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Commentary: Categorical conflict-based teaching methodology as a paradigm of civic education

Content:

1. Author and context: In-service courses for teachers at Reinhardswaldschule (Germany)
2. The *Spiegel*-affair – a lesson report
3. The case study method
4. Categorical conflict-based teaching methodology and fundamental insights
5. The concept of the exemplary in teaching and lesson reports
6. Opportunity for today's teaching
7. Questions on the concept of the exemplary in teaching in seminars
8. Literature

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Rudolf Engelhardt presents a lesson model in his article *How to Deal with Party Politics at School?* that dates back to the 1960s, when civic education was revived in the Federal Republic of Germany (West-Germany). In order to improve civic education at school, the former Ministers of Education of German states reached a joint decision on the new subject. This was as a reaction against the first massive scribbling of Nazi propaganda since the end of World War II. Therefore, a new subject in secondary education was introduced to serve this purpose. This subject was called *Sozialkunde*¹ (civic education) or *Gemeinschaftskunde*² (social studies).

1. Author and context: In-service courses for teachers at Reinhardswaldschule, Germany

In 1962, the Federal center of in-service training for teachers at Reinhardswaldschule, located in Fulda, in the Federal state of Hesse (Germany), launched a teachers' professional development programme in order to qualify them for teaching the then new subject civic education. These courses took place for fourteen days and were lead by Rudolf Engelhardt himself. He was born in 1919. In 1937, he passed his *Abitur*³ in Nazi-Germany. Not before 1945, he became a determined democrat. As far as his profession is concerned, he started as a teacher at a primary and secondary

school and later became responsible for in-service courses for teacher⁴.

The above-mentioned in-service course on civic education provided their participants with a detailed, new syllabus that contained units of lessons. Topics were, for instance on *Mass Media and Advertisement*, *Our Community*, *No Freedom without Rights – No Rights without Freedom*, *Communism – Illusion and Reality*, and *The Status of Women in Modern Society*. In a next step, teachers worked in groups on these lesson units to prepare their own lesson plans. The aim was to develop units in which students were not primarily confronted with materials for examinations. Moreover, they should be able to gain insight into the foundation of a civilized society by contemplating deeply on current topics. These lesson units were collected and published (e.g. Engelhardt/Jahn 1964).

2. The *Spiegel*-affair – An exemplary lesson report

As a result of these IN-SERVICE courses, Rudolf Engelhardt published a lesson report on the *Spiegel-Affäre* (*Spiegel*-affair), which is dealt with in this commentary (Engelhardt 1964, 87-101).

To gain an initial idea on the *Spiegel*-affair, please browse: https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Spiegel_scandal⁵.

1 *Sozialkunde* as citizenship education includes mostly civics, economics, law, and questions concerning every day social life.
2 *Gemeinschaftskunde* is an integrated subject. It is taught from 11th till 13th grade and includes history, geography and citizenship education (including economics, law, civics, and sociology).
3 *Abitur* = traditional expression for the final exam at German *Gymnasium* after 13 years (A-Level)

4 Rudolf Engelhardt published a variety books on teacher's further education and observations of his students. He succeeded in explaining general pedagogic considerations on the basis of specific classroom realities in an unsurpassed manner. His prolific way of writing is definite, often amusing, but nonetheless provides insight into complex theoretical considerations. In order to oppose to the current, predominant jargon of social sciences, teacher's further education needs to be inspired by an easy to access book, for instance by Rudolf Engelhardt.
5 Further information on the *Spiegel* affair: http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/01642006453512595568594735924988,2,0,Das_Ende_der_%C4ra_Adenauer.html, http://www.spiegel.de/thema/spiegel_affe/, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSvT2SFoY34>, in English: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiegel_scandal



The *Spiegel*-affair of 1962 was one of the major political scandals in Germany. In fact, the affair divided the country: On the one hand, some accused the influential political magazine of treason because it had revealed military top secret information of the German army. The then Chancellor Konrad Adenauer called it an "abyss of treason" as well. On the other hand, some saw it as an attack on the liberty of press as well as on the young democracy of Germany. These controversial events were discussed in depth in mass media, at working places, and at home. With regard to the teachers' in-service training, it is very likely that a course took place immediately after the *Spiegel*-affair; this caused a heated debate amongst the participating teachers on how to deal with this topic in the classroom.

