



## Chapter I

# Bringing more ‘school’ into our educational institutions. Reclaiming school as pedagogic form

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*taming school, pedagogic form, scholastic learning, school operations, emancipation, learning environments*

### Abstract

Today the issue of ‘educational change’ is widely discussed. Such change, so we can hear, is needed because of increasing linguistic heterogeneity and cultural diversity, because of technological developments and because of the persisting correlation between social background and educational success. In this context ‘educational’ seems to refer to the institutional practice of the school. But what do we mean by school? In our contribution, we offer some elements of what we call an internal pedagogical perspective on school and on scholastic learning which clarifies its emancipatory potential as *pedagogic form*. This will allow us to address the issue of educational change differently and to substantiate a plea for bringing more ‘school’ into our educational institutions. We (1) distinguish between an internal perspective and various external perspectives on the school. We, then, (2) sketch the basic assumptions, operations and experiences of the school as pedagogic form emphasizing (3) that school is technically, pedagogically and practically composed and (4) indicating very briefly how school has and is been tamed. Finally (5) we suggest some challenges for making or reinventing school today, relating it briefly to the issue of teacher education.

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## 1 Introduction<sup>2</sup>

In our contribution we want to clarify why, with regard to the actual discussions about the future of education and of teacher education, it is worthwhile to explicitly address the notion of ‘school’ as *pedagogic form*. Or even stronger, why, from a pedagogical perspective, one could plea for bringing more ‘school’ into our educational institutions which in fact, while becoming increasingly ‘personalized learning environments’, rather seem to tame or neutralize school. In order to substantiate this plea, we will offer some elements of what we want to call an internal pedagogical perspective on the school and on scholastic learning. We will do that in 5 steps: (1) distinguishing between an internal perspective and various external perspectives; (2) sketching the basic assumptions, operations and experiences of the school as pedagogic form; (3) emphasizing that school is technically, pedagogically and practically composed; (4) indicating very briefly how school has and is been tamed; (5) finally suggest some challenges for making school today, relating it to the issue of teacher education and educational research.

## 2 An internal pedagogical perspective

Let us start from the common image of the school as being situated between the family on the one hand and society on the other. From the viewpoint of the family as primary educational milieu the school appears as secondary and additional milieu to compensate for what the family milieu cannot provide. From the viewpoint of society the school appears as the place where youngsters are prepared to participate in society as labor force or citizens. In both cases the finality of school education is defined from an external perspective and appears as functional or instrumental for this external finality. Such an external perspective is also common to sociological, economic, cultural and psychological approaches towards school implying also particular concepts of learning.

In the typical *sociological* approach school education is conceived as an ‘organized and professionalized *socialization*’. It exists either to reproduce the social order through various functions (qualification, selection and allocation, integration and legitimation, e.g. Peschar & Wesselingh 1995). Or, it appears as a political instrument for producing a (projected) new society (e.g. Apple 1979). The finality

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2 This text is an extended version of a lecture at the “Abschluss-Symposium der Creative Unit ‘Fachbezogene Bildungsprozesse in Transformation’ in Delmenhorst”, 15.-16. Juni 2017. It rests largely on ideas that have also been presented and sometimes also more elaborated elsewhere (see e.g. Simons & Masschelein 2017; Masschelein & Simons 2013).

of education is defined externally in both cases. Besides this sociological perspective we can point to the *cultural* perspective which approaches school from the point of view of a cultural community. In this perspective, youngsters have to become part of a cultural community that has its values, habits, customs, social and cultural practices, ways of life. Hence, school education is to be conceived as an issue of *initiation*, of introducing into a cultural community and it is starting from that community that the role and meaning of education is defined (e.g. Lancy 2008). A different version of this cultural perspective is that which proposes or preconceives an image of the 'cultivated' human being to be fostered through education. Furthermore, we can distinguish today a very common *economical* perspective where school education is approached as an *investment* in human capital, offering both individual and social benefits (Schultz 1971; Becker 1976). School is the time and space in which parents or society as a whole invest in order to *produce* skills and knowledge that can provide an economic return. School education is externally defined in terms of its contribution to the labor market, to the individual career, to the raise of income or economic growth. Finally (and without claiming that these are the only possible perspectives)<sup>3</sup> we can point to the *psychological* approach where education is understood and even assessed against the background of processes of (cognitive, moral, social, ...) *development* and *growth* (e.g. Kohlberg & Mayer 1972). This is equally an external perspective in as far as what happens within school education and statements about what should happen are derived from processes, development laws or stages resulting out of research in developmental psychology, learning psychology or neuropsychology. Of course psychological insights can play a role in education, but they offer an external point of view from where school education appears as purely (dys)functional or instrumental (or detrimental) for processes which are described independently from school education.

