



# A hopeful future. How then?

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## Colophon

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**'Children cannot be  
missed in the world,  
not one of them.'**

Lea Dasberg

# Introduction

Together, around a table, during a meeting on primary processes in education. In dialogue with team leaders and the headmaster. One chair, however, is empty. A chair for the child who is not present, but should be. The empty chair that reminds us again and again of the value of our decisions. The empty chair that challenges us again and again to contribute creatively to a sustainable and democratic society.

This setting is a hopeful picture. Taking space together, *standing still*, being in dialogue about and in education. Thereby *'standing out'* to the world (Biesta, 2018), in connection with existence explicitly giving a voice to the child, by asking questions together with the child to yourself, to each other, to the child. And *standing up* when needed. Standing up because we are touched and can no longer do otherwise. *Standing up* because we have to take responsibility for what happens.

Because of the daily confrontation with several crises in our society and in the world, and the effects of the contemporary educational culture on children and young people, we as educational professionals increasingly feel the call to move towards this hopeful pedagogical perspective: contributing to 'being human' in education, to the formation of individuals and to help young people and children seek their place in the world with self-confidence and resilience. Within the Academy of Primary Education (APO) of NHL Stenden is a need for an increased focus on the pedagogical perspective (Korfage, 2021).

We respond to this call with the Professorship 'Educating and leading towards sustainable and democratic living together'. Since 1 April 2022, the Professorship is part of the Academy for Primary Education with locations in Assen, Groningen, Emmen and Leeuwarden for the full-time and part-time Pabo. Meppel houses the International Teacher Education for Primary Schools (ITEPS) and from August 2023 onwards ITESS (International Teacher Education for Secondary Schools) will join its colleagues in Meppel. The Academy also offers two masters: Master Learning & Innovation (ML&I), with the special track Master International Teacher Education (MITE), and the Master Educational Leadership (MEL). The academy collaborates closely with the the Academy of Secondary Education (VO) and Secondary Vocational Education (MBO) and the Academy of Social Studies, in particular undergraduate and graduate pedagogy. The Professorship is linked and collaborates with the other research groups of the Academy PO and VO/MBO.

## Pedagogical leadership in turbulent times

Pedagogical leadership must be demonstrated in a crisis-ridden world, with which we are confronted daily through the media: natural disasters like the climate crisis and the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis, poverty, the refugee crisis, discrimination, inequality of opportunities,

the polarisation in the world<sup>1</sup>. The economic growth is accompanied by developments that fundamentally disrupt our society (Klomp, 2022). In conversations, I sense the uncertainty about our world and our society. All children and young people, but we too relate to this in our own way based on our personal experiences: being excluded because you belong to an ethnic minority, not being allowed to participate because you are gay<sup>2</sup>, not being able to participate because your parents don't have the money, not feeling seen as gifted. Not daring to show who you are and how you feel inside because your environment disapproves of that way of being. This happens in various places in our society. We see this on television, through social media, through sketched images and images in our immediate, physical environment. We cannot keep this away from children. Stories from parents, teachers, family, stories from influencers and peers on social media influence the image that children have of the world. These images impact children's behaviour, at home, at school, on the street with friends (Bronfenbrenner, 2006).

There is a need for educational leadership. We as educators and leaders<sup>3</sup> have to stand up and take responsibility for what we do in seeing the contemporary moment as important in the future for our children (Middendorp, 2015). We need to stand

up to see what is needed, to make children reflect on their gift and task in and with this world (Biesta, 2022). We need to guide them through resistances they experience in themselves and in a world full of uncertainties. We need to 'stand out' with them and listen deeply to the world of human and non-human things (Latour, 2005), because it is in this intense experience of 'standing out' that we can find the keys that respond to the crises. In this need for educational leadership, we are inspired by Biesta (2020) who sees the confrontation with a crisis as an interruption of the normal order, which literally makes us think, whether we want to or not. We also connect with the images Hammond (in Webb, 2019) provides us with of the utopian pedagogue who employs pedagogical tactics to exploit cracks, fissures and inconsistencies that arise amid mechanisms of regulation and control. In the need for pedagogical leadership, we explicitly focus on our moral responsibility.

Internally too, within the Academy of Primary Education at NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, there is a need for a clearer place for pedagogical leadership in general and teacher education in particular. This emerged from a preliminary study regarding the establishment of the Professorship and the formulation of its mission (Korfage, 2021). In this study, 40 interviews were

conducted in the field of education on pedagogy. The discussions focused on the essence and importance of pedagogy and pedagogy as an important aspect of and in education. The gist of the report is:

...the notion that education has a broad mission with regard to the development of children and young people. Education should also focus on 'being human', on formation of the person, on helping children and young people seek their place in the world with self-confidence and resilience, relate to themselves and others and mature and develop their identity in safety. Education is a pillar of society: the school is often seen as a 'society in miniature', as a community in which children and young people gain life experience and develop into critically thinking members of a democratic society (Korfage, 2021, p. 5).

### **Pedagogical leadership in education**

Pedagogical leadership is not easy in a society where young people experience relatively poor mental health<sup>4</sup> and education is associated with motivation issues<sup>5</sup>. This is not an easy task when the government in its coalition agreement includes a master plan on basic skills as a core function of education (Oppers, 2022). This is not an easy task in a society that values qualification and in which education relates to the international ranking of education

<sup>1</sup> The crises mentioned are exemplary and thus not exhaustive.

<sup>2</sup> 'Gloeï' by Edward van de Vendel features personal stories of twenty-one young people aged between 16 and 23. They are diverse, but share one thing: their orientation or gender differs from the majority.

<sup>3</sup> Educators and leaders are parents, pedagogues in childcare, teachers, education support specialists, school leaders, teachers, team leaders, teacher trainers, headmasters and administrators in primary, secondary, special and higher vocational education

<sup>4</sup> 38% of young people say they do not have any issues with anxiety and depression, nor do they have difficulty in accomplishing 'everyday' activities.

<sup>5</sup> The lack of motivation of students is evident in interviews with students from the Master's in Teacher Education and Master's in Pedagogy who have teaching positions in secondary and intermediate vocational education.

(Programme for International Student Assessment; PISA)<sup>6</sup> and thus serves economic productivity, driven by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. Pedagogical leadership is complicated when curricula or methods, standards and rules govern education (Van Manen, 2006, Brown, 2015, Mills, 2018, Biesta, 2020) and when our thinking is entirely dominated by an apparent fear of deviation, risk and 'being left behind' (De Winter, 2017). Jansen (2009) calls this the control paradigm which refers to a lack of trust in the non-measurable, non-controllable. It is a lack of trust in the unpredictability of what we call 'life'. Deviations from the standard deviation are falling outside the system. Van Manen (2006) concludes that this managerial approach keeps teachers away from the relational aspect in education. Boonstra<sup>7</sup> indicates that we are harming people, nature and the planet with our current systems. Education needs a new narrative and plays a key role in our society. Equally worrying are the increasingly abstract teaching methods, standards and rules and the fact that concerns with children are overshadowed by stress, anxiety and pressure. We call these abstractions reification (Middendorp, 2015), which presents us with several questions: what does this do to the teacher's creative thinking? In what ways is education challenging the teacher (Van Veen, 2023)? What does this do to teacher autonomy? What expertise does the teacher have to resist these mechanisms? What models are children presented with? Here

we also refer to last year's UN conferences in Paris and New York on Transforming Education, where Gutteres pointed out that we need to be concerned with radically changing how and what we learn. The Covid19 crisis is one thing young people have to deal with, alongside climate biodiversity and the loss of democratic values, among others.

It is no longer enough just to be critical. The control paradigm, the growing shortage of teachers and school leaders and Gutteres' call at the UN conferences demand immediate actions in our education system. We should have realised those actions yesterday, so to speak. Not only are we experiencing turbulent times. We are also facing a reifying and qualifying education system. This shows the need for empowerment of education professionals in an accountability and rules-ridden sector (Korfage, 2021). There is a growing need for education rooted in existential questions, that make connections with systems thinking, subject integration, changes in perspectives, (self) investigation and experimentation in the immediate environment while maintaining a view of the world around us (Wals, 2020)<sup>8</sup>.

Educational leadership is under pressure. The crises in the world are creeping in. An emphatic appeal arises for pedagogical leadership to show responsibility for the world around us and to relate to human as well as non-human entities (Latour, 2005). There is

a need for a sense of urgency in a parallel process for administrators, school leaders, team leaders, teacher trainers, teachers, educators, young people and children. This is literally about standing still, paying attention to parallel processes, considering what is actually needed to take responsibility for what is meaningful here and in the current moment, elsewhere and later... It is necessary to take responsibility by not only being critical, but also by taking action or sometimes refusing to take action. Responsibility is knowing what you take responsibility for. The pedagogical perspective is in need of recalibration and rethinking at various levels. In other words: there is a need for pedagogical leadership when it comes to thinking about shaping our current education system.

<sup>6</sup> Great importance is being put nationally and internationally to the outcomes of the study. Such large-scale research is scarce. Against the backdrop of the effects of COVID19, mapping pupils' educational attainment and well-being against previous PISA rounds has become even more important. With a high response rate, not only do the outcomes become more robust, but we also get a better picture of how Dutch education is developing - over the years - and how it compares to other countries. Accessed 6 January 2023 <https://www.voraad.nl/nieuws/deelnameaanpisaibelangvanschoolenonderwijssector>.

<sup>7</sup> Claire Boonstra; <https://operation.education>

<sup>8</sup> Professor of Sustainability at Wageningen University; holds Unesco Chair in Social Learning and Sustainable Development.

## The concept of Pedagogy of Hope

The need for pedagogical leadership is connected to the concept of *Pedagogy of Hope* that guides us as a Professorship. In chapter 1, we draw inspiration from Bloch, founder of about the concept of hope, together with De Winter, Dasberg, Van Manen, Duintjer and Wals. We explore what they have to offer us, what questions they ask us in relation to current educational practices

## Metaphor of the open landscape

In the Professorship, we focus on Pedagogy of Hope in knowing that there is hope, hope for us in and with the world (Biesta, 2022). Metaphorically, I imagine the world as an open landscape. The open landscape is an openness, the totality of sky, earth, people, non-human entities and animals. They are located in this open landscape as 'finite buildings'. The 'finite building' represents 'ordinary life'. For example, they are my experiences with my parents, my experiences as a classroom teacher or as a teacher educator. It is my experiences with nature (Kamp & Beemsterboer, 2010, Duffhues, 2009) in my childhood, in my role as a mother. In that ordinary life, I sustain myself with my own identity. From this safe 'finite building' I derive trust, this is where my moral responsibility forms (Middendorp, 2015).

## Professorship research

The Professorship's research contributes to an inclusive, sustainable and innovative society. We want to create a platform for hopeful collaborations with *moral sanctuaries* (Kunneman, 2017) that generate attention to a *relational ecology* (Bateson, 2000) and a *utopian outlook*

(Hermsen, 2017). Pedagogical leadership and more inclusive education are key themes. In choosing our themes in the context of and around NHL Stenden's Academy of Primary Education, we form a multi-year programme together with the other professorships in the education research<sup>9</sup> and focus on 'Working on worldly innovation as part of the 'Strategic Agenda Higher Education and Research (Rijksoverheid, 2019) and the research agenda of the 'Vereniging Hogescholen' (2019) of the 'Association of Universities of Applied Sciences' Hogescholen'. We elaborate on the research of the Professorship in chapter 4.

## Reading guide

Chapter 1 focuses on the concept of 'Pedagogy of Hope'. Pedagogy of Hope, as indicated, has been considered and written about by many scholars. Based on this literature, we explore the concept of hope. From that exploration arise the key themes of pedagogical leadership and more inclusive education. In Chapter 2, we zoom in on pedagogical leadership. We discuss the core value of an educational leader: responsibility to achieve sustainable change. Chapter 3 is about more inclusive education. Here, we opt for a broad definition of the theme. This means that more inclusive education focuses on human and non-human entities. The core value of dignity is a central notion in a diverse society. In chapter 4, we discuss the research of the Professorship. Chapter 5 is the conclusion entitled 'A hopeful future. How then?'

Each chapter begins with a quote that captures the essence of the topic under discussion. Furthermore, experiences and images are playing

a central role. The experiences described have taken place in educational practice and allow for reflection (Van Manen, 2014, Middendorp, 2015). When one's own experiences have been explored and linked meaningfully to theory, the values of our Professorship become visible: in standing still (self-awareness, slowing down, authenticity (Jorna, 2008), in standing up (showing autonomy, courage (Wiss, 2020), creativity and responsibility) and in 'standing out' (being aware, receptive, wondering and engaged).

## Process towards Pedagogy of Hope

Making the intention of the Professorship visible is a process, a slow process. A process that manifests itself in the professorship network, in our own research projects, in the personal (research) story of the researcher and in the connection with our regional as well as (inter)national environment. This booklet makes visible a process of working together, has initiated a conversation in our Professorship network and provides insight about our intentions. It puts Pedagogy of Hope at the centre, and each network member relates to this in their own way. To express that commonality, we use the first form plural. At the same time, in this booklet you will see me, José Middendorp, standing up to illustrate the process based on my own experiences and thoughts.

Others have also contributed to the process of writing and rewriting and manifesting our connection to the environment. The importance of the process is also visible in the work of Rikus van der Meer, former teacher of Visual Education at Nijenborg PDO and known for his mural 'The Lesson'.

