How does a competent teacher become a good teacher?
On judgement, wisdom, and virtuosity in teaching and teacher education

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The limits of competence-based teacher education[1]

The idea that teachers should be competent at what they do, is difficult to contest. Perhaps this partly explains the popular appeal of competence-based approaches to teaching and teacher education which, in recent decades, have spread rapidly across many countries around the world (for an overview and critical analysis see Heilbronn 2008, chapter 2). National frameworks for teacher education are increasingly being formulated in terms of competences, and even the European Commission has recently produced a set of *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications,*[2] meant to stimulate "reflection about actions that can be taken at Member State level and how the European Union might support these" – as it was formulated in the 2007 document *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education*[3]. The idea of competence, however, has more than just rhetorical appeal. Its introduction marks an important shift in focus from what teachers should *know* to what they should be able to *do,* and potentially even to how they should *be*. In this regard the idea of competence represents a more practical and more holistic outlook in that it encompasses knowledge, skills and professional action, rather than seeing such action as either the application of knowledge – an idea captured in evidence-based approaches to teaching and teacher education (see Biesta 2007; 2010a) – or the enactment of skills – an approach particularly prominent in those situations where teachers are supposed to pick up their skills 'on the shop floor,' so to speak, rather than that they are thought to be in need of any proper professional education.

Yet the idea of competence is not without problems, and also not without risks (see Mulder, Weigel & Collins 2007; Biesta & Priestley 2013). The risks have to do with the way in which the notion of competence is defined and understood; the problems with how it is being implemented and enacted. With regard to matters of definition competence can, on the one hand, be seen as an integrative approach to professional action that highlights the complex combination of knowledge, skills, understandings, values, and purposes (for such a definition see Deakin Crick 2008, p.313). In such an interpretation a competence-based approach clearly has the potential to promote the professional agency of teachers. Yet many commentators have shown that the idea of competence actually steers the field of teaching and teacher education in the opposite direction through its emphasis on performance, standards, measurement and control, thus reducing and ultimately undermining the agency of teachers (see Heilbronn 2008, pp. 21-25; see also Winch 2000; Priestley, Robinson & Biesta 2012).

With regard to the practical implementation of the idea of competence, particularly within the field of teacher education, there are a number of additional problems. One has to do with the fact that any attempt to describe in full detail everything that teachers should be competent at, runs the risk

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[1] I would like to thank the editors of this volume for their helpful feedback and for including me in this project.
[2] http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/principles_en.pdf [Last accessed 2 August 2012]
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/education/com392_en.pdf [Last accessed 2 August 2012]

of generating lists that are far too long and far too detailed. The existence of such lists can result in a situation where teacher education turns into a tick box exercise focused on establishing whether students have managed to achieve everything on the list. This not only can lead easily to a disjointed curriculum and an instrumental approach to the education of teachers, but also runs the risk of turning teacher education from a collective experience to a plethora of individual learning trajectories where students are just working towards the achievement of their 'own' competencies, without a need to interact with or be exposed to fellow students.

A second major problem is that competencies are always orientated towards the past and the present. It is, after all, only possible to describe what a teacher needs to be competent at in relation to situations that are already known. Yet teaching is in a very fundamental sense always open towards the future. There is a danger, therefore, that a competence-based curriculum for teacher education ties students too much to the current situation – or to a particular interpretation of the current situation – rather than that it prepares them sufficiently for meaningful action in an unknown future. This, as I will argue in more detail below, is not meant as an argument that teachers need flexible skills (on this idea, see Biesta, in press), but as an argument for the central role of judgement in teaching.

All this feeds into what is perhaps the most important problem with and limitation of a competence-based approach to teacher education, which is the fact that good teachers not simply need to be able to do all kind of things – in this regard it is true that they need to be competent (and *being* competent is a better formulation than *having* competences) – but that they also need to be able to judge which competences should be utilised in the always concrete situations in which teachers work. If competences in a sense provide teachers with a repertoire of possibilities, there is still the challenge to judge which of those possibilities should be actualized in order to realize good and meaningful teaching. This is why I wish to suggest that while the possession of competences may be a *necessary* condition for good teaching, it can never be a *sufficient* condition. And the reason for this lies in the fact that good teaching requires *judgement* about what an educationally desirable course of action is in *this* concrete situation with *these* concrete students at *this* particular stage in their educational trajectory.

