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**From Lecturer to learning Coach –
Chances and Dangers for Teachers and Consultants**

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The pedagogical field is a subsystem of society. Accordingly, developments in this area must always be viewed in close connection with the respective viewpoint of persons, values granted to them under current political- and economical conditions, social conditions together with current premises of living conditions and work contribution. In this sense, conceptions concerning the development or establishment of favorable pedagogical action can never be evaluated without taking into consideration the measures of society's status quo. On occasions where new pedagogical concepts become generally accepted or previously hardly noticed pedagogical concepts become topics, society's basic conditions and values that have promoted them should always be analysed.

The present Seminar is dedicated to a whole series of methodical-didactical concepts that are currently intensively recommended to persons working in education. The connection between all the topics addressed in this Seminar is life-long learning, which is one of the Meta teaching aims of post-modern society. This society has elevated permanent change to the highest ideals and, as a consequence, must also declare updates of both the life-long knowledge and ability of society members to be an indispensable requirement. As a result, the modularity of educational provisions, the current didactical postulate of participants, action direction and the new tutor model all have in common a tendency to view tutors less as mediators of subjects, but rather as helpful companions during learning processes. Learning processes, by the way, are the direct responsibilities of the pupil.

As outlined in my initial statement, i.e. that current condition of society is always reflected in what is contemporaneous in education, I made it my task to critically analyse the presently much discussed transformation of lecturer into learning-coach.

Is the new concept of the teacher, supported by the realization already formulated in the 1960's by Paulo Freire, i.e. that liberating education is systematically suppressed if teachers comprehend their role primarily as "mediator of material" correct, or does it only represent an increasingly popular method of adjusting persons? At that time, Freire argued that there are long-term consequences for pupils if they are treated like containers, the sole aim being to fill them efficiently. In this case, the consciousness of the pupil is distorted in such a manner that finally they can only really understand themselves as passive objects of social conditions.

The following question, therefore, arises and I would like to discuss this in somewhat more depth during my presentation: Does the current demand that teachers should withdraw from their traditional role as lecturers and become coaches for self-determining learning processes really signal a change in pattern towards education that is genuine, promoting self confidence and responsibility? Did the movement of suffragettes in the last third of the 20th century really release such deep reaching changes that the free, more superior subject became the quasi-official model of socially organized learning processes? Alternatively, does the new methodical demand simply use the onset of the 1960's emancipation concept, finally neutralizing it to a methodical-didactical "fashion trend"? Is it not possibly counter productive to oblige teachers to change methodical behaviour without giving them prior opportunity to reflect on, and consciously modify, the foundation of educational attitude to requirements?

In particular, the last point appears to be very important to me. I would like to illustrate this with another pedagogical example: One of the key words of the 60's reads "anti-authoritarian education". The mental founders of the educational movement gathered under this title appealed for the furthest possible renunciation of forms of education that are authoritarian, linked to psychological and physical force and associated with manipulative measures. Their

main concern was the principle of ensuring the equivalence of teacher and the adolescent and the dissolution of the authoritarian power gradient in the educational relationship. It is, however, certain that they did not advocate the reversal of the traditional power gradient; they called for partnership conditions in education and not for the power of the teacher to be replaced or superseded by the power of those growing up.

Indeed, this exact effect only too often developed. What was called anti-authoritarian education often emerged as nothing more than a general withdrawal of the teacher from the task of educating and a reversal of the traditional power situation. As a result of the disconcertion caused by the bombardment from the education-methodical appeal, i.e. because the usual traditional instruments of power in education was no longer “in”, to a large extent many parents dispensed with educational relationships with persons entrusted to them and withdrew to a position where offspring were allowed to do as they like without being subjectively committed.

We are sufficiently aware of the consequences of such non-education; the lack of emotional relationship deriving from the laissez-faire attitude of the educator even led on occasions to the totally opposite result of what was intended by the idea of anti-authoritarian education, i.e. to permanent psychological disorder.

How could that happen? It is a fact that parents, who – for whatever reasons – are unable to adopt an attitude of acceptance and affection towards their children, are finally unable to implement the demand to educate without the use of authoritarian behaviour. Here, the identical effect comes into operation as the one preventing the consistent implementation of a resolution for behavioural change, as long as the motive behind the un-loved attitude are not consciously thought about, i.e. the inner attitude that legitimises ones behaviour. Behaviour is derived from mentalities and attitudes. Without reflecting on these, attempts to solely change behaviour are usually very quickly doomed to failure.

If someone is only able to enter into restricted relationships in the pedagogical process due to inner attitudes, he has the choice between authoritarian- and non-interventional educations. When authoritarian behavior is momentarily not “in”, like during the 60’s, there is only one choice left and this is to retreat into the ideologically excessive “letting persons do as they like”.

Similar consequences are, however, to be feared if instructors only make the transition from the position of knowledge mediator to learning companion because this allegedly corresponds to modern didactical aspects. In his book, which at the time was extremely popular, Paulo Freire - quoted earlier - did not demand a new technology of teaching. He called for a change in relationship between instructor and pupil. What happens during lessons should not change because of some fashionable or utilitarian reason. Freire does not aim at more effective or more entertaining lessons. Neither does he aim at the fact that pupils, as a by-product, acquire competences that are important in enabling them to function in the sphere of work – in this case the independent procurement of information. His appeal for an alternative view on lessons is purely generated by *pedagogical* motives.

Only if the educator can reconstruct and really “appreciate” these pedagogical reasons, is there a chance that the new teacher model of learning coach really means a step forward to decrease the alienation in the socially organized learning processes.

The action of teachers who understand themselves as pedagogues and not as experts in shaping persons, is focussed on pupils entrusted to them becoming humane and not on their subordination due to religious-, social status quo- or economical reasons. Modern educational thinking is very closely linked to the conception that the humane potential present in every person can only develop through a process of dialog with other persons. When you

know "yourself", persons discover for themselves what they potentially are "from the beginning", the being that is in principle free, has strength, awareness and can rise above all limitations and shape his life with self dependency.

Based on the above, the pedagogical criterion for evaluating learning arrangements is not how well they are suited to influencing pupils by forcing goals upon them. The question that must be asked from a pedagogical point of view is to what extent the learning arrangements are suited as a "condition of possibility" for the development of responsible behaviour.

Classical instruction usually openly aims at suggesting to the pupil a "static" way of perceiving reality that corresponds to the regime in power. Here, "truth" is represented as objectivity deemed to be fact that cannot be put into doubt and not as an interpretation resulting from historical- and social circumstances (of power). From a pedagogical viewpoint, therefore, there is no reason to regret the break away from the conception that instructors are primarily lecturers, i.e. mediators of truth that is supposedly placed above history. Learning that is only accompanied by a learning coach and that is self-organized can, however, likewise carry the message that reality exists independently of persons and, as a result, does not need to be "perceived" afresh by each individual.

Self confidence and the ability to be critical develop during the process of struggle that is experienced to gain understanding and not through forcing so-called truth upon an individual – no matter whether these originate from a teacher, CD-Rom, the Internet or any other means of mediating. If responsibility is the aim, then it is the task of the teacher to represent the one authority that enables the pupil to grow through argumentative discussions. If being a learning coach represents being such a discourse partner during the search for knowledge, then the required transition from lecturer to learning coach really represents a chance for more efficient, socially organized learning processes in the subject of competence. If, however, there is purely an intention to pour the old wine (of mediating) into new (methodical) wine barrels, then there is a danger to even further distort the educational goal of the autonomous individual through the pretence of methodical or trendy behaviour.

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