<sup>9</sup> Meerjarenonderzoeksprogramma Onderzoeksgroep Educatie 2020-2023



His work is displayed on the front of and at the end of this booklet: Chalk Walk and Toddler Corner. Each painting is painted by him in a six-week process. In a logbook, he keeps track of important choices. They shed light on the process of painting and show with which intention choices were made. Some of his sketches and notes, recorded during such a process, are visible below. From 2014 to 2022, Rikus observed passers-by, students, parents with children and tourists from his studio window, in an inner city street of Groningen (Van der Meer, 2022).

'I see the everyday world passing below me. The unusual shadows from above and the pavement tiles as a kind of grid intrigued me, but most important is the anonymity of the passers-by. That gave me a freedom of action. At the same time, I also saw general human behaviour, the care and attention to small things. Repairing a pavement or the hand on a child's leg on the back of a bicycle. What I also find interesting are lights that keep changing and things I don't understand in the footage I make myself: a shortening that turns out odd, or an awkwardly placed detail (Van der Meer, 2022, p. 27).'

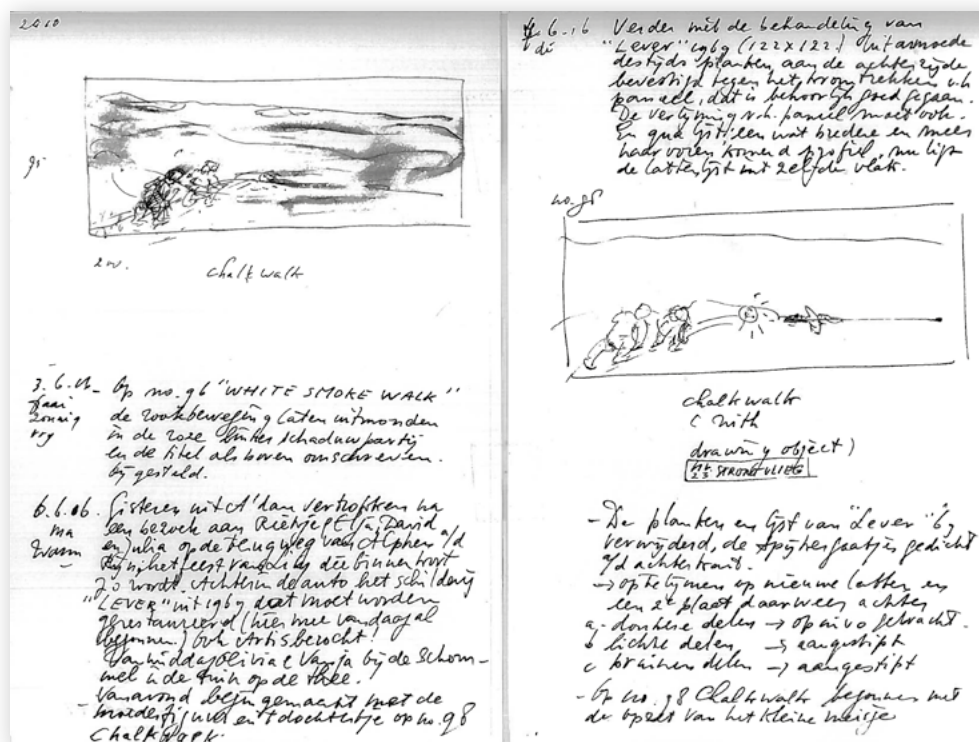
An everyday world becomes a starting point for a painting. Rikus, through the creation of 'shortenings', through observation from above and sometimes by adding his own objects evokes an unreal atmosphere in his paintings

'Observing people from above from this studio window became my source for 'irrealism' (Ibid., p. 1).

We connect this unreal atmosphere to the Pedagogy of Hope. Irrealism refers to ordinary things and to things that present themselves as strange. Irrealism is about the questions raised again and again, about the openness we want to show and about the appeal to our creative thinking skills to bring a hopeful future

a little closer. That unreal atmosphere becomes a source for the lectorate to start a conversation about ordinary and strange things, about opening and giving direction to a process that is not finite, but ongoing, always striving towards a hopeful future.

(Process) image log Rikus van der Meer on 'Chalk Walk'



**Together, around a table, with a teacher, lecturer, school leader, workplace supervisor, teacher trainer, team leader during a meeting on primary processes in education. Two chairs are prominent. A young person has taken a seat. A child has joined next to them. Frank, Noor and Gijs are joining too. They have taken the liberty of taking a seat at the table. They want to contribute to a sustainable and democratic society for now and in the future.**

# Chapter 1

## Pedagogy of Hope

This is what change sounds like.  
I hear the sound of change  
around me more and more.  
I am not afraid of change,  
I sing for everyone.  
A call, coloured red and blue,  
came from the sky.  
Voices of wise leaders,  
I hear in my dreams.  
I am the chant that rises  
and resounds.  
There is hope as change sings.  
Not everyone understands,  
it requires a different view.  
I sing for a new world,  
in which everyone is equal.  
I hear the beating of a hundred hearts,  
many hands, lighter work.  
I use my strength and my brain,  
even on your knees you are strong.  
I am the light that displaces the darkness.  
There is love where change sings.

I show others understanding,  
though it requires courage and trust  
I don't believe in high walls,  
but in building wider bridges.  
Though there are many differences,  
differences big and small.  
I want to show you  
That we are also the same.  
I am a movement that fizzles and jumps,  
a wave of change that dances and sings.  
The sound of change is getting closer.  
I can feel it down to my toes,  
change is within me.  
I am growing and thriving, change is alive.  
I do what the world needs.  
I am the voice that brings freedom.  
You are the love the heart recognises.  
A wave of music that swings and jumps,  
we are the sounds, change sings.  
The world is changing fast,  
the change is you.  
The sounds are for you too,  
will you sing with me?

I wanted to make a very big world. A kind of fairy tale at sea. And that world shouldn't always be safe. And for that, I made a fragile character, a paper boat. A paper boat that didn't draw attention to itself. This is someone who says: Don't look at me, look at the world around me. That world around me, had to have a wondrous side, but it also had to have something dark. The little boat of paper floats through that world, by trial and error. And I hope the little boat itself also becomes the symbol of hope.

**'I just thought it was a great metaphor for when you are looking for your place in the world and that world is turbulent and chaotic, and you feel very small and fragile.'**

Peter van den Ende (2019), nature guide, illustrator of 'Swirl'



Amanda Gorman, a ray of hope, spoke at the inauguration of the current President of the United States Joe Biden. She occupies a space with her proud attitude. She shows courage (Wiss, 2020) that is needed to bring about change. She speaks to adults with heart and soul.

A boat made of paper, drawn by Peter van den Ende. A fragile little boat, drawing attention to the world around him. A fragile little boat in the middle of the open landscape, but unaware of what is actually there. A fragile boat as a symbol of our vulnerability, the not knowing, the uncertainty we feel. It is meant to be a hopeful symbol.

They both remind me of the metaphor of an open landscape (Duintjer, 2002). For me, it is a metaphor of hope, openness to everything.

### Metaphor of the open landscape

In the metaphor of the open landscape, says Duintjer (2002), there is primary, open consciousness and learned and bounded consciousness. This learned consciousness Duintjer (2002) calls the 'finite building'. In learned and bounded consciousness, there are two layers: the layer of *group consciousness* and the layer of *personal consciousness*. Group consciousness refers to that which we have in common with everyone who has learned the same language of concepts and codes of behaviour, and who participates in the same culture. You can think of the country you live in, your family, the class you are in, the group of friends you have, the club you belong to, the team you are part of. Group consciousness reflects who is influential<sup>10</sup> Wyngaert, 1970-1971 in your actions, who contributes to the construction

of your values and norms. In group consciousness, familiar paths form. You know how to walk a path. The bumps are known, so to speak. There will be no more surprises for you.

The layer of personal awareness is the set of traits, qualities and personal stories that characterize one's personality. It is about familiarity with who you are and want to be. What is part of me? What are my beliefs? What do I think is important? What makes me happy? What is my responsibility?

To create hope, we need to take steps, steps towards others, the other. This means we have to place ourselves and our children in the layer of our primary, open consciousness. For this consciousness, Duintjer (2002) uses the metaphor of the open landscape. This layer of primary consciousness manifests itself in an unbounded space. It is the space where we can constantly learn something new. In meeting others, in learning something new, according to Duintjer, we reach that layer and step into our primary consciousness. Every language and culture has a place in this. Every human, every animal, all things have a place in it. We are open to everything we see and hear. There is no competition between languages, cultures and ways of thinking. We say not 'this is mine' or 'this is ours', but rather we pay attention to each other. It is a layer of consciousness where everyone is allowed to be, where we are open towards the other and learn what language the other speaks. We don't have to understand everything, there is no need to. We have an endless trust. The layer of primary consciousness in the open landscape is also about making an effort to understand the other, to learn to speak the other's language. It is the

open consciousness with which we are all primarily familiar, because all of us have entered the world with this. But it is precisely that 'something' we do not yet understand that is important to notice.

An open landscape or open space with a proud woman and a fragile boat, together they draw attention to the world around us. Human and non-human things, they benefit from the Pedagogy of Hope

### Thoughts on hope

Our focus on hope is not new and much has been thought and written about the concept. In the international context in particular, hope is a principle that has been worked with for much longer in utopian studies, an interdisciplinary field with applications in education (Webb, 2019). We include this in the research of the professorship and focus in particular on the Dutch educational context. We begin this chapter by presenting several thoughts. I start by providing a comprehensive account followed by a discussion of how Pedagogy of Hope relates to pedagogical leadership and more inclusive education.

### The principle of hope (Bloch)

The work of Jewish philosopher Ernst Bloch in particular his book '*Das Prinzip Hoffnung*'<sup>10</sup> is foundational (Hermsen, 2009, 2017). He starts his book with the question: 'Who are we?' 'Where are we coming from?' 'Where are we heading?' 'What is in store for us?' 'What do we expect?' (Ibid.) '*The most characteristic experience of human beings, then, is an incompleteness, an incompleteness of being at home with oneself and thus a being on the road,*

<sup>10</sup> Wyngaert, 1970-1971

*A constant being in the process of becoming. ... The meaning of human existence lies in the process of becoming of man himself* (Hermsen, 2009, p.160)' According to Bloch, we need hope to enhance our process of becoming. Dreaming about the future is an incubator of creativity, through which the human takes shape. A core idea of Bloch is the emergence of the qualitatively new, which we call a utopian vista. The new that can bring us freedom one day, enables us to hope now. The qualitatively new breaks the circle of repetition, breaks patterns and offers its own outlets and possibilities. This corresponds with new as an open field of possibilities, as outlined in the metaphor of the open landscape (Duintjer, 2002). The utopian vista is needed to get moving. In Bloch's thinking, hope is an expectation affect, and therefore different from fear, which is an undetermined expectation affect. The object of hope is the full unfolding of the subject, the highest good, in religion often referred to as heaven. That not being there yet is *the utopia*, after the Greek 'outopos', a 'non-existent place'. The utopian vista remains necessary to get and stay in motion. It can be compared to constantly looking at the world around us to determine what it takes to do.

### Concrete utopia as the sense of direction of trends

With this, a utopia is not a castle in the air (abstract utopia), but is given a concrete representation. A utopia can be a representation of a wish. We can think here of a utopia about inclusiveness. That representation of a desire for inclusiveness need not yet be grounded in established facts. After all, established facts are not as concrete as they look either. According to Bloch, it is important to see that facts together form a 'series', in which a direction

can be recognised as a kind of thrust or pole of attraction. He calls these series tendencies, coming from the Latin 'tendere' meaning 'to pull somewhere'. A concrete utopia is not the confrontation with the facts, rather we can see it as the direction of these tendencies. We perceive those tendencies through feeling. Not the feeling of individuals or groups, but a capacity within and outside human beings. The feeling that is similar to the limbo in the open landscape. It is the direct perception of movement. We can compare it to the concept of intuition. In Bloch's work, feeling starts from a dynamic core; through feeling, the surrounding elements of movement are also perceived. Children and animals in particular, possess this sense of feeling. It is about the unconscious perception of small 'signs' or 'traces', which we recognize because we have an interest in them. It is practiced in a learning process and developed through experience. Acting today must be positively oriented towards utopia, with the capacity of 'sensing'. That ability to sense 'signs' and 'traces' focuses on smaller movements, but also on the movement of the whole world process

### The principle of hope for education

Hermsen (2017) refers to the importance of Bloch's concept of utopia for education. For Hermsen, a utopia is, a place to stretch your arms out to. We need a utopian vista to get moving. From a utopia, we can look at our current society from a critical distance. We gain insight into what is lacking in our current society. By imagining a utopia, we stimulate our creativity. Herein, for Bloch, lies the essence of the human. Valuing and encouraging new beginnings. That means the ability to change course, even when the tide is against us: '*You know what, I'm going to do things very differently tomorrow* (Hermsen,

2017)'. That possibility, the encouragement of doing things differently, is for Bloch, the sole purpose of education. Bloch argues for an *educating hope* (docta spes) in education. Education should not manifest as mere transmission of facts, but regain the narrative character. It is precisely then that you hear who someone is.. We need that narrative to appeal to the creative capacity. A utopia is then a hotbed of creativity.

