KEYNOTE ARTICLE 1

SUSTAINABLE LANGUAGE TEACHING

> Before I sink into the big sleep
> I want to hear the scream of the butterfly
> (Jim Morrison, The Doors)

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Engelbert Thaler is Chair of Didactics in English language, literature and culture at the University of Augsburg and the founder of Balanced Teaching. He has published over 500 papers on the methodology of English language *teaching and is the author of '*Challenges: Global Learning in a Globalised World*' and 'Balanced Teaching in Practice'.* His research interests lie in audiovisual media, didactics literary didactics, cultural awareness and teacher training. In this important paper he addresses how the UN sustainable development goals can be incorporated into language teaching and contribute to the enrichment of teacher and student experience.

ABSTRACT
The term "sustainability" has had a stellar career. After first appearing in scientific discourse and later advancing to the political context, it has become a buzzword in individual life design. And even bank managers now conjure up "sustainable profits". Can it also play a role in the discourse on the quality of foreign language teaching? This article attempts not only to present the relevant content and materials, but also to address sustainable structures, methods and relationships.

KEY WORDS: sustainability, 3-pillar model, structures, classroom ecology, relationships.

1. TERMINOLOGY

The uncertainty resulting from the inflationary use of the term in various areas can best be reduced by a brief reflection on its historical roots. In 1713, Hans Carl von Carlowitz, in his "Sylvicultura oeconomica" ("Instruction for wild tree

cultivation"), established the imperative in German forestry: "Do not cut more wood than will grow back". In view of the growing demand for wood in Saxony's mining industry (silver mines), he demanded "that wood be handled with care" (cf. Grober, 2013b). The term "careful" can be seen as a precursor of the term "sustainable" – with the original text of sustainability which requires that man should cultivate and preserve the earth being already formulated in the Bible (Genesis 2, 15).

Furthermore in religious-philosophical texts of Western thinking, the concept of sustainability is already laid out. Spinoza, for example, demands "Suum esse conservare" (preserve one's own being), and Saint Francis of Assisi praises the grandiosity of creation in his "Canticle of the Sun" ("Laudes creaturarum").

Albert Schweitzer:
Man has lost the ability to foresee and provide. In the end he will destroy the earth.

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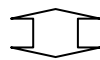
Prince Charles:
Deep within our human spirit, there is an innate ability to live sustainably with nature

(Grover, 2013a, 25).

Scientific milestones of the last century are the "Limits of Growth" of the Club of Rome (1972) and the Brundtland Report (e.g. Hauff, 2018). In 1987, the Brundtland Report called for a "permanent state of equilibrium" and defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (https://academicimpact). Markus Vogt (2013) formulates important ethical guiding concepts in the Anthropocene:

- responsible planetary stewardship,
- resilience in the face of the "debris of modernity" (Bruno Latour),
- ability to take risks due to "systematic ignorance",
- Green Development Rights.

Sustainability thus generally means preserving something for future generations. The Sustainability Council of the German Federal Government, for example, defines it this way:

"Sustainable development means considering environmental aspects equally with social and economic aspects ... We must leave our children and grandchildren an intact ecological, social and economic structure" (German Council for Sustainable Development).

In this context, the 17 goals for a sustainable future (Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs) of the UN are of outstanding relevance – also popularised as "The Glorious 17" (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Glorious 17 (https://link.springer.com)

By now, various definitions and models of sustainability exist, including the cradle-to-cradle vision, integrative sustainability model, triple bottom line, triple top line. The most popular is the three-pillar model, which closely follows the official definition of sustainability (see Figure 2).
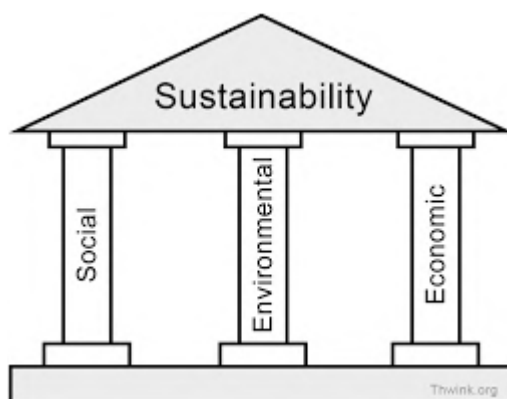

Figure 2: 3-pillar model of sustainability (www.blog.industrialecology.uni-freiburg)

