

# unfolding human potential



*Bringing it all together*

## ***A master narrative: belonging, competence, autonomy and generosity***

*by Luc Stevens*

*(day 2, transcript by Maartje Janssens)*

### **The primacy of acting**

It was the intention, and also one of our great needs, to have a debate, a discussion, a conversation, at different levels of communication, about the primacy of knowledge. In other words: the gap between so-called scientific or codified knowledge, and the educational practice. The analytic opposite to the holistic.

And after years of deliberations we have come at this symposium, with a main motive: the shift from the primacy of (codified) knowledge to practice, to the acting of the teachers – not neglecting the relevance and validity of codified knowledge. There are two rather fundamental reasons for this shift. One is that human beings, according to the evolutionary biology, are primary *acting* beings, not *thinking* beings. Since Descartes we are primarily thinking beings. And the question is, if that's a right supposition. And the second, rather fundamental, but much more moral reason, is the urgency to get the moral or the pedagogical dimension back into the discussion on education. Back into our schools. You may say, a shift from the well-known instruction model to a relational model as starting point for the practice in our schools.

### **A search for sense and meaning: on grammar and narrative**

Of course then this shift is followed by the question about the grammar, about the legitimization of practice. What is it? How can I explain it? Is there a grammar? Yesterday we decided that there is probably no grammar; there's first and foremost the narrative as the legitimization of practice. So we replaced the idea of a grammar by the idea of the narrative as the expression of the reality of

education. But: do these narratives have a grammar? Are they, in a way, comparable? Can we bring a red thread through all these narratives? In other words: does there exist a master narrative? Do we need a master narrative? A search for sense and meaning in educating children opposed to materiality in terms of effectiveness and production. Also to get an answer to the great embarrassment with, at the moment, the systematic manipulation of facts and truth. The question of a master narrative – yes, we need it, it's my conviction. And we touched that master narrative during this symposium many many times.

**A master narrative: belonging, competence, autonomy and generosity**

The concept of connectedness might be the central concept in the master narrative. I would like to present you a narrative. It's from the American Indians. We saw it yesterday in the film *Down to Earth*, at the chest of the Indian wise man who was repeatedly seen in the film. At his chest was the circle of courage. Indian children were educated within the framework of a circle of courage, which has four spirits: belonging, competence, autonomy and generosity. Well, maybe that's our master narrative. And from this narrative I have a word sending you out. I'm not a vicar or a priest, but I have a last word. A last wish. A last advice. For all of us.

Take care of yourself. Take care of the other one. Take care of the environment.