### Hope is action (de Winter)

Micha de Winter (2017) has important thoughts on hope. He connects hope with action. Action needed in a world of uncertainty. We don't have time to wait and see. In education, he traces an apparent fear of deviance, risk and backwardness. This is not hopeful. De Winter offers two pieces of (hopeful) advice: Realise that together, in education, we can bring about improvements. Create the perspective of joint action. Education is one of the most important places for young people to acquire needed competences and attitudes. Education then is more than a positive attitude, but having expectations and expressing beliefs that things will succeed together ('*shared agency*' Ibid., p. 9) and then taking action,. In his Pedagogy on Hope (De Winter, 2017), he uses the term Hope as an acronym (the acronym works for the Dutch word HOOP, but will not work the same way in English!) Hope involves (1) Cultivating action-oriented perspectives cultivate (2) Interrupting impulsive judgements and desires (3) Living optimistically and (4) Promoting participation. The educator's actions are about much more than desired reward behaviour and discouraging undesirable behaviour. Questions that shape the critical capacity of children and the educator are: '*Who am I, who do I want to be, what contribution can I make to the world* (Valk, De

Winter, 2020, p.8).' De Winter, and Meirieu (2016)<sup>11</sup>, lets educators stand up. We need experienced adults who are role models, who give confidence and who also dare to contradict children. According to Meirieu (2016), educators need to stand up to focus children on the future and get them out of the domination of 'everything, and right now (Meirieu, in Valk, De Winter, 2020, p.8).'

### Becoming at home in the world (Dasberg)

Dasberg (1980), a leading pedagogue, focuses on pedagogy as the future-oriented science in her 1980 oration<sup>12</sup>. She points out that pedagogy in practice needs a guiding perspective worth achieving. Pedagogues provide children with a pedagogical perspective or translation by placing them in the world. For Dasberg, the question is what values and norms justify hope in the future; but above all, an educator must believe in it himself. The Pedagogy of Hope makes Dasberg's (1981) question visible metaphorically with the image of 'becoming at home in the world' (1981). This expression of security has a double meaning: feeling familiar and safe as a child in that space; knowing that you are loved and the vastness that gives space, that shows connections between people. Vastness that allows you to see differences and shows that you are allowed to be there: '*Children cannot be missed in the world, not one of them.* Van Manen (2006) gives hope a similar intention. For him, hope is an enduring attitude manifested in the way an educator communicates with a child: 'I am here for you', 'I trust you', 'I never give up on you'.

### Groundless trust (Duintjer)

Important to bring up in the context of hope is Duintjer's (1983) notion of 'groundless trust'. He posits a relationship between rule-guided behaviour and 'groundless trust'. Duintjer (1983) indicates that we all learn rule-guided behaviour on the basis of, at base, groundless trust. Many rules that we use consciously or unconsciously in dealing with each other we learned as children. Those rules form a basis, but are not based on anything else; certainly children assume with groundless confidence that the basis for those rules is correct. People from different backgrounds, in different cultures, all have their own rules. The further a group is from us in terms of rules, the stranger we perceive them to be. What is strange is quickly perceived as scary. Groundless trust can be understood as a surrender to the fear of hold out for the unknown, without being dragged down with the cringe-inducing and closing suction of fear. Especially now, in turbulent times with an uncertain future, a groundless trust can be supportive in implementing a Pedagogy of Hope.

### Hope as a choice (Wals)

Finally, we put forward the views of Wals (Valk & Wals, 2020). Wals is professor of sustainability at Wageningen University and also holds a Unesco chair in the field of Social Learning and Sustainable Development. According to Wals (Ibid.), there is a growing need for education based on existential issues, which relate to systems thinking, subject integration, perspective switching, (self)research and experimentation in the immediate environment while maintaining a view of the world around us. The

question is also no longer whether education should be concerned with sustainability. Indeed, we may ask whether it can be acceptable to deprive students of the right to such an education. Wals (Ibid.) and de Winter (Valk, De Winter, 2020) broadly agree: with fear, despair and pessimism, we are not going to make the earth better. Hope, according to Wals (2020), is a choice and a perspective of something better.

### Images on Pedagogy of Hope

These thoughts about hope generate images. Those images are about hope as principle, hope as sensing trends, hope to generate creativity, hope as choice, hope as commitment (common sense, creativity, cooperation with others), generating hope by taking action, hope through educators rising up, hope through the offering a perspective of something better, hope as an enduring attitude, hope by transcending of individual interest and doing justice to the social legacy of our ancestors and the interest of generations to come. Hope through groundless trust. We take these images and contribute to the intentions of a pedagogical phenomenological stance. That pedagogical phenomenological attitude is about acting intentionally (making the choice to stand up and take action together with dedication), giving all you have (transcending individual interest; focusing on something better), but at the same time providing space for the child to discover their own good life.

<sup>11</sup> French pedagogue Philippe Meirieu, professor emeritus at the University LumièreLyon 2, who wrote the book 'Pedagogy, the duty to resist'.

<sup>12</sup> Dasberg uses the term pedagogy, referring to e.g. the actions or (guidance) of parents, teachers; pedagogy indicates a meta activity and examines or reflects on the reality of parenting.



## Relationship of pedagogical leadership to Pedagogy of Hope

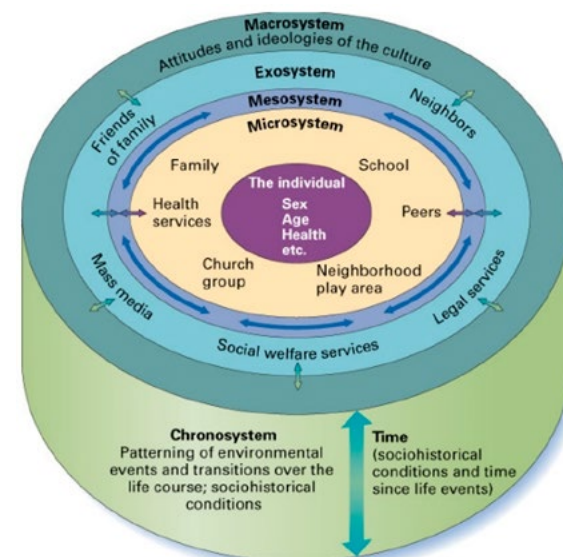
In relation to Pedagogy of Hope, we see an important role for the pedagogical leader. The pedagogical leader who stands up in education to contribute to sustainable change in education. We will elaborate on this in Chapter 2, the next chapter.

## Systemic pedagogy

The relationship of pedagogical leadership to Pedagogy of Hope is revealed in the so-called systemic pedagogy<sup>13</sup>. This involves awareness that our actions have an effect on others. And the awareness that our actions are embedded and influenced by values and norms in different systems. In that awareness, the educational leader is guided by Pedagogy of Hope. It is an illusion to think that we can separate our actions in education from other systems. Education is part of systems where there are permanent sequential interactions that affect and change all involved. We can only partially predict or understand these interactions (Grol, Mulderij & Schoenmakers, 2016). Thus, we realise how complex it can be to contribute to the concept of Pedagogy of Hope. Bronfenbrenner (2006) and Bateson (2000, 2002) give us insight into that complexity. Bronfenbrenner (2006) explains children's development through their interaction with multiple environments and depicts these environments in an ecological model. We briefly provide a view of the ecological model to understand this complexity a little more.

The child or young person is at the centre of the model. The child defines the perspective of viewing. The individual child is influenced by the ring around the m: the family, the family, the school, the neighbourhood, peers (peers). These systems, among others, determine the context. There is mutual influence here. The family influences the child; the child also influences the family. Bronfenbrenner calls this the microsystem containing various processes. A circle around the microsystem is the mesosystem. It shows see what impact, for example, the family, the school, the neighbourhood, the church and peers can have on each other and thus, in turn, on the child in the microsystem. Consider a seriously ill aunt of nieces and nephews, which they talk about together while playing and which affects the child's behaviour in school.

The next system, the exosystem, consists of family, neighbours, media, government and social agencies and gives insight into factors that may be indirect influences. These influences may not be directly detectable, but they do have an impact. Consider when a parent's business has gone bankrupt and the parents end up with a government agency. This will have an impact, but for a child *may not* become *directly visible*. The macro system is about the cultural influences like how we treat each other in our country and what habits we have. Then there is the foundation of the chronosystem: time. These are the changes in the environment that happen during life and affect development. This is about changes in our relationship with the rest of the natural world, or digital developments that have become of great influence. An analysis of these systems in the



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Bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2006)<sup>14</sup>

ecological model helps the educational leader to gain insight into the key concepts: process, person, context, time and their meaning in their own practice.

<sup>13</sup> Systemic pedagogy is related to ecological pedagogy, as described in the lectureship's starting document. We choose the term 'systemic pedagogy' because it is common in the master's in Pedagogy and the minor in Behaviour and Learning and can be recognised.

<sup>14</sup> [https://o.quizlet.com/wkip0gpXLU8DLC2XNAKEbQ\\_b.jpg](https://o.quizlet.com/wkip0gpXLU8DLC2XNAKEbQ_b.jpg) Accessed 18 January 2023

Bateson (2000, 2002, Chiew, 2016) connects with this for me. He describes that different ideas, concepts and processes of knowing and understanding are like 'natural conversations'; 'patterns' connecting the entire universe. Here he asks an overarching question: 'What pattern connects the crab with the lobster and the orchid with the primrose and all four with me?' (2002, p.7) This reflects that something can only be perceived by the associations that are available to us (Chiew, 2016). Past experiences underpin every beginning, new understanding and source of explanation. We need the past to understand the present. Features of the human species such as intention, intelligence and consciousness, which we assume are unique to the human species, are found everywhere in nature, according to Bateson (Bateson, in Chiew, 2016). They are found in animals, plants and more generally in biological and physical processes. For Bateson, this ranges from the pattern arrangement of leaves in a plant to the grammar of a sentence, the mystery of the biological revolution to contemporary crises in our relationship to our environment (Bateson, 2000). Bateson thus demonstrates a broad conception of ideation, arising from humans and non-human things.

Chiew (2016) pays attention to Bateson's significance for our education. A recognition of the complexity of subject formation is needed- of both the child and an educational leader. Bateson reminds us, Chiew says, that subjects do not act and communicate on the basis of independently existing entities (ideas, persons, objects). The classroom, the teachers' room is, as it were, a relational ecology, with an ongoing commitment to possibilities, efforts and failures. We have to realise that the reality of the various 'coincidences' in life, 'seeps' into the educational encounter as the learning process turns into new

opportunities and experiences. Knowledge arises only as a relational process that integrates mind and body, self and other, subject and world. How learning takes place thus includes relational shifts or as Bateson says: '*the difference that makes a difference*' (Bateson, 2000, p. 318).' In education, we can make a difference.

Bronfenbrenner and Bateson are important sources for us in systemic pedagogy. With Bronfenbrenner's model and Bateson's view, we realise the complexity in which an educational leader manifests himself. Each system, with its own norms and values, determines the normative professionalism of the educational leader.

### Normative professionalism

The concept of normative professionalism expresses our professional dealings with values (Kunneman, 2017). In this professional dealing, we regularly reflect on our values orientation.

We then ask ourselves questions: which values are important to me? What values do we make visible in our school? How do these values relate to a hopeful future? These questions are part of a continuous learning process, in which they always orient us to the to the WHY of education (why do we teach, what is good education, what is good action). In that learning process, reflection is conditional, and is dominated by the negotiation of conflicting values. For example, how does a value like achievement relate to a value like sustainability? Or the value self-preservation to the value of democracy? These questions lead to moral judgements, which in dialogue can lead to shared knowledge about action in practice. A dialogue that continuously leads to the generation of experiential knowledge,

as well as moral and existential insights. Normative professionalism focuses on increasing engagement in a learning process, care and attention, but also on humanising systems and society. The normative professionalism of an educational leader contributes to 'being human' in education. Learning is about 'thinking together' and stepping out of one's 'own world'.

The learning process outlined above involve repeatedly entering the open landscape to construct 'finite buildings'. Into the open landscape to face conflicts, and the unknown. We generate hope when we dare to take our place in the open landscape. Hope arises when Amanda Gorman acts with her proud demeanour, addressing the world. Hope glows when the little boat made of paper, becomes aware of the world around it. A fragile little boat in the middle of the open

sea, or our open landscape, shows itself. But it also involves really seeing the other person, however difficult that may be at times. Hope is also about ourselves. Hope becomes visible when we place ourselves as teachers, teacher educators, school leaders on that empty chair. On that empty chair, to become still and distance ourselves from the day-to-day. We then learn to see what is actually needed and notice what we have not yet seen or heard. Hope arises when we place our child or great-grandchild on that empty chair. We empathise with what the child will need in this world, we see their longing, their desires. To then look, listen, ask questions and sail towards hope.

Pedagogy of Hope is an important concept for the professorship 'Educating and (educating) towards sustainable and democratic coexistence'. Within a global constellation of myriad issues, education and in particular pedagogy seems to be able to contribute to sustainable change. Therein echoes hope, hope that is about awareness. Learning to look, listen and act differently as a normative professional in education. It is about generating movement between acting intentionally (standing up proudly, courage) and making vulnerability visible (boat of paper, uncertainty). It is about pedagogical leadership, it is about more inclusive education. In the following chapters, we elaborate on these two themes.

