Vasileios Symeonidis
University of Innsbruck, Department for Teacher Education and School Research
Johanna F. Schwarz
University of Innsbruck, Department for Teacher Education and School Research

Phenomenon-Based Teaching and Learning through the Pedagogical Lenses of Phenomenology: The Recent Curriculum Reform in Finland

ABSTRACT: This paper aims to explore the phenomenon-based approach in teaching and learning, through the pedagogical lenses of phenomenology, the philosophy of phenomena. The phenomenon-based approach has informed the new core curriculum for basic education in Finland, which has officially introduced multidisciplinary learning modules as periods of phenomenon-based project studies. In this paper, we discuss how the specific approach is integrated into the curriculum, its theoretical grounding and its connections to constructivism. We also explore its implications for teaching and learning from a phenomenological perspective. The paper concludes that the responsive relation between teaching and learning is essential when our purpose is educational. Students are part of the learning process, but they do not necessarily initiate it; similarly, teachers cannot fully instruct it. Thus, we need to make meaning of the space between teaching and learning, in an effort to reclaim learning for pedagogy.

KEYWORDS: phenomena, phenomenology, constructivism, multidisciplinary learning modules, curriculum reform, Finland.

Contact:	Vasileios Symeonidis vasileios.symeonidis@uibk.ac.at Johanna F. Schwarz johanna-franziska.schwarz@uibk.ac.at
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REFORM AHEAD: TOWARD A PHENOMENON-BASED APPROACH IN FINNISH EDUCATION

In the last 16 years, Finland's education system has been regarded as one of the best in the world, receiving major media publicity, international recognition and respect. Each year educators, researchers, experts and various interest groups visit Finland in search of "the holy grail" of education, expecting to gain new ideas and insights they could apply back home. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an internationally benchmarked study that assesses the competences of 15-year-olds in reading, math and science every three years, has steadily ranked Finland's among the world's top-performing education systems since the study's launch in 2000. Although Finnish students' test scores declined in the latest PISA results, Finland remains high in the league tables and receives similar results in IEA's TIMSS and PIRLS[1] -(IEA, 2012). The "Finnish miracle," as the media have called it, is well documented by Pasi Sahlberg in his work "Finnish Lessons." Sahlberg (2011, pp. 128-131) identified five reasons to explain the success behind the good educational performance of the Finnish comprehensive education system: (a) *Peruskoulou* – the nine-year compulsory school – offers equal educational opportunities for all; (b) teaching is an inspiring profession that attracts many young Finns;

(c) Finland has a smart policy for accountability; (d) people trust schools; and (e) the Finnish education system has sustainable leadership and political stability.

However, Finland has recently undertaken major education reforms and policy developments, including the renewal of the core curriculum for pre-primary and basic education. At this point, it would be reasonable to question why a highly ranked and well- performing education system, as indicated by various comparative studies, would need to be reviewed and reformed. According to Halinen (2014), the Finnish National Board of Education's head of curriculum development, this happens because "the world is changing around the school" and, since the 2000s, the impact of globalization and the challenges for a sustainable future are increasing. Within this new context, new skills for building a sustainable future are required, and thus the content of teaching and learning should be renewed accordingly (ibid). Mattila and Silander (2015) also argue that technology and internationalization pose new challenges for Finnish education, which needs to keep developing and move toward the future, when thinking skills, social interaction, information processing skills and skills in producing information are expected to play an important role. As Sahlberg (2015) mentions, the aim of the curriculum reform is not to reclaim the high national test scores of previous years, but to help educators teach what young people need in their lives.

