

Chapter Three

Reducing communicative inequalities towards a pedagogy for inclusion

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Framing

This chapter has two broad aims. One is the larger social and political aim referred to in the first part of the title. The reference to the work of Paolo Freire (1972) is entirely deliberate. The other, derived from the first, is to reflect on the social and political purposes of the academic field of Communication Studies [1] to increase its relevance for analyzing and developing solutions for pressing issues such as ‘the digital divide’, ‘the knowledge gap/information gap’, and others.

Theoretically, this entails connecting the macro-level of the purposes and aims of communication policy – particularly in relation to communication rights – with the micro-level of habits, practices, and structures of information use in the everyday life of social actors. This necessitates an extension of Communication Studies theory, as it has been conceptualized within mainstream academic thinking in the German speaking areas. In this tradition, phenomena are often studied under the heading of ‘media-effects’. In this chapter, communication is framed differently by introducing the notion of ‘learning’. ‘Socialization’ processes are central to any theorizing and development of policies and proposals for action in relation to communicational inequalities, and these processes are best described by the notion of ‘learning as knowledge production’. ‘Learning’ describes the process of change in the learner through the changes in the learner’s resources, gained in the process of knowledge production. In this way, both the concept and the processes become an essential component of a theory, which can then achieve the link between macro- and micro-levels of analysis.

The stance being developed in this chapter is grounded in an ethnographic study, which was carried out between 2001 and 2004 in a remote rural area in Austria (Böck, 2003, 2004a, 2004b). The groups that were studied are sometimes characterized as ‘information poor’, ‘communication poor’, ‘informational have-nots’, ‘avoiders of information’, and so on. The main research question was where and how do people get the information they need in their everyday life. One of the aims in that study was to think about how one might connect or include such groups into the contemporary knowledge society, i.e. a society in which information, knowledge, and therefore learning are central resources and processes. The study attended to patterns of interaction and took note of

what types of information were important, in what form, etc. Moreover, representations of the everyday made by members of these groups – specifically photographs – were also analyzed (see Böck, 2003). Enquiries into their life trajectories served to get a sense of their social, communicational, and personal ‘mobility’. In other words, the research question included and transcended the issues being discussed in debates on the notion of the ‘digital divide’.

From this research the concept of the ‘information habitus’ emerged. ‘Habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1982, 1993) is a sociological notion that is a useful tool in Communication Studies as it accounts for the manifold links between social structures and individual dispositions/practices. Bourdieu (1993: 97–114) makes that connection through the notion of ‘socialization experiences’. He describes the genesis of habitus as growing into one’s life-world, by ‘incorporating’ existing structures, values, meanings, and forms of acting. The essential ingredient in the process is the ‘agency’ of the individual, whose recognition of, and action on, the always-existing potentials for choice between alternatives produces individual practices and dispositions (Bourdieu, 1993: 110 ff.), even though the choices on offer might be of a banal nature. As explained above, these processes are better understood and more fully explained by the concept of learning, borrowed from pedagogy. In particular, ‘learning’ opens up the opaque area of ‘incorporating’ existing structures for a more detailed account, while at the same time connecting it with an understanding of individual ‘knowledge’ (more or less held consciously) as the effect of learning processes. Gains in knowledge are gains in potentials for action, and as such constitute the central element in any project of bringing about (social) mobility, itself central in the reduction of inequality.

Digital media and their environment

The label ‘digital divide’ has many meanings (e.g. Carpentier, 2002), each of which brings with them particular kinds of problems. A focus on digital media alone is too reductionist. It tends to narrow the perspective onto debates centred around technology and digital media, thereby only focussing on issues of ‘access’ and of technical, computer-oriented competences. It avoids taking account of humans as sense-making beings for whom the integration of media has to be meaningful in the environment of their wider ‘media menus’, that is, the environment of all the media they have available for their use and which are significant in their everyday lives. The real issue is what effects are produced by the whole web of connections between socio-structural aspects such as education, class, gender, ethnicity, age, and their interplay with habits of use of specific media.

Two further consequences of the narrow focus on the ‘digital’ are that the traditional (mass) media are often forgotten and interpersonal communication tends to be downplayed or excluded altogether. As mentioned earlier, in the

German speaking academic tradition Communication Studies have traditionally concentrated its efforts on forms of public communication (e.g. for critical comments Löffelholz and Quandt, 2003), and it also tended to analyze mass communication independently of forms of interpersonal communication. If one regards communication as an essential resource for dealing with all the aspects of the personal and social life, then all of its forms will need to be integrated into one theoretical framework.

The study analyzed in this chapter was holistic in its outset, detailed, qualitative, micro-level ethnographically oriented, and bound to forms of the everyday in its assessment of patterns of communication. It shows that a full understanding of the concerns related to the ‘digital divide’ can only be achieved if it is integrated into an understanding of the whole ‘bandwidth’ of communication. That bandwidth needs to be established on different levels – of the individual, groups, and larger social organizations. This study shows that media use and communicative habits are an integral part of people’s life-worlds. The issue then becomes one of analyzing and describing relevant features of life-worlds and establishing their interconnections with all features of media and communication.

