

# Researching Transformative Teaching and Learning— Forms of Transformative Experience in School Instruction

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## Abstract:

This article critically examines recent attempts to elaborate on the pedagogical and instructional implications of a transformative approach to education. In particular, it challenges the assumption that transformative experiences in teaching can only be initiated by utilizing crises, irritations and other forms of disruptive experience. Against the background of this critique, the article presents three alternative genres of transformative experience that go beyond disruption and that have exerted an increasing influence on the international debate on educational theory in the last five years: The notions of articulation (Taylor), resonance (Rosa), and aspiration (Callard). These forms of transformative experience are explicated and then examined in light of their advantages and disadvantages for the research and practice of transformative education. The goal of the article is to develop an analytical vocabulary to assess the transformative effects of instruction within the context of empirical instructional research. In doing so, this study shows that these various forms of transformative experience can be brought into a mutually complementary relationship with each other and can enable a unique empirical approach to the reconstruction of the transformative moments of teaching.

## Keywords:

Education  
Transformative  
Teaching  
Instruction  
Articulation  
Aspiration  
Resonance

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## 1. Introduction

The overarching goal of high-quality teaching is, in addition to teaching knowledge and skills, the facilitation

of educational processes <sup>[1]</sup>. Education-oriented teaching aims to ensure that frequently mentioned aspects, meaningful and meaningful links between the objective

references to subject-specific learning content and the subjective quality of experience learners so that they can be used as impulses and resources to prepare their interpretations of themselves and the world, as well as for the design of a successful life plan <sup>[2,3,4,5]</sup>. Although, of course, there is no consensus on how lessons should be taught is intended to achieve this in concrete terms, and the concept of education itself is not without controversy. Nevertheless, there seems to be a consensus that education is more important than simple learning and the acquisition of competences and as a fundamental change in the entire person <sup>[6,7]</sup>. Education can be understood as a transformation, as can be seen in influential new versions of the concept of education <sup>[5,8-13]</sup>, through which the self- and world-references of the individual must be deeply rethought and reshaped accordingly. Lessons should not only be informative but also be transformative.

At present, German-language educational science is dominated by the idea of transformative education as a crisis-ridden event that through irritating and, under certain conditions, highly disruptive events evoke new versions and restructuring of self and world relations <sup>[11,12,14]</sup>. This transformational image understanding of education has now also found its way into (subject) didactic considerations which emphasize that visual education is about the acquisition of knowledge and the endurance and initiation of irritations <sup>[15]</sup>.

Qualitative-empirical teaching research, however, examines the facilitation or prevention of irritations, crises, extraneous experiences of understanding in classroom interaction processes <sup>[16]</sup>. Negative experiences thus also appear as an observational category that sets what is considered to be the phenomenon of education or at least as an “educational provision“ in appearance <sup>[17]</sup>. If you take a look at the state of research <sup>[18]</sup>, however, the overall impression is as follows: If education in the context of teaching, it is usually discussed deficits complained about. Educational experiences seem to be rather rare and within of everyday teaching. To explain this empirical imbalance, in addition to the questioning of a fundamental methodological approach and accessibility to educational processes in the classroom, to what extent it seems sensible to assume fundamental changes and, whether empirical reconstruction is not rather more low-threshold in the case of subtle “different[...] of the

established relationship to the world“ <sup>[18]</sup>.

From the point of view of this newer research discourse, educational processes in the classroom as such an improbable event that empirically reconstructs and pedagogically interprets. Seen in this light, the claim that teaching should be transformed is either greatly abbreviated or even abandoned: “Education [...] can neither be brought about nor caused by pedagogical action“ <sup>[19]</sup>, or didactic methods of irritation and critical reflection are discussed.

This is where this study would like to start with the contribution and address the problem, the possibility that educational, transformative experiences in the classroom can only be initiated under the auspices of crises and disruptive irritations. Although transformational teaching concepts, including the teaching approaches that are based on the theory of transformational educational processes and other crisis-oriented educational theories <sup>[20]</sup> have an undeniable power of persuasion, a critical examination of the extent to which this conceptualization of education as a central heuristic for the (empirical) descriptions. The initiation of school educational processes is convincing. The guiding principle is on the one hand, the question of the extent to which the above-mentioned lack of education does not lie in the deficient practice of teaching, but possibly the result of that it could be a fact that there is a (relatively narrow) level of education attached to the teaching process. understanding that the events are possibly exaggerated and do not do justice to the educational quality of the teaching <sup>[21]</sup>. On the other hand, there is the question of the extent to which it makes sense, especially from an ethical point of view.

