

*Frank-Olaf Radtke*

## **Editorial: Transnationalism and Language Hybridity - New Theoretical and Empirical Challenges to the Problem of Coping with "Ethnicity" in Modern Immigrant Societies**

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Within the context of immigration in Western industrialized countries, the issue of "ethnicity" is increasingly taking center stage in the critical examination of educational institutions, above all the primary school. The way in which schools *should* act in regard to ethnic difference has been widely discussed in pedagogical research publications ever since the 1980s. However, the way in which schools actually act and to what degree they make use of ethnic differentiations in the course of their daily operations has until now only been partially explored by empirical research. Following the highly publicized "PISA-Shock" in Germany, the call for empirical pedagogical research has gone out with a new urgency.

Schools as prototypes of a complex organization which executes its tasks in direct communication with clients ("*people processing organizations*") operate on three levels, each accessible to empirical research to varying degrees: First, the level of publicly discussed programs, which establish learning goals, the material to be conveyed, the methodology and pedagogy guiding teaching interactions, and the criteria for selection and success. The next level is that of pedagogical interaction between teachers and pupils, an area which is prominent, yet also largely unexplored, as it is nearly invisible to those outside closed classroom doors. Such interaction takes place primarily in the form of classroom instruction, which serves to convey the material and norms established on the program level. The final level is that of the (public) depiction of the school's own practice. This is where an important component of schools' service to society - selection and certification of student performance - is retroactively justified and legitimated. Central to this level is the legitimation of the persistent inequality in educational participation according to social and ethnic background.

On all three levels the school establishes its own organizational logic by which it employs the semantic options provided to it by the field of pedagogy - a reflective discipline of education - and its related disciplines, primarily sociology, psychology, and language acquisition theory. These are then used in both the detection and solution of problems, as well as the presentation of results of selection decisions.

In this journal issue two theoretical innovations will be examined, which, it seems, could well unsettle pedagogical discourse: transnationality as a new structural pattern for immigration, and linguistic and cultural hybridity as a new model of subjective processing of the experiences of immigration and discrimination. New theoretical constructions of the migration problem may also compel school to rethink its practices.

## 1 The Level of Pedagogical Programs

The semantic repertoire society uses to describe the problem of immigration ("strangers", "ethnic minorities", "cultural conflict", "integration", "tolerance"), appears in schools initially in the form of *pedagogies* (see Paschen 1997) that construct a relationship and ordering of social, cultural political, and ethical goals on the one hand, and pedagogical methods on the other. Pedagogical programs turn a social problem into a pedagogical task and serve to direct educational processes within organizations (see Luhmann 1986).

A pedagogical program for educating ethnic minorities was first designed in the 1980s in the context of multiculturalism in the Anglo-Saxon immigrant societies of the United States, Canada, Australia, and its former "mother land" Great Britain under the banner of "Multicultural Education" (see Banks, McGee Banks 2002). In German-speaking countries, such a program was adopted somewhat belatedly in the form of "Intercultural Pedagogy" (see the overview in Schweitzer 1994; Auernheimer 1995; Luchtenberg 2005 [in this issue]). It was meant to supersede the home-grown practice of "foreigner (special) education" (*Ausländer[sonder]pädagogik*) which had proved itself ineffectual in several regards (see Czock 1993). Worldwide, the program of "Multicultural Education" took on various forms in the national school systems in which it was adopted in response to local peculiarities and traditions (see Steiner-Khamsi 1992; Allemann-Ghionda 1999).

The architects of "Multicultural Education" meant it as an improvement to the school situation of immigrant children, who seemed to be caught between compulsory cultural assimilation, on one hand, and persistent structural exclusion and institutional discrimination on the other. The program's planners were initially concerned with developing an educational concept which did justice to the special linguistic and cultural needs of immigrant pupils and, moreover, with providing them with access to equal educational opportunities within the school system. In order to do so, it seemed necessary to develop instructional materials and didactic structures that were specifically tailored to the tasks to be mastered by immigrant children, foremost among them the problem of language-learning, but also

ways of dealing with everyday conflicts that could arise "between cultures" (see Matthes 1992). Subsequently, many such materials have become available.

