Is Good Education about Learning to Think?

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Abstract: *Based upon perspectives from Biesta about the purpose of education and Ricoeur's approach to basic human capabilities, this article begins with an exploration of good education. It then moves on to discuss thinking as a collective practice, involving interactions in which interlocutors are engaged in sequences of asking questions and finding answers. This happens, it is argued, when the relationship between the human capacity for imagination and fantasy and its relationship with reality is understood. As Dewey argues in his analysis of reflective thinking, thinking needs time and space. Therefore, good education requires time and space for thinking to develop through the basic human capabilities; speaking, acting, and telling, through which people develop capacities to take responsibility for themselves and others.*

Keywords: *Teaching and learning, Thinking, Capability, Responsibility, Reflexivity, Good Education*

INTRODUCTION

The question about what is good education is complex, in part because it is bound to cultural and structural differences between education systems. We shall see that, in a historical and more general perspective, education and its purpose have changed considerably: from being linked to the church, later to the development of industrial society and today…? In post-industrial western societies, it is difficult to determine what purposes education should have (Biesta, 2010, 2014). At a European level (for example, by the European Commission (EC) and the Organisation for Economic

Co-operation and Development (OECD), it is striking that education is mainly discussed in terms of providing an adequate workforce for a competition economy. Education, it seems, is mainly about achieving economic ends for both individuals and society. For example, the current Horizon 2020, 'EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation' clearly states that it is a program for 'securing Europe's global competitiveness. Education is seen as a means to drive economic growth and create jobs'.[1] When this is combined with the drive for accountability and standardised testing, and the alignment of education systems across Europe (Bologna process), there are grounds to believe that

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[1] See: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-horizon-2020

some broader aspects of education involving self-development, social inclusion and democratic engagement are lost (Griffiths, Hoveid, Todd, & Winter, 2014), even when these are included in associated political rhetoric and curriculum documents (Winter, 2014).

This article is not an in-depth discussion of the governance of education, but aims to provide an useful context for discussing teaching and learning processes, especially around questions concerning thinking and thinking skills. Whatever goes on within a school and a classroom (i.e. the way we frame teaching and learning practices) cannot, I argue, be considered independently from the more comprehensive question: what is good education and what are the ideals and values that underpin a concept of good education (Biesta, 2010, 2014).

This article aims, somewhat briefly, to consider what place *thinking* has in good education. And following from this, how do we frame what we mean by thinking? Is thinking a solitary practice – something happening within the cognitive faculties of each individual. Or could we also envision thinking as part of a collective practice? The aim is to expand the notion of what it meant by 'thinking better' as a way of developing interpretations and understandings of human practices. My approach is primarily influenced by

the phenomenological hermeneutics of the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1991; Ugla, 2008). So, the question of what place thinking has, or should have, in teaching and learning processes is related to a study of *thinking* in terms of lived experience.

This approach is therefore pedagogical and philosophical. In the study of human cognition there is a possible link between what I am referring to and the concept and study of metacognition – cognition about cognition. Nelson and Narens (1994) note three shortcomings of previous research on human cognition.[2] Their claim is that very little of the previous research on human cognition seem to be related to 'empirical and practical demands [humans make] upon the world' (p. 4) and they recommend that 'substantial research is also warranted on self-directed learning and on self-reflective mechanisms that people do/could use to facilitate acquisition and retrieval' (p. 8). They also state that 'until recently, there have not been theoretical frameworks within which to systematically explore the subjects' self-directed processing' (p. 9). Space does not allow for further discussion of research methodology,[3] but it is important here to draw a distinction between 'observed and scientifically described behavior, on the one hand, and, on the other personal experience' (Changeux & Ricoeur, 2000,

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[2] This is 20 year old reference, and the field has developed. I will not try to make references here, as this is not my field of research. The point I pick up from Nelson and Narens is related to a distinction they are making.
[3] See Richard Smith (2006) 'As if machinery: The Leveling of Educational Research' for a discussion on the different approaches to research; the ambition to formulate precise techniques of research and the recognition that 'in the social sciences we – the humankind – are ourselves the object of study'.

p. 18). My pedagogical philosophical approach to *thinking* as a human activity is embedded in and tries to make meaning of lived experience as it can be objectified through intentions, communication and social practices (ibid.).[4] Let me now start with some perspectives on good education.