**We create an image of hope:  
we sit together, under the trees,  
where blackbirds whistle, a  
day peacock flutters, a squirrel  
rustles through the tree, and we  
listen, listen, listen to what is  
there.**

**'We did not inherit the earth from our ancestors, but borrowed it from our children.'**

Goodall & Abrams, 2021

# Chapter 2

## Pedagogical leadership

'You adults are not taking responsibility for the world we will soon live in. You are destroying our world. Then we have to take responsibility. What is the point of school if the world becomes unlivable (Van Dijk, 2019, p.103).'

Young people, with Gretha Thunberg at the forefront, confronted us daily in the summer of 2018. Young people have lost that groundless trust in adults. They are demonstrating for more political attention to climate. To me, Gretha Thunberg is a powerful example of resilience. Resilience that is needed in these turbulent times. We see in the Professorship the importance of pedagogical leadership in education to contribute to the formation of children and young people so that they can seek their place in the world with self-confidence and resilience. With this, we fully endorse the mandate to the professorship, articulated by Korfage (2021).

### Meaning pedagogical leadership

Pedagogical leadership has international different meanings. The meaning seems depending on the context, because of the difference in connotation in, for example, Scandinavian countries and the US and Great Britain (Forssten Seiser, 2020, Fonsén, Lahtinen, Sillman, Reunamo, 2022). In our context, pedagogical leadership is based on aspects of pedagogical tactfulness<sup>15</sup> (Middendorp, 2015, Middendorp, Wentzel & Spil, 2022a), in which the aspect of moral responsibility applies as a core value. This core value focuses on 'being human' in education by looking at the world, the other, the other, to determine again

and again what responsibility the pedagogical leader has to take. The pedagogical leader includes himself as an instrument, transcending his own individual interest. It is about the commitment of the teacher (or school leader) to tune in to characteristics and needs of children (or teachers) (Van den Berg, Stevens, Vandenberghe, 2013). We find the pedagogical meaning in the interactions between people and non-human things, in the fluid processes of spontaneous interaction, of learning and working and of evaluation and reflection: a shared outcome of efforts in a school constitutes the school climate or school ethos (Ibid.). In our context, pedagogical leadership is mainly the demonstration of moral responsibility and is considered a 'quality of being' of the person (Jorna, 2008, Korfage, 2021).

With that moral responsibility, I cannot ignore the appeal of young people. The insecurity in the world is only increasing as we are assailed by more and more "crises". Our education system faces this uncertainty daily, directly and indirectly (Bronfenbrenner, 2006). Images that reveal the state of the earth. Crises that polarize (UNESCO, 2021) and pit people in a society

<sup>15</sup> Here I see a connection with NIVUZ's Pedagogical Tactful Leadership course, among others.

against each other. We see it before us: a child who knows poverty at home and goes to school with an empty stomach and the child who can still everything they need. And what then is the role of education in this? What is good education? For what purpose do we do the things we do? To what extent do we question whether our values are still sustainable for the future (Dasberg, 1980)? How do our values relate to, the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the global sustainable development agenda for 2030? To what extent do we pay attention to moral and existential questions that arise in everyday practice (Wals, 2020)? How do these existential and moral questions relate to our normative professionalism (Kunneman, 2017). Kunneman (Ibid.) talks about creating moral sanctuaries in the formation of normative professionalism. Moral sanctuaries where we take up our responsibility together with children and young people and engage in dialogue about who you are in and with the world (Biesta, 2022), what you stand for and what contribution you want to make to this world (De Winter, 2017). In dialogue, those questions can lead to a shared knowledge about practical action. In parenting and education, such knowledge is important: 'conscious acting, intended acting, and acting-in-relation (Biesta, 2018, p. 12)'. For real dialogue, it is important to acknowledge one's own vulnerability and to be open to the other and oneself. Showing vulnerability, according to Jacobs (in Grootenk, 2009), demonstrates courage.

### Moral sanctuaries

For us in the professorship, moral sanctuaries are similar to establishing a dialogue, creating space to meet each other (with our differences). A dialogue with courage where openness is experienced, listening that goes beyond condemnation (Wiss, 2020), listening without good intentions (Jorna & van Balen, 2014). A moral sanctuary where dialogue is connective, by actually listening to what the other has to say, where moral and existential insights emerge in the everyday practice of education (Wiss, 2020). A moral sanctuary occupies space, in a society that has an explicit focus on corporate forms of steering, on efficiency and accountability for results (Kunneman, 2017). With moral sanctuaries, we create a necessary 'humus layer', of inspiring perspectives, metaphors and stories that transcend existing beliefs and behaviours and go beyond boundaries (Kunneman, 2006). A moral sanctuary is a place where the normative professionalism of the educational leader can contribute to 'being human' in education. We also find that place, that 'humus layer' in the metaphor of the open landscape (Duintjer, 2002) in the layer of so-called primary open consciousness.

However, it is not easy to create moral sanctuaries in a reifying and qualifying education system. Education professionals relate every day to numeracy, language and citizenship competences, put forward by the government as a core function of education (Oppers, 2022). Education professionals are part of a system where our thinking is entirely dominated by an apparent fear of deviance, risk and disadvantage (De Winter, 2017) and where the concept of

education is governed by curriculum or methods, standards, instruction and rules. Internationally, the trend of controlling is recognised (Van Manen, 2006, Brown, 2015, Mills, 2018, Biesta, 2020). Wals (2020) indicates that it is becoming increasingly clear that humans treat the Earth as if it is there to serve the economy and that our education should not become an extension of that. Every day, the education professional relates to young people with relatively poor mental health.<sup>16</sup> They face far-reaching motivation problems, according to secondary school teachers<sup>17</sup>. The cries for help from children and young people as well as education professionals demand to be heard and seen. They call, from our perspective, for pedagogical leadership and the creation of moral sanctuaries. In this context, I want to share with you a recent experience, it connects to the appeal of the children and young people in the summer 2018 and may be an example of a moral sanctuary:

<sup>16</sup> 38% of young people say they do not have any problem in terms of anxiety and depression, nor do they have difficulty completing 'everyday' activities

<sup>17</sup> Students' demotivation is evident in interviews with Master Teacher Education students who have teaching positions in secondary education

In June 2022, I participated in one of the spot councils organised by a group calling itself Future Ambassadors. During these spot councils, we were in dialogue about the interests of future generations<sup>18</sup>. These councils focus on different themes: the use of water, going plastic-free, local energy generation, livelihood security for generations to come, the reinforcement of important values. Always with the generation of our great grandchildren in mind. What will they see, when will they say to us: 'You got that right! At the June meeting, we did a generational immersion exercise. We took a moment to reflect. I am invited to think back to what my parents, as well as my grandparents and great-grandparents, have meant to life as I live it today. With not only my parents behind me, but also my great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, I realise that I am not alone, I feel in that moment a deep connection with them. Even if I did not know them, even if they lived in a completely different era. Then our attention turns to future generations: those of our children, our grandchildren, great-grandchildren. We reflect on the influence of our choices in the here and now for our great-grandchildren. I feel addressed. What beneficial choices am I making? What choices are not so responsible? What values do I consider important and worthy of the future?

The experience in this generational immersion exercise, in light of the crises in our world and the culture of our education, continues to occupy my mind. I feel the appeal of children and young people, think more and more of my great-grandchild's chair. For me, it is particularly about pedagogical responsibility. Pedagogical *responsibility* as a core value. In what way do I take my responsibility as an educator? What does it look like? What meaning do I give to responsibility to contribute in our education to a world that remains livable for humans and non-human things?

### Metaphor of the open landscape

Metaphorically, I place the experience of generational immersion, including the feelings at the regular reliving of this experience, as a 'finite building' (Duintjer, 2002) in an 'open landscape'. I feel responsible. I experience action shyness, feel vulnerability, try to empathise with the other and the other, place my future grandchildren in the world. And this is all happening in the moment at the same time. I do it in that moment with who I am, but feel the urge to step out of my finite building.

In leaving the finite building and stepping into the open landscape lie opportunities. Opportunities for me as a person, but particularly for education and pedagogical leadership. Opportunities for our education to take new steps towards normative professionalism (Grootenk, 2009, Kunneman, 2017), in creating moral sanctuaries to generate attention to moral

and existential questions in everyday practice (Wals, 2020). Opportunities to rethink our moral responsibility (Middendorp, 2015).

### Responsibility of pedagogical as well as leadership

So we see a beckoning perspective for education. From various conversations, in the professorship, observations and teaching in the Academy of Primary Education, we see an important role for pedagogical leadership. In particular, for (regular) teacher education.

With the focus on pedagogical leadership, we focus on the concept of responsibility. The concept of responsibility that takes on meaning in both concepts, pedagogical and leadership, and is explained in more detail.

### Pedagogy and responsibility

Van Manen (2006) links the concepts of pedagogy and responsibility. He defines responsibility as attention to the child's<sup>19</sup> being in connection with personal feelings. Responsibility is moral action: focusing on values that promote the child's well-being and development in the world (Middendorp, 2015, Middendorp, Wentzel & Spil, 2022a). Pedagogically, our education is about standing up for future values, and connections to the sustainable goals. We also call this moral values orientation (Middendorp, 2015)

<sup>18</sup> <https://weektoekomstigegeneraties.nl/samenimpactmakeninplekberadenvoordetoekomst/>

<sup>19</sup> We choose the word 'child' here because of its focus on the pabo and its connection to primary education. You can also read younger where you read child.

Of interest is Langeveld's (1979) notion that in acknowledging or assuming responsibility, the educator 'overcomes' his own (causal) determinacy. In assuming responsibility, it is not about who the educator is at that moment, but about determining the consequences of actions for the other and others (which may include people in the environment as well as institutions such as the government). The educator's 'emotional considerations' are secondary to accountability. We link this to the notion of 'interrupting impulsive judgements and desires' (De Winter, 2017). The educator is encouraged to address children's impulsiveness: 'I want it here and now, right away', and take actions to interrupt this. Langeveld (1979) advocates relying on one's own wits. Do not simply follow traditions and authorities, thereby creating responsibility for one's own actions and being willing to reflect on this. Langeveld (1979) is concerned with ensuring moral continuity. Pedagogical leadership, with emphasis on the pedagogical, reinforces responsibility for orientation towards future values.

### Leadership and responsibility

Pedagogical leadership, as defined, in our context relates to the core value 'moral responsibility'. Leadership implies responsibility. As a leader, you are responsible for who you are and how you place yourself in the world, revealing how a leader uses himself as an instrument. As a leader, you are also responsible for how you place another in the world. Responsibility becomes moral responsibility when you as leader are able to transcend your own good intentions and read the other person's appeal properly. The philosopher Levinas (in Keij, 2012) defines responsibility as '*my sensitivity to the problems of others, followed by the will to actually do something about it*' (Keij, 2012, p. 23).

This requires a certain degree of independence. According to Levinas (in Keij, 2012), only the free, independent human being can be responsible, be addressed. Moral responsibility is also about being touched: experiencing an appeal from the other, feeling troubled. With that appeal, you have to give an answer from yourself, but you think about what answer you give, what answer is appropriate. Specifically, I connect that appropriate response with the concepts of standing still, getting up and 'standing out'. 'Standing out' to the world to be open to the appeals of children and young people, human and non-human things and animals. Standing still at the call of the other and taking responsibility by not acting, giving the other space to act for themselves (giving responsibility). Precisely deciding to stand up, to act because the other cannot take responsibility (taking responsibility).

The concept of leadership here is emphatically not only reserved for formal leaders (administrators, school leaders), but of relevance to all roles in education: teacher, education support worker, quality coordinator, school leader, teacher educator, lecturer, team leader, headmaster, administrator. We do not think in terms of 'leaders and followers', but every stakeholder can take initiative (Bekman, 2018). Thus, to be meaningful in education, all those involved bear responsibility. A good example of a school leader has impact on teachers, where teachers in turn have impact on children. Pedagogical leadership, with an emphasis on leadership, is showing sensitivity to the appeal of the other, the other and being an example in a parallel process.

### Parallel processes and hierarchical structures

Responsibility for good teaching does not lie solely with hierarchical leadership. What is important, according to Wals (2020), is to recognise deep-rooted hierarchical structures and power relations in society, as well as in community contexts such as education and their effects on dialogic processes. Education for the future, aimed at that sustainable change, is recalcitrant in enduring the tension that exists between different positions and identities (Geerinck, 2021). We call this awareness of parallel processes. Processes in education that run simultaneously, but also parallel to each other. In education, we then speak of the process between school leader and teacher running parallel to the process between teacher and child. This means they are ostensibly unrelated, but from the point of view of systemic pedagogy (Bronfenbrenner, 2006, Savenije, Lawick & Reijmers, 2009) this reality is refuted. From the systemic viewpoint, it becomes clear that there are effects or mechanisms such as, for example, '*action and reaction*' (Savenije et al., 2009, p. 8). A dominant school leader largely determines teacher behaviour. In turn, the teacher's action has an impact on the child's behaviour. For educational leaders, it is important to be aware of these parallel processes in, and in connection with, education. With more visibility

### Everyone is an educational leader

Everyone has a responsibility to be a pedagogical leader and thus the duty to bring children and young people into their world from a place of freedom (Meirieu, 2016). So our definition of pedagogical leadership is deliberately assigned to everyone who has a role in the process from Pabo to primary school to bring children into the world (Bekman, 2018). The



etymology of leader is literally 'wayfarer'. Lei = way, der = seeker. It is about preparing a way, a privilege for everyone. Everyone has a path to prepare in life and leadership to make visible in caring for themselves, others and the world. We believe it is important that everyone with a pedagogical role in education is aware of his, her, his responsibility. The actions of pedagogical leaders generate effect as pathfinders of Pedagogy of Hope.