In its shortest formula we might say, therefore, that "good teaching = competences + judgement". But this raises a number of further questions. One is 'Why do we need judgement in teaching?' A second is 'What kinds of judgement do we need in teaching?' And the third is 'How might we help teachers to become capable of such judgements? – which is the question of teacher education. In what follows I aim to provide an answer to these questions. Through this I will articulate a conception of teacher education that can be seen as an alternative for competence-based approaches. This conception focuses on the ways in which, through teacher education, teachers can enhance their ability for making situated judgements about what is educationally desirable, both with regard to the 'ends' and the 'means' of education.[4]

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[4] As I will try to make clear throughout this chapter, my ambition is not to specify what an educationally desirable course of action is, but to highlight the fact that in education the question about what is educationally desirable – both with regard to the aims and ends (the purpose of education) and with regard to the ways of proceeding (the 'means' of education) – is inevitable.

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As I will explain in more detail below, I refer to this approach as a *virtue-based approach* (see also Biesta 2013a), which is the reason why I will emphasise the need for teachers to develop educational virtuosity. I will preface my discussion with an exploration of the particular nature of teaching and education more generally.

On the 'nature' of education: Teleology and the three domains of educational purpose

In order to understand why there is a need for judgement in teaching, we need to begin by looking more closely at the particular nature of educational processes and practices. In recent years it has become fashionable to do so with the help of the language of learning. Yet, as I have argued elsewhere in more detail (see particularly Biesta 2004; 2006; 2010b), the language of learning is a very limited and to a certain degree even inadequate language to capture what education is about. Perhaps the quickest way to highlight what the problem is, is to say that the point of education is *not* that students learn, but that they learn *something*, that they learn it for particular *reasons* and that they learn it *from someone*. Questions of *content*, *purpose and relationships* are precisely what distinguishes (a general discussion about) learning from (a concrete discussion about) education. Education, to put it differently, is not designed so that children and young people might learn – which they can anywhere – but so that they might learn particular things (in the broad sense of the word) within particular relationships and for particular reasons.

The latter dimension – which concerns the question of purpose – is the most central and most fundamental one, because it is only once we have articulated what we want our educational arrangements and efforts to bring about, that we can make decisions about relevant content and about the kind of relationships that are most conducive for this. Without a sense of purpose, there may be learning but not education. This is why we might adopt the stronger claim that education is not simply a practice that is *characterised* by the presence of purposes, but one that is actually a practice *constituted* by purpose(s) (see Biesta 2010a,b). In philosophical language education can therefore be seen as a *teleological* practice, that is, a practice constituted by a *telos*. This already provides us with one important reason why judgement is needed in education, as we need to come to some kind of understanding of what the purpose of our educational activities should be. (It is useful here to follow the distinction suggested by Richard Peters between the purpose of an activity, which refers to the reason for it, and the aims of an activity, which concern the concrete targets one wishes to achieve; see Peters 1973, p.13.)

But here we encounter an additional reason why judgement is needed in education, which has to do with the fact that in education the question of purpose is a *multi-dimensional question*. This means that there is not one single purpose of education but that there are a number of different domains of educational purpose (on this thesis see particularly Biesta 2009; 2010b). The idea here is a simple one, but it has some profound implications for understanding the role of judgements in education.

What I seek to do is to highlight the dimensions of this question, but it is up to educators in concrete situations to engage with the question of what is desirable and formulate and justify their situated answers, in dialogue with other 'stakeholders' in the process. My ambition is to ensure that such deliberations and justifications play a central role in teaching and hence also have a central position in the education of teachers.

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One way to understand the multi-dimensional nature of educational purpose is to start from the question how education *functions*, that is, what our educational actions and activities effect. One important function of education lies in the domain of *qualification*. Here education is concerned with the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, skills, dispositions and understandings that qualify children and young people for doing certain things. Such doing can either be understood in a narrow sense, for example becoming qualified to perform a certain task or job. Or it can be understood in a much wider sense, such as that education qualifies children and young people to live a life in modern, complex societies.

