

# TOWARDS A NEW PEDAGOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

## HACIA UNA NUEVA PEDAGOGÍA EN LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR

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**Abstract:** In this essay the authors argue the need for a new pedagogy in Higher Education (HE). Our hypothesis is that the predominant focus today is on instrumental systems meant to measure the “quality” of education, subjecting the HE-teacher to goal management and frameworks that limit didactic possibilities. However, acting wisely and solving challenges across professions in an increasingly unpredictable world, requires attitudes, knowledge, skills and understanding that cannot unambiguously be defined in advance. Using a reflective practice and action inquiry research approach, the authors reflect upon experiences and research involving the Dialogos approach to philosophical

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<sup>1</sup> The title of the first version of this article received by HASER was “Philosophical Practice, Pedagogy for the Unforeseen and Edification in Higher Education”.

practice, new research findings in pedagogy for the unforeseen and data from the completion of a PhD course for employees from four faculties in higher education. We argue that higher education should focus on open-ended and creative approaches to teaching that includes philosophical practices and reflective “samhandling” across disciplines. All higher education study programmes should to some extent train students for unforeseen events in life and society.

**Key words:** Higher education, Bildung, Philosophical practice - the Dialogos Way, Pedagogy for the unforeseen.

**Resumen:** En este artículo, los autores defienden la necesidad de desarrollar una nueva pedagogía en la Educación Superior. Nuestra hipótesis es que el enfoque predominante en la actualidad está influido por sistemas instrumentales destinados a medir la “calidad” de la educación. Así, se esclaviza al docente de Educación Superior dentro de la gestión de objetivos y de marcos que limitan sus posibilidades didácticas. Actuar con sabiduría y resolver los desafíos de las profesiones en un mundo es cada vez más impredecible y, por ello, requiere actitudes, conocimientos, habilidades y competencias hermenéuticas que no pueden definirse de forma inequívoca de antemano en la formación. Utilizando la práctica reflexiva y el enfoque de investigación-acción, reflexionamos a partir de las experiencias e investigaciones que involucran el enfoque “Dialogos” a la Filosofía Aplicada, de nuevos hallazgos de investigación en Pedagogía y de los datos de un curso de doctorado para profesionales de cuatro facultades de Educación Superior. Argumentamos que la educación superior debe centrarse en enfoques de enseñanza abiertos y creativos que incluyan prácticas filosóficas y un manejo reflexivo en todas las disciplinas. Todos los programas de estudios de educación superior deberían, en cierta medida, capacitar a los estudiantes para acontecimientos imprevistos en su vida y en la sociedad.

**Palabras clave:** Educación Superior, Bildung, Filosofía Aplicada, Dialogos Way, Pedagogía para lo imprevisto.

## Introduction

This article is based in pressing concerns of ours on the one side, and our attempts to understand and handle them on the other. Our concerns are both theoretical and practical. Our worry is that didactical models and practical pedagogies of higher education

seem to be developing in increasingly limited competence oriented, instrumental and technical (in the Aristotelian sense of *techne* and *poiesis*) way, leading to fragmentation and disintegration, amongst other.

We begin our article by explicating this worry. In the second part, we attempt to understand our concerns and propose a different perspective by tracing some roots of the concerns in the history of pedagogy, more specifically by relating them to the European traditions of *Bildung* (edification) and to the Aristotelian notions of *phronesis* and *praxis*. In part 3 we explore and reflect upon our attempts to handle the concern practically. Concretely, we have included philosophical and dialogical practices in an interdisciplinary Phd-level course for colleagues from all four faculties at the University of South Eastern Norway. This means that our teaching approaches during the course includes ways of facilitating edifying and wisdom oriented pedagogies for the unforeseen<sup>2</sup>, in line with the Dialogos approach<sup>3</sup>. We conclude that philosophical practices and pedagogies for the unforeseen are good alternatives to linear didactical models when it comes to preparing university teachers and their students for good action in an open and unpredictable future.

### *Methodology and structure of the paper*

Our research approach in this article can be compared to the reflective practice research approach of Anders Lindseth<sup>4</sup>. Lindseth

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<sup>2</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo/Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> HELSKOG, Guro: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London/New York, Routledge, 2019a.

<sup>4</sup> LINDSETH, Anders: "Svarevne og kritisk refleksjon. Hvordan utvikle praktisk kunnskap? ", in MCGUIRK, James & METHI, Jan Selmer (eds.): *Praktisk*

recommends that reflective practice research, which is essentially phenomenological and hermeneutical, takes its point of departure in an experience that has made an impression. This experience should be narrated through what he calls *original reflection*, before some core themes are drawn out through critical reflection. These themes are then, finally, reflected upon theoretically and philosophically. In our essay, however, we have chosen to start with the explication of some concerns of ours. The concerns have emerged through the years as a *feeling* that something is insufficient and not right regarding the models, theories and didactical structures that are domination higher education pedagogies in our time. In part 2 of our article we explicitly formulate these concerns. Then, in the part 3, we reflect critically and theoretically upon them in more general terms, drawing on philosophical perspectives and research literature that we have found relevant in our attempts to “open up” and shed light on our concerns on the one side, and propose a way to handle them on the other. In Part 4, we narrate one of our experiences of acting upon our concerns, namely through developing and teaching a phd-level course for some of our colleagues representing all four faculties at our university: Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, USN School

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*kunnskap som profesjonsforskning*, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2014; LINDSETH, Anders: “Refleksiv praksisforskning”, in HALÅS, Cathrine Torbjørnsen, KYMRE, Ingjerd Gåre & STEINSVIK, Kari (eds.): *Humanistiske forskningstilnærminger til profesjonspraksis*, Oslo, Gyldendal Akademisk, p. 243-260, 2017a; LINDSETH, Anders: “Forskningens vei – Fra livserfaring til en observerbar verden og tilbake til livets virksomheter”, in HALÅS, Cathrine Torbjørnsen, KYMRE, Ingjerd Gåre & STEINSVIK, Kari (eds.): *Humanistiske forskningstilnærminger til profesjonspraksis*, Oslo, Gyldendal Akademisk, p.15-37), 2017b; LINDSETH, Anders: “Dosenten i et FoU-perspektiv. Refleksiv praksisforskning som en vei mot dosentkompetanse”, in BACHKE, Carl Christian & HERMANSEN, Mads (eds.): *Å satse på dosenter. Et utviklingsarbeid*, Cappelen Damm Akademisk, Oslo, 2020, p. 75–101.

of Business, Faculty of Technology, Natural Sciences and Maritime Sciences, and Faculty of Humanities, Sports and Educational Sciences. In this part we also draw upon meta-reflections from course participants, which then provide a second-person viewpoint. What we can call “the intervention and practice research process” can also be compared to the developmental action inquiry of William Torbert and colleagues<sup>5</sup>. Torbert distinguishes between first-person action inquiry, second-person action inquiry and third-person action inquiry, also making distinctions between the subjective first-person voice, the intersubjective second-person voice and the objectivity-seeking third-person voice<sup>6</sup>. Reason and Bradbury<sup>7</sup> suggest that the most compelling and enduring kind of action research will engage all three strategies: first-person research is best carried out in the company of friends and colleagues who can provide support and challenge. Such a company may evolve into a second-person collaborative inquiry process, as it has for us when working with this article. The collaboration has strengthened the course itself, since originally, we had quite different, however compatible, positions within the science and philosophy of education. The strengthening force lies in the synergy of integrating different stances into a new integrated whole.