### Core value responsibility

Pedagogical leadership generates accents on pedagogical, leadership and parallel processes in turn. It deepens the meaning of the core value *responsibility*. The focus on the aspect of responsibility in leadership is confirmed by the focus on moral action in leadership, visible in concepts such as transformational leadership (Bush, 2018), but<sup>20</sup> Here, for child, you can also read young person or student also in the pedagogical by reflecting on our value orientation (Van Manen, 2006). Finally, responsibility is also about transcending one's own individual perspective (awareness of parallel process). *Showing receptivity* to the environment: watching and listening to what unfolds. Taking responsibility for that which is seen. Responsibility is thus positioned in the concept of *educational leadership* and carries a moral appeal. It is precisely this deeper meaning that is important in the current state of the world and our current educational culture. Pedagogical responsibility calls for standing still and 'standing out' (Biesta, 2018) to the world, but it also calls for standing up, for direct action.

<sup>20</sup> Here, for child, you can also read young person or student

### The gift and task in a development process

To contribute to education, notions of gift and task are central to an educational development process (Biesta, 2018). The gift is what the child<sup>20</sup> discovers/ achieves in himself. Here, for example, it is about the talents a child can use in the world. Amanda Gorman is a case in point. Amanda uses her gift to write about oppression, feminism and marginalisation. The task in the educational development process gives insight into the resistance that is felt (Biesta, 2018). Resistance that is about the resistance you feel within yourself and the resistance you experience from outside (Meirieu, 2016). When an educational leader takes young people's resistance seriously, education can be the beckoning perspective in these turbulent times.

Taking responsibility for bringing children and young people into the world requires conscious action: conscious of forward-looking values (Dasberg, 1980) and sustainable goals, conscious of what is appropriate in a livable world, aware of the space you want to generate, aware of your own gift and task, but also of the child, aware of the resistance and what education must relate to in order to break through taken-for-granted assumptions to secure good education.

### Pedagogy of Hope: shifting attention

Pedagogical leadership is based on a Pedagogy of Hope. A vision that gives clues about our relationship to the world and the choices we make with our education. For me, this is about focusing on the appeal of Amanda Gorman and Gretha Thunberg.

This is about shifting my attention. It becomes visible in the fragile little boat. A boat made of paper that *does not* draw attention to itself. 'Don't look at me, look at the world around me.' The attention to that world that has something wonderful, but also shows a dark side. I feel I need to bring children, young people, colleagues, others into stories about that world. Amanda, Gretha and the paper boat appeal to my creative capacity. With the appeal to creative ability, something of hope shines again for me, educational hope.

For me, a Pedagogy of Hope is also not about big deeds. It is precisely small moments that can demonstrate great insight. Scharmer (2018) points out that shifting the way you listen changes your life. It is precisely watching and listening, endlessly watching and listening again to experience the unforeseen, that give great insight. Sometimes you may experience it, unexpectedly, in small moments of hope:

Together, we sit on the floor, in the circle, on our own cushion from home. Each child has a tea light and a pen and paper. A large candle burns in the middle of the circle. The children may light the tea light and place it next to the big candle. If they like, they write on the piece of paper who they think of in particular while lighting the candle. The stories overwhelm me, children get emotional. Loss experiences emerge: the girl with divorced parents, the child in foster care, the girl in solidarity. The group feels like a group in such a moment.

In this memory, we - the children and myself - bring our finite building into the open landscape. Everyone is part of that. The space of the classroom is filled by children writing in silence, lighting a candle and adding these elements to the big candle. Everyone initially sits there with themselves, but suddenly I feel the connection. Tears flow, children embrace each other. Something happens ...

I feel: this is what I do it for. Children take something with them, however small it may be. They enter into a new relationship with the world (Jorna, 2008). Together, we show something of receptivity, connection and movement. That cannot be put into words. Not only am I touched, but also the children

Receptivity, connecting and moving. Children watch and listen with and to each other. They don't know what it will trigger. I, as a teacher, don't know how it will turn out either. I watch and listen to them. I have initiated a form; herein lies my intentionality. An open landscape is created: on the floor, in the circle, each on a cushion. Security here turns out to be an invitation to open up. Opening becomes recognising, acknowledging and connecting. I realise that I had created something, but not planned it. A moral sanctuary emerges, as it were. I also open up, as do the children. I give space to let happening. The present moment is shaped by that which wants to unfold. In that moment, I experience, not controlling but creating leads to deep learning. Creating can act as a future gateway to a field of future possibilities (Scharmer, 2018). Judith Butler, an American philosopher, puts it pithily: 'We are lifting each other up at the seams (Butler, in Kunneman, 2017, p. 112). This generates quality of life and gives hope.

### **Pedagogical leadership in practice**

In the practice of pedagogical leadership, we see differences. The practice of the pedagogical leader in primary education has different dynamics, compared to secondary and higher education. We also see differences in the concepts of pedagogical and agogical leadership. Pedagogical is about the relationship between an adult and a child or young

person. The agogic is about a change process between adults. Both notions relate to the key concepts of *ethical relationship, moral responsibility, practical wisdom and interlude*, which are extensively interpreted in the study on pedagogical tactfulness of teachers (Middendorp, 2015). Differences in the practice of pedagogical leadership are detailed.

### **Pedagogical leadership in primary schools**

Awareness of the roles of parent and teacher in primary education is important. To reach adulthood, these positions and associated identities are important for the child (Langeveld 1979, Van Manen, 2006). They both relate to child rearing. In this context, Van Manen calls the role of the teacher (in primary education) in *loco parentis*, literally 'in the place of the parent'. This does not mean that the teacher does exactly the same as the parent, but rather that there is a similar responsibility towards the child and the teacher shares responsibility with the parent. (Middendorp, 2015). Pedagogical leadership begins with our effort to get to know the other person. It forms the basis for feeling secure, developing resilience and creating self-confidence. From this foundation, values become visible. The values that parents and teacher consider important. The values that determine the child's place in the world.

### **Pedagogical leader in secondary, secondary and higher education**

The parent and teacher in secondary and intermediate vocational education have a different relationship. Here, the parent and teacher are more

distant from each other; the relationship has a less structural character. Nevertheless, the parent and teacher are important to the young person. The value of a pedagogical relationship is also emphasised at this stage of life. Responsibility at this stage relates to the principle of freedom, balancing between giving space and acting intentionally. Values become visible at home and at school. They seem to be parallel processes: they touch, but sometimes not. This can give space, but also be confusing, create resistance. This stage of values orientation is an interesting one in the context of a transition towards adulthood. In secondary education, the young person develops from adolescent to adult. This transition phase is continued by the student in primary teacher education (called PABO in the Netherlands)<sup>21</sup>. Here, the teacher educator is a pedagogical but also an agogic leader. This means that the teacher educator takes the student through a change process of re-experiencing and re-relating to one's own possibly conflicting values, leaving some behind and maybe adding new values. This reminds me of my own time at PABO. I can still see the bewilderment on the faces of fellow students when confronted with a different philosophical identity, different values. For Geerinck (2021), renewal is linked to the possibility of being affected by and being touched by something that is the order of breaking through the world. It reveals the value of vulnerability.

In becoming a teacher, the student experiences a parallel process: the student, with his, her, his values orientation, also relates directly to the children in the classroom. The experience of children in another generation and a different zeitgeist (Bronfenbrenner,

2006) are important in determining those values. What do the children's values look like? What is important to them? Here, for the student, the child manifests himself with a world of his own, new and sometimes strange at the same time. This is not always easy for a student, so a place of difficulty (Middendorp, 2015) is regularly experienced, a difference between thinking and acting. From experience, we see that students look for a degree of clarity and structure, for example. In such a phase, sticking to rules and agreements is important and can be decisive. At the same time, sticking to rules and agreements can be tricky in the student's thinking, but the student does not yet know for a while how to do things differently. A teacher educator, as well as the workplace supervisor, are role models in these developments of congruent action (where thinking and acting are aligned). The experience with students in this transition phase from adolescence to adulthood also teaches us that for them not everything is self-evident anymore. Especially at this stage, perhaps unquestionable values no longer always seem so certain. Students gain awareness about that which is (my) own and which I want to hold on to (the security of home and the existing) and 'that which is different and open' (the other and the difference) (Geerinck, 2021). From these experiences, a student appeals to the teacher educator and/or the workplace supervisor, along the lines of: would you like to look and think with me? I don't know for the moment.' Here the teacher educator is pedagogical and agogic leader. Here the teacher educator's and workplace supervisor's sense of the principle of freedom (Biesta, 2018) becomes apparent and the receptivity they show to that which a student needs.

Where one clearly knows what values are important are, think Amanda and Gretha, for another it is still a quest. Here lie keys to a hopeful future. In this transition, a new relationship to values emerges, a new relationship to 'the strange'. This is where the example of a teacher educator becomes an important example. In this development, the teacher educator can promote the transformation towards forward-looking values.

### Formal pedagogical leadership

Pedagogical leadership in practice benefits from a connection between several parallel processes. Despite the deliberate choice: *pedagogical leadership is for everyone*, here we have an explicit focus on formal leaders. The pedagogical leadership of formal leaders matters (Forssten Seiser, 2020, Fonsén, Lahtinen, Sillman, Reunamo, 2022). They are key figures in sustainable change. Key figures because of the choices and decisions they can create in an existing hierarchical system, reinforcing the required action in the educational transition to sustainable action. The connection from formal pedagogical leadership is about communication with a we-centred focus (De Haan & Beerends, 2016). Associated concepts are: building together, engaging in dialogue, slowing down, open speaking and open listening, equality, inclusivity, cocreation, connection. The parallel process serving change appeals to presencing. In *presencing*, the field of 'open will' is central. It is similar to taking a seat in the open landscape. You really want to see what presents itself, without interpretation or direction. Duintjer puts it as follows:

<sup>21</sup> Waar voortaan Pabo staat wordt ook tweedegraads lerarenopleiding bedoeld.

'[...] step by step and again and again: learning to expose yourself more to reality, as it manifests itself situation by situation, around us and within us, without defence or repression on the one hand and without clinging or addiction on the other.' (Duintjer, 2002, p. 3637)

To create that open will, space is needed to reflect on some essential and fundamental questions: 'Who am I at the deepest?' 'What is my mission in this life?' To achieve change, it is important to be aware of a parallel process. A parallel process in which formal leaders are key figures; they have opportunities to stand up, to initiate. A parallel process established from a collaborative perspective: together with team leaders, teacher educators, school leaders, teachers. From the awareness that we need each other to achieve a desired change.

To further visualise the parallel process, we again use the image of the table. We can probably see it for us, teachers together in dialogue around a table. They talk about experiences in the classroom, about experiences with children and about personal things. The conversation at this table demonstrates pedagogical leadership. The school leader slides in. A school leader designs the primary process together with the teachers; there is a focus not only on the child, but also on the colleague. Especially in these times, the school leader sometimes faces difficult puzzles: who can be in front of the class where because of illness or workload. The school leader focuses on the purpose of education with the child in mind (pedagogical leadership) and relates to his colleagues taking the essences of pedagogical

leadership, but in connection with colleagues also manifesting agogical leadership.

### **Pedagogical leadership and resistance**

Responsibility is a key value in pedagogical leadership. Responsibility that relates to the principle of freedom. In this respect, we cannot escape the concept of resistance. Resistance in the child, young person or education professional themselves and even the resistance of the use of methods, standards and tools, which is about being solution-oriented. We cannot imagine what education would look like without methods. The same goes for measuring-as-knowing, the focus on language, numeracy and citizenship competences, the testing culture. Again, we cannot imagine what education would look like without these qualifying aspects. In order to take steps to bring education to children and young people and relate our education to the livability of the world, we will have to contribute to good education. Qualification is important and should be balanced with the other goal domains<sup>22</sup> (Biesta, 2018), but we need to think about its relationship to a hopeful future. Good education is relating ourselves to 'resistance'. Good education, according to Meirieu, is education that puts students in problem situations in which they are challenged to overcome obstacles'*Education should set pupils in motion, create cognitive shifts, transformations: a new understanding* (Meirieu 1999, p. 84).' Learning together is crucial to this, but in such a way that the differences between children are made intopositives. For that, we will experience and more often create a 'place of effort'. In this, we will have to be examples to move the dialogue forward. For

instance, with the difficult child who has ADHD and can't sit in his chair more often than not. The child you want to give experiences to, that give sight of a society where there is room for him, her, that.

We feel the resistance in ourselves, in the child. We experience that tools do not help us. We see that immediate solutions confront us with our not knowing. We have to think about the intention of our actions. However, this is not obvious. You have to ask yourself every day: what am I doing this, doing that for? After all, you quickly find yourself thinking in your own box, caught in your own beliefs, which may not always be good for someone else. We are therefore responsible ourselves for resisting. Resisting reification and qualification in education to do justice to overcoming challenges. We have children and young people to move, to provide cognitive shifts, transformations and new insights that come to support the hopeful in the world. Good example follows good practice.

