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The Professional Habitus in Religious Education

Theory and Practice of Competence-Based Teacher Training – including Professional Simulation

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3. Teacher training in Religious Education as professional habitus formation

(Manfred Riegger & Stefan Heil)

How can the three professionalized habitus forms – the scientific, the pragmatic and the professional-biographical habitus – be connected, so that they become a unique professional habitus in Religious Education? How is the building of the habitus located and implemented in teacher training? And which concrete steps of professionalization have to be considered here? These questions are analysed in this chapter. Firstly we discuss the habitus formation of the three habitus forms of teachers in general (3.1), afterwards the resulting steps of professionalization are presented (3.2), and finally we concretize this by dealing with cases (3.3).

3.1 Habitus formation of teachers

Habitualized competences

The purpose and meaningfulness of competences is nowadays far less discussed than possible conceptualizations (cf. Riegger 2012a, Reis 2014) and ways to implement (cf. Sajak 2012; Altmeyer/Grümme 2018) these competences. Commemorating the manifold list of competences for teachers, one has to ask the following question: how does each and every segmented competence form a reasonable whole, an authentic person who is capable of acting (cf. Hilger 2014; 137)? We choose the opposite perspective: we do not analyse individual competences quoted out of context in order to unify them retrospectively. We to a greater degree begin with the core, the habitus, and then deduce and analyse certain competences. Such a change

of perspective implies that improving and developing competences must never be intended without considering the habitus, as it marks the undisputed centre of action.

Three dimensions of habitus formation in teacher training

The reason for the introduction of integral concepts into consecutive professionalization lies in the forming of the habitus itself. The forms of the habitus are built through different dimensions: science necessitates a scientific-reflective habitus, the professional field school a pragmatic-reflective one, and the aspects of the person as such which directly relate to the profession draw on the professional biographic-reflective habitus.

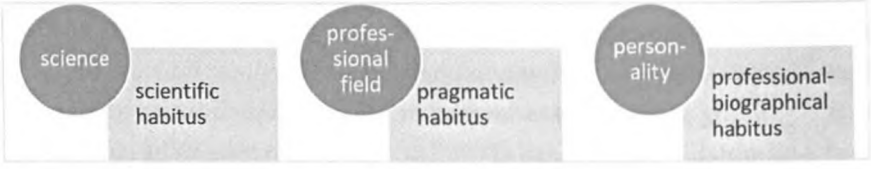

Fig. 8: Habitus formation in teacher training

The three dimensions of teacher training bring up a specific form of professional habitus: the scientific-reflective habitus results from dealing with science at university; the reflective-pragmatic habitus emerges from acting in the professional field school; the biographical-reflective habitus results from reflecting and developing one's personality. Here, different forms of the habitus which teachers need in order to cope with their educational duties and tasks are being referred to.

As every other profession does, becoming a teacher therefore requires long-term professionalization. In Germany, teacher training takes place in a three-step system determined by the three dimensions science – school – personality (cf. Heil/Faust-Siehl 2000). Professionalization starts at universities and technical colleges with the introduction to science and scientific analysis. Secondly, an upcoming professional becomes a trainee or student teacher in order to acquire actual practical experience in the professional pedagogical field. Thirdly, teachers have to attend advanced education programmes to develop their professional competences and especially their professional personality (cf. Riegger 2012c, Lindner

2015). This consecutive structure of teacher training is always interrupted by the intertwining of the three dimensions, e. g. the relation of science and school during research periods at university, the self-reflection between science and personality, mentoring or particular modules combining scientific research and practical school work. From a structural point of view this means introducing integral concepts of professionalization into individual cases of professionalization, whereby the consecutive structure is being maintained.

The challenge is to bring together these three dimensions of habitus formation and integrate them into one unique professional habitus. In their daily routine, teachers have to integrate these forms into their individual professional and professionalized habitus. The building and establishing of these three forms of the habitus are indispensable and simultaneously necessary for practical work. Teachers have to be capable of uniting all three forms of the habitus in an individual professional and professionalized habitus in which science, professional field and personality are being integrally updated in practical situations. Experienced practitioners easily succeed in doing so, otherwise they would not be able to cope with their daily challenges.

A typical problem for beginners is connecting the scientific-reflective habitus with the pragmatic-reflective one, whilst the professional biographic-reflective one is completely recessed. They have to combine theory and practice in the professional action itself – without scientific theories, they are exposed to the educational practice and without practical strategies and routines, scientific knowledge remains inert – and without the person as such, neither a relationship to others, nor to oneself, which is important for pedagogic processes, can be established. Yet the integral concept intends to combine the three forms of the habitus in order to establish a professional and professionalized habitus, which is necessary for practical action.

This does not mean that the consecutive structure has to be dissolved, as the building of the different habitus forms needs time and room for development; simultaneously it is possible to introduce integral concepts into the mode of professionalization in order to elucidate how to combine habitus forms and to show what is necessary for practical action. A productive method for this purpose is *simulation* (see also chapter 4).