Some would say that this is the only dimension in which education functions, that is, that education is basically about getting knowledge and skills. Others would highlight however that education is not just about qualification but also about *socialisation*, that is, about initiating children and young people into existing traditions, cultures, ways of doing and ways of being. Education partly does this deliberately, for example in the form of professional socialisation, or socialisation into the culture of democracy. The idea of the hidden curriculum (Giroux & Purpel 1983) suggests, however, that socialisation also happens behind the back of teachers and students, thus reproducing existing traditions, cultures, ways of doing and being often, though not necessarily, in ways that benefit some more than others, thus contributing to the reproduction of material and social inequalities. In addition to qualification and socialisation I wish to argue – and have argued elsewhere (Biesta 2009; 2010b) – that any educational activity or effort always also impacts on the person, that is, on the qualities of the person and on personal qualities. Here we can think, for example, of the ways in which through the acquisition of knowledge and understanding individuals become empowered. Or how, through adopting particular culture patterns, they become disempowered. This is a domain where we can find such qualities as autonomy, criticality, empathy or compassion, that all are potential 'effects' of education. I have suggested to refer to this third dimension as *subjectification*, as it concerns processes of being/becoming a human subject. (For the particular reason to use the notion of 'subject' rather than, for example, the notion of 'person' or 'identity' see particularly Biesta 2010b, chapter 4; see also Biesta 2006; 2013b.)

If it is granted that qualification, socialisation and subjectification are three domains or dimensions in which education *functions* – which means nothing more that when we teach we always have some impact in each of these three domains – then it could be argued that as educators we also need to take responsibility for the impact of our educational actions in relation to these three domains. That is why the distinction between qualification, socialisation and subjectification cannot only be used in an analytical way – that is, to analyse the 'impact' of particular educational arrangements – but also in a programmatic sense – that is, to articulate what it one wishes to achieve or bring about through one's educational efforts. That is why they can also been seen as three purposes of education. Given that within each domain there can actually be significantly different views, for example, about what knowledge is, what tradition or culture or, or what it means to be a human subject, I prefer to refer to them as three *domains of educational purpose*. And the suggestion here is that those who have a responsibility for education – be they teachers, policy makers, politicians, or students themselves – need to articulate and justify what they seek to achieve in relation to each of these domains.

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Why do we need judgement in teaching? Purpose, form, balance, trade-offs, and pragmatism

Against this background we are now in a position to answer the question why judgement is needed in education. The answer to this question is threefold. We first of all need judgement in relation to the question what the *purpose* of our educational arrangements and activities is to be – and this question, as mentioned, poses itself as a multi-dimensional question, so that we need to give an answer to what it is we wish to achieve and what we wish our students to achieve in relation to each of the three domains of educational purpose – a task that also requires that we answer the question *why* it is that we want to achieve this; which is a matter of justification. The reason that we need judgement here, is because any answer to this question is not a matter of stating facts, but involves values and hence normative preferences. Science and research can therefore never provide an answer to the question what education ought to be *for* in relation to the three domains of educational purpose. What it can do, at most, is provide information that might be relevant for understanding what is possible and feasible in each of the domains. Hence already at the very start of any educational endeavour we find a need for judgement. But it is not that we only need to come to a judgement about the purpose of our educational endeavours before we engage with them. The question of what it is we seek to achieve returns again and again as a very concrete question that needs to be answered in relation to concrete and, in a certain sense, always unique individual students in concrete and in a certain sense unique situations. It is therefore a question that lies at the heart of teaching and of what it means to be a teacher.

A second 'moment' of judgement has to do with the ways in which we organise and enact education, that is, with regard to the *forms* of educational action. This has to do with another characteristic that makes education different from many other human fields and practices, namely the fact that in education there is an internal relationship between means and ends. The means of education – the ways in which we act, the things we say and how we say them, the ways in which we relate to our students and let them relate to each other – can never be thought of as mere instruments that should just effectively bring about certain 'outcomes.' The reason for this lies in the fact that students not only learn from what we say but also, and often more so, from how we say it and from what we do. This means that our ways of doing in education do not just need to be effective (and sometimes that is not even a relevant criterion at all; see below). We always also need to judge whether they are educationally appropriate – which requires that we reflect on what our students might learn or pick up from the ways in which we do things and the ways in which we organise and arrange education. This is not to suggest that question about how our educational actions might 'impact' in the different domains in which education functions are not relevant. On the contrary, there are important judgements to be made about that as well (I return to this in the next section). But there is always the additional question whether our means, our ways of being and doing, are educationally appropriate, that is, whether the messages they convey – implicitly or explicitly – are indeed the messages we seek to convey (which, ideally, should be a matter of congruency, but practically should at least be a matter where the means do not contradict or obstruct the ends we seek to achieve). In addition to a technical judgement about the effectiveness of our actions and arrangements, there is therefore always also a need for a judgement about the educational desirability of our actions and arrangements.