In education, pedagogical leaders have an important role in a transition towards a hopeful future. Especially in the transition phase of the student at the PABO and second-degree teacher education, from adolescence to adulthood which is crucial. In this phase towards adulthood, there are opportunities to reconsider the value orientation in connection with the sustainable goals. In the actions of educational leaders, in a parallel process, the core value of responsibility becomes visible. Responsibility as an important aspect of a normative professional in creating a hopeful future. From the metaphorical open landscape, it is important that as an educational

<sup>22</sup> De drie doeldomeinen: subjectificatie, socialisatie en kwalificatie (Biesta, 2018)

leader you take an uncertain step to be able to come home. We have to leave our 'finite building' to enter the 'open landscape'. As a leader, as well as a teacher or parent, this is actually what you do over and over again to seek and find the right relationships. You gradually learn to trust that although the 'open landscape' is uncertain, it also expands and changes you and our future generations as a result. A change that is necessary to face the future with hope.

**We sit in a circle, as educational leaders in education. We sit in a circle with our great-grandchild in the empty chair. We wonder how we can take responsibility for her for a hopeful future.**

**'Beyond the idea of what is right and what is wrong, is a beautiful garden. And that's where I will meet you.'**

Rumi

# Chapter 3

## More inclusive education

We prepared the empty chair for Hans. His experience gives visibility to experiences in our education. We take his story seriously, in forming thoughts about a hopeful future: Hans, who prefers to be invisible but stands out because of his visual impairment. The chair is also ready for the child, the teacher who finds the other 'strange'.

From my role as a teacher, teacher educator, researcher I look back on my experiences with Hans. Hans, with a visual impairment, deliberately keeping a low profile so as not to be bullied. The story of Hans being edged while organising a school party at the end of the school year.

Hans I meet in college as an undergraduate student. Hans has a visual impairment. He tells me about his experiences in mainstream primary education. There, he is seen as a special child. 'Actually, they are constantly asked if I am doing well. I am asked more for confirmation asked than to the other kids around me.'<sup>23</sup>

He chooses his words carefully. I see him thinking. In our conversation, reflection arises in Hans. Sometimes he marvels, indicating that his experiences in primary education have never made him think like this before. He has brothers and a sister with the same disability. The 'main problem' has already been ironed out for him by his older brother: teachers have experienced his visual impairment. They react differently to him than to his brother, who was the first to enter the school with this disability. He has actually not had to fight to get anything done. With his brother, teachers still get defensive when their father says during a ten-minute interview that the line for pricking could be a bit thicker, because otherwise his son would not be able to see that line. Hans says it is good to listen to an expert.

<sup>23</sup> Excerpt from the preliminary study of my PhD research (Middendorp, 2015) on four students with disabilities. Four students, three boys and one girl, I asked about their experiences in mainstream primary education in an interview. I did this preliminary research because of the current plans around 'appropriate education'. I wanted to investigate whether appropriate education for the child with a disability is actually a desirable solution. However, I consider this a preliminary investigation, because in the meantime, the focus of my research shifted towards the teacher. It involved interviews with Hans who has a visual impairment, Frans who has a combination of ADHD, PDDNOS and fear of failure, Maaike with dyslexia, and Ward who was born with a lung abnormality and spent a lot of time in hospital.



'Fiete Anders is a sheep. Fiete feels lonely because he is different from other sheep. But deep in his heart, he knows there must be a place somewhere where Anders just is.

Driven by this longing, he sets out to find ...  
Fiete Anders is a beautiful declaration of love to the sea and a heart to heart for anyone feeling a little different.'



In class, he tries to behave as normally as possible. 'Just to avoid having a whole circus around me... I developed, I think, quite a few defence mechanisms just to make sure that my disability wouldn't actually be there, so that people wouldn't say, "What is it with that boy, or something."' Halfway through primary school, he recognises for himself that he has something that others do not. His acceptance process is initiated. That process is difficult because he is often scolded because of his visual impairment. Hans says he doesn't care that much, but when you're young, it does something to you. When they scold you, you can't trust your fellow pupils. You then wonder, 'Do you like me... or do you think I'm nice? Or things like that. Which is why I didn't really have much contact with my classmates.'

And then the school party at the end of the year (which is prepared by the class itself in collaboration) creates a kind of bond: 'Precisely because of the party, I got in touch with a certain person, who bullied me at first, and did lots of fun things. I actually built a whole friendly relationship in a few days. Really, that you start playing. That you do a lot of things at school, that you do a lot more together and stuff.'

### Striking and unusual in a cabinet of curiosities

We often say people are equals, but see them standing: Hans with a visual impairment, Jolien, highly gifted, Joris with an autism-related disorder, Nick, bisexual, Sjoerd coming from a family with various problems, Joyce with dark skin, Edward with a fish tail from the book 'Lampje', Mylo whose friend Mees was killed with a cartridge, Fiete Anders, Wounda, a chimpanzee and Gary Haun, a blind magician<sup>24</sup>. We see the Indians of Suriname, and the trees in the Amazon forest in Brazil, the meadow flowers in front of our house, the beech tree in our front garden. They bring with them a striking story. It reminds me of the cabinet of curiosities<sup>25</sup> in the series 'Lampje', Based on Annet Schaap's book of the same name. The cabinet of curiosities, in which unusual people are displayed in a fairground tent. Not 'the human' is shown, but the unusual, striking, anomalous. The cabinet of curiosities also has the meaning of a collection of 'rarities', rare objects, usually imported from outside Europe. We can think of strange shells, stuffed animals, exotic animals. Both meanings of the cabinet of curiosities give sight of human and non-human things, which are unusual and striking. This leads to questions: what then is the standard/the norm? Who determine the standard/the norm? How do these so-called standards determine what happens in education?

### Standards do not exist

A cabinet of curiosities seems to appeal to something different from the norm. A cabinet of curiosities is not about being understood, but about being watched. It refers to what Hans brings up: sometimes it seems like I am being watched, like a monkey. We are not always aware of it, but our attention is remarkably often drawn to the unusual, the striking, the different. We often unconsciously compare the striking with a standard (human), which, according to Van Houten (2004), does not exist. These unconscious thoughts are reinforced by the focus on standards (reification) in education or the presentation of an 'ideal me' as a norm, which the supposedly autonomous individual must (and usually wants to) meet (Jorna, 2008).

We often don't know how to take a stand with the unusual. In such a moment, something uncomfortable arises. With the focus on inclusiveness, the intention is to understand what seems unusual as something that is different, as simply belonging and therefore ordinary. Just belonging is receiving groundless trust (Duintjer, 1983), before knowing who someone is, what someone looks like. A groundless trust, before we have made agreements, established rules. A groundless trust for everyone who has a place in this world. We place them all, from Hans, Jolien to Gary Haun, in an open landscape. They bring themselves into their finite building.

<sup>24</sup> Wounda and Gary Haun appear in Jane Goodall's story of hope (Goodall & Abrams, 2021), *The Book of Hope. Life lessons for a brighter future* HarperCollin

<sup>25</sup> The cabinet of curiosities is also at the centre of the film 'Butterfly Circus'.

## Responsibility for the 'strange'

We now also take a quick look at the child or teacher who sits on the empty chair and is not always able to empathise with the other person, and sometimes actually finds the other person 'strange'. That may be the child who has a VWO (Dutch pre-university qualification) and does not speak your language, that may be the child who is exuberant in behaviour and is too confrontational for you (who likes silence (Cain, 2014)). The child or teacher who prefers to talk, work and laugh with like-minded people. This is probably recognisable to everyone. The same is probably true for Hans. After all, it is much easier to talk, work and laugh with someone who is experiencing the same thing you are experiencing. Who probably feels what you feel. That is often like coming home (Dasberg, 1980), that feels like a security. However, we know that in society we live together with groups where we feel secure, but also with people who are different. It is important to be aware of this. What do you experience as equal and what as 'strange' (Geerinck, 2021). Ultimately, it's about seeing people as equals and treating them that way. Meanwhile, in our education system, living together is made difficult by all kinds of different school types and there seems to be huge segregation.

## The process of segregation in education

In analysing the process towards 'inclusiveness' in our country and in particular our education system, I am struck by how segregated education is (Oppers, 2022). In 1991, a start was made with Weer Samen Naar School (WSNS- The English translation

would be Back to School, Together Again). An interim evaluation of WSNS took place in 2004. In August 2014, we are in the education from WSNS to appropriate education. In 2020, appropriate education was evaluated. The conclusion is that within appropriate education, it is not possible to determine what is a 'good' approach in schools or within partnerships (Ledoux, Waslander & Eimers, 2020). The advice towards government is, among other things, to create more clarity on the target group and goals of appropriate education and the long-term target picture. Meanwhile, a European profile of inclusive teachers has been developed for teacher education (Meijer, 2012) and the Education Council published a report entitled 'Increasingly inclusive' (Hooge, 2020). This report focuses on more inclusive education for children with disabilities and does not address a broad definition of inclusive education. Recently, from 2021, a policy agenda against segregation has been established by the government: the Equal Opportunities Alliance<sup>26</sup>. This process shows that, despite various interventions in the education system and existing segregation, the issue of inclusiveness needs continued attention.

## Classification systems as a perverse incentive

Segregation in education is visible in the growth of special/special education by making increasingly sophisticated classification systems (Smeets and Rispen (2008). Classification systems were developed to differentiate, to establish a hierarchy. With a more refined system, a better and more

responsible way of diagnosing is achieved<sup>27</sup>. Classification systems are a perverse incentive. Schools receive money for an assigned label. The problem, identified by the expert, is central to the allocation of specific facilities. From experience, it becomes clear that problems are quite often unrelated to the question of who actually has the problem and what the child or young person himself thinks about it. The problem may be the fellow pupil, the demanding parent, the teacher involved, the method and sometimes the pupil himself, meanwhile we put the child at the centre, but the child is labelled and disposed of (Verhaeghe, 2012).

## Create an appropriate story for and with the child

As mentioned, the reality in our education system is still that groups are 'put away' in separate institutions, in separate shelters with the idea that this separate status is better for the child, without involving the child in this choice. Van Houten (2004) calls this functional rationality. This way of classifying does not do justice to the child; an appropriate solution for a partial problem. Van Houten (2004) argues for substantial rationality, that is with intelligent insight the relationships between events, on moral grounds, assess. In gaining insight into the relationships between events, we are talking about the aforementioned systemic pedagogy, which transcends linear thinking (means to an end). It is important for the education professional to tell the story of the child tries to construct. The story of a particular culture, the story in a particular place, at a

<sup>26</sup> The Building Ambition project of the Regional Organ of Public Education Foundation Lauwersland (ROOBOL) pays explicit attention to equal opportunities for all children, areas of focus are the attention to children's talents (Bakker, 2022) and the transition from primary to secondary education.

<sup>27</sup> Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a classification system in which international agreements have been made on which criteria apply to a particular mental disorder based on (new) scientific insights. The fifth version of DSM is used. <https://www.nvvp.net/website/onderwerpen/detail/dsm5> Accessed 14 January 2023

particular time. If the story changes, so do the morals and that which is normal. Place the empty chair in the circle to determine in conversation with the child what an appropriate offer might be to place him, her, that in the world (Biesta, 2018).

### Segregation is universal

In that world, unfortunately, the story of the child not being seen is universal. We see it not only with children in Dutch education, but also among groups of people worldwide. Every day, images enter living rooms that reveal how we treat ethnic minority groups: for example, the Uighurs in China, indigenous people in Brazil, the Rohingya in Myanmar, the migrant workers in our own country. Intercourse reveals a hierarchy; one group rules over another. It leads to exploitation, human trafficking, refugee flows. It would take us too far to go into this in great depth; it is too complex for that. The complexity makes it clear how deeply embedded these dealings with people are in our world system.

