, 1995a) or the fact that Lee Shulman's concept of different types of professional knowledge has very much in common with traditional models of Didaktik like the Didaktik of Heinrich Roth from around 1950 (cf. Hopmann, 1994). A historically grounded check of the vast variety of curriculum proposals reported by Pinar et al. in their seminal Understanding Curriculum would reveal that even the most recent inventions are remakes, e.g., that a recently developed "romantic" approach to curriculum making can lead toward a Herbartian structure of the school curriculum—without even noticing it (cf. Pinar et al., 1995). Given the one-way character of the transatlantic discourse, at least until recently, it is no surprise that (especially) non-American precursors are practically unknown today—even if they played a significant role in the early years of American education (like Herbartianism until the turn of the century). Sometimes this leads to the somewhat curious situation that an American educational model is exported to continental Europe without any indication of its continental roots, where it is treated as an American invention without connecting it to its local prehistory. Thus, the project method made its European career as an invention of American progressive education, even though it originally stems from continental pedagogy of the 18th and 19th centuries (cf. Knoll, 1991).

One of the curious things about this situation is that, at the same time, non-educational European theories have had a significant impact on educational discourse in the United States. Habermas, Gadamer, Heidegger, and Foucault are just a few examples of European philosophers who have had a great impact on some strands of American curriculum theory in recent decades. The work of Michael Apple, Henry Giroux, and many of the reconceptualists could hardly be imagined without these sources. The same flow of ideas can be observed in the opposite direction. From Parsons to Rawls, there is hardly an American social theory of importance that has not been used and discussed in the old world. But, on both sides of the Atlantic divide, the scholars of education who draw on these theories have never found similar interest in their work. Thus, the predominant German educational theories of the 1970s and 1980s, the works of Wolfgang Klafki, Herwig

> Blankertz, and many others inclined to critical theory, are practically unknown in the United States. The same could be said about the critical strands of American curriculum studies, which have found almost no resonance in Germany (with the exception of some works in the field of educational sociology like Dreeben's on What is Learned in School and Jackson's studies on the hidden curriculum). However, the different strands that draw on the same sociological, philosophical, etc. sources, for example, critical theory, meet each other in the Scandinavian discourse, especially in Denmark and Norway, where the German tradition has always been strong but where, at the same time, paradigm shifts within American educational research have been given much attention. German critical educational theories stand, curiously enough, much stronger in Denmark and Norway than in Germany itself, where they have lost ground in recent years to other approaches like system theory and postmodernist approaches.

Even though some of these examples sound like cliches about the respective traditions, one could continue with similar observations concerning, for instance, the placement of research of teaching within the academic field and its relation to curriculum studies (cf. Westbury & Doyle, 1992). Or one could point to new developments, like the renewed interest in the relation of subject matter and teaching, which have led both traditions to quite similar research questions and models of explanation (cf. Gudmundsdottir & Grankvist, 1992). These and other examples have been discussed in more detail in the different publications of the working group (cf., for instance, Gundem, 1996; Hopmann, 1990; Haft & Hopmann, 1990; Hopmann & Kiinzli, 1992; Hopmann & Riquarts, 1995a; Hopmann et al., 1995). What these examples illustrate is the fact that the participants involved in the dialogue do not only represent their personal brand of theory but are also deeply rooted in far-reaching structures and traditions that shape their choices, their awareness of each other, and their abilities to understand what their colleagues from the other side are talking about. The search for such often unnoticed differences, for differences in the everyday life of educational theory and practice, is crucial if mutual understanding is to be possible.

However, to achieve more than this rather simple insight would require a good deal of comparative knowledge (cf., for instance, the contributions of William Reid and Ian Westbury in this volume). And even if this insight might sound rather simple-minded, it is not the conventional wisdom of the field. Why, for example, do so many publications in the field of comparative education not explicitly deal with these questions? Even the International

Encyclopaedia of Education, edited by Husén et al., 1994)m lacks any systematic treatment of these problems.

Toward a New Research Agenda

The project "Didaktik meets Curriculum" has highlighted some known and some lesser-known differences and commonalities, which may or may not have an impact on the transatlantic dialogue about education. To enhance mutual understanding is a worthwhile task, but the question remains of assessing whether or not more can be gained from the dialogue. When our American colleague asked, "What on earth is Didaktik," his question represented not only intellectual curiosity but also a quest for knowledge that might enhance the state-of-the-art of curriculum studies from an until-then neglected source. It was the newly developed research interest into subject matter's role in professional knowledge, teacher thinking, and teaching that had led him to the speculation that something supporting this kind of research might be gained from a better acquaintance with the continental European tradition of subject-matter Didaktik. It was in fact a paper on math Didaktik, presented by a German colleague at an international math education conference, that had stirred his curiosity. The paper had dealt with concepts like "didactical reduction" and "didactical transformation," which indicated that there was a developed analytical framework at hand to do both practical work in schools and research. Like him, almost all of our American colleagues involved in the dialogue were most interested in this feature of continental Didaktik. The Europeans, on the other hand, saw in the newly developed strands of research on teaching and curriculum studies a welcome support to their own efforts to give general and subject matter Didaktik a better empirical foundation. Thus, on both sides there is an actual need, which might be dealt with on the basis of a developed dialogue leading to joint efforts in the field.