Precondition: relationship between discipline and profession

The three dimensions of teacher training are based on a structural distinction between theory and practice: scientific theory is always an aggregate state of practice, but there is a categorical difference between scientific and practical theory. This differentiation is – in structural theory – integrated in the constitutive difference of discipline and profession, as, speaking trenchantly, the reference point of disciplines is truth/reliable data and the reference point of professions is efficiency. From a system-theoretical point of view, Luhmann clarifies that both application system (practice) and scientific system (theory) function according to inherent autonomous rules and that they fulfil internal specialized functions (cf. Luhmann 1993, 322). The convergence of discipline and profession (as the respective manifestation of these subsystems) with respect to an academic education that qualifies for later professions, which has frequently been demanded during the implementation of modularized university courses, often ignores this difference between the aforementioned subsystems. If the distinction between profession and discipline is accepted, then one will differentiate between knowledge and action from an epistemic point of view. If scientific, structural and system theory indicate a more or less harsh distinction, an epistemological perspective will show signs of a systemic relation, as Oevermann considers professional action to be the social space for mediating theory and practice according to conditions of scientific rationality (cf. Oevermann 1996, 80). This means conditions of scientifically profound problem-solving have to be included. The extent to which this might be included in teacher education highly depends on the collaboration of all organizing participants. The organizational levels here are universities (scientific education), schools (school education) and continuation schools (any further education).

Through these clarifications the structural-theoretical religion pedagogic model of professionalization is specified and developed from many perspectives: in scientific theory (e. g. relationing) and in epistemology (e. g. attitudes and values). It is also competence-theoretically opened with the various knowledge and theory forms and concretized on an organizational and methodical level by simulations.

A mere additive sequence of internship and studying as well as of practical and theoretical parts during university – no matter if one talks about interns or teachers in the second or third stage of their studies – is not enough to establish a direct connection between practical knowledge forms and scientific theory types. For this reason it would be a misguided aim to try to establish practical routines during the academic stage of teacher education. At the same time it is no solution to build up a stock of theoretical reflexivity before having something to reflect about in the second stage (cf. Hericks 2004, 307).

As teachers need knowledge rooted in a complex architecture (cf. Fried 2004, 237) in order to conduct their profession in a competent way, it is not sufficient to accumulate or layer knowledge in different areas. It is far more important to offer different possibilities to connect various aspects and fields of knowledge. Neither the one-way street model (knowledge transfer from universities to schools), nor the principle of selection (linear transformation model) seem to be the right approach. The variously structured knowledge and acting is to be acknowledged independently in a way – sticking to metaphors here – that the gap or wall (categorical difference) between these two is accepted and simultaneously attempted to be overcome. Thus new possibilities for a translation are to be searched and to be found (relationing). In this attempt students have to be supported likewise by universities and schools. The inclusive model which is addressed here proceeds from the necessity of relationing the various knowledge fields during all educational stages.

Relationing processes also enable the inclusion of theory and practice. Within these relationing processes one has to be cautious as one has to include in theoretical thinking what had been left out before (e. g. practice-orientated theories on the side of theorists and scientific theories on the side of practitioners).

It is not only paramount what someone in education has to do or with which intention this is done, but it has also to be detected what specifically had been excluded (critique of actualities etc.). Such an approach is beyond mechanistic or technical interlocking and promises the conveying of practical and scientific theories, which intertwine and blend without separation.

3.2 Steps of professionalization

Development of professionalization

Ensuing from this line of habitus formation, several steps of professionalization can be described. Combining the step model of Dreyfuss/Dreyfuss (1986) with the aforementioned habitus forms, the following development of the habitus within the realm of professionalization can be portrayed. Individual professionalization hereby happens step by step. Unknowingly unprofessional corresponds predominantly with novices, deliberately unprofessional with advanced beginners, deliberately professional with competent, capable and experienced teachers and, finally, unknowingly professional with highly specialized expert teachers:

Novice

A beginner in the teaching profession is not deliberately aware of what he knows and is capable of. He is *unknowingly professional.* There are many suitable examples: a beginner, after having asked a question to the students, always expects an immediate answer without having the patience to let the students think.

Advanced beginner

Reflection can lead to increased awareness, which again helps people realize their weaknesses. A teacher in this stage is *deliberately unprofessional.* One can react to this, e. g. by intending to change one's behaviour: "After having asked a question, I give students three seconds of time to think of an appropriate answer!" If the teacher generally applies this rule without considering the current situation, then we talk about a naive and mechanistic form of rule application.

Competent teacher

If the rule mentioned above is spontaneously applied in various situations and different cases, we talk about a reflective form of rule application. The competent teacher offers the student more time to answer the question, a smaller amount of time for less complicated questions, additional assistance for students who are stuck etc. Even if the situation or the concrete

case is reflected, we are still talking about the application of rules, which are skills and abilities that are easy to learn.

