The problem of educational theory

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Article

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Abstract

This interview sheds light on current developments threatening the disciplinary 'heart' of education. Taking a starting point in the continental 'configuration' of the field, Gert Biesta and Stefan T Siegel argue that there are forms of theory considered distinctively educational. Based on this premise, they discuss why defining educational theories (*Erziehungswissenschaftliche Theorien*) is so challenging, and why it is nevertheless a rewarding endeavour. By distinguishing between (genuinely) educational theories in a narrow sense and (educationally relevant) theories in a wider sense, Biesta and Siegel attempt to tackle the problem of educational theory and to stimulate the discourse on theorizing education.

A transcontinental perspective on education

Stefan T Siegel (STS): Thank you very much for taking the time, Gert. In your 2011 article 'Disciplines and theory in the academic study of education', but also in some of your other publications, you compare the Anglo-American with the continental construction of the field (Biesta, 2011). To get a sense of different traditions of theorizing education, could you please briefly characterize these ideal types and point to significant differences?

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Gert Biesta (GB): One main difference is that in several countries in continental Europe, to begin with in the German-speaking world, education established itself as an academic discipline amongst other disciplines, and this happened from the early decades of the 20th century onwards, whereas in many countries in the English-speaking world, education entered the academic world as an applied field of study. This difference is not merely 'sociological'; that is, it is not solely about the way in which education managed to gain a place in the academic world, but also has to do with the particular focus of the discipline/field and with the implications for what went on within it.

Here one key difference is that in the German-speaking context, the focus was on educational practices in a range of different settings. While this included school education, the scope was much wider and inclusive; for example, activities with children and young people in non-school settings such as youth work and special education. One might say that in the continental 'configuration' the focus was on educative work with children and young people in a wide range of settings. The specific interest in all this was about how this work could support children and young people in becoming 'agents' of their own life, to use a rather English expression.

This particular interest also necessitated particular forms of theory and theorizing that not just focused on the general question about how children and young people may become more 'agentic' individuals willing to take responsibility for their own lives. It also implied a focus on the work of educators about this interest and consequently led to theory and research focusing on 'educative action', so to speak, particularly theory and research that could support educators in their work.

This is very different from how education established itself at universities in the English-speaking world, which happened predominantly in the context of teacher education. Whereas for a long time teacher education had been organized in separate teacher education colleges, these started to be incorporated into universities – in North America from the early decades of the 20th century onwards but in Great Britain much more after the Second World War. The focus on teacher education not just led to a different social position for education departments within universities, but also resulted in a different orientation; that is, on the education of school teachers rather than on the study of the phenomenon of 'upbringing', irrespective of the setting in which this takes place.

When teacher education moved into universities, one of the key questions was how the academic 'quality' of teacher education could be safeguarded. Although in theory there were several options, including a more disciplinary focus on education, the dominant view that emerged in the English-speaking world was one in which it was argued that a practical endeavour such as teaching needed intellectual input from 'real' academic disciplines. Psychology and philosophy were two prominent ones, and history was another one, and over time – but probably only from the 1960s onwards – sociology became another important discipline.

This led to the establishment of what is still known and visible today, namely the 'of'-constructions, so to speak: philosophy of education, psychology of education, history of education and sociology of education. There are journals with these phrases in the title, and there are academic societies with such titles, and in the English-speaking world many of them are close to celebrating their 50th anniversary or have just done so.

So the main differences are (autonomous) discipline versus (applied) field; organized around an interest (promoting the autonomous life of children and young people) versus

object of study (teaching in schools and other settings); with 'indigenous' theories, so to speak, versus theoretical input from 'elsewhere'.

STS: Thank you for highlighting these main differences. I think that this transcontinental perspective is highly valuable as it shows that the academic study of education developed differently within various contexts, and it stresses the fact that academic disciplines, as well as their theories, are socio-historic constructs.

Education as an academic discipline in its own right?

STS: With the 'Manifesto for education' you developed with Carl Anders Säfström in 2011, you made a strong case for education as a discipline in its own right (Biesta and Säfström, 2011). From your point of view, why should education be a relatively autonomous discipline?