Life-worlds are socially, materially, geographically, and culturally defined spaces. With their characteristics and the manner in which their features are interpreted by its members, they create frames of potentials for action. They shape possibilities, structures, and practices of communication, which shape and transform the life-worlds in their turn. The structures of communication involve media and their usage – where ‘media’ needs to be interpreted in the widest possible fashion. The example developed further below is based on one of several interviews (as well as many other less- or unstructured encounters) with a young woman – whom, for purposes of privacy, shall be called Karin. She was a central figure, both in her group and in the study as such. She talks about the media she used in order to get information during her first pregnancy, largely about giving birth. Besides specific media, she mentions a wide range of sources. The close and entire interrelation of the structures (and characteristics) of her life-world and the ‘bandwidth of communication’ are clear to see, not only as in the media she used, but also in their significance for her and for this specific issue.

Information into knowledge: the basic resource for social action and participation

Society is changing. These transformations have many causes, and not all of these have to do with ‘the digital’. Historic expectations of a relatively equitable, democratic society embedded in the modernist ideals of the Enlightenment, are being superseded, at different rates in different localities, by the neo-liberal capitalist paradigm and new patterns of consumption; the notion of the ‘citizen’

is being displaced by that of the ‘consumer’ (Gandy, 2002). Expectations suggesting that ‘citizens’ should have the possibilities and the resources to adequately cope with the changing conditions in their society are increasingly difficult to fulfil. The wish to understand this shift and perhaps to consider intervening may be one important motivation for having a special interest in communication and the media. It seems clear that the need for ‘understanding’ will not diminish when one substitutes the rights and obligations of the state and the citizen with the rights, needs, and demands of the market and consumers. At one level, it concerns an understanding of the roles that communication and the media play in the everyday, what functions they have, as well as how they might support social actors in shaping and managing their lives. At another level, the contents of media have the potential to assist social actors in solving problems in their everyday life (Saxer, 1997). Such problems might be anything from ‘how do I spend an evening at home by myself’, ‘what to do to cheer myself up’, choosing a different hair color, to finding a new job, getting myself informed about the political situation in a place I am about to visit, etc.

In Communication Studies, as in Cultural Studies, a distinction has been made between an objective perspective (maybe more characteristic of [mass] Media Studies) and a more subject-oriented perspective (maybe more characteristic of Cultural Studies) (e.g. Bonfadelli, 2001: 175). In this chapter, a subject-oriented approach will be adopted, focussing on the perspectives of social actors in their life-world (Selwyn *et al.*, 2005: 23 f).

In the next example, Karin explains how she obtained information about the many issues concerned with pregnancy. Some brief segments from the transcript of one conversation are follows [2]:

The first thing is, people, no matter who it is, a girlfriend, my sister-in-law, anyone you might meet in the street, first thing is ‘how are you doing?’ That is simply the first question. Then, if you’re feeling ok, you say, ‘yeah, ok, I’m feeling ok’. Then they say, you know, well, with me it was like this sort of. And then blahblahblah. I tell you, the stories you hear! All the way, from vomiting to....

Well, you know, I did go and buy those little parenting magazines [literally: the Parents’ Magazine]. Some I got from the doctor for free. And I did look for them a bit by myself too.

Well, you know, I did go and kind of look in the Encyclopaedia too.

The times when I did need a bit of paper was to be able to write all that down, that was each time I had my examinations with the gynaecologist. You know, I have a female gynaecologist, she’s already got a child too.

Brochures, sort of, yeah, and little magazines, that kind of thing. (Interview Karin, 4 September, 2002, translations by the author)

Karin refers to quite a few sources of information as follows:

- First, members of her (closer) social environment ('people') who already know about her condition, social actors whom she mentions specifically, and who actively engage with her (relatives, girlfriends, acquaintances). The site of contact is the street, a public space. The others initiate the interaction ('how are you doing?'); they have a notion of what is relevant in this situation ('Then they say, you know, well, with me it was like this sort of'). Karin categorizes this information with a genre-label – 'little stories' – and provides an evaluation – 'All the way, from vomiting to...'
- Second, this time, more actively initiated by herself, the parenting magazine, a special interest magazine that she got from her General Practitioner (GP) and of which she considers herself a member of the audience. Her formulation – 'I did look for them a bit myself too' – suggests distinguishing herself from other women, who were less active in their seeking out of information than she was.
- Third, an encyclopaedia: from her perspective a highly valued medium of information, and an integral part of the media that ought to be consulted ('Well, you know, I did go and kind of look in the Encyclopaedia too'). It is not quite clear whether her attribution here refers to the book qua medium *book*, or as a compendium of approved content in the form of a 'reference book', the consultation of which implies a targeted seeking out of information.
- Fourth, there is her gynaecologist, a woman who also had experience in giving birth herself. This specification implies a special kind of information source: 'interpersonal' (e.g. with the possibility of dialogical communication in case one has not understood everything), 'professional' and 'experienced'. Her GP is very likely to take her cue on how to act from Karin's own behavior: her questions, her speech, her behavior more generally – more or less anxious or more or less secure, her professional knowledge or status, and – very important for Karin in different situations – knowledge based on experience. Karin used this source of information very precisely and carefully and had prepared a list of questions ('The times when I did need a bit of paper, was to be able to write all that down, that was each time I had my examinations with the gynaecologist').