2. THE 3-PILLAR MODEL OF SUSTAINABILITY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING?

With a little goodwill, this generally accepted three-pillar model can also be applied to foreign language teaching. Here, "economy" stands for effective teaching that promotes learning success (cf. Wirksamkeit in Prusse & Prusse, 2018), with the German term Wirksamkeit having two English equivalents of Latin origin (Thaler, 2019, p. 4):

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effectiveness:
ratio of achieved goal to defined goal, result : goal

efficiency:
relationship between achieved result and resources used, result : expenditure

effectiveness = doing the right things, efficiency = doing things right

► foreign language teaching: doing the right things right

With regard to effective (and efficient) teaching, Klippel refers to the McKinsey Report (Barber & Mourshed, 2007) and points to "three factors for success that exist in the countries that scored best in PISA: first, the right choice of those who take up a teaching position and, second, their excellent training for effective teaching. Third, the structural conditions of the respective school system are important in that the system must guarantee good teaching for all children" (2007, p. 10).

The well-known Hattie study (2008) assigns the teacher factor the greatest effect on teaching success – "and thus confirms what we have always suspected from our own school and life experience" (Klippel, Ib.).

The teacher personality also plays an outstanding role in the third pillar, i.e. relationships, which comprises the complex interaction processes in teaching. In the middle pillar, classroom ecology, the contents (input), methods and competences (output) can be subsumed (cf. also the three curriculum designs in Richards, 2013).

Thus, one could construct a 3-pillar model of sustainable foreign language teaching, with the transitions between the three pillars and their components being fluid, of course (Figure 3).
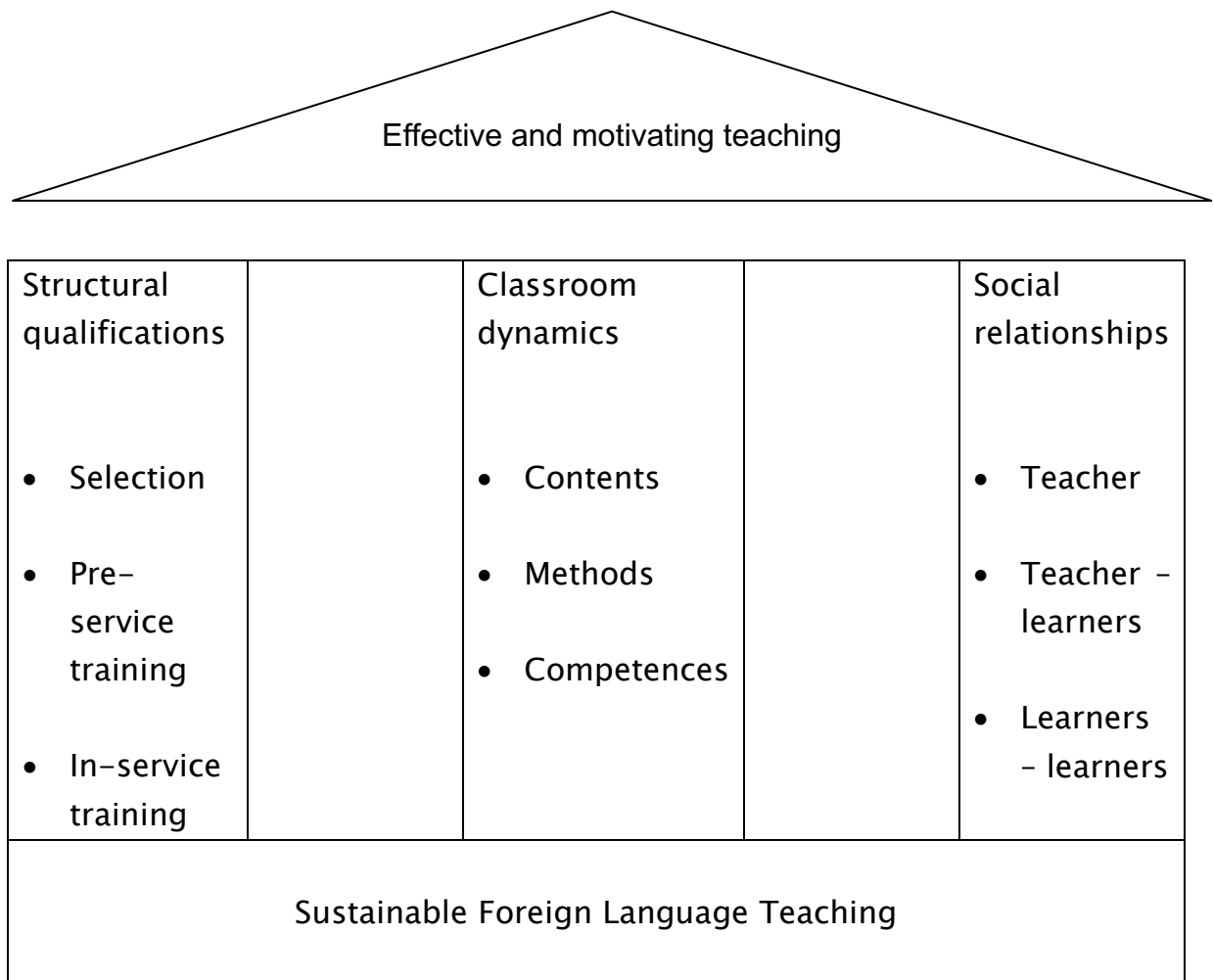
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    Effective and motivating teaching
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Structural qualifications		Classroom dynamics		Social relationships
• Selection • Pre-service training • In-service training		• Contents • Methods • Competences		• Teacher • Teacher – learners • Learners – learners
Sustainable Foreign Language Teaching				