The other side of the same coin indicates, though, the need to reform to boost economic growth and to reduce the state's debt and increasing unemployment rates. Budget cuts are therefore seen as necessary, and education is "one of the main target areas for cuts"; 210 million Euros have been the estimated education cuts for 2016 (Eurydice, 2015). Since the global financial crisis in 2008, Finland's economic performance has been going downhill, and major newspapers have characterised Finland as "the new sick man of Europe" (Khan, 2015; Walker, 2016). Uncompetitive labor costs, the decline of Nokia, Russia's trade retaliation against the EU, aging population and high rates of government spending are some of the reasons cited by public media for "Finland's long economic winter" (Walker, 2016). Under these circumstances, the restructuring of the system has been considered necessary, and the center-right Finnish coalition government has promoted "renewal" in five strategic priorities, one of which is knowledge and education (Prime Minister's Office Finland, 2015, pp. 18–20). The planned reform projects include the introduction of new learning environments and digital materials to schools, reform of vocational education, acceleration of transition to work, better access to art and culture, cooperation between higher education institutions and businesses, and youth guarantee initiatives (Prime Minister's Office Finland, 2015).

In light of this plethora of reforms, this paper will focus on the analysis of the phenomenon-based approach in teaching and learning, a pedagogical initiative that has received wide media coverage and publicity, because of the news that Finland has moved away from traditional subject teaching and toward multidisciplinary learning modules. The initial exaggerated reaction of Finland's abolishing subject teaching proved misleading, as it soon became clear that subjects remain in place, while Finn-

ish education will officially introduce study periods in which students will be working with several teachers across subjects on phenomenon-based projects. Although interdisciplinary teaching and learning have a long history in Finnish schools (Sahlberg, 2015), what is new in this reform is that each student will be required in basic education to participate in at least one multidisciplinary learning module per year, studying what has been referred to as "phenomena" or topics.

Thus, a first task of this paper will be to identify how the phenomenon-based approach to teaching and learning has been included in the latest curriculum reform in Finland, examining official policy documents such as the new national curriculum for basic education. An analysis of the phenomenon-based approach will follow, outlining the main characteristics and considering affiliated learning theories, particularly the strong connection to constructivism (Silander, 2015a). To further understand the implications of the phenomenon-based approach to teaching and learning, we will subsequently examine the specific approach through the pedagogical lenses of phenomenology, the philosophy of phenomena. Some critical remarks and recommendations for rethinking teaching and learning through phenomena conclude the paper.

INTRODUCING PHENOMENA IN THE NEW NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR BASIC EDUCATION IN FINLAND

In 2014, Finland renewed its national core curriculum for basic education, on the basis of which local curricula have been developed and gradually introduced in schools since August 2016. The national curriculum is drawn up by the Finnish National Board of Education and functions as a framework according to which municipal education authorities and individual schools shape their own local curricula, considering national goals and local needs (FNBE, 2016, section 1.1). The national curriculum supports and steers the provision of education, offering general guidelines related to objectives and core content in different subjects. It describes the overall aims of basic education, its operating culture, and organization of work at school, as well as issues of assessment, support in learning and student welfare.

The national curriculum conceptualizes learning as a cumulative and guided process in which students have an active and self-regulatory role, setting their own goals and solving problems both independently and collaboratively (FNBE, 2016, section 2.3). Through the learning process, students become mindful of their own learning and develop learning-to-learn skills. The following quotation is representative of this approach:

> The National Core Curriculum is based on a conception of learning that sees the pupils as active actors. They learn to set goals and to solve problems both independently and together with others. Learning is an inseparable part of an individual's growth as a human being and the building of a decent life for the community. Language, physical elements and the use of different senses

> are essential for thinking and learning. While acquiring new knowledge and skills, the pupils learn to reflect on their learning, experiences and emotions. Positive emotional experiences, the joy of learning and creative activities promote learning and inspire the pupils to develop their competence. (FNBE, 2016, section 2.3)

Competence is a key theme underpinning the mission and national goals of education and is seen as "a precondition for personal growth, studying, work and civic activity now and in the future" (FNBE, 2016, section 3.3). The focus is particularly on transversal competences that cross the boundaries of individual subjects and aim to link different fields of knowledge and skills. They are entities consisting of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and will that can be applied in a given situation. Seven transversal competence areas have been developed and considered key in defining the objectives and key content areas of the subjects. These are (1) thinking and learning to learn; (2) cultural competence, interaction and self-expression; (3) taking care of oneself and managing daily life; (4) multiliteracy; (5) information and communications technology (ICT) competence; (6) working life competence and entrepreneurship; and (7) participation, involvement and building of a sustainable future (ibid, section 3.3). Learning environments and a variety of working methods direct the learning of students toward demonstrating their competences in different ways.

