



The new professional understanding of oneself as PL educator

To learn differently also means to „teach differently“. All participants in Productive Learning – pupils and educators - are faced with huge challenges. Pupils must learn how to be responsible for their own educational process and to structure and evaluate it independently on the basis of their personal interests for education end activities. In accordance with this objective, educators must re-define their own roles, make themselves familiar with new tasks, reflect on their previous actions and have to acquire the competencies that are required for a professional course of action.

Educators have a very significant role to play as they have the difficult task of teaching the theoretical concept of Productive Learning to the pupils. The quality of the educational work depends on them and, by implication, the success of each and every individual pupil in Productive Learning.

The redefinition of the role and the many novel tasks pose numerous questions – with varying intensity and varying degrees of importance.

In their role as educational counsellors, educators accompany and advise pupils during the process of opening-up Productive Situations, during the planning of the learning process and during the evaluation of their individual learning processes.

But how can I give support to pupils who are meant to learn independently? How do I handle a situation when a pupil expects to be spoon-fed over and over again? How can I avoid – because of the intensive relationship between educator and pupil – to turn into a mother- or father figure for the pupil, or into a partner or friend?

An important counterpart of the individual educational counselling is the group counselling. Through group counselling, the individualised learning at places of practice becomes comprehensible and important questions which are of concern to all pupils can be dealt with together. But how can I make this exchange of experiences exciting? What common general topics derive from individual experiences? And how can I, for example, work with the topic „conflicts at places of practise“ in a methodical way?

As Mediator of a Situation I have to support the pupil in establishing a relationship between activity and learning, in formulating questions that serve as a bridge between experiences and education. I also have to make sure that pupils encounter conditions at places of practice which are conducive to learning. But how can I help a pupil to look at his or her place of practice in an open-minded and inquisitive kind of way? How do I react when the answer to my question „What would you like to learn at your place of practice“ is a mere shrugging of shoulders?

When it comes to the pupil's task of formulating questions and interests, the ensuing task of finding answers makes it very quickly clear that the educators must part with their subject-based principles and their role as subject teachers – and that the specialists must embrace a



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more general approach. However, how can I support a pupil in maths when I am myself a German teacher? How can I involve the mentor in his/her role as expert of a subject? What must I learn myself?

Also, new questions are posed when the evaluation of the education is supposed to happen through a dialogue with the pupils, when not only the result of the education is to be considered but the process itself, or when pupils are supposed to assess themselves independently. For example: How can I support pupils in their self-assessment? How do I write an educational report and don't fall into the trap of the usual formula of appraisal and reproach?

Last but not least, by conceiving and evaluating the educational opportunities educators contribute considerably to the development of the whole project. But how do I evaluate my own educational work? Which criteria do I use as guidelines? How can the process of team discussions and working as a team be structured effectively?

Such questions make clear that it does not suffice to acquire just a repertoire of methods. What is required is a fundamentally different pedagogical perception of oneself, a different perception of pupils, a different pedagogical relationship, in short – a totally different understanding of one's personal role on both sides - educators and pupils alike. Even though the role of the educator changes through experiences with the practical elements of the educational process, additional support and assistance must be provided through the input of others.

This objective is served by the IPLE's programme of further study which runs over two years and which qualifies teachers to become educators of Productive Learning. In accordance with Productive Learning's own principles and methodical and content-based objectives this programme of further study is project- and process- based and thus related to the practice itself.

I would like to conclude my own contribution with the following words: Embarking on something new and different provides everybody who is involved with opportunities – opportunities for vocational as well as personal development. However, this also means to see each day as a truly new day that may bring challenges, difficulties and opposition. However, anyone who has been involved in Productive Learning knows that it is worthwhile – for one's own personal satisfaction and for the future of the pupils.

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