GB: For me, this is not a question of social status, although I am very aware that education departments have a fairly low status in many universities in the English-speaking world, which often makes it difficult to have a sufficiently strong voice. (The reason that universities are nonetheless interested in having education departments is that they tend to get a large number of students, so from an economic perspective it is quite attractive.) For me, the main reason why it is essential to think of and establish education as an independent academic discipline is because I think that educational questions are very different from, say, psychological or sociological or philosophical questions. When education is just seen as an applied field that needs to rely, intellectually, on such disciplines, the educational question is very easily forgotten.

This does, of course, raise the question of what an educational question actually is, and how it differs from psychological, sociological or philosophical questions about education. The first answer to this question has to do with the word 'about' in the previous sentence because it's one thing to ask a psychological question about education – and I'm not suggesting that such questions are meaningless or nonsensical – but it's still another to figure out what actually the object of such a question is. Or in more everyday language: to ask a psychological question about education one first needs to be able to identify education itself and for this, I would say, we actually need an educational perspective and educational forms of theory and theorizing. We can not do this in a simple empirical way – as we might do when we point to the stars or a tree – because education is a social practice, not a natural phenomenon. This means that we should begin by asking people who are involved in education, but even there we cannot evade explorations of what education 'is', which also raises questions about what would not count as education, what the justification for such demarcations is, and so on. And then there is also the interesting and important question about the specific and unique forms of educational practice.

So in a sense, all these 'of'-constructions rely on educational forms of theory and theorizing, but either this remains very implicit, or it becomes a kind of 'blind spot', which can make work from these 'of'-constructions rather limited and, in a sense, even irrelevant from the perspective of education. This is, for example, the problem with a lot of psychological research on learning, because it may be interesting to find out how a child learns to ride a bike or how a student learns to develop a correct argument in quantum physics, but that doesn't tell us anything about what it would mean to teach a child to ride a bike or to teach a student to become versed and proficient in quantum physics. Teaching is not applied

learning theory but comes with a whole set of different questions which I would characterize as educational questions.

So I think that there is a clear need for an educational orientation, so to speak, which is increasingly missing in the English-speaking world. This either means that it is left to teachers to make the connection – and, to a certain degree, teachers are still really good at doing this, simply because many of them still understand the complexity of their educational 'art'. But increasingly thoroughly educational ways of 'doing' education are replaced by uneducational ways; for example, when teachers are not allowed to do their own curriculum making and teaching but have to follow commercial scripts based on so-called 'evidence' about which teaching interventions are the most effective.

In a recent chapter, Jochen Krautz (2021, forthcoming) has very tellingly argued that a lot of thinking about teaching has taken a cybernetic approach, precisely in the way in which you operate a central heating system by setting the thermostat at a certain desired temperature – the so-called 'learning outcome' – and then you keep pushing the system until this temperature has been achieved. That teachers still manage to make education work is, in a sense, remarkable, because these kinds of theories are not helpful at all in engaging with the work they do as teachers. There's much more to say about this, but my main point is that 'education' is in a sense a serious blind spot in the English-speaking 'configuration' of education.

Current developments threatening education's autonomy

STS: According to Matthes (2020), 'relative educational autonomy' is a central topic of *Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*, which was the dominant paradigm of educational science in Germany for most of the 20th century. Today, however, there is a substantial increase in empirical educational research which is strongly informed by psychology and which is expected to produce scientific evidence that 'works'. Referring back to your article from 2007 (Biesta, 2007), how would you evaluate this current development in German educational science, especially when you compare it to developments in the field of education in other countries?

GB: There are two aspects to this question. One is more sociological – that is, concerned with the social organization of education; the other is about the substance of what is going on. To begin with the former: I don't think that the rise of empirical research on education, 'framed' by a psychological mindset and focused on figuring out what allegedly 'works', is only happening in Germany (although it is, of course, entering a rather different 'configuration' there than in other countries). So the question is not so much whether some countries may have managed to keep this development 'out', so to speak, and Germany hasn't, but more about acknowledging that this interest in (I would probably prefer to call it an 'obsession with') questions about effectiveness has become rather global. But it is, of course, making a different impact in countries where education existed as an academic discipline in its own right. Because there it appears as a real disruption of the existing state of affairs – and countries where this has not been the case – where the same development works out more as a rise of the influence of psychology compared to the other disciplines 'of' education. So whereas in Germany, but also the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Sweden, this development is perceived as undermining education as an academic discipline in its own right, in the UK or North America it is much more about the relative dominance of the psychological mindset.