Her formulations contain evaluative comments concerning both the sources and the information and reveal what she takes for granted in these situations.

For Karin, getting information is a process in which she has a lot of responsibility and which she can control. She turns all of that information into knowledge for herself:

Well, you know, I found out quite simply that each birth is different. You know, you simply can't say that my experience was like yours afterwards. That was simply totally, everyone told me something totally different. Quite slowly it

dawned on me that no one can tell me how it really is, because, you know, quite simply you have to experience that for yourself. (Interview Karin, 4 September 2004, translation by the author)

The earlier quotation shows some of the variety of information and sources of information; they vary according to situation and topic. For Karin, in her situation of being pregnant, knowledge that comes from experience is of particular importance. She distinguishes between ‘little stories’ (‘Gschichtln’) and experiences she hears from acquaintances on the one hand and the professionally founded and supported knowledge of her female gynaecologist on the other. Regarding the latter, she stresses the personal experiences of the gynaecologist as particularly important; it guarantees the authenticity of the information for her and shows empathy with her situation and understanding of her insecurities.

The media Karin uses as sources – besides interpersonal, face-to-face communication – are print media, and these are relevant for her in different ways. Most useful is the parenting magazine. Many of its contributions are written by people who are themselves parents, who report on their experiences. As with her specialist, their knowledge has been derived from personal experience. As such, the information she gets from the print media becomes personalized.

In her professional life, Karin is a dressmaker. She uses professional, factual literature – journals and magazines, and in the part-time course she is taking to train as a childcare worker she regularly uses other media (e.g. professional textbooks) in quite specific ways. One reason for this difference – apart from the proximity of being pregnant, the private sphere, and her aspiration to be a professional child-carer – might be that the latter entails further professional development, for which textbooks are (at that time still) classic media. By contrast, being pregnant and becoming better informed on pregnancy and birth hardly count as professional development and hence do not lead her to that kind of text and medium. In her role as child-carer, the information she accumulates is directed outward – towards the care of the children – whereas the information on pregnancy and birth is directed towards herself and the baby to come. This differential practice and evaluation points towards the question of the legitimization of actions in and by a social group: what sources of information am I entitled to use to get the information I need to answer a question arising from a particular domain of my life?

A possible definition of information, which relates the ‘life-world’ to ‘information’ and ‘knowledge’, goes as follows: Information is that which is selected by actors in their life-worlds and transformed by them into knowledge in order to solve a problem.

This definition partially coincides with the situated approach of Brenda Dervin’s (1980) looking from the perspective of those who seek information. The approach adopted here focuses on the embeddedness of social actors in

their life-worlds, on their active selection of contents (and media) available to them in relation to a problem – more or less experienced and understood by them – which needs to be solved. The chosen information is ‘appropriated’ and ‘integrated’, which represents a process of learning. Through that process and in conjunction with the prior knowledge/resources of the learner, information is transformed into the knowledge, needed as a tool for solving the problem considered relevant.

Information habitus: information, knowledge, and learning

The earlier-mentioned definition of information connects information and knowledge (both terms are often very loosely used; see Stehr, 2001: 53). Knowledge is always the result of processes of transformation, evoked and shaped by the existence of a problem. In this, the learner’s – and social actor’s – knowledge resources are constantly changed, expanded, and legitimated. Knowledge is the object of constant processes of transformation. This concurs with Stehr’s (2001: 62) approach, taking ‘knowledge’ as the basis of social action in order to solve problems – from choosing a hair color to acquiring political information. Stehr (2001: 62) talks about ‘knowledge’ as a ‘potential for action’. This ‘potential for action’ includes the potential for acting on the environment (‘external action’), as well as the means for thinking (‘inner action’).

Knowledge is thus a consequence of learning. In learning, the learners are active in processes of transformative engagement with an issue or an aspect of the environment, in which the environment, the learner, and the tools used in that engagement are transformed. These transformations constantly bring about changes of the learner’s resources, tools, and in the learner (Kress, 2006).