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<sup>5</sup> TORBERT, William: *Creating a Community of Inquiry: Conflict, Collaboration, Transformation*, London, Wiley Interscience, 1976; TORBERT, William: *The Power of Balance: Transforming Self, Society, and Scientific Inquiry*, London, Sage, 1991; TORBERT, William & Taylor, Steven: “Action Inquiry: Interweaving Multiple Qualities of Attention for Timely Action”, in REASON, Peter & BRADBURY, Hilary (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of Action Research*, London, Sage, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, p. 239-251, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> TORBERT, William: *Creating a Community of Inquiry: Conflict, Collaboration, Transformation*, London, Wiley Interscience, 1976.

<sup>7</sup> REASON, Peter & BRADBURY, Hilary (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of Action Research*, London, Sage, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2008.

## Our concerns

We have already stated our worry that the pedagogies of higher education seem to be developing in an increasingly instrumental and technical way, not the least due to the increasing dominance of aim oriented, competence-based and so-called concept- or programme based approaches<sup>8</sup> in the pedagogies of academia. However, such approaches are not sufficient to cover education to handle unforeseen events. Our point here is that while traditional didactical models focus on ways of planning how to learn by presupposing clear learning goals and an inner causal interaction between factors like aims and content, goals cannot be defined and articulated clearly in advance concerning unforeseen events<sup>9</sup>.

### *On the limitations of the constructive alignment approach*

One example of such a technical approach in higher education pedagogies is the so called “constructive alignment” (CA) and “Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome” or the SOLO-model<sup>10</sup> which is dominant in higher education systems nowadays. Constructive alignment emphasizes the correlation between learning outcomes, assessment and learning activities. Following this model, every academic course would start with a definition of what the student shall have learned (learning outcome) when the course is passed, how the outcomes will be assessed and finally what kind of teaching- and learning activities which need to be used in order to reach the predefined learning outcomes.

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<sup>8</sup> ARMSTRONG, Michael: *Armstrong's Handbook of Strategic Human Resource Management*, London, Kogan Page Ltd, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo/Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> BIGGS, John Burville & TANG, Catherine: *Teaching for Quality Learning at University. What the Student Does*, New York, McGraw Hill, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2011.

Constructive Alignment has gained an international standing as a quality development tool in higher education despite the fact that the system is based on *one* source<sup>11</sup>. For instance, NOKUT, the Norwegian body for quality in education, uses this model as a system for measuring educational quality in higher education. Both before and during the corona pandemic, several webinars on the constructive alignment model (in Norwegian “samstemt undervisning”) were held for teaching staff at higher education institutions in Norway.

However, the constructive alignment model is problematic in several respects. First, the model is at risk of making the educational process instrumental, one-dimensional and unidirectional, closing the necessary space for “edificational experiences”. Second, it makes the qualities implied in edification difficult to develop, as it becomes more important for students to reach the predefined aims and learning outcomes, than to develop a critical and self-reflective relationship to the knowledge and skills<sup>12</sup>. Third, students will not easily learn virtues needed for action in an unpredictable world, such as wisdom and patience<sup>13</sup>, courage and judgment<sup>14</sup>, and appreciation of learning in the present<sup>15</sup>. All in all, the constructive alignment approach is at risk

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<sup>11</sup> ANDERSEN, Hanne Leth: “Constructive alignment og risikoen for en forsimplende universitetspedagogikk [Constructive alignment and the risk of a simplifying university pedagogy]”, in *Dansk universitetspedagogisk Tidsskrift*, 9, 2010, pp. 30-35.

<sup>12</sup> See HELSKOG, Guro & WEISS, Michael Noah: “On the Urgent need for Philosophical Practices in Main Stream Education”, in *HASER – International Journal of Philosophical Practice*, 1, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> BRUNSTAD, Paul Otto: *Klokt lederskap. Mellom dyder og dødssynder [Wise leadership. Between virtues and mortal sins]*, Oslo, Gyldendal akademisk, 2009.

<sup>14</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil. (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> SAEVEROT, Herner & TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil: “Time, Individuality, and Interaction: A Case Study”, in HOWARD, Patrick, SAEVI, Tone, FORAN,

of creating what Finn Thorbjørn Hansen<sup>16</sup> have called an “Eichmannisation of Education”<sup>17</sup>. Eichmannisation of Education is characterized by blindly and unreflectedly following orders, principles and rules, like Eichmann who claimed that he was only doing his duty when making possible the massacres of the second world war<sup>18</sup>. The point here is that even if everything is done competently and right, that is, done in alignment (sic!) with aims, orders and bureaucratic rules, or in our context here: the respective aims and principles in the constructive alignment model, it would still not necessarily be good in a moral sense. This brings us to the notions of competence and competence-based approaches to teaching, which are widely used in curricula at all levels of Norwegian education today.

### *On the limitation of competence-based approaches*

In the analysis of Biesta<sup>19</sup> learning and competence are necessary but insufficient features of good teaching practice. With regard to the practical implementation of the idea of competence in the field

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Andrew & BIESTA, Gert (eds.): *Phenomenology and Educational Theory in Conversation. Back to Education Itself*, London/New York, Routledge, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> HANSEN, Finn Torbjørn: *At stå i det åbne. Dannelse gennem filosofisk undren og nærvær [To stand in the open. Formation through philosophical wonder and presence]*, København, Hans Reitzels forlag, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> See also HELSKOG, Guro & WEISS, Michael Noah: “On the Urgent need for Philosophical Practices in Main Stream Education”, in *HASER – International Journal of Philosophical Practice*, 1, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> MAHRDT, Helgard: “Å tenke om det uforutsigbare med Hannah Arendt [Thinking about the unpredictable based on Hannah Arendt], in: TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015, p. 132-153.

<sup>19</sup> BIESTA, Gert: “How Does a Competent Teacher Become a Good Teacher?: On Judgement, Wisdom and Virtuosity in Teaching and Teacher Education”, in HEILBRONN, Ruth & FOREMAN-PECK, Lorraine (eds.): *Philosophical Perspectives on Teacher Education*, West Sussex, John Wiley & Sons, 2015a.

of teacher education (in our context the field of university teacher education) he sees a number of problems. Some of them can be outlined as follows:

1. Any attempt to draw out in full detail what teachers should be competent in, runs the risk of generating lists that are far too long and detailed, reducing teacher education to a tick box exercise focusing on whether the individual students have managed to achieve the goals, easily leading to a disjointed curriculum and an instrumental non-collaborative approach to teaching and learning.
2. Competences are always oriented towards the past and the present because it is only possible to describe what a teacher needs to be competent at in relation to situations that are already known. Hence, a competence-based curriculum for (university) teacher education would tie the student too much to a particular interpretation of the current situation, rather than preparing them sufficiently for meaningful action in an unknown and unpredictable future.
3. Good teachers does not only need to be good at doing all kinds of things (which is what competence is about in Biesta`s interpretation)