Now in terms of the substance of this development, there is something else going on, because I think that the interest in effectiveness and questions about 'what works' is, in a sense, a very reasonable and rather 'real' issue. As teachers, after all, we want to make a difference for our students, and the question of whether a particular approach, a particular curriculum, a particular way of doing 'works' for our students is, at the level of everyday practice, an entirely legitimate and reasonable one. But teachers also know that what works at one point in time, with a particular student or group of students, in a particular context, with particular resources, in a particular phase of a curriculum or school career, may fall flat if one of these aspects changes. So one really important issue here is that the question of whether something teachers do 'works' is, at the level of practice and seen as a contextual question, a really relevant one. But what has happened is that a whole research tradition has emerged that thinks that these contextual 'factors' are actually not that relevant and that, if we just have a sufficiently large sample, we can find out 'what works' in general, everywhere, any time, for all students – and that's a dangerous and naive idea. It is, however, a very attractive idea and that's why policymakers tend to fall for it. And researchers who can 'sell' this idea well tend to get large amounts of money for this research so that it grows bigger and bigger, and completely forgets that in education we need to be modest and operate with a sense of doubt.

So the worrying development is that many people are chasing an ideal that doesn't make sense for educational practice. But since everyone is chasing it, it becomes increasingly difficult to say that the emperor is naked! And rather than that teachers, and a sufficiently 'strong' and educationally informed academic discipline, would be able to push back against these developments, what you can see happening is that for this evidence to 'work', not just teachers are asked to change their practice, but students as well, and even education systems as a whole. Rather, therefore, than to invest in relevant knowledge and understanding that 'suits' the complexities of education, you can see that education is being transformed so that the so-called evidence about what works can begin to work. This is probably the most worrying development that I see taking place in several countries.

Has (German) educational science lost its disciplinary heart? The problem of educational theory

STS: In the 2013 interview 'On the need to ask educational questions', you and Herner Saeverot (2013) point to new trends in education in several European countries that run the risk of marginalizing *Pädagogik* as an independent academic discipline with its own interest, perspectives, and questions. What do you reckon – has German educational science already lost its disciplinary 'heart'?

GB: You probably know more about Germany than I do, so I am also curious about your answer to this question, but from what I can see and have experienced I think that something has indeed been lost in Germany, or has at least become marginalized, namely a 'proper' educational outlook on education. And it has been replaced by ways of thinking about education, by ways of steering education and by ways of researching education that transform education into something else. In my forthcoming book, *World-Centred Education* (Biesta, 2021, forthcoming), I use the phrase 'management of objects' to characterize this, and I contrast it with the 'education of subjects' which I think that education ought to be about. But powerful political and financial interests are much more interested in

the management of objects – which always comes with the problems that we can keep everything in control and everyone under control – than with the education of subjects; that is, people who can think for themselves and can make up their own mind!

STS: If we solely look at the secondary characteristics of German educational science (*Erziehungswissenschaft*) such as institutional manifestations in the form of subjects taught at universities or colleges, academic departments, etc. it can be considered a very successful discipline (Vogel, 2016). However, if we focus on the discipline's primary characteristics – which could be considered the disciplinary heart – such as particular objects of research (that are sometimes shared with other disciplines), genuine theories, and concepts, and specific terminology, the problem of educational theory is revealed. In fact, there is not only one problem, but several that I can't address here all. Let me just outline three problems that currently concern me.

Although education (*Erziehung*) is the eponymous term of educational science (*Erziehungswissenschaft*), there is a tendency to marginalize it and even to completely replace it with other terms such as 'socialization', 'emancipation' or 'accompaniment', etc. (Loch, 2019). This often baffles me, as, for instance, no sociologist would marginalize the central concept of society in a similar way.

The second problem is that, in my opinion, essential research questions and corresponding forms of research are marginalized, too. With the methodological or the so-called realistic turn in education in the 1960s, many educationalists started using empirical methods and especially since the year 2000 with the upcoming of large-scale assessments such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), quantitative research is gaining strongly in importance. Within the last decades, an interdisciplinary field of study – empirical educational research (*Empirische Bildungsforschung*) – emerged. It is dominated by quantitative research (which, of course, is necessary for answering certain questions), whereas, for instance, hermeneutic and historical approaches and reflection on fundamental normative questions, which would be very important, especially for educational practice, are often neglected.