All these approaches are not only understanding the finality of school education from an external point of view (society, culture, economy, development) but they also introduce their own notions of learning so to say: socialization, initiation, investment, production, growth, development, identification. All these notions have become common in our discourse about education and we do not want to question neither the notions nor the approaches to which they are related. But we do want to make an attempt to elaborate what we call an internal pedagogical approach. In this approach we assume that there is something typical about school education which cannot be understood either from the issues that the family is dealing with or from societal functions. We imply that this is not just a theoretical

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3 We could add e.g. the philosophical one in terms of ideas or purposes, the ethical one in terms of values, norms or interpersonal relations, or the political one in terms of struggle or interests. All these perspectives remain external and always instrumentalize or functionalize school.

exercise but that is highly relevant in a practical (also political and social) sense. Indeed, it will allow us to clarify why the issue of the school is a crucial public issue and it will allow us to formulate a kind of touchstone which on the one hand could be used to verify whether a concrete gathering is actually to be called scholastic, and on the other to think about how to make school today in response to current societal challenges and the so-called need for change.

### 3 Assumptions, operations and experiences of school education

Let us, thus, try to indicate what makes a school into a school from an *educational point of view*. Such a view deals with the effective and real assumptions and operations performed by this *particular, artificially (i.e. technologically and pedagogically<sup>4</sup>) composed, assembly and arrangement of people, time, space and matter that constitutes a milieu where (young) people are brought in each other's company and in company of (something of) the world in a very particular way*. School in this sense, just as democracy, is an invention and, therefore, also artificial. Just as democracy is not the natural state of politics (of dealing with the issue of living together) that would arise if you remove all artificial power plays, school learning has indeed nothing to do with the kind of natural or informal learning that is often (implicitly or explicitly) cherished by those who oppose 'scholastic' forms of learning. Trying to explore what this educational invention/event is about, trying to reclaim it, is not to idealize the past, to romanticize school, or worse, to return to the past to restore it, not at all.<sup>5</sup> The reason is that we think it is still worthwhile to *try to deal with the future of our world and of the coming generations in this particular way, which we call school*. Although, just as for democracy, it remains an issue to be discussed (they both have provoked, of course, strong questions and debates regarding their 'essence', their 'desirability', their 'effectiveness' etc. ever since their invention). And just as democracy is not the most effective and efficient managing of our social issues, schools are not the most effective and efficient ways of learning, they do not facilitate but complicate it, however they do so for very

4 In this context 'pedagogically' refers to the pedagogical ethos of the figures that inhabit school (e.g. teachers) and contribute to its operation or happening and we take 'ethos' in the Foucaultian sense of the way to relate to one self, others and the world.

5 Let us emphasize that we neither deny nor trivialize all kinds of oppressive, manipulative, normalizing, disciplining and institutionalizing mechanisms that have been diagnosed as being present in schools. We have analyzed and discussed elsewhere in detail the governmental regimes, the discourses, power strategies and tactics at play in and through education. (E.g. Simons & Masschelein 2008; Simons 2014).

good reasons in our view. Let us explore some assumptions (or starting points) and operations of the school as pedagogic form.<sup>6</sup>