Experienced (proficient) teacher

One can definitely talk about professional acting if a teacher does not only act according to situational and case-orientated rules, but when teachers act according to trans-situational principles. Teachers apply these principles derived from their experience creatively and flexibly in various situations and in individual cases. These teachers are aware of the fact that profound and successful student orientation is far more than providing enough time to answer a question. It is multifactorial. If teachers are able to identify these factors, they will be deliberately professional.

Expert teacher

After having worked in schools for many years, a school inspector realizes the appropriate classroom management approach while sitting in lessons. He considers the teacher-student interaction in different situations, difficulty levels of certain content, waiting times for student answers, learning impulses etc. The teacher gets positive feedback and becomes aware of the fact that he did not act as he did deliberately. Positive methods and actions had been automatized. The teacher is unknowingly professional.

Simulation

How can teachers go up the steps to become an expert teacher? Apart from experience and reflection, continuous training is necessary. One method of training introduced in the following chapter is the concept of Professional Simulation. Simulations can be helpful for all four developmental stages: unprofessionalism can be made deliberate, unprofessionalism can be reduced, professionalism can be established and unknowing professionalism can be made aware. In this way one can gain an insight into one's own professionalism. We would have a deliberate unknowing professional teacher in this case. In individual professionalization processes the possible awareness – and also nescience – should be dealt with sensitively and connected via scientific theories to established knowledge forms.

3.3 Professional and professionalized habitus formation based on pedagogic cases

Case: Finding the general in the specific

Why is working with cases especially appropriate for professional and professionalized habitus building? The answer to this question lies in the structure of the cases themselves: a case is the connection of the general and the specific by realizing general rules, principles and structures in specific contexts or even rebuilding them anew. A case therefore relates to a unique spatiotemporal and personnel-oriented event as well as to generally known or unknown rules which can be found or discovered in such an event. The case is determined through this dialectic of the specific and the general. A medical case, for example, is always a particular formation of a certain disease pattern. The professional habitus of the physician has the task, or even the duty, to detect the general and abstractive (new) aspects of the case and to solve the respective case competently. The typical aspects from certain domains take shape in concrete cases; however, because of the situational qualities of a case, this never takes place in pure form, but somehow transformed and modified. The professional habitus has the challenge of reconstructing the typical aspects of a case or to abductively look for new ones which determine the rudimentary structure of cases in general.

Cases and professional/professionalized habitus building

Working with cases is an apt tool to unify theory and practice in a reflective teacher education, as general theories are applied and transformed in accordance with the case. Aspects which will be important in future professional practice have already been trained under guidance during this education. In this way, the professional and professionalized habitus constitutes itself on a meta-level, as routines which show possible modes of action are developed during educational and study efforts. Ohlhaver and Wernet named this phenomenon "profession adequate habitus" (Ohlhaver/Wernet 1999, 15), as not only the scientific object of inquiry is analysed, but also the habitus itself conducts the subsequent professional pragmatic.

Whilst in other professional fields like medicine or law, case studies are a pivotal educational tool, the approach remains scarcely used in teaching professions, although the theoretical reflection of case studies for pedagogic professionalization is gaining increasing importance in various contexts (cf. Pieper et al. 2014).

Case – religious and didactical case – handling of the case

Learning through cases is still uncommon in Religious Education (cf. Riegger 2003, 275ff.; Kliemann/Schweitzer 2007, 5), although it would certainly offer many opportunities.

A case is initially a phenomenon of the lived-in world (cf. chapter 1). Therefore it is an event, an observable occurrence, a person. Not before then a case evolves to become a religion pedagogic and didactical case, if the qualified and responsible persons (e.g. religion teachers, students of theology and religion pedagogy, theologians) or institutions and instances (episcopal study department, university) declare this. Not the event or the person itself is to be declared as the case, but the thematization by persons or instances that dealt with the case. The handling of a case contains three aspects.

Firstly, the case has to be conceded space. The lesson preparation by a teacher concerning the topic of Jesus Christ can be meant by this as well as the individual reflection of a situation in a lesson of class 5b. Cases can be discussed with colleagues, in a supervision group or in a university seminar.

Secondly, the case has to be reconstructed in order to constitute it. Information has to be gathered in accordance with the case. Which aspects are pivotal for the case, which aspects are less important or negligible?

Thirdly, the newly constituted case has to be scrutinized again, including renewed interpretation. One has to re-evaluate first impressions and insights and include new perspectives in order to develop new possibilities for action.

Furthermore, young teachers and trainee teachers establish the habitus' general competence for problem-solving as it is later needed in practical situations. This underlines the difference of scientific and pragmatic thinking (cf. Messmer 2014). By choosing separated practical "constellations"

(Idel/Reh/Rabenstein 2014, 87) and not lesson conceptions as a whole, the focus can be adjusted to particular competences of the habitus which are to be built and established. Working with cases thereby contributes on numerous levels to building the professional habitus, especially if the case during a simulation is not only treated theoretically and experimentally, but also in a knowledge- and experience-based way.