It is possible to systematize Karin’s practices of getting, using, and valuing of information and sources, and her use of these in relation to specific issues and circumstances. It is this systematic use, its relative stability, as well as its effects, which need to be interlinked with the notion of the ‘information habitus’. Following Bourdieu (1993), the information habitus could be conceptualized as a means of describing and understanding habits and strategies of access to, as well as means of obtaining and using information. These could be seen as ‘systems of enduring and transferable dispositions, structured structures, made to function as structuring structures, that is, as generative and ordering bases for practices and conceptions’ (Bourdieu, 1993: 98; highlighting in the original, translation by the author). The information habitus includes schemata of recognition, of thought, principles of evaluation, and of acting (Bourdieu, 1993: 101). This refers to the relevant knowledge as to what information is available, possible (and necessary) to obtain, the means for obtaining such information – interpersonal, mediated, institutional, etc., and how these are to be used. Included in the information habitus are subjective evaluations of ‘sources of information’, of ‘strategies of information’, and of ‘forms of representation’. The latter are modes

of communication – writing, image, speech, gesture; media of communication – information book, newspaper, TV; and genres – news, talk shows, soaps. The information habitus also specifies an awareness of which ‘information strategies’, of which ‘sources of information’ etc., are legitimate for social actors to use in their social environment.

Given its immediate plausibility, Bourdieu’s notion of habitus has been widely taken up, in a variety of academic disciplines, whether in debates around multiculturalism and multilingualism (the ‘monolingual habitus’, see Gogolin and Nauck, 2000), in debates relating to Media Studies/Media Policy (Couldry, 2003), or in Organizational Communication (Mutch, 2003). One common, persistent, and unresolved problem is whether to take Bourdieu’s definitions and work with them, and as such dealing with the real theoretical difficulties regarding structure and agency, durability and transformation, or to attempt to adapt the concept as seems warranted within in-depth readings of Bourdieu’s work (see e.g. Kraus and Gebauer, 2002 [3]; as well as comments in a similar vein by, e.g. Couldry, 2003 and Mutch, 2003).

The latter is the position adopted here. Hence the information habitus is taken to be produced in the context of specific life-worlds, with their own characteristics and demands. It is socially and historically determined and is the result of the many and varied experiences of socialization. The information habitus also mediates between social actors and the conditions of their life-worlds (Bourdieu, 1993). Social actors (with their histories – embedded in their life-worlds) are at the centre of attention in this concept.

The information habitus provides explanations for the genesis of forms of practice (Bourdieu, 1993: 97ff.; here communicative practice of the everyday) for the conditions of production, as well as for their continuous change, produced as an effect of the social trajectories of the actors, their resources in the form of economic, cultural, and social capital, the changes in their life-worlds, and so on. For communication theory in German speaking domains, the concept of habitus provides a means of getting beyond the still dominant individual-based approaches to communicational action.

Whose responsibility is it to be(come) informed?

Within the information habitus, two fundamental dispositions towards the supply and/or obtaining of information can be distinguished – ‘Bringschuld’ and ‘Holschuld’ – as follows [4]:

- ‘Bringschuld’ (literally, an obligation, a ‘debt’, which the source of information owes to the recipient to provide or to ‘bring’ information) names a structure in which the responsibility and the obligation to supply the necessary information for whoever needs it, lie with the relevant authority. In other words, the suppliers of information are responsible.

- ‘Holschuld’ (literally, an obligation, a ‘debt’, which whoever needs information owes to her/himself to get or ‘fetch’ that information) names a structure in which the responsibility and the obligation lie with whoever needs the information, to seek and obtain it. In other words, those who need information are responsible.

The current changes in the social and media landscape are producing a situation in which the agency of the individual is ever more focal. ‘Becoming informed’ can be approached from two perspectives: either responsibility for providing information lies with the source of information or responsibility for obtaining information lies with whoever needs the information.

From the first perspective, the ‘obligation to fetch’, Karin – as the actor – regards herself as responsible for obtaining the information she needs. If we read her comments on a meta-theoretical level (even though expressed in her dialect), she describes where and how she obtained the information regarding her pregnancy as follows (more detail in Böck, 2004a):

It's like this, you've really got that many examinations, where it's really talked about, well, where it can be talked about, if you play your part in it. Well, I'd say, for me that goes without saying, 'cause, if I sit there and say 'yeah, ok, that's right' then she [the specialist] won't know what questions I have, what I am interested in knowing, really it's up to me to let her know that. (Interview Karin, 4 September 2002, translation by the author.)

The pause and the reformulation ‘where it’s really talked about, well, where it can be talked about’ emphasizes Karin’s sense that visiting her specialist would not have automatically resulted in getting the information she needed or would have liked to receive. This requires that she takes the initiative, she acts, and she sees very much as her own responsibility.

The second perspective of the ‘obligation to bring’ implies that the medical practitioner would as a matter of professional ethos tell patients all they need to know or that it is relevant for them to know. Gerlinde, another participant in my study, tells a different story of her two pregnancies; she didn’t have to ask much, her specialist and her GP told her all she needed to know. She hardly talked with other women about her pregnancy, nor did she read about it in books, though she did look at the brochures her doctor gave her.