To support the development of transversal competencies, multidisciplinary learning modules (MLs) are introduced as study periods of integrative instruction based on cooperation between subjects (FNBE, 2016, section 4.4). MLs aim to engage students in exploring holistically authentic *phenomena*, which are interpreted as real-world themes and as such cannot be contained in only one subject. The purpose of MLs is to functionally approach and expand students' world of experience, strengthening their motivation and making learning meaningful to them. Education providers are, therefore, required to ensure that each student participates in at least one ML per year.

MLs are planned locally, have a long duration and are meant to reflect the individual school's values and conception of learning. Within this decentralized model, education providers make decisions on how the MLs are implemented, with regard to local goals, principles and methods that guide the implementation process, objectives and content, assessment practices, and monitoring of the implementation. Moreover, links are established between the school and the society around it, in view of creating experiences of participation in the communal building of knowledge. In this respect, actors outside the school can support the implementation of MLs. Key, however, in the design of MLs is the role of pupils, who actively take part in planning objectives, content and working methods (FNBE, 2016, section 4.4).

Throughout the curriculum, and particularly in subject-related sections, the term *phenomena* is often employed to indicate things as they appear in our surroundings or experiences that are observable and can be explored. The specific term seems to penetrate the content of the new curriculum, making clear a pedagogical direction

toward learning through and about real-world topics that have a practical impact for students and help them develop competences essential to their lives. Although the previous version of the national curriculum (FNBE, 2004), valid from 2004 to 2015, lacks any reference to phenomena or competences, the new version intertwines the two terms in a continuous and reciprocally influenced manner. Thus, dealing with phenomena that cross traditional boundaries between subjects plays a central role in the development of transversal competences that link different fields of knowledge and skills, and can in turn be applied to real-world situations.

AN OVERVIEW OF PHENOMENON-BASED TEACHING AND LEARNING

In "How to create the school of the future: revolutionary thinking and design from Finland," Mattila and Silander (2015) develop their thinking on phenomenon-based teaching and learning within the context of digital pedagogy. Silander (2015a, p. 16) argues that holistic real-world phenomena help initiate learning, provided they "are studied as complete entities, in their real context, and the information and skills related to them are studied by crossing the boundaries between subjects." Examples of phenomena can include such topics as climate change, the European Union, media and technology, water or energy. A phenomenon is thus seen as:

» An authentic object of observation.
» A systemic framework for the things to be learned (systemic model).
» A metaphorical framework for the things to be learned (analogous model).
» A motivating "base" for attaching the things to be learned (Silander, 2015a, p. 18).

Phenomenon-based learning starts with observation of a phenomenon from different points of view. Silander (2015b) argues that phenomenon-based learning consists of five dimensions: holisticity, authenticity, contextuality, problem-based inquiry learning and learning process. Depending on how the specific approach is implemented in a classroom, the results can range from a superficial study of the phenomena with limited evidence to a more advanced application of learning. In its advanced potential, holisticity refers to the multidisciplinarity of phenomenon-based learning, which is not integrated in traditional school subjects but rather focuses on a systematic, comprehensive exploration of current and actual events in the real world. Authenticity implies the use of methods, tools and materials, which are necessary in real-world situations to solve problems that are relevant to students' lives and significant in the community. Theories and information have an immediate utility value, while experts and professionals from various fields are included in the learning community and learners are encouraged to take part in real expert culture and practices. A real environment, rather than a traditional classroom, is considered the authentic learning environment.