School as pedagogic form refers to the time and space that is arranged starting from the assumption that human beings have no (natural, or social, cultural, ...) destination (German: 'Bestimmung'), and therefore, should have the opportunity to find their own destiny and 'definition'. We want to reserve the notion of school for that indeed simple, but far-reaching assumption. And de-schooling, for us, refers to the opposite assumption that society (science, religion, culture) has to impose a destiny on young people through developing their so-called natural talents, through projecting a predefined image of the educated or cultivated person, through implying a process of (psychological, physical, moral, ...) development, etc.. This starting point of school education articulates a pedagogical understanding of freedom, and, related to that, a pedagogical understanding of equality. This is not a political freedom (towards power or authority), not a juridical freedom (in terms of rights) and not an economic freedom (in the sense of, for instance, freedom of choice). The pedagogical understanding of freedom simply means that human beings have no 'pregiven' (natural, social, cultural) destiny<sup>7</sup>, and therefore are able or can shape/form themselves and give themselves direction to their existence. Equality in pedagogical terms is not the same as social equality (being equal or making equal in social, cultural, economic, national, ... terms), it is not juridical equality (everyone is equal before the law, and everyone should be treated equally according to the law), and it is not about equality of opportunities or outcomes (for instance, to treat or compensate for inequality and to bring everyone at the same start line or to help everyone to pass the same finish line). Pedagogical equality has a double meaning: assuming that everyone as student is able to learn (and study/exercise), and assuming that there is common school matter and stuff – in order to be able to renew the world – for each of the students. School then is the materialization of both of these pedagogical assumptions (of freedom and equality), or to reformulate this: school as pedagogic form is neither oriented towards and tamed by a political utopia nor by a normative ideal of a person, but is *in itself* the materialization of a utopian belief: *everybody can learn everything* (Verburgh et al. 2016). Stated differently: neither what you can learn, nor what you have to

6 For a more elaborated discussion see: Masschelein & Simons (2013; 2015a, 2015b) and Simons & Masschelein (2017).

7 In that sense, it disrupts any order that assigns particular activities and rights to particular bodies, as is explained in Plato's myth of the metals which establishes a 'natural' social destination: "The story goes that once upon time, Mother Nature invented all human beings and mixed different metals – gold, silver, bronze or iron – into their characters? Rulers have gold in their characters, workers have iron, and so on for all different classes and professions" (Plato: Republic Book III, 415).

learn are ‘naturally’ (pre)defined. There is no ‘natural’ or ‘pre-defined’ connection between a body on the one hand and capacities and social positions on the other hand (see also: Rancière 1988). This belief is, in our view, not a kind of goal or aim (projected in the future), but the point of departure. There are clearly other points of departure possible when it comes to learning (e.g. some students should a priori be excluded from certain subjects or natural ability is a decisive criterion to decide on when and what to learn). In other words, instead of thinking about how an utopian school or an utopian educational system would look like (as is often done when thinking about the future of education), we suggest to look at the school itself, and what it does through its pedagogical form, as the materialization of this utopian idea that everybody can learn everything or that humans have no natural destination. In that sense, schools are no instruments to realize more (social) equality in the future, but starting from the assumptions of equality (and freedom) they affect (already) the unequal social and family orders. This implies that the sheer existence of the school always brings into play the existing social order (the existing connections between particular bodies and particular capacities, activities, positions and the implied inequalities).

The school materializes its utopian belief by providing *scholé* or ‘free time’, that is, non-productive time, time of delay, time to study and exercise to all (in principle). School is literally a place of *scholé*, that is the spatialisation and materialisation of ‘free time’ and, thus, of the *separation* of two uses of time. What the school does (if it operates as a school) is to establish a time and space that is in a sense detached and separated from the time and space of both society (*polis*) and the household (*oikos*). However, a condition of free time is not a place of emptiness, but a condition in which things (words and practices) are disconnected from their regular use (in the family and in society) and hence it refers to a condition in which something of the world is open for common use. ‘Free’, then, has at once a negative and positive meaning: freed from productive time and space (the logic of economic or social gain or return is suspended), but freed to study and exercise in order to give shape to oneself and to get in good shape. This is the double sense of what we could call ‘formation’: giving oneself (a) shape/form on the basis of the presented content and precisely through this giving shape also bringing oneself into (good) shape. The terms ‘preparation’ and ‘exercise’ are connected to this understanding – and therefore we can find often an analogy with the athlete (Foucault 2001; Sloterdijk 2013). Formation is bringing oneself into good (physical, cognitive, affective, emotional) shape or condition: making oneself prepared. Prepared means two things: being concerned or involved in some thing (speech acts, bodily acts, issues, ...) but also to be able to have a certain distance (in order to be able to make a right use of them in certain situations and circumstances). The combination of the two is what could be understood also as: being able *to relate to some*

*thing*, to nature, to the digital world, to technology, to language, .... (or as we will see, becoming 'literate' in a broad sense). This implies that formation has always a societal or better a 'worldly/mondial' dimension. It is always about something of society or of the world that is constituting our lives. But school is the place where students get the opportunity *to relate* (i.e. both get involved and at a distance) to that something which is influencing or defining their lives. What the school form does (if it works as a school i.e. turns someone into a student or pupil) is the double movement of bringing someone into a position of being able which is at the same time an exposure to something outside (and hence, an act of presenting and exposing the world). School entails an experience of being able and being exposed. This now has implications both towards the family and towards society.

