



SYMPOSIUM

A dialogue on core qualities and practices needed in education
Driebergen, 8th & 9th February 2017

The language we use, the language I use, unknowingly and unintentionally steers views and ways we deal with practise

Reflection by José Hofman

Looking back at the symposium the first thing that comes into my mind is the importance for me of meeting other people who are working in education and trying to achieve goals that are similar to mine. Dialogue brings me new ideas, confirms or refutes my convictions. It sharpens my thinking and gives me inspiration for my daily work. Not everything I heard was new, not all my views were changed. But my `house of knowledge and ideas` has been rebuilt here and there and expanded.

One of the things I take home is the importance of language. Being a advisor in a organisation for primary and secondary education each day I talk with schoolleaders, boardmembers and supervisors about improving and innovating schools. I often write about it. Thanks to the reflections of Tone Saeve and Ferre Laevers (first chapter) I am more aware of the fact that the language we use, the language I use, unknowingly and unintentionally steers views and ways we deal with practise.

At the same time the economic way of looking at education is a reality. It is not automatically wrong or unwise to monitore the fruitage of education. What counts is what we measure and what we do with it. We need to find vocabulary that helps to find the balance, as well as paths to value the soft side of education. We can step out of this trap. This symposium gave me clues how I could add to that, in my organisation. We are already working with a monitoring system that leans on dialogue and data. Making the noticeable results of education visible is one of our next challenges. Ferre Laevers insight that relation, safety and joy is in the heart of learning helps.

That goes also for the notion that the heart of learning by teachers lies in learning to know yourself, learning te reflect on your actions and being part of a safe learning community. A schoolboard like the one I work for (BOOR) can provide such a safe environment and from my position as a advisor I can try to connect layers of the organisation, advocating that one

can learn from failures and that achievement should be considered within the context of each school and person. Dialogue on narratives and performance, rather than paying off.

Maybe NIVOZ and the Learning Community for Well Being can initiate a discourse on this theme at national (Dutch) and international level, with the influencing keypersons that need to be convinced. I am sure there are enough representatives of educational practise who are willing to contribute.

I was happy to hear Edith Hooge (third chapter, second day) emphasizing that education is the social capital. Not a production. I recognised her approach that the soft side of education shields a hard core of strong leadership with clear drives and strong convictions. That also connected with the closing remarks of Linda O'Toole that congruency, curiosity, humanity and narratives are important core capacities. That contributed to my vocabulary and will help me in my work.

Luc Stevens talked about the Indian circle of courage with the spirits of belonging, competence, autonomy and generosity. I felt more courageous when I went home. Thank you!

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