The third dimension, contextuality, refers to learning of phenomena as systemic entities, which are meaningful in a natural context and setting. In this sense, a phenomenon cannot be predefined but stays rather vague and ambiguous, as it is brought up by the students who observe their wider context. Through problem-based inquiry

learning, students pose their own questions and collaboratively construct knowledge during the learning process, which is considered an intentional process of developing hypotheses and working theories. Learning tasks facilitate learning and guide students to become mindful of their learning (know-how). In its advanced stage, the students themselves plan the learning process by creating their own learning tasks and tools. Scaffolding is necessary for students to move beyond what they currently know toward what is to be known (Silander, 2015b).

At the same time, phenomenon-based teaching is embedded in a problem-solving environment, where the teacher starts by posing questions or problems and the students "build answers together to questions or problems posed concerning a phenomenon that interests them" (Silander, 2015a, p. 17). Instructional goals are negotiated, not imposed, and evaluation serves as a self-analysis tool. Teaching is learner-centred, and theories to be learned by the students are connected to practical situations and phenomena. To address the study of phenomena in its holisticity, team teaching with different subject teachers is considered an important way of working (Silander, 2015b). In the learning process, teachers are seen as facilitators of learning tasks, who use their expertise not necessarily to transmit facts but, more important, to encourage and guide students to deal with a problem students themselves have identified (Silander, 2015b).

THEORETICAL GROUNDING AND CONNECTION TO CONSTRUCTIVISM

According to Silander (2015a), the phenomenon-based approach in teaching and learning starts from constructivism and includes elements of social-cultural learning (see Vygotsky 1962; 1978; 1987), progressive inquiry learning (see Hakkarainen, 2002; Muukkonen et al., 1999) and problem-based learning (see Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Kilroy, 2004; Schmidt, 1983). The following quote illustrates the learning theories behind the phenomenon-based approach:

> The starting point of phenomenon-based teaching is constructivism, in which learners are seen as active knowledge builders and information is seen as being constructed as a result of problem-solving, constructed out of "little pieces" into a whole that suits the situation in which it is used at the time. When phenomenon-based learning occurs in a collaborative setting (the learners work in teams, for example), it supports the socio-constructivist and socio-cultural learning theories, in which information is not seen only as an internal element of an individual; instead, information is seen as being formed in a social context. […] In curricula, the phenomenon-based approach supports, in particular, learning in accordance with inquiry learning, problem-based learning and project and portfolio learning in educational institutions as well as their practical implementation. (Silander, 2015a, p. 19)

Constructivist theory of learning, in its modern form, is based on how people make sense of their experience (Taber, 2011). Therefore, meaningful learning is considered a personal process of making meaning out of what we see and hear in our surroundings. Every student in a class brings unique cognitive resources, which lead to the construction of personal knowledge (Taber, 2011). However, learning by the child, according to Vygotsky (1978), also occurs through social interactions, not just through self-initiated processes. Vygotsky's theories stress the importance of social contributions in acquiring knowledge within a human community and assume that cognitive development varies across cultures (ibid). With the zone of proximal development, which refers to what a learner cannot yet do independently but can achieve with guidance and support from a more knowledgeable partner, Vygotsky leads us to the notion of teaching as scaffolding (Wood as cited in Taber, 2011, p. 52). With the right support, guidance, learning materials or cultural artefacts, learners can achieve tasks that are currently beyond their knowledge but within the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky's work implies the differentiation of teaching and the importance of learning with peers, not just with the teacher (Taber, 2011).

The model of progressive inquiry, developed by Kai Hakkarainnen and his team at the University of Helsinki, refers to "the sustained processes of advancing and building of knowledge characteristic to scientific inquiry" (Muukkonen et al., 1999, p. 2). It emphasizes a cyclical learning process of engaging students with questions and explanation-driven inquiry, which reflects the practices of scientific research communities. Creating the context is an important first step of this model, which assumes that new knowledge is constructed socially through generating research questions, developing working theories and engaging in a process of deep inquiry, in which searching for new information leads to constructing more articulated working theories, and students move step by step toward answering the initial questions (ibid, pp. 2-4). Similarly, problem-based learning, which originates from and has been widely used in medical schools (Kilroy 2004; Hmelo-Silver, 2004), fosters an experiential approach to learning. Students develop strategies and construct knowledge through the experience of solving real-world problems. In this way, students become active learners who assume responsibility for their learning, developing a flexible understanding and lifelong learning skills (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