The most important limitation of competence based approaches to teacher education is however, according to Biesta<sup>20</sup> the fact that good teachers need to be able to judge which competences should be utilized in always concrete situations in which they work. Hence, he suggests that while competences is a *necessary* condition for good teaching, it can never be a *sufficient* condition, because good teaching requires judgment about what an educationally desirable course of action would be in *this* concrete situation with

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<sup>20</sup> BIESTA, Gert: "How Does a Competent Teacher Become a Good Teacher?: On Judgement, Wisdom and Virtuosity in Teaching and Teacher Education", in HEILBRONN, Ruth & FOREMAN-PECK, Lorraine (eds.): *Philosophical Perspectives on Teacher Education*, West Sussex, John Wiley & Sons, 2015a.

these concrete students at this particular stage in the educational trajectory. It requires *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. The difference between a competent teacher and a good teacher is thus according to Biesta that the good teacher is able to make judgements about what is educationally desirable. The good teacher has become excellent, i.e. existentially and morally wise as well as competent; a *phronimos*.

Thus, good teaching can not be reduced to competence, nor to reaching predefined aims that can be measured in tests and exams. The instrumental means- aims orientation implicit in the constructive alignment approach, and the forms of knowledge implied in edification, can be traced to the two forms of knowledge as explicated by Aristotle, which again can be traced to Plato: *techné* and *phronesis*. Both forms of knowledge represent practical knowing, but while *techné* can be understood as skills in order to produce something, *phronesis* is the awareness necessary for doing the right in the right moment towards the right people at the right place, with regards to living a good life overall<sup>21</sup>. Hence, while *techné* can be understood as know-how knowledge, *phronesis* is often translated as prudence or practical *wisdom*. As depicted by

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<sup>21</sup> ARISTOTLE. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Retrieved 11.02.2020 from The Internet Classics Archive Nicomachean Ethics by Aristotle (mit.edu); see also HELSKOG, Guro: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2019a; WEISS, Michael Noah: “Phronesis – The Backbone of Philosophical Practice?” in STAUDE, Detlef & RUSCHMANN, Eckart (eds.): *Understanding the Other and Oneself*, Cambridge Scholar Publishing, Cambridge, 2018; WEISS, Michael Noah: “Philosophical Mindfulness. An Essay about the Art of Philosophizing”, in *HASER – International Journal of Philosophical Practice*, 8, 2017; WEISS, Michael Noah & HELSKOG, Guro (2020): “ ‘They often have AHA-moments’: how training teachers to philosophize the Dialogos Way with their students can promote life skills and democratic citizenship in education”, in *Educational Action Research*, 2020.

Biesta<sup>22</sup>, *techné* is related to skills and thus to what Aristotle calls *poiesis*, an activity which has the goal beyond itself, while *phronesis* implies a type of activity called *praxis* by Aristotle. *Praxis* implies activity which has the goal within itself, such as learning for its own sake.

*On the risk of increased fragmentation and disintegration*

The implementation of the constructive alignment model is further at risk of contributing to increased fragmentation and specialization in academia. Following its line of didactical thought, sciences, disciplines, subjects and professions is at risk of limiting their scope to disciplinary specialities, thus creating professional competence based subcultures that become closed to the horizons of understanding represented by other disciplines and professions. The consequence can be that insight and knowledge that can not directly be connected to the internal professional or disciplinary knowledge and competence is considered second range or irrelevant. When this happens, there is a danger that institutes and faculties are on their way towards what Majken Schultz and Mary Jo Hatch<sup>23</sup> calls a form of narcissism where the profession or the organization repel, neglect or overlook the value of exchanging knowledge and understanding with other than themselves. Instead, the institutes, faculties and institutions close themselves up in their already existing identity, profession and culture.

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<sup>22</sup> BIESTA, Gert: "How Does a Competent Teacher Become a Good Teacher?: On Judgement, Wisdom and Virtuosity in Teaching and Teacher Education", in HEILBRONN, Ruth & FOREMAN-PECK, Lorraine (eds.): *Philosophical Perspectives on Teacher Education*, West Sussex, John Wiley & Sons, 2015a.

<sup>23</sup> SCHULTZ, Majken & HATCH, Mary Jo: *The dynamics of organizational identity, Human relation*, London, Sage Publications, 2002, p.990-993.

## Critical-theoretical reflection upon our concerns

In the previous three sections we have explicated some of our concerns regarding the development of cultures and practices in academia. We are by no means alone with our concerns, nor are the concerns new, even though they have taken different forms throughout history. Historically, the roots to our worry can be traced to the political and pedagogical debates of the enlightenment period featuring philosophical thinkers like Rousseau, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, Kant and Hegel, and further again to ideas of Indo-European antiquity<sup>24;25;26;27;28</sup>. Moreover, our worry has roots in a returning debate in academic life in Norway for more than 50 years. This is where we will take our point of departure in the following, bringing forward the themes of Bildung/edification towards wisdom and of dialogue and philosophical practice as

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<sup>24</sup> LØVLIE, Lars, MORTENSEN, Klaus Peter and NORDENBO, Sven Erik (eds.): *Educating humanity: Bildung in postmodernity*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2003. Originally published as LØVLIE, Lars, NORDENBO, Svein Erik and MORTENSEN, Klaus Peter (eds.). Education Humanity: Bildung in postmodernity. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, Special Issue*, 36, 3, Autumn 2002.

<sup>25</sup> SLAGSTAD, Rune, KORSGAARD, Ove & LØVLIE, Lars (eds.): *Dannelsens forvandlinger. [Transformations of Bildung]*, Oslo, Pax, 2003.

<sup>26</sup> RISE, Svein (ed.): *Danningsperspektiver: teologiske og filosofiske syn på danning i antikken og i moderne tid [Perspectives on Bildung: theological and philosophical views on Bildung in antiquity and in modern times]*, Trondheim, Tapir, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> STRAUME, Ingerid (ed.): *Danningens filosofihistorie [The history of the philosophy of Bildung]*, Oslo, Gyldendal akademisk, 2013.

<sup>28</sup> STEINSHOLT, Kjetil & DOBSON, Stephen (eds.): *Dannelse: introduksjon til et ullent pedagogisk landskap [Bildung: introduction to a vague pedagogical landscape]*, Trondheim, Tapir, 2011.

ways to promote wisdom, in our context in higher education pedagogies.