WHAT IS MEANT BY GOOD EDUCATION?

Questions related to what we mean by good education, has engaged pedagogues, students, parents and politicians for centuries. With Comenius, Magna Didactica – the great didactics (aprox. 1631) – a first and influential attempt at addressing the purpose of education was published. Although this text can be read as an input for how to organise and structure education, and thus make it more effective, it still saw part of the educational enterprise as being human flourishing as a whole (Gundem, 2011). Around this same period we saw the beginning of industrialisation and with it came mass schooling and the idea that by collective input one could enhance the training of individuals more effectively. At the beginning of the 19th hundreds the Lancaster school (Burke & Grosvenor, 2008) introduced a monitorial education system. 'This mechanical system enabled very large numbers to be schooled in spaces under the single gaze of one master' (p. 33). It introduced an organisation of the classroom, known as the 'buss-principle' (in Scandinavian); placing children on an individual desk in parallel rows in a (class-)room.[5] This image of what a classroom looks like is known worldwide today and makes it easy to recognise schooling within very different cultural contexts. The underlying assumption that schooling should lead to more efficient learning and thus that learning is linked to qualification of a workforce and to economic growth in a society is something which is partly brought forth by industrialisation (ibid.).

Today, in western societies, the current drive for accountability in education, often reduced to its economic connotation, ask for (so called) *learning outcomes* from education. This seems to build on an idea that learning can be done more efficiently; quick and targeted (Biesta, 2014)[6] the way industrial production is made efficient. Even though many societies today have moved beyond the mechanistic logic of industrialisation, into a post-industrial, information era the perspectives on edu-

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[4] Possible links between this pedagogical and philosophical approach to lived experiences and the cognitive sciences will not be elaborated further in this paper, but a reference to cognition will be picked up towards the end of the article in my references to Vygotsky.

[5] For a more humorous, but serious talk about 'Changing Education Paradigms' see this short animated video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U, with Sir Ken Robinson, a former Professor of Arts Education at the University of Warwich, now an author, speaker, and international advisor on education in the arts to government, non-profits, education, and arts bodies (Wikipedia).

[6] Biesta writes: 'The call [is] to make education strong, secure, predictable and risk-free…' (p. 3).

cation still seem to linger in the logic of industrialisation. Societies are changing but maybe education less so. The current drive for accountability – that is, for more effective learning, more basic core knowledge and measuring of learning (or rather the outcome of this learning) – seems to reduce education to a type of schooling where educational processes can be measured and controlled. This is not only a reductive view of education, but also a development which could have detrimental effects on education as an individual, public and democratic undertaking.

The above is, of course, portrayed somewhat rhetorically. But the underlying mechanistic worldview and confined understanding of what purpose education is made to serve for individuals and for society is easily detected in much of today's education politics across Europe (and beyond). Of course, education will continue to serve as a route to qualifications that make pupils employable. Education should prepare young people for work. But when education is reduced to the narrow idea that it is only about qualifications for work, something important is taken out. Biesta (2010, 2014) highlights the threefold objective of education as; socialisation, qualification and subjectification. Whether we link this back to 'Paideia' of the ancient Greek culture, to the 'Bildung' tradition of the Continental (German/Scandinavian) philosophical tradition or perspectives from the Anglo-American tradition, i.e.: Dewey, Peters and Hirst, just to mention some, the wider aims and purpose of education as

a social and individual undertaking cannot be overlooked.