It thus becomes clear that all approaches that inform phenomenon-based teaching and learning are grounded in and derived from constructivist epistemology. Multiple perspectives, authentic problem-solving activities, real-world environments, inquiry learning and scaffolding are some of the themes related to constructivist teaching and learning. The similarities between the approaches imply that learning is mediated and controlled by the learner, who constructs knowledge in a process facilitated by the teacher. The role of the teacher is to guide and organize the learning process rather than strictly provide knowledge. From this perspective, students are seen as active participants who engage in social construction of knowledge.

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL IN PHENOMENON-BASED TEACHING AND LEARNING

Examining the phenomenon-based approach in teaching and learning through the pedagogical lenses of phenomenology, the philosophy of phenomena, sheds light on issues worth considering. The word *phenomenon* stems from Greek φαινόμενον (*fainómenon)* meaning the obvious, that which shows itself, emerges from itself (Heidegger, 2006, p. 28ff). However, it is important to note that what emerges and shows itself is never the phenomenon in its entirety; its appearance, rather, is what is expressed in the following analogy:

> This is how people speak of "phenomena of disease." This includes bodily occurrences that show themselves and by doing so indicate something, that does *not* show itself. The occurrence of such incidents, their showing themselves, coincides with the occurrence of disturbances that do not show themselves. Phenomena as the phenomena of something, in fact, do not mean showing themselves by themselves but indicating something that does not show itself by something that does. (2006, p. 29)[2]

To explain what Heidegger postulates here in an example, let us consider the phenomenon of weather. Weather itself never shows itself, but it has occurrences such as rain, temperature, fog or snow that indicate the phenomenon of weather, which itself does not show and cannot be directly explored. While the concise program being implemented along the principles of phenomenon-based learning seems to overlook the complexity stated above, a phenomenological perspective on learning would use the complexity as a starting point (Meyer-Drawe, 2008). As expressed in the example with the weather, we cannot directly explore a phenomenon in its entirety, but we need to focus on the concrete articulations in the real world. Therefore, interdisciplinarity is also considered key from a phenomenological perspective. This interdisciplinarity involves studying phenomena in their social, cultural, historical and physical contexts.

However, learning in itself is also a phenomenon that seems to be on everybody's mind and agenda these days. For this reason, our analysis will now focus on the potentials and limitations of phenomenological and constructivist perceptions of learning. Biesta speaks of the *learnification* of society (see 2009, 2012), a concept that in his view describes a turn toward *learning* and away from *education* as well as "the disappearance of teaching and the concomitant disappearance of the teacher" (Biesta, 2012, p. 35). Biesta specifies that, given that millions of teachers teach daily in schools around the world, the disappearance of teaching refers to a recent development, which he describes as the "erosion" (2012, p. 35) of the understanding that teachers are there to *teach* rather than to orchestrate learning environments, mediate conflicts, manage classrooms or facilitate learning; themes which often appear in constructivist learning theory.

This idea, according to Biesta, must not be misunderstood as a plea for restoring old models of teacher control in which the "best and most effective teachers are the ones who are able to steer the whole educational process towards the production of pre-specified 'learning-outcomes' or pre-defined identities, such as the 'good citizen' or the 'flexible life-long learner'" (2012, p. 35). Meyer-Drawe is similarly critical of the "hochtourige Lerner," the *high-speed learner*, who appears as the questionable icon of unlimited progression of learning (2008, pp. 35, 125–155). The student is never *just* "the object of the teacher's actions" (Biesta, 2012, p. 36) but rather, as Meyer-Drawe puts it, our teaching is fulfilled in the learning of others – of students, for instance (2011, May 8). This idea of teaching means that teachers cannot control their students' learning but should respond to articulations of how students experience what they encounter at school. Students experience school in positive or negative ways, and a responsive teacher would take into account articulations of such experiences. This responsiveness implies an important relation between teaching and learning in which students must not be the sole actors in their learning process.