First, in relation to the family, the school offers the possibility to get children out of the 'family' (with its value and warmth, but also its inequalities). The school offers the experience of being a student or pupil, not a son or daughter. School, if it operates as school, materializes the suspension of the 'family', the opportunity for sons and daughters to leave behind their past and family background, and indeed to become students or pupils like all the rest. Past and background, of course, do not disappear, but when entering the school form (and when this operates as school form) they are suspended. Or put differently: children becoming pupils or students get the (collective and democratic) mark that makes them equal and free: 'I just as anyone else, get the time to exercise and study'. This is not about romanticizing or idealising but about the pragmatics of school education: you leave the family and are no longer son or daughter, but also not immediately included as worker or citizen in society. As student or pupil you can form yourself, but we should remind, as we stated earlier, that this freedom is a pedagogical freedom and that maybe the best description of this freedom is the experience 'to be able', 'I am able'. If school works as a school, if school is 'well made', it puts youngsters in the situation that they are able, which is not just an experience of possibilities, but an experience of being able to begin *with something*, always in relation to something.

Second, in relation to society, one can say on the one hand that school also suspends society, in the sense that as a student or pupil one is not a worker or citizen, and on the other hand that for a society that organizes school, and hence, is not predefining the future of youngsters, the school requires a certain kind of responsibility. The question is then not what school would mean for society, but on the contrary what society could mean for the school (Bachelard 1943/1967). It is society that has to decide upon the content and aims of formation, and so is *forced* by the (existence of) school to have a debate about the curriculum and the kinds of literacy that it wants to enable. We can speak about language literacy, but also about technological or scientific or digital 'literacy'. Being literate meaning:



you have enough *involvement* and *distance* towards the language, the technology, the digital world in order to be able to deal with it at least to some extent independently. Literate means not just being defined by what is influencing you, but being able to relate to the influences. E.g. digital literacy could mean that you are not just able to use google and are not just influenced by what Google makes you do automatically, but that you know what the search algorithm is doing for you, so that you can have a certain distance to it. Literacy in this sense is not referring to an elitist ideal but to a right to get into 'good shape'. The responsibility that the school imposes on society is not to define the figure of the educated person or to make the young realize the dreams that the older no longer see possible for themselves. The issue of the basic aims of the school is the question which kind of literacy we consider important, and the issue of the content refers to the grammars that organize our societal life. The social responsibility that is imposed by the school, therefore, also always implies to describe the 'we' and the 'us' in relation to the new generation.

In this context, we can also indicate how the issue of 'social and cultural diversity/identity' appears from an internal educational perspective on (making) school. Usually the starting point seems to be the affirmation of cultural diversity and differences in terms of identity and the question is then, it seems, how the school can recognize this diversity and these differences and play a role in the struggle for (the recognition of) identity or identities. We do not question the reality and importance of cultural differences and related identities, but we doubt whether these are pertinent categories when it comes to school affairs. We remind that we consider that one of the most important operations of the school is precisely to consider everyone as 'student' or 'pupil' i.e., *suspending*, not destroying, the ties of family and state or any 'closed' or defined community. This is not a kind of school imaginary, but a material intervention. This school operation is, one could say, the visible mark of our acknowledgment that '*our*' children are not '*our*' children. Hence, school is a *plural* and *embodied* performativity, a very concrete assembly of bodies<sup>8</sup> saying: we are no family and not becoming one, we are 'singulars' (in the plural). They 'say' without saying, as a bodily enactment: 'we are not disposable, but call for attention and regard'. Which means that initiation or socialization (preferred forms of learning for family (re)unions) are in fact interrupted and complicated, not facilitated, by education, that is by taking children to school.

8 As Butler and Esposito remind us: embodied forms of gathering or assembly have a significance which is not discursive or pre-discursive - , they have a significance ('say' something) which is not just to be expressed in words (Butler 2015; Esposito 2015).