In order to sketch out the wider purpose for education both socially and individually we can begin with Biesta's above threefold domains; socialisation, qualification and subjectification. The claim that education has to do with *socialisation* has been well elaborated in pedagogical theory. According to Biesta 'the socialisation function has to do with the many ways in which, through education, we become part of particular social, cultural and political "orders"' (2010, p. 20). From an Arendtian (Arendt, 1989; Higgins, 2011) point of view this could mean that education has to do with initiation into society and tradition (into what is already present), to culture and knowledge. Whether we talk about basic skills, such as learning to read and write, or more advanced knowledge connected to historical consciousness within a culture, education is initiation into something already there before the individual child. This initiation will always entail transmission of standards, values and cultural norms, of which some are taken for granted.

From a societal perspective, education has to do with qualification and the need for a qualified workforce, but not exclusively this. Providing pupils with knowledge and skills also contribute to their possibilities of becoming active members of a society, and thus *qualification* also has to do with citizenship and democracy (Biesta, 2010). Last but not least education has to do with *subjectification* and as such as a space for personal development.

Again, there are many different ways of framing what is meant by subjectification within different educational systems and pedagogical theories. As Biesta frames it, with reference to several influential educationalists, subjectification means that '… any education worthy of its name should *always* contribute to processes of subjectification that allow those educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking and acting' (2010, p. 21, Italics in original).

Thus education is not a light undertaking – education is both complex and multifaceted. It should provide something for the common good and it should provide meaning and empowerment for each individual. To frame education within an 'economic' and limiting input-output logic and understand it in terms of competition between pupils, schools, regions, and nations, can I claim, contrary to the political rhetoric about education, be harmful to individuals and societies in the long run.[7]

Education, and more specifically teaching and learning processes deals with individuals. By definition, individuals each have their own particular histories and identities. What Biesta frames as subjectification is one of the domains from which educational purposes arise. This can be connected to the Ricoeurian outline of development of human capabilities (Ricoeur, 2005) to provide a useful 'backcloth' for a discussion of education as a space for the development of thinking. Thinking is by large understood in terms of an individual undertaking. It will be argued that the development of the human capacity to think does not necessarily take place only within the individual, but is developed in interaction with others and through the human capability to recognise oneself as a speaking, acting and telling human being – one who is capable of taking responsibility for one-self and others. Education as development of human capabilities

In his book 'The Course of Recognition (2005) the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur develops a phenomenology of the capable human being. He frames the human being as one endowed with certain capabilities. Whether these capabilities are given or socially constructed is not the point, but rather that as capabilities they can either be enhanced or restricted. Thus, education is of importance for development of these capabilities (Hoveid & Hoveid, 2009). Also these capabilities has to do with being able to recognize oneself as a human being .That is, through having the capacity to *speak*, *act*, *tell* and ultimately to *impute*, the human being, through the reflexive process of recognizing oneself, can develop as a responsible human being. In this perspective being responsible is both connected to the individual and to the collective.

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[7] My point is: The logic of competition is to celebrate a winner, and this works well on many arenas, but it is based on a principle of exclusion (of those who are not good enough or up to standard). Everyone have the right to education - everyone should in some respect experience education as 'winners' – hence education has to be developed on principles of inclusion.

The human capacity to *speak* is fundamentally linked to the expression – *I can speak, I can say*. Hence '...the one speaking designates him- or herself as the one who make use of the first person singular. As such, this person is not substitutable' (Ricoeur, 2005, p. 95). This addresses the particularity of human beings, and as a particular human being *I[can] speak*, and I recognise myself as this speaking being who by my words act upon the world. Furthermore speaking is always related to someone or something or it is a response to a call from others. This entails that 'the self-designation of the speaking subject is produced in interlocutory situations where the reflexivity is combined with otherness' (p. 96).