A number of teachers probably reported on their lessons, of which Engelhardt developed a draft that helped to clarify fundamental problems in civic education. In the course of this essay, Rudolf Engelhardt will indicate three varieties of teaching which are linked to three different kinds of teachers (variations 1-3):

The first variation, for instance, he introduces a teacher who steps into his classroom in order to teach the regular art lesson. The 15 year-old 8th graders are awaiting him – but more or less half of them own the latest edition of the so-called weekly magazine *Spiegel*; nobody is prepared for an art lesson. Nothing about it is supposed to be provocative – a discussion about the *Spiegel*-affair is considered to be more vital than an art lesson at that moment. This has been a result of their teacher's way of "spoiling" his students concerning discussions about political issues: As soon as anything occurred which attracted public attention, he did not hesitate to answer their questions.

This posed a considerable problem to the teachers in their role as political educators: Should the students be allowed to express their own view-points in class? And if so how? The students were possibly exposed to a different lesson with opposing opinions depending on whatever political party the teacher might belong to or favor; there is always a risk to be overwhelming or indoctrinating (Snook 1972/2010). The arts teacher (variation 1) simply did not hesitate to answer their questions on those things for which other adults considered the students either to be too young or too ignorant. Instead of advancing their artistic skills, they decided to discuss the *Spiegel*-affair as this is more important to the students, now. The teacher took them for serious; therefore, they liked to talk to him, particularly.

In the second variation another teacher asked the students to collect material on this controversial issue.

Both teachers paid attention to the needs of the students; however, the lesson remains unsatisfying. It is not sufficient to simply deal with current issues in class. Moreover, the teacher has to have an aim for his lesson: "What should be the lesson learned for

students beyond current events?" Primarily, the aim is to empower the students in general to understand and to judge current political issues independently. In order to be able to do that, they have to learn the political system's structure and how political decision-making takes place.

Further, Engelhardt introduced a third variation to the reader. He reported on a number of lessons of this teacher. Afterwards he enhanced and probably added content to the report. This lesson report has resulted in a best practice example of civic education in Germany until today. In addition, lots of authors have further refined this type of lesson since then.

Engelhardt's lesson unit could be still considered to be a model for teacher trainings, and moreover, should be part of the classical canon of subject matter didactics in the field of civic and citizenship education.

In the beginning, the third teacher is purely concerned with the particular aspect of the *Spiegel*-affair that provoked the public's reaction: the illegal arrest of the article's author abroad (<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-25673830.html>). In the first lesson, the students were asked to take notes of the facts that they had heard of in the media, primarily newspapers and the radio, rarely television. They wrote their notes on the blackboard. Thus, the previous knowledge established a shared basic understanding of the situation in order to review these together in the course of the following lessons. Further on, the students presented their collected material either to prove or correct their previous knowledge. In fact, the students should challenge their own knowledge: "What do I know for sure, what do I assume, what is just a view-point, and what is a judgment?" As a result, the students are now able to justify their opinion. Nevertheless, assumptions need to be shared.

Unfortunately, it is a part of politics in which involved persons and the public know too little about the critical event than is necessary to react to it adequately. Furthermore, every point-of-view is lead by intentions and interests. Hence, it is crucial to politically involved persons to succeed and to be superior to someone else. This fact causes politics to be polemical as well as it is often considered to be a (hopefully only rhetorical) showdown. Both comprehension and alignment are the aims of a civic education lesson.

The political discussion was resolved by a debate in the *Bundestag* (Federal Parliament), which had been broadcasted on the radio and on television during the next days.⁶ The students informed themselves at home independently. They experienced how the opposition politically controlled the government in parliament. As far as the lesson is concerned, it is not important

⁶ Television at schools was not yet fully developed at that time. Therefore, TV broadcasting at school could not be considered to be standard.



which political party succeeded in this debate. Moreover, this heated debate provided “an example in order to show that political power needs to be controlled.” The students discovered a fundamental problem of the political order: The existence of a major and peculiar difference between the legitimate need for security of the state (national security) on the one hand, and the legitimate need of the citizens to be informed about everything that has happened in the state on the other. Whatever the answer to that might be, there need to be a solution that solves the problem at least temporarily.

