

Professional learning journeys: online, hybrid, offline – connecting pedagogical knowledge with creative activity and personal as well collegial reflection

Ulrike Sievers, elewa-eLearningWaldorf e.V. / Waldorf Seminar Hamburg / Christian Morgenstern Schule Hamburg

While there has been a lot of profound research on pedagogical issues carried out in recent years, it seems as if the results often have little effect on the pedagogical practice in schools. The here presented research tackles the question how the idea of life-long teacher learning and interactive collegial dialogue, as suggested by Steiner for the weekly conferences as an ongoing living university for life-long learning of Waldorf teachers, can be realized in a way that invites practicing teachers and student teachers-to-be to engage in a learning journey beyond the local boundaries of each school. Therefore, in the HERMMES working group on teacher training, we have created online courses that can be used in an asynchronous way by individual teachers, but can also be used for online, hybrid or offline learning by groups of educators, e.g. a college of teachers, or as material for offline workshops.

While aspects such as availability, flexibility and affordability of offers for professional development are relevant, the most important question is how teacher education reaches not only the teachers' minds, but also their hearts and will. Since, as Hüther (2011) describes, human beings tend to fall back in their own experiences, especially when under stress, it needs transformative learning processes to bring about a change of practice. Werner Bleyhl said in a talk about his study on teacher learning, it is not enough to present a good concept or well-designed materials to change a teacher's habits. Only when a teacher feels a need for change, she will make the effort to change her practice. In their book *The Heart of Higher Education* (2010), Palmer and Zajonc emphasize that higher education needs to take into account the whole human being and addresses mind, heart, and spirit.

This work is based on various concepts of adult learning, (Otto Scharmer's Theory U, Coenraad van Houten's NALM (New Adult Learning Method) and Martyn Rawson's account of Learning Processes (2018), both based on the life processes described by Steiner), as well as on our own results from practice research during 8 years of elewa online courses and many years of online, hybrid and offline adult teaching experiences. HERMMES learning journeys combine diverse media and methods, thus providing pedagogical knowledge, engaging learners in creative

activities, welcoming imagination, inviting collegial dialogue, and with the help of methods such as journaling and practice research, provide spaces to individual as well as collegial reflection.

Since habits should be formed or transformed as early as possible, it seems important to integrate the idea of professional life-long learning journeys already in the training of students and teachers-to-be at institutions and courses for teacher education.

Reference:

G. Hüther (2011), Was wir sind und was wir sein könnten. Ein neurobiologischer Mutmacher. Fischer.

Palmer, R. J., Zajonc, A., & Scribner, M. (2010). *The Heart of Higher Education: A call to renewal. Transforming the academy through collegial conversations*. Jossey-Bass.

Rawson , M. (2018). Life processes and learning in Waldorf pedagogy. *Research Bulletin for Waldorf Education*, XV111(2).

Scharmer, C. O. (2018). *The Essentials of Theory U. Core principles and applications*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

van Houten, C., & Pannitschka, S. (2018). *Erwachsenenbildung als Willenserweckung: Methodik und Didaktik erwachsenengerechten Lernens*. Verlag Freies Geistesleben.