The capacity to *act* is entailed in the *I can*. This has to do with the 'capacity of the subject to make things happen in the physical and social environment' (p. 96). To make things happen entails that the subject expresses him-/herself as being the *cause of* something: I did it. But this capacity to act also has a reflexive side to it. By taking 'possession of an action' the self also recognise itself as one who is capable of taking an initiative.

Then we have the capacity to *tell*. It has to do with talking about oneself narratively and is connected to the Ricoeurian notion of narrative identity. This is rather comprehensive and not possible to develop fully here. What is underlined for the purpose here of discussing good education is that narrativity designates personal identity. Personal identity is constituted through narrative structures. This capacity to tell designates the human as someone capable of creating him-/herself through narration. Thus both consolidating a more stable identity and also recreating oneself as someone who is changing. 'Learning to narrate oneself is also learning to narrate oneself in other ways' (p. 101).

Ricoeur argues (p. 104) that, 'The series of questions, Who speaks? Who acts? Who tells? finds a continuation in the question, Who is capable of imputation?' To be capable of imputation has to do with being able to recognise oneself as that particular human being who is responsible, thus imputability has to do with that 'which makes subjects accountable for their acts, to the point of being able to impute them [actions]to themselves' (p. 105). Thus this has more to do with *taking* responsibility than *having* responsibility as a moral obligation. This raises an important pedagogical point in my argument. To recognise that pupils need space to develop their capacities to take responsibility for themselves and others has to do with acknowledgement of individuality (subjectification) in education.

The rather complex understanding entailed in the Ricoeurian capability approach does, even though it might seem quite abstract and philosophical, have some practical consequences. If we agree that these capabilities are basic human capabilities, then education will be one of those practices where these are expressed, learned and developed – deliberate or not. Meaning we can address these capabilities as part of teaching and learning process-

es and analyse in what ways educational practices opens or closes their development.[8] A crucial aspect in relation to development of human capabilities in education has to do with another notion of accountability than the one based on the logic of financial auditing (Biesta, 2010). If education is about developing human capabilities it has to do with learning about responsibility, about *taking* responsibility as a human being, for oneself and others.

Whether we talk about education in terms of broad processes or functioning's such as socialisation, qualification and subjectification or in terms of human capabilities a key theme emerges – having to do with individuality and the collective, and the reflexive (which I will return to towards the end of this article). In practice educators will know this as the balancing act between the good for the individual pupil and the good for the class (collective). In educational practice there is no way of making this balancing act stable and secure or eliminate it altogether. The answers is rather to be found if one acknowledges that this creates reflexive processes we have to take into account in education.

To very shortly summarize my argument of what good education is; it concerns teaching and learning processes which go beyond a specific learning outcome. These are processes which have to do with the flourishing and the potential of the human as a social being living in a society. From this outline of what is good education I now want to turn to a specific aspect of learning to think connected to the role imagination play. But first I want to connect thinking with acting as Arendt does in her reference to a Socratic model. This done before I take up a discussion on thinking understood as something linked to collective practices and then finally get back to the main question, is good education about learning to think?

THINKING: INDIVIDUAL WITHDRAWAL OR COLLECTIVE PRACTICE

Western science often operates with a dualism between thinking and feeling, between mind and body. This dualism is also deeply rooted in educational sciences and so thinking is often defined as that which takes place in isolation from others – as something going on inside a person and as part of a cognitive processes detached from the experiences of the rest of the body.[9] The approach to thinking

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[9] There are of course many opponents to this more cognitive approach to thinking, especially from theories within the socio-cultural tradition. In Philosophy there are also opponents, especially from the so-called linguistic turn. Many then show how this division of mind-body and language is inseparable. My main source of inspiration in this respect is Ricoeur.

in this paper draws upon Arendt (1978), and her model of a thinker, and Vygotsky (2004) in his approach to imagination and creativity. This leads us to consider the interconnections between thinking and social practice, especially ways in which thinking is embedded in social practices and ways in which thinking entail combinatory capacities, and how these capacities develop trough an engagement with reality (to use the Vygotskian term) and others.