It is therefore not only necessary but also obvious that clarifying and generally binding rules are obligatory and support the role of laws.

Fachdidaktische (subject matter didactic) Perspective: Content + raising a certain question = (results in a) topic of a lesson

Content (here: *Spiegel*-affair) results into a topic due to an extracted and problem-based presented question (topic): National security or freedom of information? This algorithm is called building a *fachdidaktische* perspective.

In the seventh lesson, the students continued to follow the course of the *Spiegel*-affair (so-called civics education that is taught parallel to the event: *politikbegleitender Unterricht*). Both public and Federal Parliament demanded the resignation of the Federal Minister of Defence named Franz-Josef Strauß⁷. He is accused for deception of the parliament. The students wanted to understand what consequences could follow his resignation. Consequently, they consulted the basic law, the German *Grundgesetz* (constitution), and searched for the appropriate articles. By the way, they became acquainted with the structure, operation and tasks of the *Bundesregierung* (federal government). Inevitably, the students were looking for knowledge of the institutions themselves (institutionenkundliches Wissen). The class can be provided with a brief insight into the parliamentary system of government by these few articles of the basic law, since it was previously examined in class what happened in the Federal Parliament and what the relationship between the government and the opposition looked like. Now, the students are able to follow the case’s development, as long as it takes place within the important political institutions. This poses an opportunity for the students to express their opinions; the teacher is now able to fuel the discussion and openly share his own opinion, too, for which his students might ask apparently.

3. The Case Study Method

The *Spiegel*-affair had been widely discussed at that time. Hermann Giesecke (*1932), who was - concern-

ing the development of civic education in class - at that time another important author, who focused on how to deal with this affair in class in his dissertation (<http://www.hermann-giesecke.de/diss2.htm>). With regard to the *Spiegel*-affair, he developed his own particular method of teaching, which has been influential for civics classes in Germany until today that is so-called *conflict-based methodology*.⁸ The two central elements of conflict-based methodology are the principle of actuality and the case study method. In terms of the lesson, the *case* (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Case_method) and its different aspects, which are to be studied, need to be put into a chronological order.

Giesecke describes the case, its way of broadcasting by the media, its demands on the capabilities of comprehension of the citizens, and their possible reactions to it. Yet, this is only a first approach of methodological opportunities of this case; should this case serve as a good example, then its learners must be able to gain basic understanding of the political system from it as well. On that account, Bernhard Sutor (*1930), another important author in citizenship education and subject matter didactics, described the course of lessons in a case analysis as follows:

“We essentially differentiate ... for the course of lessons between

1. Stage of introduction (in terms of learning theory, stage of motivation that involves the preparatory planning of a discussion)
2. Stage of examination (to get knowledge to orientate and to take a critical view of the initial question)
3. Stage of problem solving (including discussions aimed at having a result and to form an opinion), decision-making
4. Stage of integration and generalization as a result of orientated learning.” (Sutor 1971; Schattschneider/May 2011)

What structure does Engelhardt’s teaching model have? On the basis of the public’s discussions of the *Spiegel*-affair – of which the students will have any knowledge –, it will be dealt with as follows:

1. The previous knowledge and the students’ predispositions towards the case will be discussed.
2. Afterwards, a verification phase of the previous knowledge and the predispositions gained by media (newspapers and radio) follows, in which the former are examined and, if necessary, corrected.
3. Insights are gained during the discussion by examination and correction: The world looks some-

⁸ There are similar developments in the USA concerning the “controversial issues” approach, for the first time mentioned by Oliver/Shaver 1966. [http://www.learner.org/workshops/civics/workshop7/otherlessons/index\\$1.html](http://www.learner.org/workshops/civics/workshop7/otherlessons/index$1.html). Actually, the approach of “socially acute questions” in France should be taken in consideration. (Simonneaux/Legardez 2010 <http://www.jsse.org/2010/2010-4/pdf/Simonneaux-et-al-JSSE-4-2010.pdf>).