With the ‘obligation to bring’ the responsibility to provide or supply information lies with those who have it and to a much lesser extent with those who need the information. If that information is not coming, then these (potential) sources of information are responsible, not those who needed (but did not seek) the information. It is essential to focus on these profoundly distinct dispositions in any attempt to develop strategies for overcoming inequalities. This will be taken up again later.

Media, as well as other technologies of communication, are implicitly structured along these lines (e.g. television leans more towards ‘Bringschuld’ while the Internet is more oriented towards ‘Holschuld’), so the concept can be quite readily transferred to media use (Böck, 2003). For instance, it is quite possible to be satisfied with the information supplied in the main news programmes on television or radio. Equally, it is quite possible – easy even – to look out for more extensive discussion programmes, or to read at greater length in newspapers or newsmagazines, to go to the Internet, and of course it is possible to talk about issues with others. Depending on the individual’s information habitus – and on the specific topic and domain of interest, etc. – strategies will vary.

There is one further issue. This concerns the extent to which information is ‘prepared’ for those who seek or need it, or the extent to which they themselves can and need to transform information, which is not necessarily ‘tailored’ to their habitus (Böck, 2003). In interpersonal communication, the interlocutor does this work, by and large. The adjustment is an integral part of the interaction, as we are unlikely to select that person again as a source of information if this adjustment is not made. By contrast, in classical mass communication, there is a one-way relation from communicator to recipient, and the issue there is very much the aptness of the content and the expectations and capacities of the audience to ‘decode’ and use information appropriately. Karin’s reluctance to refer to the encyclopaedia may be a case in point.

The dispositions of ‘Holschuld’ and ‘Bringschuld’ are profoundly different forms of the information habitus, and it is precisely here that the major challenges for policy reside.

A pedagogy for inclusion

A pedagogy for inclusion is both a ‘pedagogic’ and a ‘political’ project. As a pedagogic project, it is concerned with individuals and their needs; as a political project it has to do with social issues such as changed (social) affiliations, different distributions of power both for individuals and groups, different potentials for individual and social action. It aims at changes ‘in’ the individual in order to achieve social change and at social change in order to produce changes in any individual’s potential for action. The political aims of this pedagogy are to assure democratic, equitable outcomes for social, cultural, economic, and political participation at the widest level (see Freire, 1972; Cope and Kalantzis, 1993, 2000; Bernstein, 1996; Gee, 2000; Giroux, 2001).

Learning as producing knowledge is fundamental for all aspects of social life; a pedagogy for inclusion focuses on an individual’s dispositions towards learning or producing knowledge and aims at inducing specific changes.

What is meant by ‘a pedagogy’ and ‘pedagogy for inclusion’? As it is used here, ‘pedagogy’ describes the social relations of the participants (as learners and as social actors) in the situation in which learning takes place

(Bernstein, 2001: 3–24; Kress, 2006b); the social place and social relations of the participants involved in the pedagogic process – how do those who are ‘teachers’ see learners? What power is attributed to learners or to teachers? What status does the curriculum have? Whose authority stands behind the curriculum? And what relations exist between all these? The ‘curriculum’ on the other hand specifies ‘what is to be learned’.

At this level of analysis, we need to consider both formal and so-called informal learning. While in Communication Studies informal learning has received much attention, the increasing emphasis on life-long learning must lead to an expansion of focus for both Communication Studies and pedagogy. This will result in a closer relationship between the interests of Communication Studies and pedagogy. What Communication Studies might be able to offer schools – and the educational system as such – would be a relevant question in this regard.

The term ‘pedagogy for inclusion’ implies at the same time the content of the curriculum and the political project of the pedagogy. It implies an existing structure of inclusion and exclusion of groups of learners and others, and it suggests means for overcoming those exclusions, namely the curriculum. What structures of social relations are needed in order to foster people’s mobility? While this concerns, in principle, all people and all groups, it has a specific significance in relation to groups which have had negative experiences regarding (formal) learning, as well as developing social relations.

As with pedagogy, there is also a need to specify what is included in the curriculum. The main content and task of the curriculum is to provide the resources needed as a means of ‘making mobile’ independently of content and strategies. ‘Moving’ a learner or a group of learners from one state (not having certain kinds of knowledge, skills, values) to another (having those skills, knowledge, values) is a quite traditional pedagogic task. ‘Movement’ is implied in all pedagogy, as in all learning (and teaching).

For a social–political project, such as a ‘pedagogy for inclusion’, questions of social relations and power are central, and they have effects on every aspect of the strategies to be adopted in programmes of action (e.g. Foucault, 1980; Bernstein, 1996: 3–24).

The essential features or components of a pedagogy for inclusion are the following:

- An essential precondition is an apt theory of communication, learning, and ‘making knowledge’. This necessitates reframing existing theories.
- A basic aim of any pedagogy is always promoting mobility, whether of individuals or of groups. Both learning and knowledge production expand the resources and horizons for individuals and for groups (of learners as social actors), whereby the expansion of horizons is understood as promoting mobility.