In her exploration of acting and thinking Arendt (1978) returns to Antiquity. For Arendt the question has to do with whether, in the vita contemplative (the life of the philosophers), the thinker, must be understood in terms a retreat from the world. After much deliberation, she chooses Socrates as her model and shows how he was someone 'who in his person unified two apparent contradictory passions, for thinking and acting …' (p. 167). Through sequences of questioning and answering, Socrates could elaborate a theme in order to reach a new or deeper understanding of it. He did this by criticizing and looking at things from different perspectives, always reluctant towards a final answer or (closing) truth which would mean the end to this kind of practice. For, as Arendt describes this 'method': 'None of the *logoi*, the arguments, ever stay put; they move around' (p. 169–170). Her use of the Socratic model always seemed able to pick up any theme from another perspective,

opening it anew toward other horizons. Socrates embodied through his actions 'the right to go about examining the opinions of other people, thinking about them and asking his interlocutors to do the same' (p. 168). This unique approach serves as a model for Arendt when she argues that Socrates embodies a thinking which is not deemed as a solitary contemplative activity, but rather as something which is acted out in relation with others. This kind of thinking thus takes place *between* humans.

If thinking is about engaging with the world (not a retreat from it) and with others, how might that be understood? In a lesser known text by Lev Vygotsky, Imagination and Creativity in childhood (2004)[10] Vygotsky gives us an account of how human thinking is developed and how creativity and fantasy play a pivotal role in learning how to think. He distinguishes between two important functioning's of the brain, the reproductive and the combinatory (or creative). He writes:

In addition to its function in storing previous experience, the brain has another, no less important function. Aside from reproductive activity, we can readily observe another type of activity in human behavior, what can be called combinatorial or creative activity (p. 9).

In this text Vygotsky sketches out four different relations between imagination and reality in human behavior. The first type of relation derives from the fact that

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[10] My prior reference to this text is the Swedish translation from 1995 (Daidalos, publishers).To my knowledge it was published in Swedish before it was published in English. I have here chosen to refer to the English translation.

everything the human imagination creates is always embedded in elements taken from reality. This means that human imagination is connected to human experience, i.e. the richer experiencer the more possibilities for imagination. From this a first law governing the operation of imagination is formulated: 'The creative activity of the imagination depends directly on the richness and variety of a person's previous experience because this provides the material from which the products of fantasy are constructed' (p. 14–15). The second type of association (which this relation between imagination and reality is called) is different and in some way an opposite to the first, it has to do with how imagination helps us reach a broader experience of the world. Without this use of imagination in relation to reality we would not be able to read about faraway places or events and include them in our experience of the world, or to learn from something others tell us about their own experiences (learning from something we have not experienced directly ourselves). This relation between fantasy and reality involve 'a more complex association, not between the elements of an imaginary structure and reality, but between the final product of imagination and some complex real phenomenon' (p. 16).

The third type of relation involves emotions and how the relation between human creativity and reality is connected to or rather 'colored' by different emotional states. Vygotsky refers to two different modes of emotional influences on us: one is linked to our internal experiences and how

they are emotionally structured and the other is the external expression of our emotions. So, '[T]he emotion selects separate elements from reality and combines them in an association that is determined from within by our mood, and not from without by a logic of the images themselves (p. 18). He refers this to what he calls the law of 'the emotional reality of the imagination' (p. 19) which means that emotions work both ways; imaginations influence emotions and emotions influence imagination. It can be noted that this has complex and far-reaching consequences if applied to the analysis of different kinds of educational learning activities and environments.

The fourth type of association between imagination and reality is related to the third but also completely different from it. Vygotsky argues:

The essence of this association is that fantasy may represent something substantially new, never encountered before in human experience and without correspondence to any object that actually exist in reality; however once it has been externally embodied, that is, has been given material form, this crystallized imagination that has become an object begins to actually exist in the real world, to affect other things. In this way imagination becomes reality (p. 20).