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz-Josef_Strau%C3%9F



what different from what the students previously assumed, a new view is formed by meta-reflection.

- Since new insights into and knowledge of different political fields are gained, which are all important to clarify the case, these will be enhanced, and new ways to judge the course of the case or other cases are established.

Engelhardt follows a former German, *Didaktik* tradition – probably without knowing it as he did not make any references. According to Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbart>), the worldly-known founder of German scientifically-based pedagogy and who followed Immanuel Kant and had been appointed to the chair at Königsberg / Prussia, the pure system of knowledge does not educate at all.

Since the process of acquiring knowledge is divided in two main parts – experience of different perspectives (*“Gewinnung der Anschauungen”*) as well as development of content from descriptive subject matter (*“Entwicklung des Begrifflichen aus dem anschaulichen Stoffe”*)⁹ – a more or less fixed sequence in lessons and in each lesson’s unit can be identified.

In the 19th century, Herbart’s heirs, that is *Herbartians*, founded a system of formal steps for lesson planning for in-service courses for teachers (<http://www.xtimeline.com/evt/view.aspx?id=356620>). Engelhardt followed this tradition and structured his lesson units adequately:

	Herbartians	Engelhardt
1	To identify the previous knowledge. To introduce the new subject matter.	To get to know the new case and one’s own previous knowledge. To examine previous knowledge and prejudices to the case by comparison and coherence to other materials.
2	To compare and to link the new subject matter.	To link the case to the political system. To gain knowledge of the political system simultaneously.
3	To deduce definitions and to establish a systematic approach.	To link knowledge and insights in a new way, to get new perspectives and insights.
4	To use this knowledge.	To use this newly gained knowledge in further lessons and to link it to future political incidents.

9 Wolfgang Hilligen focused on the so-called “pulse theory” („Pulsschlagtheorem“) concerning German civic education pedagogy in terms of case and definition / systematic approach (<http://www.jsse.org/2004/2004-1/interview-hilligen.htm>). Case study method and teacher training support one another as well as the deductive and inductive procedure.

4. Categorial conflict-based teaching methodology and insight

According to Engelhardt – who refers to Kurt Gerhard Fischer (1928-2001, compare Fischer, Hermann, Mahrenholz 1965 with additional lesson reports; Schattschneider/May 2011), another important author in the German discussion on citizenship education and subject matter didactics –, students should be provided with fundamental *insights*. Fischer himself states that we need to differentiate between (definition-based single) knowledge and systematic and fundamental insights. Students have the opportunity to gain basic, definition-based knowledge to a number of areas, for instance parliamentary democracy and its establishment in the basic law concerning the lessons that the *Spiegel*-affair dealt with. This opportunity offered knowledge of several single words and definitions (categories). In a whole, these categories provide a *field of ideas*, which supports to understand the way a parliament works, the mission of the Federal President, the importance of a parliamentary Question hour, the opposition’s role, the legal status of the government and its members. This gives the students an overview of the political system. On this basis, Engelhardt and his colleagues established their general pedagogical concept of *categorial conflict-based teaching methodology* for civics lessons.

Wolfgang Klafki’s (*1927) work „Das pädagogische Problem des Elementaren und die Theorie der kategorialen Bildung“¹⁰ paved the way for this theory, which referred to the German tradition of *Didaktik* (didactics) ([http://books.google.de/books?id=Gp9Xg42YWe sC&pg=PA101&lpg=PA101&dq=klafki+categorial+education&source=bl&ots=9KkXiQw4sx&sig=_KhxlFmL97uIxs4eAs58Pas0LKA&hl=de&ei=bK0wTZQ\]ysKzBtS4-YoK&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=klafki%20categorial%20education&f=false](http://books.google.de/books?id=Gp9Xg42YWe sC&pg=PA101&lpg=PA101&dq=klafki+categorial+education&source=bl&ots=9KkXiQw4sx&sig=_KhxlFmL97uIxs4eAs58Pas0LKA&hl=de&ei=bK0wTZQ]ysKzBtS4-YoK&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=klafki%20categorial%20education&f=false)).