We looked at our dealings with striking children, with minorities in our country, in our world. Inclusiveness is also about our dealings with the earth and thus we define broader than the human perspective. This choice is prompted by the complexity outlined earlier by, for example, Bronfenbrenner (2006) and Bateson (2000). It can no longer just be about humans in and with this world. A poignant example is the felling of the rainforest in Brazil, leaving the indigenous population in dire straits and the earth exploited. The state of biodiversity, all over the world, is deteriorating (Morizot, 2022). In these issues, Morizot sees unnecessary conflicts arising from dichotomies: the dualism between nature and man, between exploiting and protecting, between wild and domesticated. We see this in our country,

for example, in the debate about the wolf, the bioindustry, the nitrogen crisis. We observe that we need to change our ways of thinking, points of view, we need to change our focus regarding the earth and thus towards the theme of inclusiveness. We should no longer think that we are the masters of the earth or the rulers, but workers chosen because of our intelligence, as representatives of others, the other life forms (Morizot, 2022). To put it in perspective, from the perspective of the earth (Gaia, Greek maiden name for earth and in classical mythology goddess of the earth) or in other words from our contribution to the habitability of the earth, we are infinitely less important workers than the phytoplankton and earthworms. Phytoplankton is the Earth's largest primary producer of oxygen and food source for zooplankton and many higher animals. Earthworms play an important role in the ecosystem. They improve soil fertility. Earthworms also improve the soil's ability to absorb carbon. Also, the worms' burrows allow more air and water to enter the soil. We should be more aware of the effect of our behaviour on the quality of life in deze wereld, op andere bevolkingsgroepen in de wereld, gedragingen die polariserend werken en inclusiviteit zwaar onder druk zetten. Volgens Morizot (2022) moet eerst de wereld weer opnieuw worden bevolkt. Niet-menselijke dingen moeten niet langer de status van decor of hulpbron hebben, maar die van een medebewoner die ook plaats neemt op de lege stoel. Ook zij zijn als eindige gebouwen in een open this world, on other populations in the world, behaviours that polarize and put heavy pressure on inclusiveness. According to Morizot (2022), the world must first be repopulated. Non-human things should no longer have the status of decor or resource, but that of a fellow inhabitant who also takes a seat on the empty chair. They too are like finite buildings in an open

landscape. So, we need to realise *'that they make the world habitable for all living things, including us* (Morizot, 2022, p. 209)

### Moral values orientation pedagogical leadership

That also means something for a pedagogical leader in our education system. The view of Pedagogy of Hope requires a moral value orientation from a pedagogical leader. Which values are important and are sustainable for the future? As a pedagogical leader, we have responsibility to take ('stand out' and stand still) and to give (stand up and 'stand out'). As an educational leader, you relate to equality. Then it's not only about children and young people we experience as problematic or children and young people we experience as 'strange', but also about ourselves. How do we place ourselves and our children and young people in a liveable world (Biesta, 2018). The question then becomes where there are actually problems or attitudes (within a system) that cause certain response to be legitimized. Who actually has a problem? Where can we as educational leaders be our own instrument with the awareness of classification systems, standards and our place in this world? How can we show responsibility for people and non-human things? How do we take responsibility for people and things we experience as 'strange'? This reflection requires a reflection on the essential and fundamental questions already formulated earlier (De Haan & Beerends, 2016): who am I at the deepest level (our highest future possibility)? What is my mission in this life (What am I here to do/why am I here?)? These reflection questions lead to a deepening of and connection to what people essentially are and want. They create a utopian vista (Hermesen, 2017). This allows us to move from intrinsic wants and desires. In this deepening,

we are more open to what is and what is possible in the future (De Haan & Beerends, 2016). Once again, we step into the uncertain, open landscape.

In the open landscape, we choose a focus. We zoom in on my experience with Hans and shape a sustainable attitude (Van Manen, 2006) that contributes to more inclusive education and focuses on the pedagogy of hope. A sustainable attitude gives sight of the *teacher as an instrument* with, in this situation, embodiment of the values: responsibility, equality and vulnerability. We conclude this chapter with a hopeful picture towards the future. The hopeful picture gives an impression of the research in our professorship: researching and sharing good practices, creating moral sanctuaries.

### Normative professionalism in practice

Hans's story makes me realise again how important the teacher's behaviour<sup>28</sup> is for the well-being of all children in the classroom, but especially for children like Hans. It is important for the teacher to say, '*I am here for you*', '*I trust you*', '*I never give up on you*'. I see the parallel with the PABO and teacher education. The teacher educator is also decisive for students' well-being. From the conversation with Hans, I come to the following reflection: I see Hans in front of me, sitting in my own classroom, and imagine how I would do him justice in my classroom. That 'doing justice' is like a *moral orientation*. I see it as my *responsibility* to guide the children in my class - and Hans in particular - on their way to a place in the world (Biesta, 2017). It is my responsibility to support vulnerable children<sup>29</sup> in getting into the world and

give the group experiences that refer to solidarity. Solidarity with the other to avoid excluding others. For the children, it is only a small part of that journey to adulthood, but meanwhile it is also an important formative period. In my guidance, important values emerge from my mission statement, reflecting my life ethos. The values emerge below.

That starts with *relationship (connectedness)*. The fundament of my teaching lies in the relationship with Hans. In forming a relationship, I explore who Hans is and what he needs from me. Our relationship is a connection between him and myself, but also between him, myself and the group. That relationship involves equality, with the premise that all children are different. I see the classroom as a diverse society where children are not classified, especially not by one characteristic. I do not approach children as dark, solid, with ASD, and Hans as visually impaired. I try to appeal to children on what they can do and encourage them in it. Hans gets a place next to Nick. I have noticed that they encourage each other in learning. As soon as the children in my group -and this obviously applies to all children- notice that I have established a bond with Hans, Hans gets a different position in the group. It is important for children to feel this *recognition*. Teacher recognition confirms the teacher's authority in the group and supports Hans' position in the group. In that recognition is part of my moral orientation: *to be seen*. I do Hans justice by seeing him or by promoting that the other children also see him. Hans gives a talk about his visual impairment. This is a way of him showing himself. But that being seen precisely does not

happen only in public. It's in little things like those drawing thick line or magnifying the words of the spelling lesson, giving Hans a place in the circle that is comfortable from his perspective. I place the relationship with Hans in the broader perspective of education. What does education have to offer him on his way to adulthood and what specifically does he need in it? I take into account what he needs in maths and language lessons, but the real 'taking into account' happens for me as a teacher more in the lessons and situations around them. For example, Hans becomes aware halfway through primary school that he is different. This also marks the beginning of an acceptance process that takes a lot of energy for him. It is important for Hans that I pay attention to this. This is where practical wisdom is expected of me. I discuss Hans' acceptance process not directly and ostentatiously, but indirectly through the stories I tell in class, by having him work together, by talking together about the definition and meaning of 'being different'. This is not important only for Hans, but for all children. This does justice to his fear of being left out. It has social value. This is the part of my moral orientation that is directly connected to my attitude to life. I want to make children part of this attitude to life. I want to make them aware of this attitude to life and then give them room to choose their own position. This is the principle of freedom. The value that plays a role in this is self-acceptance. That is like 'love your neighbour as yourself'. From your own attitude to life, you build and give space. You build a development, a relationship with another. You teach children *responsibility*, give them responsibility. You discover a direction: you feel what is important to

<sup>28</sup> You can also read secondary school teacher here.

<sup>29</sup> We are there for children to let them live, not survive, which is why we do not use the word 'help'.

you, but also what is important to the child. Hans discovered this through trial and error.

In Hans' story, at the end of the school year, the group is faced with a task: the children must work together to prepare for the school fete encounter. While before that it was difficult for Hans to connect with other children, the shared preparation for the school festival began a healing. It shows what happens when the classroom system is shaken up, when children break away from existing groups and collaborate with others. A different dynamic emerges, in which there can be room for a meeting between Hans and his classmate (who previously bothered him).

Hans says nothing about the teacher's intentions, but I imagine this is an annual phenomenon. And teacher *intentions* do matter. The teacher must have a view of group dynamics and be able to set out lines<sup>30</sup> in them. While those lines<sup>30</sup> need not be directly visible, they should be upset the relationships again and again. The teacher can see what a child needs relative to the group, and give each child the opportunity to reposition himself relative to the other. As a result, the group develops a certain resilience. The group must become resilient, must learn to act as a social cushion, so to speak. A teacher who is an ethical relationship with the group, the group can learn to move with each other, with the different children in the group, in the situations that arise. The child then learns that he has a role in a group and that this role entails a certain responsibility. This can be the leadership role, but also a role in the middle group (of the class) which can, if necessary, collectively

take on Hans and other children. This is how they learn to take responsibility for each other and build mental resilience (Duyndam, 2011), allowing them to do so (Duyndam, 2011). They still maintain and even promote humanity in situations where they experience opposing forces or pressure.

To become resilient and able to take responsibility yourself, role models are needed (Ibid.). These do not have to be heroes or saints; on the contrary, they can also be the very ordinary people in your own environment. A teacher is such a role model par excellence. The teacher enters into a *relationship* (as part of the pedagogical relationship), in which the child makes a translation (*application*) of the teacher's actions. That is, the child applies the values of the teacher's actions to his own situation, thus making it into something of his own in a creative process. By thus making space for this personal application of the child, you balance your influence with that of the child, and that makes your influence a subtle influence.

We got to know Hans better, a child who is remarkable but does not want to be remarkable. This requires the teacher to repeatedly bring Hans into an awareness of who he is and what position he may and should take.

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<sup>30</sup> Plotting the lines is about the wherefore of the school festival. The to-do of the school festival is about connection, making talents visible and focusing on having fun

## Talking about consciousness

Speaking of awareness, Hans has experienced how important it is to belong to a group. Jolien has experienced how important it is to belong to a group that speaks the same language, that understands each other without words. The same goes for Nick, in the series *Heartstopper*<sup>31</sup>. He becomes aware of his bisexuality and struggles with the question of which group he belongs to: with the tough rugby boys or with Charlie's LGBTQIA+ group that shows individuality and strongly committed to each other. Charlie, in love with Nick, joins rugby when Nick asks him to do so. They have a spare needed. In *Heartstopper*, you can see inclusion and exclusion intertwined. Charlie, in the Netflix series 'Heartstopper' experiences what it's like to belong to a familiar group AND what it's like not to be known by, in this case, the rugby team, to be bullied. It goes so far in *Heartstopper* that because of the situation that has arisen, the familiar group is no longer always familiar either. We can say here that inclusion (moving to a new group) here causes exclusion (being excluded from the familiar group), so to speak. In a diverse society, where we value differences, it is important to be aware that we function in groups that feel familiar, but that there are also groups in which this is less the case. This theme becomes visible in the picture book of the sheep Fiete Anders. She feels lonely because she is different from other sheep. She goes in search of a place where different is normal. Not feeling at home somewhere (feeling strange) is not nice, but it is reality. In education, we have the

awareness to create a diverse society where we live together and have to learn to live together from diversity. Creating that awareness is a pedagogical perspective.

From a personal pedagogical perspective, it is important to belong to a group that you know, recognises and understands, which feels normal (inclusion), but that there is also an awareness about the possibility of belonging to a group that appeals to you less, where you feel less comfortable (exclusion), where you find the other person 'strange'. After all, you don't always have a choice, but it certainly helps when you can make a choice. That means, as a teacher, you take a child into experiencing the effects of a possible choice for a (new) group. In a class situation, you let a child have different experiences with 'new' groups. In this, you have a responsibility as a teacher. Experiences with new groups contribute to the development of learning and living together. The child gains insight into what it is like to be in work in different groups: groups where you meet like-minded people, groups where you don't, and diverse groups. As a teacher, discuss your experiences with groups: what do you do when you don't feel so comfortable? How, despite everything, can you learn and live together? For the teacher, firstly, it is important that he, she, who is aware of the environment. Next, it is important for a child to at least feel known somewhere, whether or not in a group. Feeling known by at least the teacher as an educational leader. A pedagogical leader with

a sustainable attitude giving children struggling to belong opportunities to participate in a new future. This is a task that recurs every day and contributes to more inclusive education. Pennac (2008) puts it as follows below:

Our 'bad' students (students who have the name that it would never amount to anything with them) never come to school alone. An onion enters the classroom: several layers of sadness, fear, anxiety, resentment, anger, unsatisfied needs, a savage indifference, and all against the backdrop of a past full of shame, a present that has little good to offer, and a lost future. See them come, with their bodies in the making and their families in their backpacks. The lesson can only begin when the burden is on the ground and the onion has been peeled. It is difficult to explain, but a single glance or a kind word is often enough, a word from a trusting, stable adult you can depend on, to make the pain disappear, to lighten the spirits, to pull them into the pure present tense. Of course, the healing effect will only be temporary, the onion will be folded again at the end of the lesson, and we will probably have to start all over again the next day. But that is part of being a teacher: starting again and again until we have to step out of the picture as teachers. (Pennac, 2008, p. 4647)

<sup>31</sup> *Heartstopper* is a British coming-of-age romantic comedy that can be streamed on Netflix. The series is about two high school boys who start a relationship with each other. The story is based on the webcomic and comic book of the same name written by Alice Oseman.

## Good practices

We have seen how important it is to create awareness in education about what a diverse society is about. With Van Houten (2004), we talk about a diverse society where it is particularly about dealing with the combination of equality and diversity as guiding principles. It is a mindset, not a blueprint, and it will mainly have to be built from the bottom up. We say this with the conviction that things can (go) differently. *It is about improvement action. '... bit by bit, experimenting, trial and error, learning by doing, but above all, doing.'* (Van Houten, 2004, p. 35) Moreover, acting is reinforced by presenting good practice. Below, we will discuss the Netflix series 'Heartstopper' as an example of good practice. However, in presenting the practice described, it may seem that we are stigmatising: after all, we are presenting a specific example, an example 'pigeonholed'. Just apart from presenting good practice, we would like to say two things about this: any categorisation leads to a new categorisation, but does not approach the actual experience. That means we want to do justice and give space to one's own experience at all times. Good practice (as indicated above) is not a mindset, a blueprint, but a hopeful idea that in this case people feel known. Secondly, it is important for an educational leader to be aware of all the major themes that can lead in any way to stigmatisation. As an educational leader, try to have a view of who the child is, in what systems the child participates (Bronfenbrenner, 2006), how the child is feeling and what it is sensing. Enlarge the sense of the situation appears through reflection on one's own experiences. It is precisely awareness and sensing that makes one look critically at language, behaviour, teaching materials, films, and (children's) books in education as a part of educational hope (Hermsen, 2017).

## Good hope practices

The popular Netflix series 'Heartstopper', is an example of Hope. Heartstopper normalises LGBTQIA+. We can call her a good practice.