Imagination can create something completely new; this goes both for material products and the more artistic or creative 'products' of art and literature. Vygotsky supports his argument on imagination with many examples from literature. His analysis of the four different associations between imagination and reality shows that

the work of imagination is an extremely complex process.

Why bring this up in a discussion about learning to think? The multifaceted relations between reality and imagination accounted for above show that there are many ways in which imagination relies on reality as much as realty can also be constructed from imagination. Undoubtedly thinking has to do with these combinatorial or creative capacities of human activity. Imagination or fantasy is that faculty the human use when engaged in these combinatorial activities.

The approach developed here combines Arendt's model of a thinker, as one who is engaged in a play of question and answer (a type of inquiry which happens in dialogues with other people) and Vygotsky's theory of fantasy and creativity and its relation to reality. The notion of reality here is crucial. It is understood here to be both what exists between humans as patterns of interaction and behavior (or what Arendt, 1989, refers to as the web of relations) and the extra-linguistic reality of the natural and material world.

The Socratic model of thinking combines two passions, thinking and acting. Thus thinking encompasses that which can go on while we are engaged in dialogues, in talking with others, through processes of questions and answers. These dialogues were not designed for the purpose of finding a right answer. The reality that is at stake in these sequences of questions and answers is either the one related to by the interlocutors, their natural and material world, or the one already present in the thinking of the same interlocutors. What happens when these sequences of questions and answers are put into play between interlocutors, where opinions are examined and thought about, is that thinking is developed – not in isolation, but as a collective practice or as a sort of thinking-in-concert (O'Donnell, 2012).

Teaching and learning processes are usually organised in classes of pupils, which means individuals in school usually belong to a group and are engaged in activities were a group of individuals do something together. Maybe, thinking-in-concert could serve as a more realistic and creative way of conceptualizing how thinking is developed. This approach does not rule out individual thinking, the contemplative, but raises questions as to why activities in education so often are assessed by individual accomplishment – rather than teamwork and collective thinking.

In the final part of this article I want to address a Deweyian aspect of thinking (1991) as a further elaboration of inquiry and collective thinking.

A PAUSE IS NEEDED FOR THINKING TO TAKE PLACE

As a matter of fact – human beings are thinking creatures. Using the Vygotskian scheme this means that as humans we have some faculties which make us act (behave)[11]

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[11] I do not mean to equate action and behaviour. Here I use action in more philosophical terms (Arendt, Ricoeur) and behaviour as a more psychological term. For the purpose of this article I do not venture into the theoretical distinctions that can be made between action and behaviour.

upon the world differently from other animals. Both thinking in terms of reproduction and imagination are dependent on a social [material] world and it happens through engagement with others. This is what I contend from reading Vygotsky. Thus thinking cannot be addresses as something uniquely taking place in isolation (contemplation) and it does not happen in a social vacuum, independent of reality.

For practical educational purposes, it is necessary to engage with this collective aspect of thinking. It is usually recognized that critical reflective thinking requires training through teaching and learning processes, but not necessarily in the way that Dewey foresaw. Learning to think, whether addressed through the theory of Vygotsky or Dewey is a complex matter, having to do with how concrete mental operations are developed into abstract mental operations. Both Vygotsky (1978) and Dewey (1910/1991) address this, although differently.[12] However, the critical and reflective side of thinking is not always communicated and addressed, sufficiently, either in education programs or in practice. My main point is to connect critical reflective thinking to making use of imagination in an approach to teaching and learning which values inquiry and the collective through reflexive processes.

Dewey writes, 'To say "I think so" implies that I do not as yet *know* so' (1991,

p. 9, italics in original). What is meant by this?[13] Thinking is not set, it has this fluidity and one has not yet entered the realm of knowing (or truth), but thinking could bring one there. In this respect thinking has to do with an activity going on before we know something: it entails deliberation and inquiry. The sub-processes involved in every reflective operation are then according to Dewey:

(a) a state of perplexity, hesitation and doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief (p. 9).