These knowledge and awareness can be provided by fundamental political insights. To establish these fundamental insights in terms of a deeper understanding (orientation towards a common sense) is meant to be *education* (Bildung) according to the German *Didaktik* tradition: “Political power could be abused – democracy without parties does not work – permanent discussion between government and opposition prevents dictatorship – fundamental freedom is under risk if not enough people support public welfare – liberal de-

10 Klafki, Wolfgang: *Das pädagogische Problem des Elementaren und die Theorie der kategorialen Bildung*, Weinheim: Beltz 1959, ders: *Kategoriale Bildung. Zur bildungstheoretischen Deutung der modernen Didaktik*, in: ders: *Studien zur Bildungstheorie und Didaktik*, Weinheim: Beltz 1963.

Some of his works have been translated into English and are listed at the end. Horst Leps *Journal of Social Science Education Kommentar: Kategoriale Konfliktdidaktik als Paradigma politischer Bildung* Volume 9, Number 3, 2010, pp. 94–101



mocracy needs to be supported by each and everyone who feels and acts responsible." (Engelhardt 1964, 99) Conflicts are crucial to democracy; conflicts are the content, on which lessons of democracy are based and from which students can learn. Therefore, *categorial conflict-based methodology is the paradigm of subject matter didactics in the field of citizenship/civic education regarding the German tradition.*

According to Engelhardt, fundamental insights provide "... guidance and orientation in a democratic, pluralistic, industrialized society, they should contribute to an understanding of their problems and their art of *recte vivere* in a society that is not easy to comprehend." (Engelhardt 1964, 11) Further on, they do not add up to specialist profound knowledge, but they do add up to an attitude that is based on consideration of and experience with basic questions of politics.

To gain knowledge, to raise awareness, to provide insights

In order to define knowledge (expertise and information), it is supposed to be the teaching and learning of words, which signify something. This denotes to establish a definition; the latter plays a vital role in civic education. However, its importance should not lead to the assumption that civic education is only about defining expressions and nothing else. For instance, a student says: "The - SPD, CDU, CSU, FDP, NPD, KPD ... - is a political party." Awareness is supposed to be a judgment *a posteriori*, which is followed by - a direct or connected - experience and its reflection. For instance:

"In A-town has been B-company on strike since days. Workers and employees have refused to work because they demand higher payments. Their employer, however, has refused to agree because of several reasons such as market prices have risen, raw materials are needed, and necessary investments have to be done in order to improve the company's competitiveness. Moreover, he argues that otherwise he cannot guarantee any jobs in the future." The result is: "because ... therefore" argumentative strategies mark adequate connections of a variety of information (payments, strike, worker, employee, employer, market price, competition, investments, etc.). Hence, adequate generalizations are based on gained experiences, which the individual mind has to consider. These are fundamental to analyze social phenomena and social experiences on a highly abstract level and assert a claim for several other phenomena in societies, which can be compared to the analysis' subject matter. Therefore, the above-mentioned reflections and its influence on civic education show the following: Apparently, a subject matter of civic education could only refer to cases (*casus*), in other words to a detail of social reality for a critical analysis. This analysis of social reality and experience cannot be limited to statements; the statement has to be questioned, to be compared to other facts, and

to be applied to accepted standards of political acting. However, statements are not issued because they should be, neither by social sciences nor by those who "make" politics; they raise questions on reasons and background, or they instruct to make announcements and measures according to the statement.

Obviously, the described process of awareness is considered to be the center of civic education.

"As far as our mind is concerned, enlightened civic education ends in the solution of a case, an incident. The lesson's result provides an inductively gained description of an incident and the explanation of its background." Fundamental insights are meant to be statements which fit to the kind of judgments in an *a priori* sense. Furthermore, insights are judgments, which closely anticipate all gained experiences. This anticipation applies to a logical idea and not in the sense of physical time." Fischer, Kurt Gerhard 1971: *Einführung in die Politische Bildung (Introduction into civic education)*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 2. Auflage, S. 91-96, shortened.