The third 'moment' of judgement in education follows directly from the multi-dimensional nature of educational purpose, because although there are interconnections between the three domains and there are, therefore, possibilities for synergy – to understand something can, as suggested, contribute to empowerment and agency – the three domains are not seamlessly connected, so that, in addition to opportunities for synergy, there is also a real chance for tension and conflict. The three domains of educational pull us as educators in slightly (and sometimes significantly) different directions. Think, for example, of the potentially damaging effects in the domain of subjectification of a constant high pressure in the domain of qualification, that is, a constant high pressure to 'perform' in the sphere of knowledge and skills. That is why in each educational situation – both at the general level of educational design and programming and at the concrete level of the encounter with each individual student – there is, on the one hand, a judgement needed about what an educationally appropriate *balance* between the three domains might be and, on the other hand, there is a judgement needed about the inevitable *trade offs* between what can be achieved in the three domains. It is, after all, possible to achieve highly in each of the domains, but this often comes at a cost for what can be achieved in the other domains – think again of the 'price' of a single emphasis on qualification with regard to both the domain of subjectification and the domain of socialisation (with regard to the latter it means, for example, that we initiate our students into a culture of competition rather than one of collaboration).

The final point I wish to make is that, given the teleological character of education, any judgements we make about *how* to proceed – that is any judgements about the form and content of education – once we have come to an understanding of what a desirable and justifiable set of purposes for our educational endeavours is, have to be understood as entirely *pragmatic*. I mean pragmatic here in the technical sense of the word, that is, where we judge the desirability of an educational arrangement or course of action in function of what the arrangement or course of action is supposed to bring about. Pragmatic judgements are therefore different from principled judgements, where we judge the desirability of an arrangement or course of action just on the qualities of the arrangement or course of action itself. While there is some room for principled judgements about the form and content of education in that we do not want them to be in any way unethical or immoral, apart from this any decision we make about how to proceed in education always needs to be taken in light of what it is we have judged to be a desirable set of purposes for our activities.

What I have in mind here is very practical and down-to-earth, but nonetheless very important and often overlooked in educational discussions, particularly when a new fashion emerges – sometimes from the field of practice, sometimes from the field of policy, sometimes from the field of theory and research – and those working in education feel forced or compelled to adopt this fashion without asking what it might be good for. That our judgements ought to be pragmatic means, therefore, that in education nothing, that is, no arrangement, no course of action, not even any content or curriculum, is desirable in itself; it all depends on what we seek to achieve (and of course on how we envisage that a particular arrangement or course of action might contribute to the purposes set). Concretely, it means that whether education should, for example, be flexible or inflexible, whether it should be personalised or general, whether it should be student-led or curriculum-led, whether the aims should be transparent and visible for the student, or not transparent and invisible, whether education should be easy and nice or difficult and strict, and perhaps even whether education

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should be effective or not, is not something we can decide in an abstract sense, but only in relation to what it is we seek to achieve. Pragmatic thinking can help us, on the one hand, to make a sound educational judgement about any new idea or suggestion that enters the educational domain – and notions such as flexibility, personalisation, transparency and visibility are currently definitely amongst the more fashionable ones – and can, on the other hand, also help us to see the value of ways of educational doing that are all too quickly discredited as a result of certain educational fashions. It can help us, in other words, to develop progressive arguments for what, from the perspective of fashion and a fetish for the new, might be seen as conservative ideas (for an attempt to reclaim the idea of teaching for education, see Biesta 2012).

What kinds of judgement do we need in teaching? Practical knowledge and practical wisdom
If the previous section has established a case for why judgement is needed in teaching by indicating those aspects of the practice of teaching where a judgement is called for, the question I wish to explore in this section is at a slightly higher level of abstraction and has to do with the *kinds* of judgement we need in teaching.[5] My guide in this section will be Aristotle (384-322 BC) and the reason for turning to his work is twofold. First of all he provides a compelling and useful set of concepts for understanding the role of judgement in teaching. Secondly he provides some interesting and original suggestions for teacher education through his ideas about the way in which we develop our ability for judgement. I will turn to the latter question in the next section and will focus here on Aristotle's views about judgement.