The third problem, which is in my opinion closely related to the previous ones, is that there doesn't seem to be a consensus definition of what educational theories (*Erziehungswissenschaftliche Theorien*) are (Siegel and Daumiller, 2021) – and also not really an urge to find an adequate answer to that question. Neglecting this primary characteristic, however, makes it difficult to evaluate and systematize the theory development within educational science. Besides, it complicates distinguishing distinctively educational theories from theories that are borrowed or imported from adjacent disciplines.

Reconsidering the idea of educational theory

STS: In the year 2013, Irby et al. published the *Handbook of Educational Theories*. The volume is valuable as it makes many influential and frequently consulted theories accessible to students and instructors of educational studies in Anglo-American countries (Irby et al., 2013). In your chapter 'On the idea of educational theory' (Biesta, 2013) you argue that educational research needs theories distinctively educational. Reading the handbook, I noticed that it contained theories I would not identify as genuinely educational but rather as educationally relevant. What are your thoughts on that?

GB: I agree with your observation, though I wasn't surprised about that because I think that if you don't have a sense of education as a discipline in its own right it's very difficult to

envisage what educational theories are as properly educational theories, not theories coming from 'elsewhere' and then applied to education. Now, I do like your phrase 'educationally relevant' because there is a lot of good scholarship in different disciplinary fields that is very interesting and potentially important for education. The sociology of education has provided important insights into the ways in which education systems, but also school curricula and teaching practices, often tend to reproduce particular social inequalities rather than reduce or eradicate them. That is definitely educationally relevant. Just as there is quite a lot of interesting philosophical scholarship about education, and even interesting psychological work (although I tend to keep psychology at a distance because it has been most aggressive and destructive in trying to take over education).

But, as I have already alluded to above, such educationally relevant theory and research still needs to go through an educational transformation, so to speak, to become educationally 'operational'. The sociology of education is an interesting example of this problem. Bourdieu's work on 'capitals', for example, has shown how the educational reproduction of inequality works, and I think that Basil Bernstein's more micro studies have also made valuable contributions here. But it's one thing to know how we are constantly reproducing hierarchies and inequalities, yet still another (to know) what, as teachers, school leaders or educational policymakers, we might do educationally to change this.

In Bourdieu's terms, one could say that it is relatively easy to hand out capital to more people but it's far more difficult to change the field within which particular capital has 'currency', so to speak. Put differently, we can see that some students have an advantage because they possess cultural codes and ways of speaking, and doing that makes it possible for them to navigate particular parts of society that remain closed to others. If you don't know the codes of the upper classes in England, which are mainly handed over in the privately funded schools, it's almost impossible to find your way around in those circles. Those circles exist, however, because they give some people an advantage over others, and that is why the capital people who inhabit those circles have is so valuable. But as soon as everyone would have that capital, the capital will very quickly lose its value, because the point of its value is *that not everyone has it*.

And there you cannot just see what the problem is with all the educational compensation programmes based on Bourdieu's work. For our discussion, this is also a key example of the 'gap' between wonderful and insightful sociological explanations of the educational reproduction of social inequality and the practice of education, even education that is strongly interested in alleviating inequalities.

What are educational theories?

STS: To gain a deeper understanding of how German students and instructors of educational studies and teacher training think about educational theories and to what extent they deal with these theories I conducted a qualitative interview study ($n = 32$ students and 12 instructors). The results show that a majority of the students interviewed, but also some instructors, had great difficulties in defining the term 'educational theories' (*erziehungswissenschaftliche Theorien*) and in providing adequate examples (Siegel and Daumiller, 2021). Firstly, how would you evaluate that finding? Secondly, what would you tell, for instance, a teaching student if they asked you what educational theories were and how they differed from psychological or sociological theories?

GB: I was indeed quite surprised when I read your research, as I had assumed that the 'memory' about educational studies and educational theory (though we should probably switch to German here and talk about *Pädagogik/Erziehungswissenschaft und pädagogische/ erziehungswissenschaftliche Theorie*) would have been much stronger. And whereas we cannot blame students for this, as they are coming to university to study and in a sense be taught about these theories, it's more remarkable that this is also no longer just part of the 'common sense' of those teaching them. This could either indicate that within one generation the discipline has transformed significantly, and I am aware that in a sense it only takes one generation to get such a break with what went before. It could also indicate, however, that 'education' or 'educational studies' is a rather broad field that draws its academics from a range of disciplines, and that this may also explain why not everyone teaching in such a programme comes with this expertise. (I still find it odd, though, that so many people think that they are qualified to teach in education programmes, but that this hardly ever happens in the opposite direction; that is, that with an education degree it's unlikely that you can get a job in a department of psychology, or sociology, or philosophy – although this probably says more about how effective such disciplines are in 'border control'.)