When we start looking from the perspective of the school to the family and to society (or the state), and not the other way around, the claims of (natural, cultural, social, ...) identity and difference become problematic. Of course, these claims are real, and precisely for that reason pedagogical efforts are needed to suspend them, to bracket them, to interrupt them. The plurality of the school is not a natural state of affairs, it is the result of addressing everyone as 'just one' (not as representative or descendent) but *not* about recognizing each 'person' as having its own 'properties' or 'property', its 'own' talents, 'needs' or 'identity'. It is about refusing any natural or predefined connection between bodies and their 'proper' characteristics or the capacities ascribed or attributed to them. The pragmatics of the school is exactly about this: it offers the experience of being without destination but being able to find one's own destination. At school we are Julie, Maximiliano, Walter, Inés, Jorge, Clara, Martha, ..... We are called by our given names, which somehow marks a non-genealogical movement, and not by our surnames. In fact, at least that is the case in Belgium, being called by our surnames at school often is exactly re-installing a kind of genealogical claim, re-attaching someone to his or her family, and removing students from the class or school. Of course there are differences between students, be it clothing, religion, gender, background or culture. But in the classroom, by concentrating on what is brought to the table, those differences are (temporarily and to some extent) suspended.

#### 4 School: technologically and pedagogically composed.

We have touched upon some of the operations of the school as *pedagogic form* in the previous section, let us just briefly summarize them: (1) the operation to consider everyone as 'student' or 'pupil'; (2) the operation of suspension i.e. putting *temporarily* out of effect the habitual order and use of things; (3) the operation of *making* 'free time' i.e. materialization or spatialization of the time for study and exercise; (4) the operation of *making* something (knowledge, practices) *public* and putting (them) on the table, at arm length (what could also be called a *profanation*) in a grammated form i.e. turning something of the world into 'school matter' i.e. also into public matter. (5) the operation of making 'attentive' or *forming attention* relying on a double 'love', both for the world and the new generation (see Arendt 2006/1958), and on disciplining<sup>9</sup> practices to make attention and renewal possible. The importance of attention can also be formulated differently: the school does not only make things known, but also exposes students to these things and gives them

<sup>9</sup> This discipline is not about normalizing bodies and practices, but about enabling attention and getting in shape to take care. One could think about the discipline of the athlete to get her body (and mind) in good shape.

'authority' or 'presence', makes them come into our *company* in the strong sense. The school refers, then, to an assembly of people and things arranged as a way to (be able to) deal with, pay attention to, take care of some-thing – to get and be in its company – in which this care entails structurally an exposition. The form of *suspension*, *profanation* and *attention* is what makes school time a public time; it is a time where words are not part (no longer, not yet) of a shared language, where things are not (no longer, not yet) a property and to be used according to already familiar guidelines, where acts and movements are not (no longer, not yet) habits of a culture, where thinking is not (no longer, not yet) a system of thought. Things are 'put on the table', transforming them into common things, things that are at disposal for free use. What has been suspended is their 'economy', the reasons and objectives that define them during work or social, regular time. Education is a whole of practices to keep the things of the world out of the circles of consumption and the business of use and exchange value. Things (including language) are thus disconnected from the established or sacred usages of the older generation in society but not yet appropriated by students or pupils as representatives of the new generation. It is in front of common things available as means that the young generation is offered the opportunity to experience itself as a new generation, i.e. the experience of (im)potentiality: beginning in front of something that is open for common use.

Let us emphasize once more that the school as pedagogic form is not an idea or ideal, there is never a guarantee of its reality nor any reduction to just an idea, but it is a form of gathering that is to be made and can 'find place' or 'happen.' Education, or pedagogy if understood in its broadest sense, then could be regarded as being the art and technology to make school happen, that is, to spatialize and materialize free time. It is beyond the scope of this contribution to discuss this in detail, but we want to stress here that a school pedagogy that aims at constituting the happening of 'free time' includes particular architectures and particular forms of discipline (intellectual and material technologies of mind and body, specific pedagogic gestures) and of gathering (e.g. always involving more than one student) and certain pedagogical figures (persona characterized by a particular ethos, i.e. an attitude or stance such as e.g. embodied in the figure of the teacher)<sup>10</sup>. Let us just point to two aspects.