*Bildung- or edification towards wisdom*

In his classical 1969-essay “Ein utdana mann og eit dana menneske”, which can be translated “An educated man and an edified human being”, Norwegian philosopher Jon Hellestnes<sup>29</sup> claimed that current forms of education in his time makes *Bildung*, or what we in this paper translate as *edification*, increasingly impossible. By *Bildung* or edification (“danning” in Norwegian) Hellestnes is using a complex and widely discussed concept in European history, various versions of the concept having been used as critical concepts in a scholarly fight against materialist and market oriented trends in education since the Enlightenment period. Hellestnes` places the distinction between education/educated and edification/edified within this historical discussion. While education and becoming educated implies becoming qualified for certain functions in society, edification and becoming edified is a life long and never ending process involving the development of deep understanding and wisdom, according to Hellestnes. Education need to give space for edification, which requires forms of reflection that goes beyond and in between university subjects. Moreover, it includes the perceiving subjectivity and the everyday world that is always the point of departure for education as well as for scientific work. An education that loses contact with the everyday world becomes an education without edification, or *Bildung*. The challenge, Hellestnes argues, is that technical reason is

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<sup>29</sup> HELLESNES, Jon: “Ein utdana mann og eit dana menneske. Framlegg til eit utvida daningsomgrep”, in *Pedagogikk og samfunn*, Bergen, Filosofisk institutt, Universitetet i Bergen, 1969.

invading the academic and educational field<sup>30</sup>. As argued in Helskog and Weiss forthcoming<sup>31</sup>, there is thus an urgent need for philosophical practices at all levels of education in our time. Along with Hellesnes, Lars Løvlie<sup>32</sup> and Anders Lindseth<sup>33</sup> are among the Norwegian scholars that have spent much of their academic life analysing and critiquing dominant trends in science and education from the humanistic perspective of edification. Both were central when scholars from the Universities of Oslo and Bergen, and the University College of Bodø in 2009 delivered their report looking critically at the “quality reform”, “Bologna Process”

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<sup>30</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen (2003): “Den humanistiske dannelsen og 1990-årenes utdanningsreformer”, in *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift*, 1, 2, pp. 19-33, 2003; BIESTA, Gert: “How Does a Competent Teacher Become a Good Teacher?: On Judgement, Wisdom and Virtuosity in Teaching and Teacher Education”, in HEILBRONN, Ruth & FOREMAN-PECK, Lorraine (eds.): *Philosophical Perspectives on Teacher Education*, West Sussex, John Wiley & Sons, 2015a.

<sup>31</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen & WEISS, Michael Noah: “On the Urgent need for Philosophical Practices in Main Stream Education”, in *HASER – International Journal of Philosophical Practice*, 1, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> LØVLIE, Lars: “Verktøyskolen [The tool school]”, in *Norsk Pedagogisk Tidsskrift*, 3, pp. 185–198, 2013; LØVLIE, Lars: “Dannelse og profesjon [Education and profession]”, in INNSTILLING FRA DANNELESUTVALGET FOR HØYERE UTDANNING: *Kunnskap og dannelse foran et nytt århundre*, An independent selection of individual institutions in Norwegian Higher Education, 08.10.2009.

<sup>33</sup> LINDSETH, Anders: “Dannelsens plass i profesjonsutdanninger” in INNSTILLING FRA DANNELESUTVALGET FOR HØYERE UTDANNING: *Kunnskap og dannelse foran et nytt århundre*, An independent selection of individual institutions in Norwegian Higher Education, 08.10.2009; LINDSETH, Anders: “Personlig dannelse”, in HAGTVEDT, Bernt & OGNJENOVIC, Gorona (eds.): *Dannelse. Tenkning, modning, refleksjon*, Oslo, Dreyers forlag, 2011.

and “Lisboa strategy”<sup>34</sup>. The report investigated the conditions of academic edification understood as critical reflection and ethical understanding across university studies.

In his contribution to the report, Anders Lindseth writes that “within all education, edification is a challenge”<sup>35</sup>. The student should not only become able to reproduce knowledge, but also acquire a personal, reflected and critical relationship towards this knowledge. The acquisition implies formation of the student in which he or she finds her place in relation to the knowledge. Such personal acquisition is edification or *Bildung*, Lindseth argues, a position that has a parallel in Lars Løvlie’s contribution to the report<sup>36</sup>. Edification, Løvlie writes, describes a personal trait, characterized as an attitude, a disposition, a character or a virtue. This personal trait is materialized in the story we expect modern people to be able to give about themselves. We can of course focus on the content (the “what”) and methods (the “how”), but this gives little meaning without a clear reference to the individuals involved in the educational situation, he argues. The *who* of teaching and learning becomes important, in addition to its what, how and why. Løvlie places edification in the cross sections between philosophy and pedagogy, with self-formation or self-edification as the primary ideal. Edification thus implies pedagogical reflection and

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34 DANNESESUTVALGET: *Kunnskap og dannelse foran et nytt århundre [Knowledge and Bildung in the face of a new century]*, Oslo, Dannelsesutvalget, Universitetet i Oslo, 2009.

35 LINDSETH, Anders: “Dannelsens plass i profesjonsutdanninger [The place of Bildung in professions education]” in INNSTILLING FRA DANNESESUTVALGET FOR HØYERE UTDANNING: *Kunnskap og dannelse foran et nytt århundre*, An independent selection of individual institutions in Norwegian Higher Education, 08.10.2009.

<sup>36</sup> LØVLIE, Lars. “Dannelse og profesjon [Bildung and profession]”. In *Kunnskap og dannelse foran et nytt århundre*, 28-38. Oslo, DANNESESUTVALGET, Universitetet i Oslo, 2009.

mindfulness, and with the words of Hellesnes<sup>37</sup>: When education is edifying, it enhances wisdom. One becomes edified through reflection and problematizing of one's subjectivity, including one's knowledge and practices, and of the daily world who is always ground and the point of departure for the professional, academic and scientific world. An education that loses touch with the daily world, and thus with the personal lived life, practice and politics, is an education without edification, Hellesnes argues, a position that is developed further in theory and practice by Helskog<sup>38</sup>.

The basis of the critique of Danningsutvalget, in which Lindseth and Løvlie contributed with their understandings of edification, was a critical stance towards the “quality reform”, “Bologna Process” and “Lisboa strategy” after the turn of the century. The basis of our paper is in addition a critique towards the earlier mentioned competence-based and so-called concept- or programme based approaches<sup>39</sup>, which have gained increasing dominance in the pedagogies of academia. In an attempt to cut through the concept's different historical meanings and connotations in order to create a working definition in the context of teacher education, Helskog has chosen to understand *Bildung* – or edification - as holistic self-education towards wisdom, modelled in the six dimensional map for wisdom oriented pedagogy<sup>40</sup>. Edification is

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<sup>37</sup> HELLESNES, Jon: “Ein utdana mann og eit dana menneske. Framlegg til eit utvida daningsomgrep”, in *Pedagogikk og samfunn*, Bergen, Filosofisk institutt, Universitetet i Bergen, 1969.

<sup>38</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2019a.

<sup>39</sup> ARMSTRONG, Michael: *Armstrong's Handbook of Strategic Human Resource Management*, London, Kogan Page Ltd, 7th edition, 2020; See also LAI, Linda: *Strategisk kompetanseledelse [Strategic competence management]*, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London

according to this understanding never limited only to knowledge storage, or to changing one's rational points of views or one's opinion about an issue. Rather, it involves transformation of one's entire being in direction of increased ability to judge, and deeper understanding and wisdom in a broad sense. Wisdom is and should remain an utopian ideal – a horizon that moves away as the individual expands and deepens his or her understanding, while developing epistemic humility, self-insight and insight in their own knowledge and limitations.