However, how should these fundamental insights be taught? They cannot be taught directly since students would only learn definitions by heart and will forget them right away. Moreover, insights should have an influence on the students' attitude towards specific fields of life. Civic education has to be political upbringing which forms the character and attitudes from early years on.

"Knowledge can be taught - fundamental insights, however, have to be discovered by every student independently, he has to gain these and cannot memorize them as easy as a political catechism. ... Knowledge can be tested - but, if someone is able to provide fundamental insights, this will be shown by judgments of political incidents only." (Engelhardt 1964, 10f.).

In order to provide students with fundamental insights, a teacher has to offer experience-based lessons: How does he give the impression that the perspective of a debate in the Federal Parliament is inside the classroom and not far away outside?

According to Engelhardt's draft, he introduces the *Spiegel*-affair to the classroom; the affair was not only an unknown object in the past, but moreover, the classroom was part of the participating public of the affair (so-called *politikbegleitender Unterricht*).

5. Concept of the exemplary in teaching and lesson reports

In terms of German educational science, the case study method is called concept of the exemplary in teaching (*exemplarisches Lernen*). In the 1950s and 1960s, Martin Wagenschein (1896-1988) (<http://www.natureinstitute.org/txt/mw/index.htm>) developed a unit for physics and mathematics on this basis. As a result, he has dominated the German academic discussion of teaching at school for decades and has had huge practical influence on lesson planning schemes



in German schools until today (browse: <http://www.jsse.org/2004/2004-1/lehrkunst-english-berg.htm>). According to his papers on general pedagogy, Wagenschein had not only stated his principles of teaching, but moreover, had described his lessons in detailed lesson reports. In the preface of a paper (1953) he puts forward:

„The developed units will be revealed step by step with most of particularity and thoroughness. However, I do not recommend readers and teachers to imitate this procedure exactly. On the contrary, every seeking and working group (of learners; HL) will find its own way. The *kind* of thoroughness should be displayed, and this could have only been done in a specific way. The aim is to give ideas and not regulations.“ (Wagenschein 1953/1975, 8)

As well as Wagenschein, Rudolf Engelhardt developed and explained his principles of teaching from a concrete case. This tradition of a concrete and well reflected lesson report, which is very descriptive and invites to imitate it, should be revived in teacher's training. In addition, it suits certainly for international communication on subject-related pedagogical concepts and teaching practice.

According to this lesson report the paradigm of categorical conflict-based didactics is developed which has determined the subject matter didactics in the field of civic education in Germany until today (Gagel 1994). With regard to school's reality, qualitative, empirical teaching research has identified fundamental problems when this approach is put into practice since it is necessary for teachers to have fundamental knowledge of the subject matter as well as a high *pedagogical beat* (pädagogischer Takt) in order to deal with the students' ideas adequately.

6. Opportunity for today's teaching

How might a lesson unit look like today – almost half of a century later, according to Engelhardt? This could be the subject matter of a seminar for future teachers. I will make a suggestion only, as follows.

With regard to the challenges that democracy faces today, these are different. Rudolf Engelhardt worked and wrote for a young, German democracy – gifted by the allies –, firstly, in order to anchor it in the students' minds, and secondly in order to prevent it from failing again like democracy in Weimar Republic in 1933. This democracy has changed as the economic and social environment has, in which it was embedded. Today, according to Colin Crouch, western democracies¹¹ face a phase, in which the democratic process is continuously caved. Since the 1970s, the state's ability to regulate the economy and society has declined. Political parties lose their members

to the thousands and the participation in political elections decreases. Although all forms of political participation have remained, the expectation that politics would “make a change” has decreased at the same time; whole groups of society have backed out of the political system.

An analysis of concrete politically-based questions reveals political-ideological questions of principle: What is the state's responsibility? What areas should not be regulated by the state? This has an impact on democracy: On the one hand, what areas should be regulated in democratic processes, and on the other, what should be regulated by those forces who are in power concerning different social areas? Questions of principle in a political sense are always strongly related to arguments on concrete political concepts, viewpoints, and interests. However, this is nothing new.