Extending beyond the rather technically and professionally oriented planning of concrete teaching and learning situations and effective instructional sequences, the concept of "Multicultural Education" was soon entrusted with a further task that was no longer directed toward the children of minorities, but was instead meant to prepare members of the majority for life in a society that would be increasingly characterized by cultural diversity. Along the path of "Human Rights Education", "Civil Education" or "European Education" the school was to be dislodged from the tradition of the nation state, undergo wide-scale reform, and be directed toward a situation characterized by ethnic pluralism, or when formulated more dramatically, by deep-seated ethnic polarization and growing racism.

Within the program of intercultural pedagogy, ethnicity is valorized as a socially meaningful (self-)description of a group. Instead of adhering to the assimilationist notion of a society of immigrants as a *melting pot*, the school is charged with the mission of re-organizing the relations between ethnic groups on the basis of reciprocal acknowledgment. Especially in the United States during the 1980s, a concept of *ethnic studies* developed in education by which the cultural achievements of various indigenous and immigrant "minority groups" were to be recognized and meaningfully integrated into the national curriculum, thereby freeing it from its concentration on the culture of the "white" majority. Debates about variants of these programs were carried out with great intensity in the media between parents, school administrations, textbook and curriculum commissions, politicians, and scholars. These are part of what is metaphorically described as the *culture wars*, battles that were and continue to be fought in the United States about its conception of itself as a nation. The debate centered precisely on the question of whether the Western, Judeo-Christian tradition - which perpetuates itself through its domination in the English language, the political system of representation, a liberal political culture, and a legal system that emphasizes and guarantees individual freedoms - should continue to serve as the standard for the knowledge passed on to children to socialize them into the norms of society, or if a *cult of ethnicity* would, as critics feared, lead to a fragmentation, resegregation, and ultimately tribalization of American life (Schlesinger 1992). In Germany these battles assumed a belated resonance in the late 1990s in a brief debate about "deutsche Leitkultur" and its role in education.

A second variant of multiculturalism, one preferred in Germany, recommends constructing a regime of public tolerance of ethnic difference (Walzer 1998), which insists on the separation of the public and private spheres (see Arendt 1967) and seeks to guarantee that the engagement with (cultural) difference take place on the basis of (legal) equality (Prenzel 1993). Starting at an early age, *all* children should be raised to show tolerance for "others" (Nieke 1995) - this explains the conceptual shift from "Multi-" to "*Intercultural Pedagogy*" - even in schools that have few or no immigrant children with immigrant background.

Hence, what in its earliest days was meant as a means of improving the educational situation of immigrant children thereby becomes a general program of civic education in the virtue of tolerance toward cultural differences. This high pedagogical aspiration strives for establishing a harmonious society of cultural diversity in which prejudices and discriminatory practices are reduced and ultimately eliminated.

Pedagogical programs formulate intentions that are not to be equated with what actually results from their practical application. They respond to changes in the environment of the educational system with semantic reformulations, which are primarily of a theoretical nature and lead to new ways of describing the problem situation and the tasks they create for education. In the sociology of migration a debate is currently underway between so-called assimilationists and transnationalists about finding an answer to the question of whether it still holds that there is no alternative to the assimilation of immigrants as a condition for successful social integration, or whether the conditions of the post-national constellation ("globalization") require the assumption of revised models of migration and transnational structural developments and networks, which would then have new political and pedagogical consequences.