Therefore, it seemed to be appropriate to close the Oslo conference with the issue of whether there is a need for a new agenda in educational research and what the dialogue might contribute to this agenda. Many contributions to this closing debate addressed known but not yet adequately addressed issues like the tendencies toward a worldwide unified curriculum and the important role of non-educational agencies like supranational organizations

or the World Bank seem to have in this respect (Birgit Brock-Utne, Kurt Riquarts). Implicitly the same problem was articulated by a contribution dealing with the implications of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity and with the challenge to develop a concept of education that deals with these implications in a multifaceted way and not in terms of an "integration" pedagogy reducing minority cultures to deviance (Kamil Øzerk). A similar argument was made about the role of gender in educational research and practice, calling for a non-patronizing approach to difference and irregularity (Kirsten Reisby, William Pinar). These issues are evidently of mutual interest on both sides of the Atlantic.

The most challenging issue seems, however, to arise from a few participants surprising observation that both curriculum studies and academic research on Didaktik find themselves in a comparable messy situation at the end of this century. Frances Klein and O. L. Davis' (in this volume) sharp critique of the practical irrelevance of contemporary curriculum studies had striking similarities with the ways in which some Norwegian scholars of education, and some of their German colleagues, experience their own situation. Parts of the Norwegian educational research community, for instance, feels set aside by the politicians and the curriculum practitioners who are unleashing one of the biggest school reforms in Norwegian history. Obviously, modern educational thinking has lost its anticipatory and guiding force outside its own academic environments, at least in the field of curriculum making. The question "whose fault" found quite different answers. Some accused the researchers of being too far from what is going on outside the academic ghetto; others claimed that the research community is set aside because of its critical stance on what is going on. Whatever the diagnosis, there can be no doubt that the respective academic milieus have to think about their future role in shaping educational realities.

Historically speaking, there is nothing new about this challenge; Joseph Schwab in the United States and Herwig Blankertz in Germany raised the same issues some 20 years ago, and there is a history of similar deliberations since the days of the Enlightenment (Oelkers & Neumann, 1984). Scholars of education have pictured themselves throughout history as being in a state of fading impact. Probably this is a necessary part of dealing with the unavoidable distance between them and those on the "front-line." What is different today, however, is the reality that academic research on education is

far from the only provider of educational research and scientific knowledge to the field. On both sides of the Atlantic, public and private research institutes and other enterprises have gained a considerable share in delivering the kind of evaluation research and knowledge actors in the field of schooling are asking for. State administrations and other sponsors of academic research are becoming more and more specific in their expectations about what they are prepared to pay for, setting academic research in a position somewhat similar to the research done by state-run institutes or private contractors. Thus, the question is how do we (re)gain influence? rises to a new level of significance, at least for those who measure the importance of educational research by its impact on practice.

Naturally, a conference series like ours cannot provide a compact and comprehensive answer to such a question. But many of the debates following the different contributions focused on what kind of research should be developed to change this situation. Not surprisingly, most proposals extended the new research topics presented at the conferences, for instance, combined research on curriculum and teaching, looking closer at the relation of content and classroom management (Walter Doyle), the role of "pedagogical content knowledge" (Lee Shulman, Sigrun Gudmundsdottir), the social construction of subject matter inside and outside schools (Roland Lauterbach, Ian Westbury), or the rationality and meaning-bearing implications of teaching (Erling Lars Dale, Tomas Englund). Also, the debates about the ethics of teaching showed clearly that the "critical" and the "practical" are intertwined aspects of any Didaktik or curriculum theory aiming at responsible teaching (Wolfgang Klafki, Klaus Schaller, Peter Menck, etc.). Following these directions, some members of the working group have decided to start a new dialogue effort focusing on subject matter as a frame of reference" dealing, for instance, with the emerging research on school subject matter knowledge and the role of subject matter in constructing and controlling the curriculum. Another project attempts a comparative view on curriculum making and lesson planning in five European states and the development of analytical tools to compare state-run and locally based curriculum decision-making. A third effort focuses on the exploration of comparative topics in educational discourse.

More issues and research options could be added. The bottom line of most of them was a change of attitude or the renewal of an old virtue—as

Peter Menck would put it—asking for a scholarship of education that sees itself as an active, responsive, and responsible partner in the field, which shares the needs and endeavors of those teaching and educating. Research strategies supporting self-determination and autonomy and respecting the perspectives present in the field are needed. Perhaps the combination of some models and approaches from both traditions, Didaktik and curriculum, may provide the necessary tools and theories to move on in this direction (cf. Gudmundsdottir & Grankvist, 1992; Doyle & Westbury, 1992; Gundem, 1996; Hopmann & Riquart, 1995b; etc.). Because of this, the working group behind the dialogue project "Didaktik meets Curriculum" is delighted that the most important task of the project was fulfilled: the strategy of "making people meet" should encourage mutual understanding and cooperation by bringing leading scholars from the different strands together. Not only the publication of the working group, but more so the newly established working relations within the field seem to be promising: Scandinavian scholars touring Germany and hosting German and American colleagues at their own institutions, Scandinavian and German scholars of Didaktik taking part in American conferences on curriculum, publications on Didaktik in Anglo-Saxon journals (like the Journal of Curriculum Studies) and by American publishers, as well as extensive discussions about new paradigms in curriculum research in European journals, give hope that we are indeed on our way to a new era of interchange and dialogue. If the project has contributed to this development, it was truly successful.

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