Figure 3: 3-pillar model of sustainable foreign language teaching

3. STRUCTURES

A (selective) look at the three phases of teacher training in Germany, for example, shows the following desiderata.

3.1. Selection

- Aptitude test: In contrast to countries like Finland, many German universities do not have a (strict) aptitude assessment procedure for future foreign language teachers. Instead of considering the teaching profession as a vocation, some students just see it as a makeshift solution (job mentality).
- Studying without Abitur (A-levels): With about 60,000 people in 2017, the number of people studying at a German university without Abitur has quadrupled in the past ten years (CHE, 2019).

- Lateral entrants: 8.4% of teaching staff requirements are now covered by lateral entrants. It is clear, however, that "the performance of learners in English taught by teachers from other subjects is lower" than in classes with teachers with basic training (Kirchhoff et al., 2018, p. 5).

Fig. 4: The bad English teacher (pinterest.com)

3.2. Pre-service training

Of course, there is a need for optimising teacher training at university as well. Among other things, a compulsory stay abroad of longer duration would be important to improve (oral) language competence, promote intercultural communication skills, and develop personality. Unfortunately, in addition to legal barriers, personal obstacles often stand in the way of this necessity, so that quite often the foreign language is not developed in the target country.

3.3. In-service development

In the 3rd phase of teacher training (after university and traineeship), the structural foundations for effective teaching must be improved as well. A look at the 4 Au's of teacher satisfaction (improving, feeling at ease, refreshing, taking a language bath) (Figure 5) may help to prevent too many Aua (Ouch) experiences – because a satisfied (not self-satisfied) teacher is a better teacher.
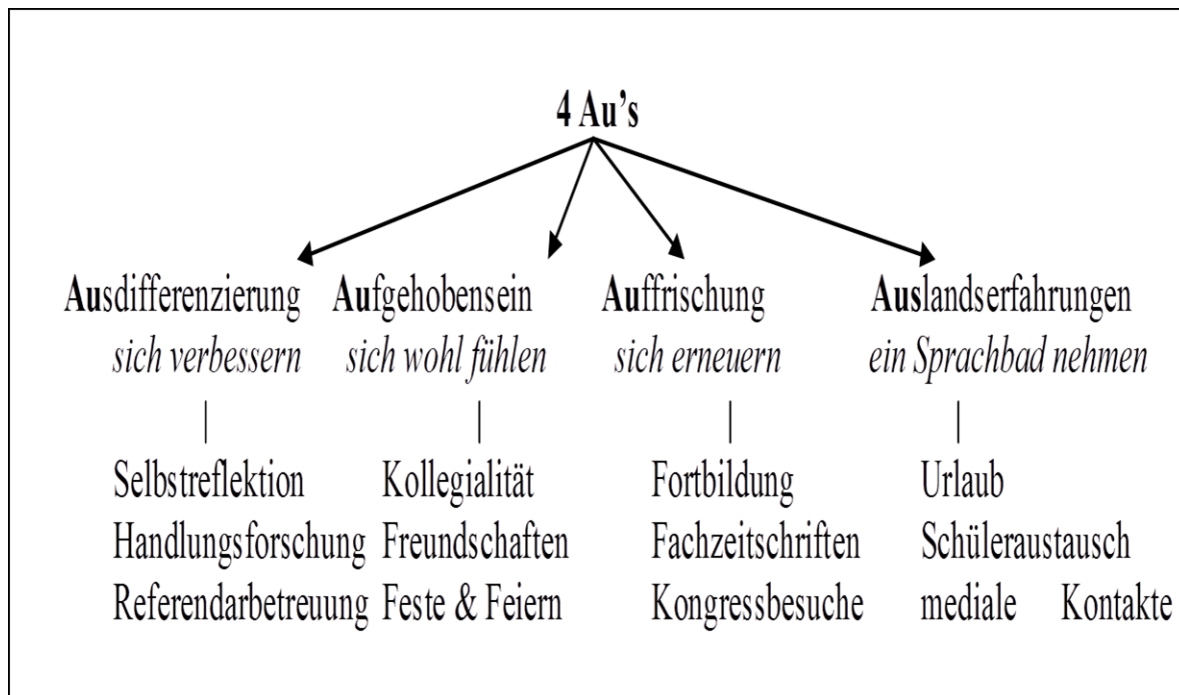
Figure 5: The 4 Au's of teacher satisfaction (Thaler, 2012, p. 47)