While in the previous section I have tried to indicate the different aspects and 'moments' of teaching where judgement is needed, one may still ask why judgement is actually needed in teaching. Couldn't it be the case, so a critic might suggest, that we only need judgement as long as there are aspects of teaching where we lack sufficient knowledge but that, with the advancement of the science of teaching, we will eventually reach a point where we no longer need judgement but can proceed with certainty? One argument against the idea of the sufficiency of a science of teaching, that is, of a conception of research that seeks to cover all the possible aspects of teaching, can be found in the work of William James (1842-1910) who in his *Talks to Teachers* made the point in the following way.

> Psychology is a science, and teaching is an art; and sciences never generate arts directly out of themselves. An intermediary inventive mind must make the application, by using its originality.

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[5] The argument I am developing in this chapter focuses on how we might understand teaching and what such an understanding implies for the role of the teacher. The understanding I put forward focuses on the role of judgement in teaching, and thus highlights the crucial importance of teachers' judgement. My focus is on the implications of this understanding for teacher education. There is a further question that falls outside of the scope of this chapter, which is the extent to which teachers are able to exercise the judgements that, in my view, are crucial for any educationally meaningful teaching. This question partly has to do with the self-understanding teachers have of their own profession and professional scope for action, but is of course also highly influenced by the concrete environments in which teachers work – environments that nowadays often only offer little scope for teacher judgement (see also Priestley, Biesta & Robinson in press).

> The most such sciences can do is to help us to catch ourselves up and check ourselves, if we start to reason or to behave wrongly; and to criticize ourselves more articulately after we have made mistakes.

> To know psychology, therefore, is absolutely no guarantee that we shall be good teachers. To advance to that result, we must have an additional endowment altogether, a happy tact and ingenuity to tell us what definite things to say and do when the pupil is before us. That ingenuity in meeting and pursuing the pupil, that tact for the concrete situation, though they are the alpha and omega of the teacher's art, are things to which psychology cannot help us in the least. (James, 1899, pp.14-15)

The point James makes here could be characterized as an *epistemological* point, as he indicates the gap between the general knowledge the science of psychology can generate and the specific knowledge the teacher needs in each concrete situation. Looking at it in this way, we could say that the knowledge science can generate about teaching is never sufficient. Or, looking at it from the other side, such knowledge can never tell teachers what they should do, but can at most inform their judgements. Whereas this line of thought leaves open the possibility that a science of teaching might be possible – and in a sense only makes the point that scientific knowledge and practical knowledge are of a different category – Aristotle goes one step further by arguing that there is a fundamental difference between what he refers to as the theoretical life (the 'bios theoretikos') and the practical life (the 'bios praktikos'). This suggests that his argument is not epistemological but *ontological* as it asks what kind of reality teaching is or, to be more precise, in what kind of reality teaching takes place.

Aristotle conceives of the theoretical life as having to do with "the necessary and the eternal" (Aristotle 1980, p.140), that is, with those parts of reality that do not change. He refers to the knowledge that is at stake here as 'episteme' which is often translated as 'science' (although the translation is a bit misleading as it suggests that science is an epistemological category – an idea well refuted by authors such as Karl Popper, Stephen Toulmin, Thomas Kuhn and Bruno Latour). We can think of *episteme* as representational knowledge about an unchanging world 'out there' and the connection Aristotle makes between *episteme* and the eternal suggests that it is, in principle, possible to generate knowledge that is 100% certain and true, simply because its object is in the domain of the necessary and the eternal. Teaching, however, is not something that takes place in this domain. It rather belongs to the practical life, which Aristotle refers to as the domain of the "variable" (ibid., p. 142), that is, the domain of change and possibility. It is the world in which we act and in which our actions make a difference. What is interesting about Aristotle's ideas about our activities in the domain of the variable is that he makes a distinction between two 'modes' of acting (and hence two forms or kinds of judgement; see below), one to which he refers as *poiesis* and one to which he refers as *praxis* or, in Carr's (1987) translation, 'making action' and 'doing action.' Both modes of action require judgement, but the kind of judgement needed is radically different, and this is an important insight for the art of education.