In his contribution to this journal issue, Michael Bommers sketches this sociological debate and attempts to defuse it, or perhaps set it straight, via a theory of functional differentiation. Both positions, assimilationist and that of transnationality, represent a challenge for pedagogy (see the special issue of the ZfE 2004: "Transnationale Bildungsräume"), in that the sociological debate postulates cultural and social constellations that cast doubt not only on the criticism directed up to now toward assimilation as an irrefutable precondition for integration, but also calls into question the concept of cultural plurality and seems to require new models for the problem of the pedagogical engagement with immigrants in the modern world community. Sigrid Luchtenberg's contribution to this issue is explicitly directed toward this question. She reconstructs the origins of the program of intercultural pedagogy and discusses demands for the revision of this program within the context of practical and theoretical developments internationally.

## 2 The Level of Interaction in Classroom Instruction

An accusation directed against the study of education in Germany is that in terms of the philosophy of education it concentrates on the intentional, descriptive level of pedagogical programs and, moreover, has failed to empirically illuminate the praxis and orientation of the political decision makers (Weiler 2002). The key concepts of intercultural pedagogy - "culture" and "tolerance" - have been criticized again and again (Czock, Radtke 1984; Diehm, Radtke 1999). The suspicion has also arisen that the innovations sought could be limited to the semantics of reform plans, while the practice of education in the school as an organization perpetuates its own routines and follows its own logic. Against this backdrop, research into schools has assumed the task of monitoring the practice of intercultural

education. Such empirical research seeks to make a contribution to the development of a theory of the school in order to provide a scholarly basis for teacher training and policy decisions regarding education and immigration. With the exception of a few case studies (Czock, Radtke 1984; Auernheimer et al 1996; Diehm, Radtke 1997), this remains a broad area in need of research into the effects of the ambitious program of intercultural pedagogy.

In an initial approach, a discourse-analysis oriented study of the representation of "strangers" in newer school textbooks (Höhne, Kunz, Radtke 2005) led to the sobering insight that also in the program of intercultural pedagogy, the didactic mode of addressing pupils - the traditional division into "us" and "them" groups - lives on in a subject-object constellation ("Ask your foreign classmates ...") in which immigrant children become the object of curiosity, and at times sympathy, of their German classmates. A systematic observation of classroom communication triggered by such textbook passages has yet to be conducted.

When pedagogical programs are introduced into schools, they are accompanied by the intention of directing or redirecting pedagogical practice from the outside by setting new goals and by bringing them into contact with new ways of dealing with problems. In order to do so, programs are to be built into the organization as precisely as possible. This is only possible when the program and its accompanying semantics help rather than hinder the usual way of dealing with problems. The organization will always integrate the program into its established practice selectively according to its own calculations, or, if it does not help to solve problems, simply ignore it. Because organizations themselves are highly partitioned, and their various calculations perhaps contradictory, the results of adaptation to local circumstances cannot be predicted. Research into schools would therefore be concerned in the broader view with tracing the obstacles facing implementation of the program of intercultural pedagogy as well as reconstructing the various forms of integrating programs into schools. This would therefore involve exposing the implications, ambivalences, and ambiguities that come about in their realization in classroom instruction and would monitor programs' results and undesirable side effects.

The impetus for designing the program of intercultural pedagogy was the determination that the school acts with inattention and indifference toward ethnic differences, that it persists in making selections according to general criteria, and that it neither follows nor has achieved the two goals of the program: equal opportunity and the recognition of ethnic difference. This is evidenced by the inequalities in education participation rates, the manner of dealing with multilingualism, and the state of current curriculum. Research into educational participation has limited itself to reporting on the statistically quantifiable inequity in the academic success of social groups, especially that of immigrants (Baker, Lenhardt 1988; Alba, Handl, Müller 1994; most recently Powell, Wagner 2001). Working from a largely etiological perspective, such studies seek causal contributing factors, which are primarily located in the conditions of pupils' class-specific socialization (Bernstein 1971/1972) and in their social and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, Passeron 1971) that are not accepted by the school.