4. CONTENT

In the national educational standards (2003 and 2012 respectively) for Germany, for example, the term "sustainability" is not explicitly mentioned. The Conference of the Ministers of Education made up for this with the "Orientation Framework for the Learning Area of Global Development" as a contribution to the world action programme "Education for Sustainable Development" (KMK/BMZ, 2016). Approximately 20 pages of this document (from point 4.2.2.) are devoted to the new foreign languages (English, French, Spanish):

- Contribution of the new foreign languages to the learning area of global development
- Sub-competencies related to the subject
- Global development issues in foreign language teaching
- Competence-oriented teaching example: Adivasi Tea Project
- Performance monitoring and learning development interviews
- Literature and material sources

The dictum "unus mundus" (Marc Aurel, 'one world') is now also followed by the curricula of the individual states, which, in the context of globalisation/global learning, also deal with sustainability, e.g. "consumer and media behaviour of young people, also with regard to sustainability" (Bavarian Curriculum Plus for 9th year English grammar school: ISB). Global Education

is also discussed in professional journals (e.g. PFU 5/2012), TEFL anthologies (e.g. Lütge, 2017), master's theses and teaching models of various textbook publishers.

For example, the series "Challenges. Global Learning in a Globalised World" (Thaler, 2005ff.) comprises 16 issues, including

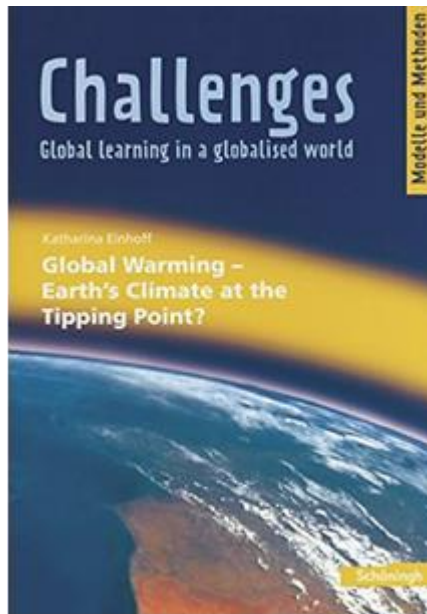– Global Warming – Earth's Climate at the Tipping Point? (Einhoff, 2007)

Figure 6: Challenges, example

– Them and Us – On the Way to One World? (Kollmeyer, 2007)

– The West Against the Rest? Beliefs and Values in Western Societies (Panne, 2011)

– Science (Fiction) in the Third Millennium (Pottbäcker, 2006)

– Global Economy – Hype, Hazard or Hope? (Edelbrock/Schmidt-Grob, 2008)

Global Economy (2008):

Aspect 1: Trade and economy in history – The cradle of big business

Aspect 2: China – A rising economy on the global market

Aspect 3: Economy and the human being – How economic development threatens or supports people

Aspect 4: Politics and economy – A tightrope walk between economic forces and increasing inequalities