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Poiesis is about the production or fabrication of things – such as, for example, a saddle or a ship – although I prefer to think of it slightly more widely, that is, as action that brings something into existence (see below). It is, as Aristotle puts it, about "how something may come into being which is capable of either being or not being" (which means that it is about the variable, not about what is eternal and necessary), and about things "whose origin is in the maker and not in the thing made" (which distinguishes *poiesis* from biological phenomena such as growth and development) (Aristotle, 1980, p. 141). *Poiesis* is, in short, about the creation of something that did not exist before. The kind of knowledge we need for *poiesis* is *techne* (usually translated as 'art,' although this translation is a little misleading and unhelpful as it is actually about the kind of knowledge and judgement we need in the domain of *poiesis*). Unlike episteme, which is knowledge about what is and how it is, *techne* is "knowledge of how to make things" (ibid, p.141). *Techne* thus is about finding the means that will bring about what one seeks to bring about or bring into existence. It encompasses knowledge about the materials we work with and about the techniques we can apply to work with those materials. But making something, such as a saddle is never about simply following a recipe. It involves making judgements about the application of our general knowledge to *this* piece of leather, for *this* horse, and for *this* person riding the horse. So we make judgements about application, production and effectiveness in our attempts to bring something into existence.

The domain of the variable is, however, not confined to the world of things, but also includes the social world; the world of human action and interaction. It is here that a second art is called for – the art of *praxis*. The orientation here is not towards the production of things but towards the promotion of human flourishing (*eudamonia*). *Praxis*, Aristotle writes, is "about what sort of things conduce to the good life in general" (ibid, p.142). We could say that *praxis* is about good action, but good action is here not to be understood as a means for bringing about something else – that is the domain of *poiesis* which "has an end other than itself" (ibid., p.143). "Good action," on the other hand, "itself is its end" (ibid, p.143). The kind of judgement we need here is therefore not about *how* things should be done. We rather need judgement "about *what is to be done*" (ibid; emphasis added). Aristotle refers to this kind of judgement as *phronesis*, which is usually translated as practical wisdom. Aristotle gives the following, more precise definition of *phronesis* as a "reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human goods" (ibid, p.143).

Aristotle's reflections on the domain of the variable and the different modes of action within it are important for understanding the role of judgement in education in a more precise manner. The first and perhaps most important point to make in relation to this, is to say that we should never think of education *just* in terms of *poiesis* but always also in terms of *praxis*. While education is clearly located in the domain of the variable, it is concerned with the interaction between human beings, not the interaction between human beings and the material world. Our students are never simply objects, but are always to be seen and treated as human beings in their own right, that is as subjects. Yet this does not mean that we should exclude the idea of *poiesis* from our educational thinking. (I am responding here to authors in the educational literature who tend to overemphasise phronesis and underemphasise – or in some cases even reject – techne as being educationally relevant; see, for example, Heilbronn 2008, chapter 5; Hillier 2012, chapter 1.) After all, we do want our teaching and our curricula to have effect and be effective and we do want our students to achieve, both in the domain of qualification and in the domain of socialization. But that should never be the be all

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and end all of education, because we also want our students to flourish as human beings – which is the question of *praxis* – which is perhaps an interest first of all located in the domain of subjectification, although we could also say that this is precisely where the interest in subjectification intersects with both qualification and socialization (for example in the difference between what we might call subjectivity-reducing and subjectivity-promoting qualification and subjectivity-reducing and subjectivity-promoting socialization).