- The political aim of a pedagogy for inclusion is to change horizons, potentials, and affiliations of individuals and groups with the aim to connect ‘excluded’ individuals and groups with groups who can be situated in the mainstream.
- A sine-qua-non of a pedagogy for inclusion is engaging learners, as social actors in their own right, as always significant and as experts of their own life-worlds. This relates to seeing and treating those who belong to ‘excluded groups’ as knowledge makers and learners already.
- Those who are the objects of a pedagogy for inclusion have to be accorded full recognition of their position and the achievements in their lives, in their life-worlds. They have to be made aware of their practices as achievements and of their position as learners and makers of knowledge.

An apt theory of communication, learning, and of making meaning

As listed earlier, one essential pre-requisite is an apt theory of learning and meaning production, leading to the reframing of existing theories – both in terms of communication and pedagogy. This will enable recognizing the intrinsic connection of learning and knowledge production and focus on the actions of individuals as knowledge makers in all areas of their everyday lives. This gives proper recognition to the significance and potential of everyday actions and acknowledges both that individuals are constantly involved in processes of learning and ‘knowledge production’ and ‘learning’ are two sides of the same coin.

Mobility or ‘making mobile’

If a basic aim of ‘pedagogy’ is to promote mobility, whether of individuals or groups, then the difference in the aims of a ‘pedagogy for inclusion’ lies in the specific direction and the goal of that movement. In this regard, it is essential not to confuse ‘transport’ with ‘making mobile’; the latter implies a particular disposition on the part of the learner – ‘being mobile’, which the former does not presuppose. Similarly, ‘inclusion’ implies a reciprocal relationship between ‘feeling a part of’ and ‘being included’. Such movements have social effects and are political in the everyday sense of bringing about changes in social affiliations and distributions of power, etc.

The movement envisaged in the pedagogy for inclusion can be seen in different ways: as the expansion of the horizons of those located in one life-world to include forms of actions, knowledges, practices, habits from other life-worlds; as a movement across life-worlds from one to another, or as connecting one life-world to another. It ideally results in the linking-up of an individual to other possibilities of life and to the expansion of the potentials for action. Seen at the micro-level of the individual, the main issue here is ‘difference’ – in the everyday, in practices, etc. At the social macro-level, in the presence of power, phenomena, such as discrimination and exclusion, come to the forefront. Important in this regard is the political question that deals with the interrelation

of life-worlds and the effects of expanding horizons. Any political project of intervention – of which the pedagogy of inclusion is one – will invoke profound ethical and power issues, and of the legitimacy of such a project.

Seeing practices and lives in a wide social context is to recognize that seemingly ‘mere’ individual differences have a social dimension. It always implies excluding individuals and their group from the social, cultural, and economic benefits/goods of their wider society. Hence the subjective perspective always needs to be seen from a wider social perspective.

Directions of movement: the political aim of changing potentials and affiliations of individuals and groups

The aim of a pedagogy for inclusion is that of connecting individuals and groups who are ‘excluded’ with groups who can be situated in the mainstream of cultural, social, economic, and technological processes. Here again arises the political question of the relation of life-worlds towards each other, and the expansion of horizons of potentials, perceptions and expectations for individuals and groups (Selwyn *et al.*, 2005: 19ff.). On the political level, it is essential to link a focus on the individual within their own specific life-worlds with the macro-level of the social, characterized by its inequalities and differences. This would make it possible to develop proposals for actions in which an understanding of individual lives and their horizons is central – through the notion of the information habitus. In this way individuals can be connected to the horizons of mainstream social groups, situated on the other side of the digital divide, so to speak.

Ideally, this implies the possibility of offering all members of a society the same potentials for action – independently of their membership of specific life-worlds. A banal example would be that Karin could have researched forms of surgical intervention that might be used in the processes of the baby’s delivery in hospital through consulting the Internet. This would have given her the basis for a much more focussed discussion with her GP. The example is both banal and profound: given her information habitus, and the limitations of the horizons of knowing which the habitus imposed, much information that is now available and regarded as essential for informed decision-making was not available to her. This relates to the question of Karin’s independence of action, her autonomy in seeking information in order to construct the knowledge she needs in relation to her problem. However, she needed to approach someone whom she regarded as competent, without actually knowing what she might need to get from this person; or could she act on her own account in shaping her search for information and knowledge production? The effects of the information habitus can be seen here – the different possibilities for action in combination with various sources of information, issues, and their evaluation. Karin and others can find themselves in a form of exclusion not necessarily wanted by anyone or determined by any structure but nevertheless detrimental to her in this crucial part of her life.

Politics of a pedagogy for inclusion as a politics of intervention: putting agentive learners central

A pedagogy for inclusion is at all times a political project, and as such it raises ethical, social, and political issues. This presupposes that those who are potential subjects of a pedagogy for inclusion are already active and possess agency in their life-worlds. A cornerstone of a pedagogy of inclusion is seeing agency both as the starting point and as the centre of pedagogic action. In other words, learners and their actions are paramount to this pedagogic strategy. But, being a political project, these subjects also have to be seen as social beings, as full, significant, valuable participants in their life-worlds. As such, any engagement has to take place ‘on their own terms’, from within their life-world, in which they are (usually/often/always) already experts.