### *Dialogical and philosophical practice*

In her articles “*Bildung towards wisdom through dialogue in teacher education*”<sup>41</sup> and “*Searching for wisdom the Dialogos Way*”<sup>42</sup>, Helskog explores the edifying potential of philosophical practices in teacher education. In the first article, she thinks with Norwegian philosopher Hans Skjervheim<sup>43</sup>, who distinguishes two basic models of pedagogy:

1. Pedagogy understood as technique, art, craft and transmission of predefined knowledge, with “to affect” as basic metaphor

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and New York, Routledge, 2019a.

<sup>41</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: “*Bildung towards wisdom through dialogue in teacher education*”, in *Arts and humanities in higher education*, 18, 1, 2019, special issue: The Art of Dialogue, edited by ALTORF, Hannah Marije, pp. 76-90. First published online, October 18, 2016.

<sup>42</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: “*Searching for Wisdom the Dialogos Way*”, in: AMIR, Lydia (ed.): *New Frontiers in Philosophical Practice*, London, Cambridge Scholars Publishing Ltd., 2017.

<sup>43</sup> SKJERVHEIM, Hans: “*Eit grunnproblem i pedagogisk filosofi [A foundational problem in pedagogical philosophy]*”, in SKJERVHEIM, Hans: *Deltakar og tilskodar og andre essays*, Oslo, Tanum, p. 226-245, 1976.

2. Pedagogy understood as based in a romantic, biological understanding of the human being, with “free growth” as a basic metaphor.

In their ideal-typical forms, both these pedagogical models are un-dialogical and one-sided, Skjervheim argues. In the first, which we above have related to the constructive alignment model, the teacher is the *subject* while the student is the *object*, whom the teacher can affect in the direction of specific pre-defined outcomes. The model of teaching thus become (probably unintendedly) authoritarian top-down formation of the student. The second model is seemingly contradictory and supposedly a “bottom-up” model of pedagogy, in which the young person is free to develop her inner dispositions. As a pedagogical model, however, it does not work, because teaching and pedagogical guidance of the young, in our context into a given profession such as the teaching, nursing, engineering or management profession, is necessary. In the first model, the teacher *openly* affects and forms the students through techniques and predefined knowledge, while in the second model, the teacher *subtly* affects and forms the students through manipulation, at the same time seducing them to think they are allowed to grow freely. Thus, none of the pedagogical models grants the students the space and freedom necessary for *edification* to occur. Such processes call for a third model of pedagogy, Skjervheim argues, namely a dialogical and philosophical model. Skjervheim uses the practice of Socrates as described in the dialogues of Plato as an example of the third model. Socrates simultaneously affects *and* lets the young develop freely, in Skjervheims interpretation. This third pedagogical model - the Socratic - is dialectical, and it takes into account the difference between doxa and episteme, between mere opinion and true insight. Skjervheim labels this dialectical pedagogical model of education *psychagogy*, or soul guidance through words.

Similarly, during a full Dialogos process, experiences, ideas and concepts are explored through dialectical movements, and wondered upon from logical, emotional, experiential, existential and spiritual starting points and perspectives. Socratic dialogues, guided imageries, pro-con argumentation, philosophical walks, mind-body exercises as well as art-, text- and emotion based dialogues and -essay writing might be among the exercises included<sup>44</sup>.

At each moment of a philosophical dialogue, the teacher or facilitator needs to be alert in order to be able to channel the ongoing philosophical and edificational process. This can in one moment imply encouraging participants to argue from divergent or opposite viewpoints, at other moment to contemplate in silence. This cannot be planned in advance.

The written form of Skjervheim`s third pedagogical model is the personal essay<sup>45</sup>. The word “essay” derives from French *essai*, meaning “self-attempt” or “self-trial”. Finn Thorbjørn Hansen, in his attempts to develop a new university pedagogy in Denmark<sup>46</sup>, argues that a teacher, a counsellor or other professionals who do

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<sup>44</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2019a.

<sup>45</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: “Om Askeladdens metode. Essayet som erkjennelsesvei og vidsomdannende skrivepraksis”, in ASKELAND, Norunn & JØRGENSEN, Iben Brinch (eds.): *Kreativ akademisk skriving [Creative academic writing]*, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 2019b.

<sup>46</sup> HANSEN, Finn Torbjørn: *At stå i det åbne. Dannelse gennem filosofisk undren og nærvær [To stand in the open. Formation through philosophical wonder and presence]*, København, Hans Reitzels forlag, 2008; HANSEN, Finn Thorbjørn. *Kan man undre sig uden ord: udvikling af en alternativ universitetspædagogik på Designskolen Kolding. [Can one wonder without words: Development of an alternative university didactics at Designskolen Kolding]*. Ålborg: Ålborg Universitetsforlag. 2014; HANSEN, Finn Thorbjørn. *Det personlige essay som en filosofisk praksis. Skriftserie for Barnevernets utviklingscenter i Nord-Norge*, nr. 3. 2007.

not know or wonder about their own philosophical standpoint or values – i.e. ones views on humanity, the world and the good life, and on philosophical concepts like care, integrity, love, respect, confidence, authenticity, etc, will never grow to become a master of his profession. A master, Hansen argues, has learned to know his or her point of departure well enough to realize how little he or she actually can know, master and control. It does not require competence development, but rather a particular sense of self-cultivation, i.e. *Bildung* or edification. The master has learned to step aside and let the world come to him, requiring an attitude that is fundamentally wondering. Hansen lists twelve characteristics of the personal essay, arguing that each point reflects what goes on in philosophical practice<sup>47</sup>:

1. The essay creates an intimate relation between reader and writer and displays and exercises the essayist's inner dialogue.
2. The tone is personal, honest, confessional, teasing and playful, while also revealing vulnerability.
3. The essayist is a good storyteller.
4. The form is one of pushing borders, exploring, self-testing (and in the end also self-developing).
5. The voice is not private but personal, pointing towards the general.
6. Shows scepticism to dogmas and “great ideal thoughts”, but humbleness towards the world and the “insignificance” of oneself, and sees the great in the small and ordinary.
7. The essayist is in the service of comedy rather than tragedy, i.e. uses humour and irony and exercises a heroic self-investigation with a twinkle in his eye.
8. Moves from the individual to the universal and back.

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<sup>47</sup> HANSEN, Finn Thorbjørn: “Det personlige essay som en filosofisk praksis”, *Skriftserie for Barnevernets utviklingscenter i Nord-Norge*, 3, 2007.

9. May also move back through history and traditions in order to meet “the great masters” whom he frequently quotes, but in a playful manner and only as part of the development of the essayist’s own train of thought (does not give grounds with reference to authorities, but “colours” his own statements).
10. The method is a non-academic and “non-methodical method”, depending on what may occur to the essayist during his journey and what serves him best at the moment in his investigation of the concrete subject that is in focus.
11. Typical of people in their mid-life and later, who restrain themselves by looking back at their actions and the choices they made.
12. The essay is an existential way of life, an attitude, philosophy and a kind of philosophical reflection that relates to philosophy understood as life form and not a theoretical discourse.