Your second question – what would I tell students – is an important one, and I think I have had the luck over the past 20 years that this question has become a very 'live' question for me, because, having moved from the Netherlands to Britain most of my colleagues in education schools and department asked me, sometimes explicitly but often without really knowing, what I was trying to say when I used the adjective 'educational'. So my work over the past two decades has to a large degree been focused on making the educational 'point' without being able to use the vocabulary and grammar of continental *Pädagogik*. So I find myself saying things such as that 'education' is not a noun but a verb; that is, it refers to something teachers and other educators do. Or that the orientation of this work is about the students' independence, their 'agency' and their willingness to be responsible for themselves and their lives. Or that 'development' and 'learning' are actually not part of the educational vocabulary because they refer to processes that can happen anywhere and can go in any direction whereas, as educators, we are interested in the direction of such process – what good, desirable, worthwhile development is and what we can do as educators to encourage children and young people to go in that direction, so to speak.

So on the one hand this has led me to say a lot about the purposes of the work of educators. But I have also increasingly become interested in the question of the form of the practice of education as I think – taking a lot of inspiration from the work of Klaus Prange (e.g. Prange, 2005, 2012) – that this form is distinctive for education (it's different from the form of practice of, say, medicine, or agriculture or law) and also shows what is unique about education and distinctively educational about it. So I won't have a quick answer for your students and their instructors, but I would have quite a lot to say!

The challenges and merits of defining educational theories

STS: There is no doubt that theories play an important role in research and practice. Although educationalists and policymakers frequently refer to 'educational theories', they scarcely disclose their understanding of this term. According to you, why is it so challenging to define educational theories, and why it is nevertheless a crucial and rewarding endeavour for individual educationalists as well as the discipline as a whole?

GB: I think that part of the problem has to do with a rather underdeveloped understanding of the roles of theory in empirical research anyway. And it's actually interesting that when I started to work on the particular 'nature' of educational theory, I had to encounter this whole discussion about its roles in research as well. (My book *Educational Research: An Unorthodox Introduction* is the main result of that work; Biesta, 2020.) So in relation to empirical research, there are important theoretical dimensions, particularly with respect to how one understands education and the dynamics of education – I've referred to this as the ontology, axiology and praxeology of research: all research needs to have a proper theorization of what the unique reality of education is (ontology), the normative orientations that play a role in it (axiology) and the fact that to educate is to act (praxeology). My problem with an enormous amount of so-called educational research is that it doesn't reflect on these things at all but relies on what I tend to call quasi-causal assumptions about education. There are so many research papers that try to identify the 'impact' of something on something else (and the something else is sometimes also, in very vague and uneducational terms, named as 'student learning' – or sometimes in very restricted operationalizations named as 'student achievement' or, even worse, 'test scores'), without ever raising questions about what 'impact' actually is, how it happens, if it happens at all and what that has to do with and means for the work of educators. So if you ask me – which you are doing – I think that an awful lot of so-called educational research is actually quite misguided. But because there is so much of it, and because those who are misguided are also the ones who review such papers, it keeps going on and, as mentioned above, runs the risk of wanting to transform educational practice so that the practice 'fits' the research, rather than that the research 'fits' the practice. So there's quite a lot at stake and quite a lot to do about the theory question in education.

Distinctively educational versus educationally relevant theories

STS: Would you support the view that distinguishing between genuinely educational theories in a narrow sense and educationally relevant theories in a wider sense could help to tackle the problem of educational theory and stimulate the discourse on theorizing education? According to you, what should educationalists do besides that?