First, the delay and the possibility to relate to the world and get in good shape (be concerned or attached but being at the same time at a distance) is related to what could be called (technical) processes of (dia)grammatization. Which is not only referring to the grammar of language, but to the externalisation of what usu-

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<sup>10</sup> We can refer here to the very rich pedagogical and didactic tradition with its practices, technologies and technics to 'make school'.

ally remains enclosed in certain practices and activities (the principles, rules, definitions basic gestures, of mathematics, sports, communication, etc.). School matter is therefore the grammated (and hyperfunctionalized) version of regular or life-world actions, activities, practices. This rupture with the 'natural' and with 'lifeworld' is precisely essential to make study and exercise possible. 'Naturally' you will not encounter language turned into the letters to be found in the alphabet and the letter box. In 'nature' you will never see all the prairie birds gathered on the typical school panels, and certainly not together and at the same time in order to be able to compare them. Without this 'grammatization' of the 'nature', of the 'natural' (technology, biology, language) we deprive children of being able to relate to the world and to that what defines them. Therefore there is indeed a difference between 'learning by doing' and 'scholastic learning'. This grammatization is always related to certain kinds of visualisations and/or textualisations, it implies 'inscriptions': the alphabet, numbers, formulas, schemes, diagrams ... These inscriptions are not to be understood as representations of an outside world (following the logic of the fiction/simulation and reality), but as presentations through which the world becomes something to be talked about, something to relate to, something to study. This is probably the pedagogical force of these inscriptions: the double movement of making attentive and disclosing world.

Second, we have to mention of course the figure of the teacher, not conceived as a sociological category or a psychological profile or a professional role, but as an ethos, a way to relate which is characterized by a particular care and love. It is a pedagogical love which is a double love, as Hannah Arendt indicates, both towards the world ('matter') and the new generation (Arendt 2006/1958) And although one 'falls' in love, we think this love always implies also a very mundane preparation to host the 'event', to become attentive, stay attentive, make time also for studying and exercising oneself. It is challenging, requires some discipline, suspending quick judgments and immediate helping hands. We should also be careful to distinguish pedagogical love from 'maternal', 'paternalistic' or 'parental' love (Freire 2005). The pedagogical love allows to present something as interesting (receiving authority) without imposing it, which requires to work on the language and articulates itself also in the embodied voice of the figure of the (school)teacher (which helps to make something of the world 'exists' in the real sense).

## 5 Taming the school

Elsewhere, we have diagnosed in detail various ways in which the school (and the teacher) is tamed (see: Masschelein & Simons 2013). Here, we want to frame this

taming more generally and very briefly by connecting it to a difference between what we want to call the modern school on the one hand and the school as it seems to take shape today on the other hand. (For a more elaborated analysis see e.g. Simons & Masschelein 2008; 2017).

There is a way of taming and neutralizing the school as pedagogic form which has been analysed in educational theory and in the history of education in many different and extensive ways and which we could call the totally institutionalised 'modern' school. That is the school as an institution which is organized in view of a predefined (political, social, personal, religious) ideal. Where one is pulled out of the family in order to be introduced immediately into a new (national, cultural, religious, ...) family so to say. A school that is aiming at a *normalised* individual through the presence of a teacher embodying the norm and through disciplining practices of the mind and the body which, as some have stated, prepares (workers) for the industrial factory and (citizens/inhabitants) for the modern, bureaucratic state (see e.g. Foucault 1975).

Today, besides (or maybe in line with) the way identity politics threatens the school (i.e. by *tying* students to their past and family background, their identity, instead of temporally suspending them) the most important attempt to de-school the school is the attempt to turn the school into a 'personalized learning environment' that offers resources for learning seen as an investment and as effective and efficient production of learning outcomes. These 'environments' (no longer 'institutions') are conceived as 'learner-centred' and designed to take into account the 'uniqueness' of the learner and the individual learning needs. They offer ideally personalised learning trajectories that include permanent monitoring, incentives, *personalized feedback* and profiling (largely made possible through the digital) in order to realize *employability* (not normalization) in terms of competences and to capitalize the human (creative) learning potential. They require no teachers that embody norms but disembodied coaches and designers of the learning environment. Such a learning environment is increasingly organised as a feedback apparatus (ideally automated, using learning analytics) (Simons 2014). One could maybe state that these learning environments (and think about the new fab-labs, creative labs, edulabs) are no longer preparing someone for the modern factory or modern state, but that since the new factories become creative and immaterial (Flusser 1999/1993), and are exploiting the learning force, the difference between factory and school as learning environment disappears.

We cannot elaborate on this diagnosis here, but just indicate how such personalized learning environments, probably unthinkable without the digital, clearly imply some neutralization or taming of the operations of the school as pedagogic form: all time becoming learning time as investment time and productive time

(producing outcomes, return, learning gains) hence abolishing the separation between 'free time' and 'productive time'. Education becoming also learner centred and not world-centred and offering no 'grammars' but real-life situations, hence jeopardizing the possibility to take a distance and *relate* to the world (instead of just be employed or functioning in the world).