Even when the inequalities in the education participation rate are seen as the effects of a discriminatory practice of selection on the part of schools, the mechanisms that routinely create such effects remain largely neglected. Until now they have rarely been examined directly in schools, based on the selection decisions and the rationale that serves to direct the stream of pupils to the various school forms within the German tripartite school system (see Gomolla, Radtke 2002). Yet in the wake of the various comparative national and international PISA studies, it is precisely here that a beneficial aspect of empirical research into education is to be found, should PISA want to highlight and focus analysis on the significance of systems, organization, interaction in classroom instruction, and politics.

Unlike the program level, at which pedagogical communication is publicly performed and documented, the level of direct communication between educator and pupil in classroom instruction and that of selection decisions made in conference are difficult for research to access. Not only are classroom doors closed and boards of examiners not open to the public, still more insurmountable is the fact that the presence of (scholarly) observers and/or recording devices seriously influences the classroom situation. However, with the help of organization theories (March, Olsen 1976; Meyer, Rowan 1978; Weick 1995) and profession theories (Dewe, Ferchhoff, Radtke 1992; Combe, Helsper 1996), the structured nature of pedagogical interactions can be modeled and the form of instruction as well as the sometimes contradictory logic of pedagogical decisions can be reconstructed. Such modeling allow for the interpretation of empirically observed class sessions and selection processes, and, in turn, the empirical evidence serves to further differentiate theoretical models and to correct or refine them.

At the level of interaction schools are dealing with real children. As organizations that are functionally oriented toward a defined goal, they are solely concerned with a certain segment of the characteristics of children of a certain age, specifically with the question of whether a child fulfills the conditions of membership that are established for the role of a pupil in terms of the specific school level and form, that is, if the children in this school and this class if they can be expected to be learning and to be (on average) successful pupils. A child's "school readiness" is determined by the school itself in light of its available options in a formalized school admission procedure or, likewise, the annual assignment to "classes" ("holding back/voluntary repetition") or the transfer to other, more suitable school forms ("special school referral procedure") or further education schools. When the school makes selection decisions, which are shared in by several decision-makers and therefore several perspectives and interests, it is also making a decision about the solution to its own problems.

The examination of membership requirements takes place for all children according to the same criteria. This also applies to immigrant children, no matter which language they speak, what immigration status they have, what their national origin may be, or in what point in their schooling or the school year they arrive ("Seiteneinsteiger", see Radtke 1996). The organizational practice of the classification of children seeks to establish the most homo-geneous groups of learners as possible (Hinz 1993); once formed, the dominant method of (frontal) collective instruction subjects all pupils to the same course offerings and compares their performance



against each other. Language or language competency is the decisive criterion for membership in and assignment to a class. In contrast to the linguistic and ideological homogenization of the population in the sense of national community building, this classification is in practice concerned with a technical homogenization of groups of learners with the goal of heightening the rationalization and cost-effectiveness of classroom instruction. That both aims serve to reinforce each other has contributed to the success of the organizational model of "class" as an institutional foundational unit of the school.

In its classifications, the school follows an expectation of normality scaled to the age of the child, ranging from the categories "learning disabled" to "highly gifted". Such variations are difficult to define but are detected by the organization's measurements when they (could) hinder group instruction; they first become relevant for decisions and selection when the school does not want to keep disruptive children in a class because, for instance, their classes are filled to capacity and the problem should be delegated to other preparatory or special institutions that already exist or should be furthered.

"Ethnic particularity" is also not perceived by the school automatically, but only once deviations from the norm are to be explained or when internal organizational courses of action exist - for instance, preparatory classes, special courses or other special measures for immigrant children, such as additional teachers ("foreigner-bonus") - for which candidates must be found and their participation justified. Ethnic differentiations are then made when they serve to maintain the functional capacity of the organization, to gain advantage, and to avoid difficulties for the school's own mechanisms for making decisions and taking action.

The children of immigrants can deviate in several dimensions from the school's expectation of normality, which is based on a German middle-class child with a standard biography. Whether the school perceives these deviations and uses them as a basis for selection decisions does, however, depend on the respective options for a course of action.