Both Biesta and Meyer-Drawe, in one way or another, emphasize that learning is always learning *of* something and *by* someone e.g. *from* someone (Biesta, 2009, 2012; Meyer-Drawe, 2008, 2015). Thus, to differentiate the learning question from the educational question, Biesta (2012) stresses the importance of paying attention to "*content, purpose* and *relationships*[3]" (p. 36) as core items for teaching. Biesta (2012) attributes the aforementioned disappearance of the teacher not only to the "rise of a 'new language of learning' in education" but also to "a number of discursive shifts that have occurred over the past twenty years" (p. 37)

> […] including the tendency to refer to teachers as facilitators of learning, to teaching as the creation of learning opportunities, to schools as learning environments, to students as learners and adults as learning adults, to the field of education as that of lifelong learning, and to the very idea of education as that of 'teachingandlearning' – which I deliberately write as one word, as this is how many people nowadays seem to use it. (p. 37)

Biesta traces this development back to a number of others, such as the postmodern critique of authoritarian forms of education, the impact of neoliberal ways of thinking, and the impact of the internet, but above all to the impact of constructivism, which in reference to Barr and Tagg he labels "a Khunian paradigm shift from the 'Instruction Paradigm' to the 'Learning Paradigm'" (Biesta, 2012, p. 37). Regarding the linguistic perspective on the term *learning*, according to Biesta (2012), it depicts a process devoid of meaning and direction, thus turning teachers into "process-managers of empty and in themselves directionless learning processes" (p. 38). The language of learning is not considered an adequate educational language, partly because "learning in itself is empty with regard to content and direction," and partly because "learning is an individualistic and individualizing term" (p. 38). However, education is always a matter of learning something from someone, and educational practices

are always framed by a *telos* – the Aristotelian term of purpose – which is fundamental when we want "to make meaningful decisions about the 'what' and 'how' of our educational efforts, that is, decisions about contents and processes" (p. 38). The language of learning seems both to be of little help in articulating the complex, intricate pedagogical endeavor and to conceal the real nature of learning, making the decision-making processes related to the purpose of education invisible and inaccessible (Biesta, 2012).

CRITICAL IMPLICATIONS FROM A PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Halinen (2014) maintained that the content of teaching, pedagogy and school practices should be renewed in relation to the changing environment within which schools operate and the skills needed to build a sustainable future. One way to achieve this renewal is to introduce multidisciplinary learning modules and phenomena in the new Finnish core curriculum. The new national curriculum addresses learning as a goal-oriented and lifelong process, in which students reflect on their learning, experiences and emotions and assume responsibility for the learning process (FNBE, 2016). Students, who are considered to be "active actors" in their lifelong learning cycles, are to become mindful of their own learning and acquire strategies of *how* to learn, a joyful, creative and reflective activity to ensure a good life (FNBE, 2016, section 2.3). Competence, the buzzword of the 21st century, lies at the heart of this conceptualization of learning, which is essentially constructivist and psychological.

While all these characteristics sound fair and nobody will veto the importance of the seven transversal competence areas, a pedagogically and phenomenologically oriented learning perspective adds ingredients to this conceptualization that avoid students' getting all the blame if learning endeavors fail. It seems to be the sole responsibility of the students to accumulate knowledge, solve problems, learn independently and collaboratively, become culturally multiliterate, become confident in expressing themselves and reflective about their own learning.