This aspect of thinking as something involving, perplexity, hesitation and doubt is important. If the activities in teaching and learning only deals with the transmission of a content from one (teacher) to the other (pupil), then according to this, <u>no</u> thinking is involved. Following Dewey, facilitating thinking requires teachers and students to allow a pause for inquiry and deliberation to take place and, furthermore, a period of analysis, for a systematic approach toward different possibilities (whatever content we are dealing with).

Reflective thinking is always more or less troublesome because it involves overcoming the inertia that inclines one to accept suggestions at their face value; it involves willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance (p. 13).

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[12] It is important to mention that the role imagination plays in thinking is developed quite different in the two theories. I am aware that Dewey (1991, p. 3) describe imagination as something preceding reflective thinking. In my argument I connect imagination to thinking as described earlier.

[13] I do not mean to open the discussion about what the difference between thinking and knowing entail, but just to make the statement that there is a difference.

Allowing for this pause to take place connects well with the Arendtian model of thinking; this fluid activity of going back and forth between questions and answers, just for the sake of 'examining opinions' and 'letting arguments move around' (Arendt 1978, p. 169–170).[14] Does this generally take place in classroom teaching and learning? In the author's extensive experience as a teacher educator, the recurring issue that teachers raise is of lack of time. There is, they say, too much content in the curriculum and teachers take seriously their responsibility for getting through it all before the school year ends. They are faced with criticism from pupils, parents and accountability systems if any of these can point to content that has not been covered for the assessments. As a result, teaching becomes mainly a process of transmission of curriculum content.

Something which can be lost in this sort of transmission process is possibilities for pupils, individually and as groups, to have pauses for thinking. They may still occur at times, but the more teachers are pushed towards transmission methods the less common such paused for thinking are likely to be.[15] The prevalent, combined structure of education programs, curriculums, textbooks and accountability influence what type of teaching and learning processes will be prioritized and that in turn pre-determines how the learner tends to act. Currently, the learner is pushed to-

wards being a receiver rather than as an actor or agent.

The perspective on thinking developed here treats thinking as an activity that occurs when there is a pause in which it is allowed to let go of the idea that teaching and learning is always about reaching the specific goal of learning objectives/outcomes. Rather, the purpose of thinking is not to have a specific purpose, other than that of being engaged in sequences of questions and answers. The pauses create spaces where this thinking can take place – spaces where imagination can be put into play and developed. But this requires time; there is no fast-track here. It entails overcoming the 'inertia to accept suggestions at their face value' and both to be willing and able to endure a period of doubt and not-knowing. This for most, and maybe especially in teaching and learning, implies a type of insecurity, a not-knowing (Hoveid, 2012b), which is difficult to uphold. Teaching, for many teachers is about showing that they know; that they have the answers – not this opposite in an 'insecurity' and search into what is not-known. If time is not allowed for this kind of reflective thinking through questions and answers in education, then the development of thinking is hindered. Learning and teaching will not allow time for learning to think.

So from Ricoeur's capable human being, Arendt's the model for a thinker/

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[14] Joseph Swab (1962) (American science educationalist) used the concepts fluid and stable inquiry. My interpretation of Arendt and Dewey is also inspired by him see, for instance H. Hoveid & Hoveid (2013).
[15] For a literary comment on this fact, what effectiveness can lead to, I recommend reading Mikael Ende, *Momo* (1975). In this story Momo fight against the 'time thief's'. See also M. H. Hoveid (2012a).

inquirer, Vygotsky on imagination and Dewey on thinking as a willingness to endure a condition of mental unrest and disturbance, a concept of thinking requiring education to create pauses for engaging in sequences of questions and answers has been developed. So, is good education about learning to think?

