

Foreword

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In the pluralistic and open society of the 21st century, the question of the educator's understanding of what it means to be human – the conception of mankind which determines his or her pedagogical approach – seems outdated. Don't definitions of humankind inevitably consist of normative concepts which do not belong in the classroom – and isn't this conviction a defining characteristic of a liberal education system? Don't teachers who work out of a particular view of mankind stand in danger of limiting their understanding of the world, or even indoctrinating their students? Despite - or perhaps because of – this indisputable problematic, we are convinced that educational science cannot forgo a critical reflection of the anthropological basis of pedagogical practice, in that educational practice can never be isolated from the conception of humankind held by the person who is teaching. Where the educational approach aims to exclude any underlying premises with regard to its image of the human being, the danger cannot be underestimated that implicit – and thereby often unreflected - rather than explicit convictions will shape educational practice.

In the course of the second international Congress of the European Network for Academic Steiner Teacher Education (ENASTE) which took place in Vienna from May 1-3, 2013, educational scientists, teachers, philosophers, theologians, historians, and brain scientists from 28 different countries convened to consider and discuss the relevance and the problematic of anthropological assumptions, convictions, and knowledge within the field of education. Forty researchers from nine countries presented their theses, concepts, and research results. A number of the lectures held in Vienna are published in this issue of RoSE.

Jochen Krautz addresses the conception of the human being which underlies current educational reform. He criticizes this understanding of humankind as being increasingly determined by economics. Krautz clearly illustrates how this tendency contradicts a concisely developed concept of education. An essential aspect of a complex understanding of education is the relevance of relationships as a basis for every pedagogical process. The lecture by Thomas Fuchs presents findings from developmental psychology and neurobiology which support the idea that learning can only be effectively realized within relationships. Moira von Wright examines the meaning of intersubjectivity in education, demonstrating that a "sphere of intersubjectivity" is an essential prerequisite to enable novelty to arise in a classroom setting. The pedagogical relevance of relationships is also addressed by Wolfgang Schmalenbach, who also points to the necessity of the contradictory and yet related dimensions of "closeness" and "distance". "Trust" as a central category of pedagogic relationships is the main theme of Leonhard Weiss's lecture. Peter Lutzker demonstrates that there are essential differences between pedagogical approaches which consider "seeing" and "conceiving" to be the main means of discovering the world, and those which recognize "hearing", "attunement", and "active stillness" as essential forms of encountering the world and other people.

Albert Schmelzer examines the relevance of Rudolf Steiner's view of the human being for teaching practice at a Waldorf School. Carlo Willmann addresses possibilities for the realisation of Waldorf pedagogy, based on Steiner's anthropology, in varying cultural and religious contexts. Teaching at Waldorf schools is also the subject of contributions by Michael Zech, who examines the position of history coursework in Waldorf schools in the context of current discourses regarding history didactics, and Gunter Keller, who discusses the consequences of current concepts of globalisation for the teaching of geography at Waldorf Schools.

Another area of teaching practice – that of in-service training and further education of managers – is the subject of Beatrix Palt's contribution. The author illustrates implicit assumptions regarding the understanding of the human being which underlie the teaching of business management. A central concept of many current debates in the field of educational science ("inclusion") is the topic of the manuscript by Harm Paschen, which addresses the question of the relevance of dogma within pedagogical discourse. Henning Pätzold discussed the role of metaphors and images for the understanding of educational institutions in his lecture at the Congress in Vienna. His thoughts on this matter were already published in RoSE in 2013. For this reason, the table of contents of this edition of RoSE includes a link to the previously published paper.

The Congress "The Educator's View of the Human Being. Consequences for Schools and Teacher Education" was organized by the Zentrum für Kultur und Pädagogik in Vienna, an institute of the Alanus Hochschule für Kunst und Gesellschaft, on part of ENASTE, a cooperation of all academic Waldorf teacher training programs in Europe.

Please note that the third international ENASTE Congress will take place from May 14 – 16, 2015 in Vienna. Its title is: „Transformations. Education in a rapidly-changing world / Bildung in einer sich wandelnden Welt“ (www.enastecongress.net).