The philosophical dialogue and the personal essay both represent philosophical practices that falls under Skjervheim`s third model of pedagogy: The dialectical. The “learning outcomes” of dialectical processes involved in philosophical dialogues and essaywriting is unpredictable and in the open, and cannot be planned in advance in terms of for instance constructive alignment and competence-based approaches. With their emphasis on measurable learning outcomes and learning activities that will lead to the predefined aims, these models are closed and restricted to what can be predicted and controlled. Thus, they fall under Skjervheim`s first model of education, namely that of techne and poiesis, as also discussed by Biesta<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> BIESTA, Gert: *The Beautiful Risk of Education*, London/New York, Routledge, 2014.

### *Pedagogy for the unforeseen*

As with philosophical practices, all teaching- and learning processes imply a risk<sup>49</sup>. One simply can not know what the result of the process will be, and a lot can happen that is not planned for. This risk is the very basis for pedagogy for the unforeseen, in which three pedagogical elements are central<sup>50</sup>:

- a) Alertness regarding productive moments
- b) Hermeneutical suspiciousness regarding the consistency of ones discipline
- c) Preparedness for unexpected future events.

#### *Ad a) Alertness regarding productive moments*

Central in pedagogy for the unforeseen is the capability of utilizing productive moments. If something in a teaching session happens as a surprize or unexpectedly, or something does not go as planned, this can be used creatively as an opportunity for bringing forth edifying experiences. This can happen if the teacher takes the opportunity to break out, think freshly and creatively, trying out ways of teaching and learning that has not yet been practiced within the discipline or the institution<sup>51</sup>. Hence, the teacher who is open to the unforeseen, needs to have qualities similar to that of a philosophical practitioner as understood in the Dialogos

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<sup>49</sup> BIESTA, Gert: *The Beautiful Risk of Education*, London/New York, Routledge, 2014.

<sup>50</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015.

approach<sup>52</sup>. The philosophical practitioner is able not only to secure “free growth” by going with the flow of the philosophical process as in the “free growth” metaphor of Skjervheim. He or she is *also* able to make facilitation moves that directs the dialogue in a fruitful direction in line with the “affect” metaphor of Skjervheim, thus enacting a *dialectical* or Socratic pedagogy that is alert for potentially fruitful moments.

*Ad b) Hermeneutical suspiciousness regarding one`s discipline*

By hermeneutical suspiciousness we mean an open, yet critical interpretative and investigative approach to one`s academic discipline regarding uncovering insecurities, insufficiency and unclarity in for instance models, theories or descriptions. This can have consequences for how the discipline should be taught to students or described to the research community, and further influence understandings of what “good” quality of education is, and how this is evaluated and “measured”<sup>53</sup>. Compared to philosophizing the Dialogos Way, this would imply interpretation and critical reflection through analysis, comparison, synthesis, conceptualization and problematizing, key elements in Brenifier`s<sup>54</sup> understanding of philosophizing. Relevant philosophical questions could be: “What do I hold as true in my discipline?” “What is the limitations of this truth?” “What is held as true in my profession, more generally?”

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<sup>52</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2019a.

<sup>53</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015.

<sup>54</sup> BRENIFIER, Oscar: *A quick glance at the Lipman method*, 2008. Retrieved February 9<sup>th</sup> 2016 from <http://www.practiques-philosophiques.fr>.

*Ad c) Preparedness for unexpected future events*

A third approach to pedagogy for the unforeseen concerns the preparedness and development of knowledge in society regarding risk and unwanted events such as for instance ideology conflicts, terror and challenges related to climate change and sustainable development. The key question is<sup>55</sup>: How can such events be prevented, and how can such unexpected events (also positive) be used in teaching? To prepare students for good action in unpredictable surroundings, education for the unforeseen also needs to include elements such as improvisation and ‘*samhandling*’. ‘*Samhandling*’<sup>56</sup> is a Norwegian word that equates, but in our context is not identic, with English words like interaction/social

interaction/collaboration/cooperation/coordination/join forces with/joint action/teamwork. Recent basic research by Torgersen<sup>57</sup> implicates that ‘*samhandling*’ is one of the most distinct predictors for handling unforeseen events. *Samhandling* under risk and unpredictable conditions presupposes emphasize on other factors

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<sup>55</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil & SAEVEROT, Herner: “Ny pedagogikk for det uforutsettes tidsalder? [New pedagogy for the unforeseen age?]”, in TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015, p. 17-27.

<sup>56</sup> See also TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil: “*Samhandling Under Risk (SUR) – Theoretical Foundation as a Common Frame of Reference*”, in TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): ‘*Samhandling*’ [Interaction] Under Risk - A Step Ahead of the Unforeseen, Oslo, Cappelen Damm Akademiske, 2018, p. 19-38. A short definition of ‘*samhandling*’: “*Samhandling* is an open and mutual communication and development between participants, who develop skills and complement each other in terms of expertise, either directly, face-to-face, or mediated by technology or manually” (p.26). The relationship between participants at any given time relies on trust, involvement, rationality and professional knowledge.

<sup>57</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): ‘*Samhandling*’ [Interaction] Under Risk - A Step Ahead of the Unforeseen, Oslo, Cappelen Damm Akademiske, 2018.

than what is the case for samhandling when conducted under predictable conditions. Extracting knowledge out of disorder in information and surroundings, shared leadership, the avoidance of organizational narcissism, and collective acceptance for swift trust and loss of control are among the elements in good samhandling under risk. This is maybe where the different orientations of pedagogy for the unforeseen and philosophical practice becomes most visible, even though the attitudes needed for wise action under such circumstances can be enhanced through philosophical practices both in preparation for such events, and in the reflection upon such events when they have happened. “What is good action under pressure?” “How can I be wise in a chaotic situation?” “What are the limits of my responsibility?” could be questions explored both before and after such events.

*Edification through philosophical practice as a pedagogy for the unforeseen?*

While educating for the unforeseen requires pedagogies that are open to an unpredictable future<sup>58</sup>, models and concepts that are currently dominating higher education didactics are insufficient for this purpose. The pedagogical approach in pedagogies for the unforeseen should according to Saeverot<sup>59</sup> be *indirect*, and make use of “invisible methods”, which implies minimum use of defined blueprint solutions, and a conscious use of unclear learning content. The Dialogos approach to philosophizing towards wisdom<sup>60</sup> is an

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<sup>58</sup> Barnett, Ronald: “Learning for an unknown future”, in *Higher Education Research & Development*, 23, 3, 2004, pp. 247–260.

<sup>59</sup> SAEVEROT, Herner: *Indirect Pedagogy. Some Lessons in Existential Education*, Boston & Rotterdam, Sense Publishers, 2013.

<sup>60</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2019a.

approach that encompasses such features<sup>61</sup>. Joint investigation of phenomena implied in the *art of living* is at the core of the Dialogos approach. Of course, the art of living also implies the art of acting well, under risk and pressure as well as when a productive moment appears. Hence, philosophical practice may well be included as an approach to teaching for the unforeseen in most disciplines.

However, not all pedagogical approaches that can be included in Pedagogy *for* the unforeseen are philosophical, even though experiences *from* such pedagogies can be reflected upon through different forms of philosophical practices. Critical reflection upon experience will take the past as material, enlightening the experience while opening up to the here and now and to the future. The relationship to pedagogy for the unforeseen is thus indirect and hidden, as called for by Saeverot.