With regard to classical Greek discussions on democracy, this was linked to the genuine structure of society and those disparities in terms of power, authority, and influence, which threatened democracy as well as enriched it. (Schmidt 2008, 36, on Aristoteles: Politics IVth book) Therefore, the relation between political equality in a democracy and social inequalities in a pedagogical draft has to be regarded as crucial; however, it has often been forgotten. Practically, according to Engelhardt's model and including questions of principle on political order in the sense of Klafki and Fischer, a lesson unit could look like this (in the moment in which I am writing this):

1. The current case: The disputes over the period of time until nuclear power stations are to be shut down in Germany¹². Actors: major corporations, (new) small public utilities and other suppliers of regenerative energies, the current government, and the opposition. The previous knowledge and the media – newspapers, television, Internet (YouTube) – provide an overview.
2. One week later: What progress is made? Statements to the press of the major corporations and of the other suppliers of regenerative energies, negotiations in the chancellery, topic is analyzed by the ruling parties and the government, government's decision, discussion between government and opposition takes place. Media reports as soon as possible. At the same time, students examine the exposition of the political system and the law.
3. Generalizations are made in order to create a definition-based system. According to the individual lesson unit, viable insights are: “Actually, democracy needs to be supported anytime, in order to establish a strong democracy in a society that faces huge social inequalities and offers only more or less reasonable ways to take influence for the

¹¹ Crouch, Colin: Postdemokratie, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2008

¹² For initial information: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2022333,00.html>



individual.¹³ – “The alternative to a lack of democracy does not mean to abandon politics to the others, but moreover to lay emphasis on democracy.”

This unit could establish a field of expressions for the current German political system, as Engelhardt showed. At the same time, this unit may cause a deeper knowledge on this particular political system, since it makes the relationship between society and political order a subject of discussion.

7. Questions on the concept of the exemplary in teaching in seminars

In Germany, this report on the concept of the exemplary in teaching civics is used as an example itself in seminars for future teachers in terms of pedagogic theory as well as of planning and managing civic education lessons. The initial question in such seminars might be: How to deal with party politics at school?

In Germany, after a phase of ideological discussion in the field of education within the 1968 movement and later (1976), this question was answered by the so-called *Beutelsbacher Konsens* (<http://www.lpb-bw.de/beutelsbacher-konsens.html>, Consensus of Beutelsbach) in 1976.

According to this consensus, the three principles of a professional and democratic lesson are the following: prohibition of overwhelming¹⁴, command of controversy, and orientation on interests.

Each lesson has to be judged by these three criteria. In sum, these principles are closely related to a concrete idea of the civics teachers' role. In order to approach the lesson's report, further questions might be the following:

- How is the lesson unit structured? (structure of phases)
- How is the lesson reported? (style of the report)
- Should the content of a civic education lesson always be related to current political cases or problems, or are there elements of basic knowledge as well? (relationship between case and curriculum, the exemplary in teaching and structure.
- What could be and should be subject matter of civic education? (canon, curriculum) Should there be a principle opportunity to react to current topics in civic education – according to the principle of actuality?
- Do current topics exist, which should not be dealt with because students are not mature enough for these? Or, may every topic be presented by the

teacher according to the students' background and age in order to broaden their horizons?

- How does the relationship between the particularities of the case on the one hand and the systematic content to learn on the other look like? Does the particular case introduce into the subject matter, only? Or has the case to be chosen on the basis that students will be able to access the basic principles of the subject matter? The case: Pure introduction or continuous case study?
- How could we avoid the problem that students need to know more than is necessary in order to work on the case appropriately, and might therefore give up too early?
- Is the teacher allowed to express his or her political opinion in the lesson? Is it allowed to encourage political action? How does forming an opinion relate to an action? How is the relationship between reflection and political involvement established?
- Consequently, the future teachers gain their professional idea of their subject-related work with students in the classroom.

“The best practice exemplary in teaching does not mean to teach it better, but moreover, that it will inspire you to create a new one.” (Wolfgang Hilligen <http://www.jsse.org/2004/2004-1/interview-hilligen.htm>)

13 In addition to Fischer's latest insight: „Der politische Unterricht“ S. 33

14 Link this to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of thinking about upbringing and education (liberal education) and what is discussed traditionally in terms of indoctrination. See e.g.. Snook (1972).



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