Aspect 5: Starbucks – The impact of a global coffee company

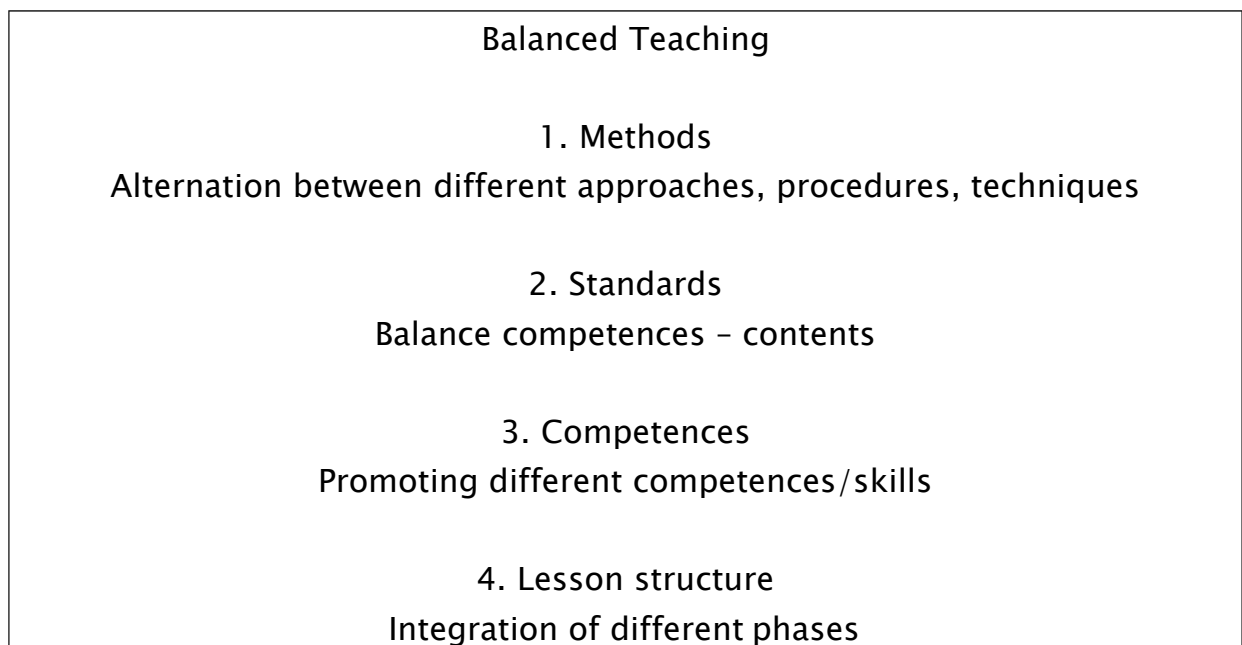Figure 7: Contents of a Challenges booklet

5. METHODS

Even if some apologists of the post-method era proclaim the end of the method discourse, sensibly arranged learning scenarios still play a decisive role for sustainable teaching success (post-post-method era?).

"*I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!*"

Figure 8: Balance between teacher control and learner orientation (pinterest.at)

The importance of balance and common sense, the knowledge of the pendulum swings of science, the rejection of bandwagon hopping, and the recognition of the individuality of the teacher's personality are, for example, reflected in the concept of Balanced Teaching (Thaler, 2011, 2012) (Figure 9).