GB: I think that the distinction is helpful but, as I have already mentioned above, it's crucial to have a good sense of what the difference is – or what the differences are – and this, I think, is a question that can only be addressed properly from the side of education. So there's quite a lot of work to do for educationalists in building up – or rebuilding, perhaps – the discipline so that a serious and relevant conversation with work from elsewhere can take place. This is also important in light of the current fashion around interdisciplinarity. Quite often it feels like this means that we should invest less in discipline building, whereas I would say that interdisciplinarity rather needs strong and well-developed disciplines. Otherwise, there is no point for disciplines to meet and benefit from each other's strengths and insights. The other point just to mention briefly is that a lot of the promotion of interdisciplinarity comes with the idea that contemporary problems are too complex and multi-faceted to be able to be solved by just one discipline. But just to think that academic and intellectual work only exists to solve problems is rather narrow and problematic. As I've written recently, together with my fellow editors of the *British Educational Research Journal*: educational research should not just solve problems but should cause problems as well. It should problematize things that are taken for granted, where no one sees a problem, and so on (Biesta et

al., 2019). That's an essential aspect of academic work as well, for which disciplinary approaches are crucial.

Education: a very normal discipline?

STS: This already leads to my last questions; pointing out the problem(s) of educational theory – as we have done – might give German educational science a bad name. In sum, it could be argued that the discipline could do better at defining and developing genuine theories rather than importing them uncritically from adjacent fields of study. However, looking at the discipline's secondary characteristics such as the number of institutes, third-party funded projects, journals and students, it can be considered a very successful discipline.

Do you think that some of our observations might be true for many other disciplines as well; in other words: from your point of view, is education a speciality or just an ordinary academic field like medicine or psychology?

GB: That is an interesting observation, although I wonder what actually explains the size of the discipline of education in Germany (or, for that matter, other countries too). I know that in the UK education is one of the biggest if not the biggest field of research in terms of the number of academics involved, but this is mainly the result of the fact that almost all university departments of education are first and foremost involved in teacher education, and teacher education is itself one of the biggest fields of professional education. I think this holds for many universities worldwide, and maybe this is one explanation of the 'success' of the field in terms of the secondary characteristics you mention. I probably also want to mention that part of the success may involve educators selling their soul – or selling their soul to the devil, to use the full expression – because they may be able to attract funding not because they are educational scholars but because they address rather urgent (or in some cases just fashionable) societal topics and issues, sometimes even without any particular educational angle. This is much more difficult for the more 'confined' or focused disciplines, and perhaps that's the downside of having a clear disciplinary identity! But I do think that all of this does indicate that there is a fine balance to be found between enhancing, improving and increasing the educational focus of educational studies, on the one hand, and taking care of the 'infrastructure' within which this can happen. I tend to think that being close to teacher education is not a bad place for this, but not if the argument is only that teacher education delivers 'the numbers' and thus secures a steady stream of funding. Rather, the challenge is to show how proper educational theory is absolutely essential for good teaching and good teacher education.

Are all these issues unique for education? On the one hand, I'm inclined to say yes: there are also interesting historical analyses that show that education has always been a contested 'field' within the university (see particularly Condliffe-Lagemann, 2000; Labaree, 2006). In the English-speaking world, this has something to do with its closeness to teacher education, because one of the implications of this 'location' is that many who end up working in education departments are former teachers. Whereas other disciplines and fields recruit their academic staff from those who have a degree in their particular discipline/field, this is far less the case in education. In technical terms, it means that education tends to have a rather 'weak' system of reproduction, whereas academic psychologists educate psychologists who then become the next generation of academic psychologists. Education also tends to have a rather low status, although it is always challenging to pin down how the status of a

particular field or discipline or profession is established and how it evolves. And in education there is the additional problem that because almost everyone has gone to school, everyone has an opinion about schooling, so the idea that there is specialist educational knowledge is more difficult to argue for than, say, in thermodynamics or astrophysics. Yet I do think that when you compare education with more similar fields and disciplines, such as nursing, accountancy or business studies, you will find similar issues and concerns. So it is crucial not just to take a small number of allegedly 'strong' academic disciplines as the point of reference – and even so-called 'strong' academic disciplines may turn out to be messier when you begin to look more closely. Yet all this is not a reason for saying that things are not that bad in education. There are real issues that have less to do with status and much more with the quality and specific nature of what we as educators try to do, and it is essential, as Säfström and I put it in the manifesto (Biesta and Säfström, 2011), that we 'stand up' for education.

STS: Gert, thank you for the insightful interview. It was a pleasure talking to you.

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