Among the expectations placed upon a member of the school as an organization are the experiences and knowledge gained before and during their time there. School classes are assembled homogeneously according to performance, and are likewise homogenized again throughout the course of the school year by way of evaluation and selection. In doing so, the German elementary school, whose mission since its institutional founding in the 1920s was seen in turning children into pupils, has come to assume their formal role competence ("school readiness") and to expect the family and the kindergarten to provide the necessary preparation. These include the cognitive, motor, social, and linguistic competencies that the school no longer wants to create itself, but to use as a prerequisite. This has also become the function of the preferred tests of language standards. Should testing detect deficiencies in pupils, the options discussed above of *external* or *internal* differentiation can be chosen - regardless of whether the standard classes are filled to capacity or if real possibilities exist for delegating the problem.

The most important prerequisite for successful participation in classroom instruction - one of the membership requirements - is knowledge of the language of instruction, which is usually the language of the national

majority. Children whose families speak another language present schools with a particular challenge the world over: The organization will only tailor its practice toward these new conditions in its environment if the possibilities of ignoring them are effectively done away with - for instance, by publicly placing drawing attention to overlooked demands for equal opportunity.

The organization can react to the linguistic heterogeneity of its pupils with temporary external differentiation in preparatory classes or additional tutoring. *External* differentiation for compensating language deficiencies has the advantage that the (fictional) homogeneity of the standard class can be maintained, whereas an integration of children without adequate language skills in the standard class would require more complex instructional structures for *internal* differentiation. Every organization will be sure to reduce the complexity of required tasks and to use available opportunities for delegating problems to special institutions or to specialized personnel, as long as this does not create problems elsewhere.

Today language deficiencies remain the preferred variable for explaining the lagging academic success of immigrant children, even those of the third generation. Located within the stock of justifications used by schools as well as media commentators is the polemical notion of "double half-fluency", which postulates a circumstance in which immigrant children are neither sufficiently fluent in the language of their nation of origin nor in that of their adopted country. Although this thesis was refuted early on, it has shown great staying power. In his contribution to this issue, Volker Hinnenkamp takes up this discussion anew and uses examples from the natural language practice of migrant youth to show that schools should have every reason not to assume deficiencies, but, quite to the contrary, the linguistic and poetic virtuosity of speakers of two languages. Hinnenkamp terms such language use "mixed speech". Multilingualism evidently takes on more forms than that of a purely distinct bi- or multilingualism. A call for incorporating the competencies revealed through this study into classroom instruction would, however, reverse the stating of the problem and raise the question of how it is possible in Germany that even after four or even six years of regular school attendance, the requirements of the formal instructional language are not being met. Sigrid Luchtenberg addresses this question in her contribution, along with the problem of media competency as a challenge presented by the program of intercultural pedagogy.

Schools are of course part of a national culture of assumptions and understandings stemming from the way of life of the majority - one does things in a certain way and at certain times. One such component is the majority language, which is seen as a self-evident medium of communication, as is dress, eating habits, gender roles, public holidays, the relation to nature, etc. When children and parents deviate too far from the majority culture and for religious or traditional reasons seek to maintain special clothing styles and eating habits or rules governing them, refuse to give up conceptions of gender roles, or show or are even feared to practice any other deviant behaviors, schools are faced by the question of whether in their practice they should react through differentiation or should demand and enforce conformance. This becomes a special problem in regard to the fear of the majority society of the politicization of Islam in Germany.



Possible conflicts about, for instance, the participation of Muslim girls in biology classes, swimming lessons, or class trips result from a combination of fear and insufficient information and have found their symbolic expression in the "head scarf controversy" (Karakasoglu-Aydin 1999). On the program level, the line is rapidly crossed at which the tolerance propagated by intercultural pedagogy is suspended and the suspicion of fundamentalism starts being voiced (Heitmeyer, Müller, Schröder 1997).