Learning and knowledge production expand the resources and horizons of the involved learners. The expansion of horizons brings about the potential for doing things differently and can thus promote mobility. The aim of this mobility is the expansion of the potentials for action in specific areas and to open up forms of action, which had hitherto not been taken into consideration or had not been recognized as a possibility. Such an expansion of horizons is the democratic goal of maximal participation by all citizens.

A curriculum for inclusion: what is it that is to be learned?

A *pedagogy* describes the social relations of those who are engaged in the processes of (teaching and) learning and knowledge production. A curriculum then is or describes ‘what is to be learned’. We can view a curriculum in different ways though always as altering the resources, which are available to the learner: it ‘fixes a lack’; it supplies what is missing, what might be needed. From this follows the question what the lack is which needs to be fixed by this curriculum. The changed resources transform the individual’s potentials for action, which can potentially change the notion of the self as a social actor. At the most general level, the curriculum aims at dispositional changes; at other levels more specific aims appear.

The aims of a curriculum for inclusion have to be in harmony with the pedagogy for inclusion. If the aims of the latter are to promote mobility, the aims of the former are to provide the means for achieving these aims. The different elements of a curriculum can be summarized as follows:

- Means for producing changes in the information habitus in general, in all forms, at all levels. In particular, moving away from a disposition of ‘Bringschuld’ towards a disposition of ‘Holschuld’. For Karin, this might mean that there are other sources of information than acquaintances or (professional/non-professional) experts in the wider social environment, for instance factual literature, or the Internet.

- Means for producing specific dispositional changes: finding means of showing the fragility of ‘the already achieved’. This can be expressed as ‘I am happy with what I have, where I am, I would not get any further anyway, I have got a steady/secure job, it makes no sense for me to do a course, etc’ [5]. It is crucial to continue to provide recognition of the subjects’ present position while also showing the intrinsic (e.g. seeing Adult Education as simply instrumental, job-oriented) and extrinsic (e.g. there are no secure jobs any more) difficulties and limitations of the position. This perspective provides a full picture of education as a personal (leisure time, health, living) and as a professional (development in a job and for other occupations) project. Any challenge to existing achievements must not lead to a denigration of present achievements as real achievements. However, it is important to see the insistence on ‘I am happy where I am’ as an implicit acknowledgement of fear. While the present might be unsatisfactory, anxiety about the unknown prevails.
- To initiate a changed sense of self, and changes in the self-image, and the individual’s valuation of her or himself. ‘Who am I, where do I stand? What does change mean for my potentials to do things differently in my everyday life? If I change my knowledge, my competences, will I then also give up my own sense of expertise?’ If I change it might/will change my position in my life-world, for instance power-relations might become questioned (McGivney, 1990), and different roles become recognized.
- To expand potentials for action and to insist on the legitimacy of changing common practices so that the individual can see, think, and act differently. A first step is that actors have to become aware of these possibilities. The essential second step is that of recognition – to recognize possibilities as relevant and legitimate for themselves.
- To expand knowledge around sources of information, making learners as social actors aware that there are other sources of information than those that have been used within their everyday practices. This entails specific elements in the curriculum such as providing research skills. This entirely connects with the agenda of information and communication rights and freedoms.
- To provide (the means of gaining) access to the knowledge resources available to all. This entails engendering a disposition of seeing learning as a socially centred means of access. A central problem for the knowledge society is that those who are excluded might remain excluded, causing the gap to widen even more, due to the movement of society as a whole. This requires that they are provided with strategies and specific means for catching up, thereby creating an environment of equal chances [6].

A curriculum for inclusion, thus, starts from the recognition that social actors already possess a specific information habitus with specific strategies for obtaining information, a particular stance towards learning, and so on. While that information habitus might be limiting or even counter-productive from the perspective of a pedagogy for inclusion, the argument being made here is that

citizens need to be respected for the capabilities they already have and learners need to be approached as knowledge producers, taking them seriously as experts, and as such according them recognition in a real sense. The point is to find means and strategies to align this with the demands of the knowledge society. Central to that – both for those who are developing these strategies and for those who become the subjects of the pedagogy – is seeing learning as the central means, process, and resource in the pedagogy for inclusion, a resource for all aspects of managing life.

Re-theorization

This brings us back to the task of re-theorizing Communication Studies. This chapter started by outlining two broad aims: the larger social and political aim referring to Freire, and the other, inseparable from the first, to reflect on the potential social and political uses of Communication Studies in relation to the ever more pressing problems around issues such as ‘the digital divide’, ‘the knowledge gap/information gap’, and so on. My theoretical proposal for both, but in particular for connecting the macro-level purposes and aims of communication policy with micro-level of habitus, practices, and structures of information use in the everyday life of social actors, was to introduce the notion of ‘learning’ into the set of terms used in communication theory.