To some extent, phenomenon-based learning stems from reform pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning that are characterized by emotive words such as holisticity, child-centeredness and lifeworld, and appear to neglect the complexity of educational situations. Phenomenological conceptions of learning emphasize making experiences [*Erfahrungen machen*], which is different from constructing knowledge. It gives credit to an element of uncertainty and the belief that neither teaching, nor learning can be fully instructed, and that the former does not necessarily result in the latter. Pedagogically and phenomenologically oriented approaches to teaching and learning regard both sides of the same coin as essentially social activities that reflect contemporary as well as historical dimensions of sociality. One should beware of educational reform and policy making that tends to shift the responsibility for learning outcomes onto the students and reduces the teaching job to facilitating, mediating and organizing multidisciplinary learning modules. Pedagogically and phenomenologically oriented approaches to learning and teaching conceptualize this

relation as a responsive one (Agostini, 2015; Meyer-Drawe, 1987; Waldenfels, 2009; Westphal, 2015). Neither teachers nor students alone contribute to successful learning outcomes, but within their responsive relation occurs a transformation that is the work of both. Approaches that neglect the responsivity of this relation risk turning teaching and learning into neoliberal practices in which the students not only receive all the blame if their endeavors fail but also, reflectively, ascribe this failure to themselves.

RETHINKING TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH PHENOMENA

Compared to tradition-laden *Bildung,* to what extent is *learning* an appropriate concept of pedagogy? Some scholars in the German-speaking world devalue *learning* as the minor concept that became *en vogue* because of the empirical turn in the 1960s. In this tradition, *learning* was conceived primarily as a psychological term that soon turned into an outcome-oriented notion that made it measurable and clearly determinable compared to *Bildung* as the richer and more comprehensive concept. To Käte Meyer-Drawe (2008) *learning* is a notion that dates back to antiquity, to Aristotle and Plato, that has been linked to various metaphors. She refers to Plato's allegory of the cave, as well as Socrates' comparison of the educator's job to a midwife's. She regards an experiential conception of learning as the most relevant one in pedagogical terms, and one of her prime interests is to reclaim learning for pedagogical thinking and practice rather than having it surrender to psychology or the neuro-sciences. Learning occurs when the old is gone and the new has not yet emerged. Gaining a new perspective necessarily results in losing an old one. This is no pleasant state. Meyer-Drawe is critical of current notions of learning as an easygoing, funlike, brain-gym activity that is easy to produce. She is skeptical of what she calls the hype around the *autonomous learner* and *self-regulated learning* (Meyer-Drawe, 2012). Learning is always learning *of* something *by* someone and, as a process, comparable to awakening; it is active and passive at the same time. We are present, but it withdraws from our own initiative. Only in hindsight can we say we have learned.

As educators, we always perceive something *as* something, act *as* someone, analyze something *as* something, read something *as* something, see something *as* something and so on. The double structure of this "something" corresponds with phenomenological thinking. Our attention is never neutral or innocent; it is always directed. Perceiving students as creators of their own learning will shape the way we deal with them and may limit our perception of their potential. We must, therefore, consider both the *what* and *how* of the learning process, and make meaning of the space between teaching and learning. Students are part of the learning process, but they do not necessarily initiate it, and teachers cannot fully instruct it.

Pedagogues, educators, teachers act within a *normative* context, which must not result in too naive ways of considering lifeworldly experiences, but requires the application of a dialectic balance between intuition and reasoning. While this is nothing policy makers prefer, educational situations in general and learning in particular

are complex. It is the inevitability of crisis, as well as the impact of the discontinuous, the alien, the ambivalent and the negative that shape educational situations at school. The teacher is fundamental in steering students through such turmoil.

CONCLUSIONS

The phenomenon-based approach to teaching and learning invites us to break the boundaries of traditional subject teaching and move toward interdisciplinary explorations of phenomena. While interdisciplinarity can help in revealing and understanding the nature of a phenomenon from multiple perspectives, it is hardly ever possible to approach a phenomenon directly in its entirety. We can only experience articulations of phenomena through our senses. Thus, it is essential to recognize and embrace the complexity of this process, which is not an easygoing activity. As humans we live *in* the world and do not construct it. This complexity also applies to learning situations at school that cannot be fully instructed, even though this does not make careful planning and preparation obsolete. In a phenomenological perspective it, rather, calls for embracing the fact that gaining a new perspective requires letting go of an old one – a painful process. Educators must be prepared to guide students carefully in this process.