### 3 The Level of Representation and Legitimation

The semantics associated with immigration prominently appear in the retroactive justification and representation of primarily negative selection decisions. Recent organization theory (Weick 1995) distinguishes between *decision-making*, in which professionals in an organization make decisions at planned intervals as the result of previously complex processes of negotiation and compromise in which quite different and antinomial positions come into play (see Helsper 1996), of processes of representation and interpretation of such decisions (*sense-making*), in which the decisions and indecisions (!) previously made - even those that should never have come about in the first place - are given a meaning after the fact with which the organization can assert its standards of rationality and justice. The question is *how* the organization can succeed in interpreting organization-specific problems and events *ex post* in such a way that the organization can continue on as it is.

The statistical fact of persistent inequality in academic success of German and non-German pupils cannot be ignored and has again been brought to the attention of the general public by PISA, yet it also belongs to the regular effects of the work of schools, which according to their own standards and public expectations of equity in distribution should not be allowed to come about. This creates an increased need for explanation and legitimation. The inequality that results from the numerous and complex chains of decision-making in the schools, in which individual decision-makers could not overlook the effect of their respective decisions about the performance of a pupil, can be seen as an unplanned and unintended effect in which the rationality of the organization has prevailed. For the retroactive interpretation the organization has an institutionally validated stock of knowledge and interpretative models at its disposal, which in modern societies has to be oriented according to the latest scholarly knowledge available, but which can also be tended to selectively according to its own standpoint from the range of available theories. Interviewing decision-makers - school principals and teachers - who were confronted with the statistically documented results of their selection decisions (Gomolla, Radtke 2002) showed that the differentiations introduced by intercultural pedagogy between "cultures" and "ethnic identities", which were supposed to improve the situation of immigrant children, were now re-entering the school as a causal attribution when justification was sought for the causes of the inequalities in academic success and negative selection decisions (also see Bender-Schimanski, Hesse, Göbel 2000; Walter 2001).

Research into the application of knowledge (Beck, Bonß 1989) has shown that the utilization of knowledge within organizers cannot be controlled by the sender of knowledge, but must instead be selectively adopted according to their own standpoints. There are indications that the good intention of intercultural pedagogy has left in its wake precisely that form of ethnization and acculturation of social and pedagogical problems which had been predicted as an undesirable effect of the introduction of the program. Whereas the failures of "German" pupils can be attributed to their family setting and resulting psycho-social problems ("changing childhood", "broken homes", "poverty", etc.), for immigrant children socio-cultural conflicts ("caught in between") determine their behavior in school and is meant to make acceptable the in fact unacceptable statistic for the organization, which documents the result of its own activity. Such explanations externalize the causes and overlook the practice of the school.

#### 4 Conclusion

Ethnic differentiations appear on each of the various levels of the school, yet are dealt with in different ways: While at the level of programs, the tolerance of cultural difference is propagated, and culture and ethnicity are explicitly thematized to this end and made a subject of instruction, cultural differences are largely ignored on the level of direct interaction with pupils. All children are subjected to the same criteria and given the same class offerings. The effect of such equal treatment is, in turn, inequality in academic success. Not until ethnic differentiations create advantages for the organization in the sense of a reduction of complexity are they applied instrumentally. However, on the level of the representation of the resulting effects ethnic differentiations assume a prominent position, though not intentionally as a means of improving the situation of immigrants, but as an acceptable explanation of their plight, which together with *common sense* manages to continually reproduce itself in everything from the media to school textbooks.

Research into schools is thereby opened up at all three levels: that of policy and programs, interaction, and the justification of decisions. This is a broad area of potential insight into the practice and application of ethnic differentiations in schools which would provide the precondition for identifying points of intervention at which the ills of persistent inequality and institutional discrimination of children from immigrant families could be remedied. How and to what end the new debate introduced here about transnationality and linguistic and cultural hybridity is incorporated into pedagogical discourse remains to be seen.

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