As a conclusion of this chapter, the arguments regarding ‘learning’ developed in this chapter will be summarized in three main points: (1) the response of communication theory to social and economic change; (2) the difficulties which exist in relevant areas within theories of communication; and (3) the political purposes of Communication Studies for many of its practitioners, that is, the attempt to affect potentials for equitable social outcomes through theorization and analysis. These are as follows:

(1) The inexorable move in ‘developed economies’ towards a situation in which information and/or knowledge define both the dominant forms of economic activity and salient features of society – the so-called information or knowledge societies – has profound consequences for members of those societies, whether (still) as citizens, as consumers, or as part of the labor force. With the rise of the post-industrial economy, its required flexibility and the abundance of information; an individualized and stable sets of skills may no longer suffice to meet the demands of the labor market and of society. Phrases such as ‘life-long’, ‘life-wide learning’ respond to this situation (e.g. Gee *et al.*, 1996). The economy and its spokespersons, as much as politicians, demand that schools should produce a flexible, dynamic, innovative, creative population of young people for that market. But as demands for change affect everyone, irrespective of age and increasingly also of social position, the question arises whether communication theory needs to expand its role into this field, where socialization, pedagogy, and

communication intersect and interact. In any case, issues, such as the ‘digital divide’, are an integral part of the concerns of communication theory, as are many (maybe all?) of the issues of information and knowledge. They too are, without question, central to this area. But so are the processes, the environments, and the effects of learning. In the manner being described and defined in this chapter, learning and the production of knowledge are interconnected.

(2) Learning describes the processes of change within the learner through the changes produced by the learner in the learner’s resources, gained in the process of knowledge production. At this point, learning becomes once again a central concept in relation to the theoretical issues raised on habitus/disposition and the need for communication policy to find ways and means of reconnecting (with) those who are in danger of being excluded in the course of social and economic developments. What is needed for members of these groups are precisely these changes in their dispositions/habitus in order for them to become re-mobilized socially, culturally, economically, and psychologically. Such changes of disposition pose a problem for present conceptualizations of habitus (see my earlier brief reference to that). The issue is one of stability, persistence, and durability versus dynamism, change, and flux. In (contemporary socio-cultural) theories of learning (see e.g. Gee *et al.*, 1996; Daniels, 2001), the processes of learning are described more in terms of processes of constant transformative engagement and change by a learner with her or his environment. The effect of that process is a change in the resources of the learner, in terms of a changed capacity for action, for instance. But this is very similar to a change in/of disposition by the learner – a change in habitus. Theories of learning of this kind relate to durability as much as to change – a relative durability, an apparent inertia even combined with incessant transformation of usually the smallest kind. In this way, both the concept of learning and the processes invoked by that term become an essential component of a theory of communication, which can then achieve the link between macro- and micro-levels of analysis.

‘Socialization’ processes are central to any theorizing and development of policies and proposals for action in relation to communicational inequalities, and in my view these processes are best described by the notion of ‘learning as knowledge production’. In this approach, the relative durability of structure is given; there is no suggestion of ‘things being thrown over’. Yet agency, similarly, is given and brings along the constant transformative engagement of socially formed and located actors with their visions on the shape of their worlds, and their dispositions.

(3) That brings us to the third issue, an older political purpose of Communication Studies for many of its practitioners, namely to have an effect on potentials for equitable social outcomes through theorization and analysis. The effects of economic, social, political, cultural, and technological change – implied in terms

such as ‘the digital divide’, as much as in other communication-related ‘divides’ and inequalities – demand a response on the part of Communication Studies. This chapter hopes to contribute to that attempt.

Notes for Chapter Three

- [1] References to Communication Studies in this section relate to the mainstream German tradition, which focuses still, to a large extent, on public communication in the traditional mass-media (the Press, TV, Radio, though also now the Internet). Its main concerns are processes of production, mediation, and reception (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft, 1999; for critical comments see Löffelholz and Quandt, 2003), with the transmission of information as often also quite central (see here the critical comments by Klaus, 2003).
- [2] The conversation was conducted in the local dialect, of which we are both speakers. Many of the nuanced meanings of dialectal forms – of all kinds – are inevitably lost or smoothed out in the translation, even if it would be ‘translated’ into standard German.
- [3] ‘Der Habitus ist kreativ, er variiert, geht mit neuen Situationen anders um als mit alten’ – ‘the habitus is creative, varies, and deals with new situations differently to old’ (Krais and Gebauer, 2002: 79).
- [4] I have not as yet produced a good translation into English, so I will gloss each concept and then use two terms ‘obligation to bring’, and ‘obligation to fetch’.
- [5] As one of my ‘informants’ said to me in the context of a different project, concerned with establishing paths to courses in ‘Basic Education’.
- [6] This is a quite different situation for those who have the intellectual, educational, social, and economic means for remaining connected but make a deliberate decision to adopt a different position.

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