This brings us to part 3 of our essay, where we reflect upon our attempts to handle our concerns and act upon them through our joint curriculum development and -teaching of an interdisciplinary phd-level course for our colleagues from all four faculties at our university.

### **Acting upon our concerns in pedagogical practice in HE**

Reflections such as the ones we have formulated in part 2 forms part of the background when we, the authors of this essay, have had the opportunity to develop and facilitate a phd-level course for our colleagues at the University of Southeastern Norway. The participants have so far been colleagues who do not have a doctoral degree, but who are working to become acknowledged as having

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<sup>61</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: “Bildung towards wisdom through dialogue in teacher education”, in *Arts and humanities in higher education*, 18, 1, special issue: The Art of Dialogue, edited by ALTHORF, Marije, 2016, pp. 76-90.

competence that equals a phd, and be granted the title of associate professors (in Norwegian called “førstelektor”). They can then work further to be acknowledged as docent professors. However, from the year 2020/2021 the course is opened to those who are working to qualify as professors with phd as well, because they too need to document the ability to reflect theoretically upon their pedagogical practice. By the end of 2020, 55 colleagues will have completed the phd-level course, earning 10 ECTS.

### *Developing the curriculum*

The university board and the programme committee of the so called “førstelektorprogram” had named the course they invited us to develop “Pedagogisk kompetanseutvikling og utdanningskvalitet”, which can be translated “Pedagogical competence development and quality of education”. Hence, two of the concepts previously criticized in part 1 of this essay, were given us as a seemingly unescapable framework. The programme committee had also made the decision that the course should include the following three themes:

1. Pedagogical philosophy (which associate professor Guro Hansen Helskog was invited to be in charge of),
2. Didactics with a focus in e-learning (which professor Andreas Lund was invited to be in charge of)
3. Pedagogical professionalism (which professor Glenn-Egil Torgersen was invited to be in charge of).

Helskog was granted the responsibility of leading the curriculum development work in our group of three scholars, and later be head teacher of the courses. Now, how did we set up the course and give it a content that would address our previously described concerns in a constructive way? Before starting the developmental work, the first we did was to specify the themes so that they better fitted our

respective pedagogical perspectives and practices, while indirectly addressing our concerns:

1. Pedagogical philosophy and ethics with an emphasis on edification through self-reflexivity and dialogical approaches
2. Didactics with an emphasis on e-learning and digital methods of teaching
3. Pedagogical professionalism with an emphasis on innovation, including pedagogy for the unforeseen.

We thus kept the concepts chosen by the programme committee, while framing the course with notions reflected upon in part 2 of our essay, namely notions such as *edification*, *self-reflexivity*, *dialogical approaches*, and *pedagogy for the unforeseen*. The intention was to make sure we organized and taught the course in such a way that it altogether would lead the participants through an edifying process. In the syllabus we included articles written by scholars drawn upon in this essay, such as Hellesnes, Løvlie, Lindseth and Biesta, as well as literature on philosophical practice, essay writing and pedagogy for the unforeseen.

### *Setting up the course*

We began the course with an introduction to pedagogical philosophy that was inspired by the German Socratic Dialogue approach— which participants also read - in line with the Dialogos approach. First, participants philosophized upon personal experiences based in the philosophical question “What is good higher education pedagogy?” Then, upon reading different parts of the literature chosen for the theme (which has also been thoroughly referred earlier in this essay), including Hellesnes, Skjervheim, Løvlie and Lindseth, participants introduced each other to this literature, and reflected critically upon it, also in relation to their own practice and experiences.

The purpose of beginning the course this way was to set in motion the edifying process that was supposed to be enforced throughout the rest of the course. Because the participants came from different faculties representing very different knowledge regimes, such as kinder garden pedagogy and engineering, economy and nursing, literature and optometry, law, mathematics and geology, the perspectives represented in the course were diverse, expanding the horizons of understanding of each participant – including us as course facilitators. Hence, the diversity of participants was used as a resource in the course, making possible the bridging of institutional and academic divides through joint reflection, dialogue and “samhandling”. In order to contribute to participants’ awareness of relationships and critical potential concerning the uniqueness of the disciplines, as well as their limitations and possibilities in inter-disciplinary relationships, students studied Phenix’<sup>62</sup> analytical concepts “synthetic coordination” and “analytic simplification”, amongst other. As part of the philosophical-pedagogical and critical educational (Bildung) dimension, emphasis was placed on raising awareness of relationships between the disciplines’ possible inherent structures on the one hand, and interdisciplinarity on the other. Participants were also encouraged to reflect upon these relationships’ significance for development and innovation of new and creative curriculums and renewal of pedagogical practice within their own higher education subject and professions. Through this, our purpose was to contribute to edifying integration as opposed to encyclopaedic fragmentation. This also implied combining dialogical reading of course literature with oral and written philosophical reflections throughout the course. The reflections were based in personal HE-teaching experiences as well as in the

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<sup>62</sup> PHENIX, Philip: “The Diciplines As Curriculum Content”, in GRESS, James & PURPEL, David (eds.), *Curriculum. An Introduction To The Field*, Berkeley, McCuthan Publishing Corporation, p. 139-148, 1988.

literature, done individually as well as through philosophical dialogues and interdisciplinary group work, in line with principles in the Dialogos approach to wisdom oriented pedagogy<sup>63</sup> and pedagogy for the unforeseen<sup>64</sup>.

The foundational principles in these approaches transcend the limitations of the constructive alignment approach and of competence-based approaches, while promoting *samhandling* and thus unification and integration (as opposed to fragmentation and disintegration) between people belonging to different professions and academic disciplines. In their final exam, participants are supposed to write a personal essay in which they put themselves as university teachers “at trial”. This leads us to part 4 of our paper, in which we bring in the perspectives of participants in the course. How have they experienced their personal journey with regards to the notions? With the written permission of participants, we have drawn out some excerpts from their final essay in the course, in which they were also supposed to reflect upon their experiences and “outcome” of the course through meta-reflections. Their meta-reflections are categorized under five dimensions of edifying processes already discussed in the critical-theoretical part of our article. The categories are as follows:

1. Edification through philosophical self-reflection
2. Edification through inter-disciplinary ‘samhandling’
3. Edification as development of pedagogical pronesis
4. Preparing students for the unforeseen
5. Towards edification-oriented pedagogical practices

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<sup>63</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2019a.

<sup>64</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015.

*Meta-reflections from participants*

With written permission from course participants, we have extracted key reflections from exam essays and final evaluations. The reflections are categorized under the five dimensions of edification listed above. However, because it is impossible to include all reflections, we have chosen four or five examples under each category. We have chosen to let the reflections speak for themselves.