The second point that follows from these considerations is that with Aristotle we can now identify the two difference kinds or modes of judgement that are needed in education. On the one hand judgement plays a role in the domain of *poiesis*, the domain concerned with bringing something into existence – and I have carefully used the phrase 'bringing something into existence' rather than the cruder notion of production or technology, because I wish to highlight that poiesis is not to be understood in terms of mechanical or even mechanistic and machine-like production, but rather is to be understood as a creative act and an act of creation where we do aim to bring 'things' into existence that did not exist before (see also Biesta 2013, chapter 1). The judgements we need here are *judgements about how to do things* and we have to acknowledge that these are indeed judgements, because in the domain of the variable we are working with unpredictable 'material' which means that the results of our activities here will always *and necessarily* have a degree of uncertainty. This is not an uncertainty that at some point in time can be overcome once we have enough knowledge of all factors and dimensions of education. It is an uncertainty that stems from the very fact that education, as an interaction between living human beings, is in a fundamental sense open towards the future (which means that the only way to reduce this radical openness is by taking the 'human factor' out of education). In addition to judgements about how to do things, we need *judgements about what is to be done* as the ultimate orientation of all education should be to the well-being and flourishing of our students, not in some kind of narrow, instrumental way – for example orientated towards making our students 'happy' or 'satisfied' – but by contributing to the possibility of leading a worthy, meaningful human life (on the notion of worthiness see Gur Ze'ev 2010, pp. 11-28). Both forms of judgement can be called 'practical,' as they both are concerned with acting in the domain of the variable. Perhaps the first could be called *practical knowledge* – as it is knowledge about how to operate effectively in the domain of the variable – whereas the second can be called *practical wisdom* (which is the common translation of the word 'phronesis') – as it is about the ability to judge what is to be done in a given situation, which is the question of educational purpose(s) as discussed above.

How can teachers become capable of educational judgement?
In the previous sections I have tried to make clear why we need judgement in education, where we need judgement in education, and what kinds of judgement we need in education. I have, following Aristotle, argued that education has both poiesis and praxis dimensions, so that we both need judgement about how to do things (*techne*) and judgement about what is to be done (*phronesis*). I have also argued that because of the teleological nature of education, that is, the fact that education is constituted by purposes – and precisely here education is different from learning – all our educational actions and activities are ultimately 'framed' by our considered views about what education is for. And this question is not only an abstract question at the level of education policy or curriculum theory, but is (also) a concrete question that returns again and again in every concrete

moment of teaching. It is one of the reasons why all our judgements in education ultimately need to be pragmatic – that is connected to the question what the activity is for. And, given that the purpose of education is multi-dimensional, always also raises questions about balance, tensions and trade offs between the three domains of educational purpose. All this means that the ability to judge and to do so in an educational way – which means to ask with everything we do whether it is educationally desirable – is absolutely central for good teaching. This is why it also should have a central role in teacher education. But how should we understand the 'ability' to make educational judgements? And how can we support teachers in 'developing' this 'ability'? It is here that I will turn one more time to Aristotle.[6]

While practical knowledge (*techne*) plays an important role in teaching, all judgements we make in relation to how we should proceed are ultimately framed by judgements about what is to be done, which is the domain of practical wisdom (*phronesis*). While it is important for teachers to develop their ability for judgement with regard to the question how to act, the underlying need – which precisely marks the difference between a competent teacher and a good teacher – has to do with the ability to make judgements about what is educationally desirable. For this teachers need practical wisdom (*phronesis*). While some try to suggest that practical wisdom is itself a competence – that is, something a teacher can acquire and then possess – Aristotle argues, and this is the lead I will follow here, that practical wisdom should be understood as a quality or excellence of the person. It is therefore in the domain of *being* not the domain of *having*. The question for teacher education, therefore, is not the question how a student can *acquire* practical wisdom; it rather is the question how the student can become educationally wise Or in Aristotle's terms: the question is not how the teacher can acquire *phronesis*, but how the teacher can become a *phronimos*, a practically (and educationally) wise person (on this distinction see also Biesta 2013a). What we are talking about here is what in Greek is called ἀρετή and in English is often translated as *virtue* or *character*. While both words have problematic sides – and particularly the notion of 'character' has, through discussions on character education, been made into an aim for rather strict and reproductive socialization – what we have with the idea of ἀρετή is not a skill or cognitive faculty, but rather something that *characterises* the way of being and acting of a person. It is a quality that permeates how the person is and acts which means that, in more modern terms, it is a holistic and embodied quality. So how can student teachers become educationally wise? Aristotle makes two interesting points in relation to this question. The first is his observation "that a young man of practical wisdom cannot be found" (Aristotle 1980, p.148), which suggests that practical wisdom comes with age or, to be more precise, that it comes with *experience*. The second is that Aristotle does not provide abstract definitions of what practical wisdom looks like, but rather tries to make this clear through examples, that is, to referring to those who exemplify *phronesis* in a particular domain. Taking all this together I would like to conclude with three 'reference points' for teacher education: a focus on the

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[6] In what follows I provide a particular interpretation of Aristotle that I find useful for the point I wish to make about teacher education. For this I focus on *phronesis* and the idea of virtue in Aristotle. The question I leave aside in this discussion is about the status of *techne* and the extent to which this does or does not belong to the intellectual virtues. In some places Aristotle does include it, yet in other places he does not – which raises further questions about (the different interpretations of) the distinction between *episteme* and *techne* in Aristotle's work. For a helpful discussion see Parry 2008.