## 6 Reinventing the school: dealing with some challenges

Let us conclude by turning to teacher education and educational research, which in our understanding have to do crucially with 'making school'. As we stated, the school is a historical invention, and can therefore disappear (just as democracy). But this also means that the school can be re-claimed. In English to reclaim means not only 'to retrieve', to 'recover', 'to obtain the return of' but also to re-cultivate, and in our understanding to re-invent, and that is precisely what we see as our challenge and as our responsibility today. Educational research could try to find further ways to talk *pedagogically* about the school (and we tried to contribute to it), try to develop theory that is expressing care and concern for the school (and not just for teaching and learning), try to address the challenges not by giving up school, but by re-inventing it so to say, by trying to bring *more school* into our educational institutions.

Reinventing the school comes down to finding concrete ways in today's world to provide 'free time' and to gather young people around a common 'thing'. This reinvention could be guided by the touchstone we tried to sketch and it definitely has to deal with what we have called rather un-precise 'the digital'. Maybe we could make a parallel here to the alphabetic. The alphabet allowed for a profanation and grammatisation (that is an externalization and materialisation) of speech which made it available to be studied and, hence, allowed to take a certain distance in order to relate to it. It made speech public in a specific way (as written) but also opened up a world and new possible relations to the world. Very briefly and tentatively we could now say that the digital environment (internet) seems to allow equally for a profanation and grammatization which is even more radical and encompassing (including not only our saying, but also our seeing and listening) as the one offered by the alphabet (see Stiegler 2013). However the way the alphabet made a certain emancipation possible was also related to all kinds of practices (i.e. precisely school practices such as rehearsing, copying, essay-writing, reading loud, etc.) that created the possibility for an attentive and collective dealing with language (as a means, an archive, a memory, ...) i.e. the possibility to put language on the table (not just using or making or transmitting it so to say). It still is very much a question how we could think of (and experiment with) practices that would

allow to make school in relation to the digital. As far as the digital world is a programmed world working through algorithms, and as far as the screen and looking is replacing the book and reading, school practices have to address these transformations. So the question is: how is a certain emancipation possible in a programmed and visual world, or what allows for a degree or kind of de-programming and de-visualization today? It is just a hypothesis, but perhaps new school forms of textualisation and alphabetization would be relevant here.

Let us turn also briefly to teacher education. It is important to emphasize that we conceive of the teacher as *schoolteacher*, which implies that is not just about teaching, but about *making school*. Which is complicating the act of teaching and, according to us, for very good reasons, reasons which have to do with pedagogical equality and freedom. Therefore the question of the formation of teachers should be taken up in relation to what happens to school education today (and which we have briefly indicated as the transformation into personalized learning environments). Indeed, very importantly, it seems that due to all kinds of social (e.g. migration) and technological developments (e.g. ICT) the conditions in which to make school are changing rapidly and are affecting educational institutions and their inhabitants in different ways. In this context it seems illusionary to think that one would be able to formulate all the concrete teaching competences that could be used as 'learning outcomes' for the formation or rather, training of teachers. In fact *we do not know what is becoming of school education under current conditions*. It is (partly) to be studied, and to be re-invented. Therefore it seems that a 'teacher training' that is directed by predefined competences in fact becomes today a very difficult (or speculative) thing. We suggest therefore that teacher formation should be reconceived as a kind of 'school studies' where students together with their teachers study what is actually happening to school education and therefore try to develop responses (or a response-ability) through collective and public study. School studies in this sense are not a yet established discipline and corpus of knowledge, but a field of study that has to be composed by students and professors (and including concerned or affected others) together, creating and constituting their 'study material' together, inventing what could be called a 'sensorium' that would contain different practices and techniques to 'sense/perceive' what is going on. Such studies would also require to use and further develop all kinds of (public) methodologies that can help to compose this material, that allows those affected to have a voice, and allow 'what happens to school education' to be studied in order to foster a response-ability. At least if society is prepared to offer time and space for teachers to become school teachers, for we know that teacher formation, in view of efficiency or control, tends to become reduced to a kind of learning while doing or an outcome oriented training process, which is rather about

neutralizing school. Hence, a crucial public issue is indeed, whether society still wants schools?

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