There is no simple prescription for giving time and space for thinking. It happens when there is time to ask questions and to listen to each other. That is, when there is a space which is not collapsed into oneness – into one way of thinking or expecting one answer (see also Hoveid, 2012b; Hoveid & Finne, 2014). Good education needs to find ways of creating space where there is time to let individuals develop their thinking-in-concert with others. Without this, education risk turning into a machinery for employability, or qualification to use Biesta's terminology. Good education is about more. This extra derives from the Ricoeurian understanding of the capable human being, imputability and reflexivity, along with the above analysis of thinking and good education.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: THINKING, RESPONSIBILITY AND GOOD EDUCATION

A basic human capability is the capacity to impute, to recognise and refer an action back on oneself and take responsibility for it. This capacity to be able to *take* responsibility for our actions, recognising ourselves as someone (I am this particular human being) means responsibility is reflexive. For human beings to recognise themselves as responsible, the other capacities of the capable human being are important; to speak, to act and to tell. The argument here is that these capabilities are developed with others – in classrooms. Some of this happens, these capabilities are developed, whether we want or not. It is not implied that human capabilities can only happen through a narrow means-end didactic, but rather that there are always possibilities for these capabilities to be given space and time in teaching and learning processes. However, as argued above, this space and time can also be taken out of education as the pressure on teaching and learning processes to become more efficient and goal-oriented is made stronger.

Education needs to slow down in order to create time and space for teaching and learning processes for inquiry, for deliberations, and for exploring questions and answers (where the answer is not predefined). Although they may not always take the same forms, these sorts of open-ended activities can take place in all subject areas. Teachers and pupils are then engaged in activities for the sake of 'examining opinions' and 'letting arguments move around'. This can be difficult for teachers. To illustrate, a teacher in one project (M. H. Hoveid, 2009), contrary to what she used to do in her half hour morning meeting with the pupils, let there be silence, which she refrained from

filling.[16] Then, after some time (really less than one minute) the pupils started talking among themselves. This had rarely happened before because, as she said afterwards, she was so used to always leading the dialogues and filling silences immediately.

When teachers are afraid of silence and fill it themselves, there are few possibilities for pupils to take an initiative: to speak, act and tell. When this is combined with the perceived necessity of getting though all of the curriculum content, then teachers inevitably become more obsessed with what they feel they must talk about. When this happens, it gradually obliterates the pedagogical moments where pupils are given opportunities to recognise themselves as speaking, acting, telling individuals. These are the moments where thinking is allowed, where imagination is put into play. But if the main message pupils learn through schooling is: '*teacher, what do you want me to do*', they have learned to perform (say, write, act) according to what is expected of them – to act as servants not as agents. As agents, pupils can recognize themselves as able to speak, act and tell and see possibilities for taking reasonability for oneself and others. Good education is about learning to think because it leads to this sort of agency. So, this time and space is required. As the example above shows, teachers can learn to let it happen, but they also need acknowledgement and support from parents, politicians and education leaders in finding more opportunities and in modifying how education is conceived. This involves using the collective, that is relations between humans, to create a more fertile ground for thinking in our education processes. Here a space can be created and that it is 'the space we have to cross in order for humanity to play out in a good way'[17] and for good education to become a reality.

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[16] A note is needed to say that her idea for doing this derived from looking at a video of one of her male colleagues. He had a group of pupils in this same morning meeting, which were active talking with each other – and she had a hard time making the pupils in her group speak. When she tried this out in her group, I had no prior knowledge of her reasons for doing so (as a researcher). It was afterwards she told us about it and said; 'I completely forgot about the time'.

[17] Wolf, M (2000) is a compilation of Kate Wolf's songs (American sing-song writer) in the Album: *A Weaver of visions, The Kate Wolf Anthology*, released by OWL productions. This sentence, which I have borrowed, is from the booklet accompanying the CD-album, page nine.

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