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formation of character or educational virtuosity; a focus on practising judgement; and a focus engagement with examples of educational virtuosity.

The first point is that teacher education should be understood as a process of the formation of the person – not, that is, the individual person, but the person as professional. This means that in terms of the three domains of educational purpose, we should not confine teacher education to the domain of qualification – to just providing teachers with the knowledge and skills they need – nor to the domain of socialisation – that is, just initiating them into the (existing) professional culture. While such paths may bring about teachers who are competent, they may not result in teachers who are good, precisely because they may lack the embodied ability to place their knowledge, skills and ways of doing within the wider context of the question what is to be done, the question, as to what is educationally desirable. To make that question the centre of one's professional action as a teacher requires that this question – and the ability to engage with it in a meaningful way – permeates everything one does. We could say, therefore, that teacher education should focus on the formation of educational character. However, given potentially problematic connotations of that word, I prefer to describe the approach I have been outlining here as a *virtue-based approach*, that is, an approach aimed at the formation of educational virtuous professionals. To play a little with the word 'virtue,' we could rephrase this as a concern for the education of professionals whose ways of acting exemplify *educational virtuosity*, that is, embodied educational wisdom: the embodied ability to make wise educational judgements about what is to be done, that is, about what is educationally desirable. As I have tried to make clear throughout this chapter, such a virtue-based approach is significantly different both from a competence-based approach and an evidence-based approach. When we think of how musicians develop their virtuosity we can see two other important dimensions of a virtue-based approach, which give us the other two reference points for teacher education.

The second is that we can only develop our virtuosity for educational wisdom by practising such judgement, that is, by being engaged in the practice of judgement from the very start of our formation as teachers. The question as to what is educationally desirable is, to put it differently, not a question that should come at the very end of teacher education, once all the knowledge, skills and competences have been acquired, but should be there from day one – perhaps on the simple principle that if you want to learn to play the piano there is no point in starting on a flute; you have to engage with the piano, its challenges, complexities and difficulties from day one if you want to become a good piano player. It is perhaps important to emphasise that this is not an argument for training on the job. It is only an argument for saying that if our ultimate aim is the formation of educational wisdom, of educationally wise teachers, this needs to permeate the teacher education curriculum from the very start.

The third reference point that follows from my considerations is the importance of developing educational virtuosity through examples, that is, through studying the virtuosity of others, precisely because we are not talking about an abstract skill, but an embodied and situated way of doing, so it requires careful study of those who we might see as good – or for that matter – bad examples of having become educationally wise. Again, this is not an argument for training on the shop floor, and also not for fashionable idea of peer learning. It is precisely the difficult task of studying the

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virtuosity of experienced educators, trying to see how it functions, how it is embodied, where it is done explicitly, where it is held back precisely for educational reasons, and so on. Such a trajectory of study requires careful attention to detail, and thus requires time and a need for deepening, because what we may be able to see the first time we look may become very different from what we might be able to see the second time we look, and so on.

Concluding comments

In this chapter I have tried to answer the question how a competent teacher might become a good teacher. I have suggested that the difference between a competent and a good teacher lies in the ability to bring judgement to the task of teaching. I have, on the one hand, tried to indicate why and where teaching needs judgement and have, on the other hand, tried to make clear what kinds of judgement teachers need. Against this background I have made a case for a virtue-based rather than a competence-based or evidence-based conception of teaching and teacher education and have, in relation to the latter domain, highlighted the importance of working on educational virtuosity in order for teachers to become educationally wise. Initial teacher education has an important and unique role to play in this, and I have provided a number of reference points for such forms of teacher education. Nonetheless I believe that teachers can continue to grow in their educational wisdom, and in this regard the question what is educationally desirable is one that should remain central throughout their teaching career.

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