The close connection between constructivism and the phenomenon-based approach reveals specific implications for teaching and learning. Within a constructivist context, teachers seem to be absolved from their responsibility to teach because the meanings of phenomena emerge in the minds of students. In a phenomenological view, teachers need to give way to students' experiences and recognize moments of learning when they arise. But they must also assume a fair share of responsibility in the educational process. According to Biesta (2012, p. 44), teachers need to make "concrete situated judgements about what is educationally desirable, both with regard to the aims of education and with regard to its means." Competences, although important, cannot be considered a sufficient condition for good teaching because for each particular educational situation a need for judgment arises, as to which competence the teacher should employ (Biesta, 2012, p. 44). In this respect, the Finnish advantage of teachers and quality teacher education, as Sahlberg (2011) mentions, must remain high on the policy agenda when educational reforms are planned or implemented.

With regard to the role of students, the idea of developing self-regulated learners might lead to the unintended outcome of students' receiving the blame if educational endeavors fail. Learning is always learning of something, for particular purposes and from someone. From a phenomenological perspective, learning as an experience implies that students must undergo experiences; they cannot construct them. And this situation gives rise to an element of uncertainty and ambivalence, which educators need to be prepared to encounter.

Last but not least, phenomenology argues for the responsive relation between teaching and learning, which in itself is a third dimension that comes into being

through the common endeavors of teachers and students. This unity, overlooked by approaches that focus predominantly on teaching or predominantly on learning, is essential when the purpose is educational. It is therefore our task as educators to reclaim learning for pedagogy.

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FENOMENOLOGICZNA PERSPEKTYWA NA NAUCZANIE I UCZENIE SIĘ UJMUJĄCE CAŁOŚCIOWE ZJAWISKA. NIEDAWNA REFORMA PROGRAMOWA W FINLANDII

ABSTRAKT: Niniejszy artykuł omawia ujmujący całościowe zjawiska model uczenia się i nauczania (*phenomenon-based approach*) z pedagogicznej perspektywy fenomenologii, czyli filozofii tego, co bezpośrednio dane. Prezentowane podejście stało się fundamentem nowej podstawy programowej dla szkół podstawowych w Finlandii, która oficjalnie wprowadza multidyscyplinarne moduły kształcenia przewidujące okresy realizacji projektów poświęconych całościowym zjawiskom. W artykule pokazujemy, jak to konkretne podejście wbudowane zostało w program nauczania, jakie jest jego teoretyczne zakotwiczenie i jak powiązane jest ono z konstruktywizmem. Zgłębiamy również jego implikacje dla nauczania i uczenia się w optyce fenomenologicznej. Na zakończenie przedstawiamy wniosek, że kluczowym czynnikiem w osiąganiu celów edukacyjnych jest właściwe sprzężenie między nauczaniem a uczeniem się. Uczniowie stanowią czynnik procesu uczenia się, ale niekoniecznie sami proces ten inicjują; nauczyciele, podobnie, nie mogą go w pełni samodzielnie przeprowa-

dzić. A zatem aby przywrócić uczenie się pedagogice, musimy zrozumieć przestrzeń między nauczaniem a uczeniem się.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: zjawiska, fenomenologia, konstruktywizm, wielodyscyplinarne moduły kształcenia, reforma programu nauczania, Finlandia.

1. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has conducted the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) every four years since 1995 and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) every five years since 2001.

2. Translation of the German original by the authors: "So ist die Rede von »Krankheitserscheinungen«. Gemeint sind Vorkommnisse am Leib, die sich zeigen und im Sichzeigen als diese Sichzeigenden etwas »indizieren«, was sich selbst nicht zeigt. Das Auftreten solcher Vorkommnisse, ihr Sichzeigen, geht zusammen mit dem Vorhandensein von Störungen, die selbst sich nicht zeigen. Erscheinung als Erscheinung »von etwas«, besagt gerade nicht: sich selbst zeigen, sondern das Sichmelden von etwas, das sich nicht zeigt, durch etwas, das sich zeigt" Heidegger (2006, p. 29).

3. Highlighted in the original.