*'Together with my husband, I watched the Netflix series Heartstopper. A day later, I felt happy and miserable at the same time. As it turned out, I was not the only one. In the global lhbtqi+ community, many people had been similarly affected by the series, and like me, they recognised themselves in the story and characters. The series was familiar and healing at the same time, giving me something I didn't know I needed.'* (Van Dam, 2022)

Heartstopper heeft de top 10 van best bekeken series bereikt en is te zien in 54 landen. Heartstopper maakt zichtbaar dat het thema van inclusiviteit internationaal leeft. Eén van de kijkers spiegelt de maatschappij en daarmee het onderwijs met zijn vragen:

*'What if, when I was still in the closet, I had known another lhbtqia+ person? What if I had seen examples? What if there had been even one LGBTQIA+ character in books, in lessons or on television during that time?'* (Van Dam, 2022)

This is about being seen by the other person. Seeing who the other person is and wants to be. It is about giving voice to everyone in our world. It is an existential aspect of pedagogical leadership. It poses the question of how we make our children appear in the world. How inclusive is that?

*'Representation is the most important thing people who feel 'different' need. On television and in films, at school and in read-alouds and textbooks, in the people around you and at work - in short, in society. No matter how small or subtle words, images, (re) actions are, they make a difference. It is never too late to realise that. It is important to normalise LGBTQIA+ happiness, break down barriers and stigmas and create a society that is more accepting of each other.'* (Van Dam, 2022)

The Netflix series 'Heartstopper' shows us how being different just is.

We should not forget the good examples in our own region. There are also good practices of Hope in our own region. As a professorship, we are tasked with making these visible.

On the empty chair, Hans, Nick, Charlie and Amanda have taken seats. They stand up, feeling the movements of the world. Together with the fragile little boat, they draw our attention to the world. They take us into a future where a diverse society is common and desirable. That is precisely what makes the world worth living in...

Charlie from the series 'Heartstopper' takes a seat on the empty chair. He would like to share something. 'You know,' he says, 'I experience every day what it's like to be confronted with who I am. Hey gay... you guys know. It's painful... I hear you guys want to understand. I hear your good intentions to make education more inclusive, but what are you actually going to do to make our education a little more inclusive. How do you guys make this urgent?'





**'A world map missing the  
country of Utopia is not  
worth looking at.'**

Oscar Wilde

# Chapter 4

## Research in the Professorship

The Professorship's knowledge circle is meeting for the first time. I have asked everyone to write a mirror letter. Using the mirror letters we get to know each other better. Who are you? What are your perspectives on research? Who would you like to focus on in your research? We connect personal stories to theories and themes. There is an intention for our research to contribute to a hopeful story for children and youngsters.

### The mirror letter

In the Professorship's knowledge circle, we shared our mirror letters with each other. We have also experimented with the mirror letter across various teaching and course settings. In the Minor 'behaviour and learning', students wrote a letter to themselves as a child in primary school. In a Master programme, a student wrote a letter to the education system. The mirror letter is still in an experimental phase and triggers a process of awareness. This reflection

method follows a phenomenological approach, one of the research methods put forward in our Professorship. I see the mirror letter as a reflection method that supports deepening the research themes of pedagogical leadership and more inclusive education. The mirror letter focuses on the moral responsibility of the educational leader in more inclusive education.

### Mission of the Professorship

This brings us to the mission of the Professorship. 'Educating and learning towards a sustainable and democratic society takes on the task of contributing to the societal challenge of an inclusive, sustainable and innovative society (Association of Universities of Applied Sciences, 2019), or as Bateson (2000) calls it: *a relational ecology*. The mission of the research group is to contribute in the north of the Netherlands (and wherever Academies po and VO/ MBO are active) to the core objective of education: to realise a place in society for all. We take our (moral) responsibility (Middendorp, 2015) to build together to 'humanise' education, as a counter-reaction to the control paradigm in today's education. We will create a platform for collaborations with a utopian outlook (Hermsen, 2017), striving towards hopeful collaborations that emerge from favourable conditions, but are currently not yet formed. We are striving towards hopeful collaborations with education professionals and other fields, to reflect on shared principles of pedagogical leadership. This collaboration is about sustainable change in education with a focus on teacher education, from a pedagogical perspective. In the Professorship, critical reflections on the effects of developments in society on education are central; reflections that

provide a language to 'discourse in the teachers' room' (Korfage, 2021). The Professorship has a structural connection with the Master Learning & Innovation, the Master Educational Leadership (MEL) and the Master Pedagogy. It also contributes to the 'leadership house', a visible connection in the north of the Netherlands between the school leadership programme and the MEL (Ibid.).

### Research methods in the Professorship

To explore what the concept of Pedagogy of Hope can mean for education and teacher education, we intend to use, among other things, the principles and research methods. Of phenomenological research (Middendorp, 2015), Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Oosterhoff, 2021), utopian and speculative thinking and action (Van Dermijnsbrugge & Chatelier, 2022) and organisational principles rooted in anarchist philosophy (Chatelier & Van Dermijnsbrugge, 2022).

### Phenomenology

Phenomenological research is a method of practical reflection on lived experiences in education (Van Manen, 2014). In phenomenological research and reflection, we refrain as much as possible from theoretical, polemical, presuppositional and emotional influences (Middendorp, 2015). Phenomenology is about reasoning without solutions, talking about matters that challenge us, that we experience as difficult. The research methodology is characterised by attention to wonder, shyness, being touched. Phenomenological research is about examining our experiences. Two theoretical principles underlie our phenomenological research: *subjectivity* and *intersubjectivity*. Subjectivity is the researcher's personal attribution of meaning to the experiences with different educational roles. Intersubjectivity stands for the totality of shared

meanings in education. In creating change in education, as a Professorship, we allow ourselves to be fascinated by phenomena that present themselves to us. We do not have a fixed image of Pedagogy of Hope, but wish to create an image (creativity) based on our lived experiences in education. These lived experiences emerge from standing still and 'reaching out' (Biesta, 2018) to the world in the service of creating a better place to reach out to (Hermsen, 2017)

### Actor-Network Theory (ANT)

ANT applies philosophical and methodological principles that resemble those of phenomenology, such as, for example, valuing the description of (rich) reflective experiences over the search for explanations and development of theoretical laws (Adams & Thompson, 2016). ANT, however, explicitly attends to studying the active role of non-human entities (Latour, 2005) - such as objects, technologies, rules, standards. These entities influence our practices, often without our awareness. These influences are not isolated, but are part of extensive and complex networks of relations between humans and non-human entities. ANT is therefore part of the 'sociomaterial' movement in philosophy. The Professorship aims to investigate the ways in which the philosophical and methodical principles of ANT can inspire and support teacher educators and students to explore the influence their sociomaterial environment has on (their own) teaching practice.

### Utopia as method

EA pedagogy of hope in times of crisis and a seemingly hopeless future requires courage, creativity and speculative thinking and action (of a pedagogical leader). It requires us to have the courage to understand how our contemporary

society came about, what historical processes preceded it and what the real causes are of current issues such as climate crisis, health problems, migration, for example. These insights help us make explicit who we (want) to be as citizens, parents, teachers, students, friends and to what kind of future we want to contribute. This helps us to act more thoughtfully, to be creative and speculative in our daily and immediate actions, and thus build a more sustainable, inclusive future. Sociologist Ruth Levitas (2013) calls utopia as method or process. Anarchic, organisational principles can guide the practical work of utopia as method. How can we think and act speculatively in our everyday practice? What norms and values are involved? How do we organise ourselves? How can we act autonomously and creatively within the constraints and presence of external, local, national and transnational bureaucracies? How can we put into practice a Pedagogy of Hope?

### Research theme 'Pedagogical leadership'

The theme of 'Pedagogical leadership' (introduced in chapter 2) and its emerging challenges need to be unpacked further. We see pedagogical leadership as an important concept to realise Pedagogy of Hope in practice. International publications show that pedagogical leadership adds value and supports formal leaders in their daily practice (Fonsén, et al., 2022, Forssten Seiser, 2020).

The theme of pedagogical leadership is also further defined in relation to the concept of 'professional leadership' (Oosterhoff, 2021). 'Professional leadership' is one of Arda Oosterhoff's research themes. Professional leadership of teachers, also known as teacher leadership (Snoek et al., 2019),

becomes visible when teachers, based on their vision and expertise and in dialogue with their environment, influence the implementation and organization of education. That influence transcends the teacher's own classroom.

Professional leadership is an important competence with regard to the quality of education, but also with regard to retaining professionals in the workplace (Oosterhoff, 2021). The latter is especially important giving the increasing staff shortage in education.

A key question we want to investigate within the Professorship is: *How can teacher educators support and strengthen the development of professional leadership of (prospective) teachers?*

A strong professional identity forms the basis of teachers' professional leadership. The personal and professional identity development within the Design Based Education curriculum in NHL Stenden's Academy of Primary Education is currently under development. Development of professional leadership as a guiding principle can support the future development of Personal Professional Identity in teacher education.

### Research theme 'More inclusive education'

MIRROR is a reflective method developed to enhance inclusion in education. MIRROR, a Dutch acronym, represents a Method for Inclusive Teaching by Reflecting, Reasoning, Meeting and Realising. A central question is how pedagogical leaders relate to one of the existential underpinnings of pedagogical action: assuming differences among all children. Language, beliefs, stereotypes: the mindset of teachers (Dweck, 2016) influences decisions. The aim of MIRROR is to guide (future) teachers and teacher educators and encourage them to act more inclusion-

oriented in their own teaching practice. The first step in the methodology is the theatre performance 'Live your Story' which confronts the audience with their own educational practices. The second step is dialogue (meeting, reflecting and reasoning): lovingly, curiously and without judgement talking to each other about uncomfortable realisations, subjects we would rather hide from (Rozeboom, 2023). This step can be linked to realising a safe moral space (Kunneman, 2017). Step 3 (reflecting) is writing a mirror letter to gain personal clarity on what steps you want, can, should start taking to act more inclusively. Step 4 is about action (realisation) to make education more inclusive. It is about translating personal reflections into one's own teaching practice. MIRROR is in an experimental phase. The intention is to be able to present a prototype of the methodology by the end of this academic year.

Today, I get to observe a master's student interviewing a colleague. She is conducting the interview within the context of her phenomenological research. The opening question is about an experience. The student is aware of her phenomenological stance. She wants to ask a question. 'Oh, I am not allowed to judge...' I see her thinking about how she will ask the question without judgement. Inquiry makes one conscious.



## 'Undisturbed development'

(...)

**One must be patient  
with unresolved matters in the heart  
And try to cherish the questions  
as closed rooms and as books  
that are written in a very foreign language.  
It comes down to living everything.  
If you live the questions,  
you might be living slowly but surely, without noticing,  
on a good day into the answer.**

Author unknown,  
Inspired by Rainer Maria Rilke



# Chapter 5

## A hopeful future. How then?

In creating a hopeful future, the following phrase from Bloch comes to my mind:

'Dreaming about the future is an incubator of creativity, giving shape to the human.'

This is what can be a hopeful future: to reshape human beings through creative action in education. Creative action can come from *standing still*, *standing out* in and with the world (Biesta, 2022) and *standing up* when needed (intentional action).

Amanda Gorman is a striking example for me. She steps out of her finite building into the open landscape. She lets everything come together in one moment:

She *stands still* and manifests who she is, shows self-awareness, authenticity (Jorna, 2008):

*I am the chant that rises and resounds.*

She *stands out* to the world, observes, is aware of differences, shows commitment:

*There is hope, as change sings. Not everyone understands it, it requires a different perspective. Though there are many differences, differences big and small. I want to show you that we are the same too.*

She *stands up* for change, showing courage, creativity and responsibility:

*I hear the sound of change all around me more and more. I am not afraid of change, I sing for everyone.*

Amanda Gorman is an example. She gives us insight into how hopeful practice can emerge. She makes us shift our attention a little (Scharmer, 2018), shift from that which is to that which is not yet. She illuminates the new, as it were. Amanda is a trailblazer. She makes utopia visible, a 'good' and 'not yet existing' place (Hermsen,

2009). It is precisely that looking again, listening to what we hear in the world, with a broad view (Bateson, 2000), that is the new we need in order to change.

Let us follow Amanda, let us follow our children and young people and listen to them. As educational leaders, let us become aware of what their future could look like. We have to take our moral responsibility (Middendorp, 2015) and act differently precisely in light of the future of our children and great-grandchildren. Let us imagine what is not yet, feel the urgency and focus on the new.

For me, Rikus van der Meer, in his painting 'Chalk Walk' on the cover, makes this visible. The child comes first. Let us look seriously at what we have to do differently in our education. What values are we imparting through our teaching? Are those the values Amanda is referring to, Lea Dasberg reflects, Micha de Winter advocates?

I end with questions. Pedagogy in education is asking ourselves questions again and again, every day, in every situation. Rikus van der Meer also asks us questions with his artwork 'Toddler Corner' (at the beginning of this chapter): Who do we see? What do we notice? What questions would we ask ourselves in such a situation? Questioning and dwelling, 'standing out' in and with the world and standing up. Let us stand up, follow our children and make each other's dreams come true.

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**We sit in the circle with an empty chair in the middle. We wonder when our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren will say to us: 'You did that well!'**

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