*Edification through philosophical self-reflection*

One claims that “I reflect more upon my own role in relation to students than I did before”. Another emphasises increased awareness about his or her horizon of understanding and role as a university teacher: “My role as an educator and my framework of preferences have been challenged, and I have become more conscious about what I do, how and when”. A third example is the participant who claims that the course has “provided an opportunity to take a step back and lift ones eyes above the context one usually is in. It was useful for me that reading tasks were set in advance, because I was forced to immerse myself in literature that was new to me and which I would not have trace don my own. This has given me new perspectives and challenged my ‘truths’ about teaching and reminded me of how important it is to be curious and in motion”. A forth writes that he or she “hopes that the reflection processes I have been in, and the new discoveries that I have made during the course in pedagogical competence development and educational quality, will make me a better teacher in my subject and a better supervisor within my profession”. A fifth participants claims that “the expectations in my academic community is mostly about being professionally good, while lecturing, supervision, relations, ethics and reflection is under prioritized. By participating

in this course I have gained insight and knowledge that I did not have before”.

### *Edification through inter-disciplinary ‘samhandling’*

A participant puts emphasis on his or her development of awareness regarding developing an inter disciplinary perspective through ‘samhandling’: “The collaboration between others across disciplinary divides has been important in order to understand quality of education as superior preferences across academic disciplines”. Another claims to have been inspired by getting to know how other professions solve their pedagogical responsibilities: “There are many ways to solve ones mission as a teacher, and it was inspiring to discuss improtatn pedagogical questions with academic staff that work in different subjects and in completely different ways”. A third saw the potential of interdisciplinary ‘samhandling’ across faculties: “It was especially fruitful that we had to make use of each other`s competences and collective resources. However challenging, the instructions have been very useful in order to avoid taking the usual paths. The sessions has given room for dialogues across disciplines and faculties about superior structures and values”.

### *Edification towards pedagogical phronesis*

One participant claims that the course has lead her to “reflect more about what is demanded of prudence and practical wisdom (phronesis) to be a good teacher of language and literature in teacher education”. Another claims that he or she has wondered about “the meaning of practical wisdom (phronesis) both when it comes to the qualification of students and of myself as a professional university teacher”. Her or she is underlining that through practical wisdom “the importance of ethical reflection and the ability to act with good professional judgment, which is

essential in the practical action competence of the child welfare worker” is brought explicitly to attention. A third participant reflects upon the necessity of being open and questioning towards the unknown: “(...) I now see that I to a greater extent need to take an investigative approach toward phenomena that are unknown”. A fourth example is the participant who claims that he or she has experienced that “My belief that critical reflection as a foundation is extremely important for students who are entering a profession where care, play, learning and edification is part of professional practice” is strengthened.

### *Preparing students for the unforeseen*

One example is the participant who stated that “I have earlier not been very conscious about the fact that we are educating students for the unforeseen. This has been a great inspiration for developing the themes that our studies in economy consist of. Even if the ideas involved in pedagogy for the unforeseen is relatively simple, this is not necessarily something one would think about when standing in front of students”. Another participant reflected upon characteristics of a university teacher who is focused on developing students’ preparedness for future unforeseen events, stating that “alertness for signs of what is emerging of both good and bad, of opportunities and risks” is among the virtues needed». Moreover, a third participant stated that “I have had my eyes opened for the value of creating pedagogical situations that challenge students for good action in unfamiliar situations. Before I related this more to first aid training courses and crisis management, but now I see that this can be useful in many academic subdisciplines”. A fourth participant claimed that “It is easy to related the unforeseen to unwanted events with adverse consequences for individual, society and nature. However, what might be even more important is to

identify signs of positive unforeseen events, seize them and develop them to the best of our world”.

*Towards edification-orientated pedagogical practices*

One participant states that “I experience that the course structure has emphasized the edifying process as an ‘arena for learning’ ”, while another emphasises that “the written assignments have been different in content and form, and thus given different approaches and opportunities for reflection, both individually and in groups”. This has lead him or her to “try out new forms of teaching, to tune in to supervision in different ways than earlier, and to secure that the dialogues with students are held in personal, authentic but yet academically anchored ways”. A third participant emphasises that “in encounters with students I have now become more aware of how their edification is enhanced through scholarly demands and feedback”. Further, a fourth participant states that the course has given inspiration to judge and further develop his or her pedagogical practice, saying that he or she wants to “praise the exiting choice of course literature and the structure with assignment and presentations in groups in the sessions. I experience it as useful when one later is to evaluate one`s own pedagogical practice, and make judgments about the forms of assessment one should use in ones own courses”. These elements are also emphasised by a fifth participant, who claims that the phd-course has given him/her inspiration and motivation to

“...have as a goal that my students should gain true insight, develop curricula and teaching practices that has high relevance for practice, see theory and practice in relation to each other, to facilitate student active forms of learning, and waking students from slumber through unforeseen events in the classroom, and to a greater extent integrate digital methods in teaching practice”.

## Summary and final comment

We began this article by describing our concerns that didactical models and practical pedagogies of higher education seem to be developing in increasingly limited competence oriented, instrumental and technical (in the Aristotelian sense of *techne* and *poiesis*) way, leading to fragmentation and disintegration, amongst other. We then reflected critically and theoretically upon our concern by tracing some roots of the concerns in the history of pedagogy, more specifically by relating them to the European traditions of *Bildung* (edification) and to the Aristotelian notions of *phronesis* and *praxis*. In part 3 we described our attempts to handle our concerns practically through the development and teaching a phd-level course for university teachers from all four faculties at our university. The course was set up with the purpose of setting in motion a process of edification. Concretely, we included philosophical practices as ways of facilitating edifying and wisdom oriented pedagogy for the unforeseen<sup>65</sup>, <sup>66</sup>, preparing university teachers and their students for good action in an open and unpredictable future. Philosophical practices and pedagogies for the unforeseen, which both have the characteristics of indirect and “hidden” dialectical and thus Socratic teaching methods, were the main approaches used in the course.

Based in our concerns, theoretical reflections, practical-pedagogical trials and feedback from course participants, we have two concrete suggestions for teaching practice in higher education:

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<sup>65</sup> HELSKOG, Guro Hansen: *Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education. Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation*, London and New York, Routledge, 2019a.

<sup>66</sup> TORGERSEN, Glenn-Egil (ed.): *Pedagogikk for det uforutsette [Pedagogy for the Unforeseen]*, Oslo, Bergen, Fagbokforlaget, 2015.

- 1) The staff, both scientific and administrative, should focus less on traditional aims and objectives as indicators of learning outcomes and quality. Instead, higher education should focus on open edificational and creative oriented approaches to teaching that includes philosophical practices and “samhandling” across disciplines.
- 2) All higher education study programmes should to some extent train students for unforeseen events in society, while explicating possible contributions and limitations to different scenarios.

Edification oriented teaching sets inner and relational existential movements in motion. Such motions are created through the existential encounters between the individual and the content, and between the individuals who take part in the pedagogical situation. Hence, *the edifying process itself* comes to the foreground, while the aims and methods are pushed to the background, which is what gives edification oriented pedagogical practice their critical tilt towards logical-instrumental aims- and learning outcome oriented practices. As participants meta-reflection notes indicate, we seem so far to have succeeded quite well in creating a course that has edification at the centre. However, we continue to develop this particular course as well as our teaching practice in general, both based in feedback from participants, as well as in critical reflection upon our own experiences with teaching the course. This means that none of the three courses we have facilitated so far has been equal, as we keep trying out new pedagogical approaches and new ways to include philosophical practices in the course. For instance, this year we have had an increased focus on ethical reflection.

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