Balanced Teaching

1. Methods
Alternation between different approaches, procedures, techniques

2. Standards
Balance competences – contents

3. Competences
Promoting different competences/skills

4. Lesson structure
Integration of different phases

5. Topics
Selection by curricula and students, linguistic and non-linguistic content

6. Interaction patterns
Whole-class teaching and individual work, pair work, group work

7. Speed
Fast and slow phases

8. Activation
Exciting and calming activities (stir – settle)

9. Mode of working
In oral and written form

10. Degree of difficulty
Easy, medium, difficult activities

11. Activities
Tasks and exercises (and tests)

12. Focus
Fluency and accuracy (and complexity, appropriacy)

13. Mood
Serious and cheerful phases

14. Teacher's role
Guide on the side and sage on the stage

15. Student's role
Knowledge, skills, action

16. Gender
Female and male needs/interests

17. Media
Textbook plus alternative materials

18. Classroom discourse
Questions and impulses, display and referential questions

19. Assessment
Discrete-point exercises and communicative tasks and integrative testing

20. Curriculum
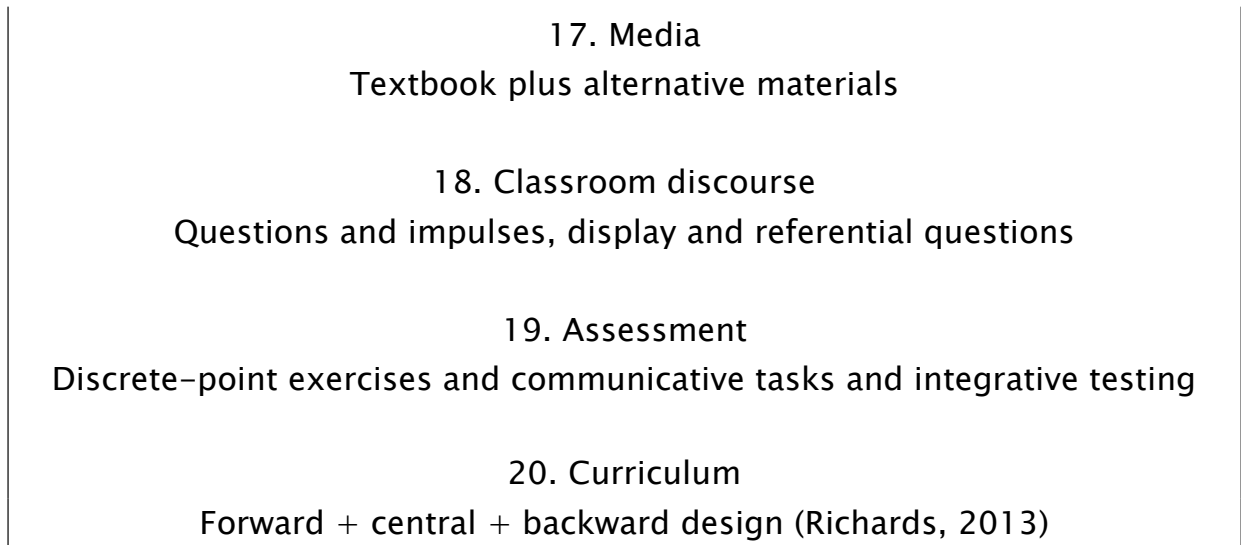Forward + central + backward design (Richards, 2013)

Figure 9: Balanced Teaching (in the broadest sense)

No. 20 makes it clear that there are two other basic options for the conception of a curriculum in addition to backward design (output). In our COS era, the age of the competence-obsession-syndrome, some narrowing down to the output-orientation has set in (e.g. Council of Europe 2001), but we should not forget the contents (forward design) and processes/relationships (central design) besides the competences.

6. RELATIONSHIPS
The social pillar of the 3-pillar model focuses on the teacher personality and relationships – between teacher and students as well as among the learners themselves. A few relevant insights are listed below:

- The famous core characteristics of a good teacher, according to Carl Rogers, are empathy, authenticity, respect: "Teachers need an EAR".

- The 3 F's (fördern, fordern, führen) stand for promote, demand – and also lead.

- The occupational physiologist Müller-Limmroth satirically emphasises the role expectation overload in his famous quote:

"Probably there are not many professions for which society makes such contradictory demands ... in a word: the teacher has the task of leading a hiking group of top athletes and disabled people through impassable terrain,

in fog, in a north-south direction, so that everyone arrives in the best of moods and, if possible, at three different destinations at the same time" (Müller-Limmroth, 1988)

... or more succinctly:

Be a teacher,
Be a hero!

Among the empirical studies on what makes a good foreign language teacher, the Moskowitz study of "outstanding language teachers" still stands out (Figure 10, cf. Thaler, 2012):

The outstanding foreign language teacher ...

1. has thorough knowledge of subject matter
2. is very well prepared
3. is fluent in the use of the foreign language
4. enjoys teaching
5. is willing and able to answer students' questions
6. is fair
7. organises the lessons well
8. has good classroom control
9. conveys self-confidence
10. is dedicated and hard-working

Figure 10: Top ten characteristics of outstanding foreign language teachers

And the omnipresent Hattie study makes an apodictic observation (2009):

The teacher matters!

The teacher as "director" places great value on cognitive activation, clear structure and individualised feedback to the students.

7. CONCLUSION

In the legendary epic rock song When the Music's over (1967), Jim Morrison, lead singer of the Doors, begs: "I want to hear the scream of the butterfly", to

lament a few lines later: "What have they done to the earth? What have they done to our fair sister?"

"Our fair sister" must be preserved, and "sustainability" may be the key to her and our survival. It would be desirable, however, if first the once noble word coined by Carlowitz and mentioned at the beginning of this paper, did not degenerate into fraudulent labelling employed by political spin doctors and advertising yuppies; secondly, if bureaucratic reform mania in education did not lead to teachers being forced to learn sustainability content by top-down regulation – par ordre du mufti; and thirdly, if the comprehensive concept of sustainability in foreign language teaching was not reduced to topics and content only.

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