Building on this, the study seeks to propose alternative approaches that enable the exploration of transformative moments in the classroom beyond crises and disruptions. The article also aims to establish the foundational elements needed to develop an analytical vocabulary for examining the educational and transformative aspects of teaching empirically. This vocabulary is intended to serve as a heuristic tool for empirical teaching research, focusing on when and how teaching contributes to successful transformations of self and world perspectives. What constitutes a successful transformation, as well as an educationally relevant connection to self and world perspectives, is discussed

and elaborated with the proposed vocabulary below.

The argumentation of the article unfolds in three steps:

- (1) Recent attempts to clarify the pedagogical and educational implications of a transformational concept of education are discussed and critically examined. Although it becomes evident that the transformational theory of education lacks a coherent theoretical framework to fully describe the transformative effects of teaching, this is attributed to the diversity of educational experiences that play a significant role in education-oriented teaching.
- (2) Three alternative genres of transformative education, which have gained increasing influence over the past five years in the international debate on educational theory, are explored. These concepts—articulation (Taylor), resonance (Rosa), and aspiration (Callard)—are explained, followed by a discussion of their strengths and limitations for transformation-sensitive teaching research. Despite their differing emphases and philosophical underpinnings, these forms of experience are shown to complement one another, offering a unique empirical approach to reconstructing transformative moments in teaching.
- (3) Finally, an approach that provides practical insights for designing and implementing transformation-sensitive teaching research, referred to as ‘Educational Transformation Research’ are outlined. This framework aims to offer a structured pathway for investigating how teaching fosters meaningful transformations in self and world perspectives.

## 2. Crises, irritation and experiences of strangeness in the classroom

In different didactic approaches, it is assumed that the subject-specific subjects, if it is to be educational, must be designed and made possible <sup>[22–24]</sup>. The various approaches are based on the assumption that disappointing or crisis-laden moments can enable learners to surpass themselves, gain new insights about themselves, and develop a deeper

understanding of the subject matter. These discontinuous moments, and their potential to foster new perspectives and innovative problem-solving approaches, are contrasted with merely additive and reproductive forms of learning. Such negative experiences are understood as a negation of expectations—an interruption that breaks the continuity of experience. However, this disruption also presents an opportunity to learn, not only about the subject at hand but also about oneself. These breaks in continuity allow learners, at least in principle, to become aware of the horizon of expectations on which their prior understanding is based and to recognize its limitations <sup>[25–27]</sup>.

Currently, the primary focus is on the concept of transformative education, following Koller (2012) <sup>[12]</sup>. While this theory is not primarily designed to address pedagogical problems, its aim is to understand and empirically capture transformative processes within individual biographies <sup>[28]</sup>, it has recently also found its way into (general) didactic considerations. Teaching that enables education is understood to mean that as a staging of irritation, as a “breaking of institutional routines, in slowing down rapid processes of interpretation, in confronting unresolved unfinished, contradictory, confrontation with the radically new“, which in the thoughtful conversation <sup>[15]</sup>.

It is not only assumed that the paradigm of transformative education, along with the subsequent irritation described as a ‘didactic-methodical-domesticated crisis’ <sup>[29]</sup>, provides a meaningful window into subjectively significant access to individual experiences, but also that it aligns well with what empirically occurs in the classroom <sup>[30]</sup>. Numerous empirical studies—primarily from school pedagogy, subject-specific didactics, and general educational science—have explored educational experiences, focusing on moments of crisis, irritation, and negativity. These studies often employ retrospective approaches, such as interviews, videography, or (non-) participant observation, and some triangulate these methods to examine the extent to which school reality aligns with this particular ideal of education <sup>[18]</sup>.

Many of these studies reveal that educational processes are often not reconstructed within the researched teaching practices. Instead, moments where education is actively prevented are frequently observed <sup>[23,24,31,32–34]</sup>. While a deep understanding of the

subject matter, prompted by crises, may leave traces of educational processes, these occurrences are described as ‘unlikely events’<sup>[35]</sup> and as ‘islands in a sea of routine’<sup>[36]</sup>. In her study, Müller-Roselius (2013) notes that literature teaching often fosters an attitude of connoisseurship and habitual engagement with texts rather than facilitating meaningful encounters with new ideas or crisis-driven upheavals that could transform thinking<sup>[24]</sup>. This approach frequently results in the reinforcement of existing perceptions of self, others, and the world. She concludes that identification with the subject matter ‘prevents education in the sense of transformational educational processes’<sup>[24]</sup>.

The reasons for this include the dominance of information-absorbing forms of work, such as frontal teaching methods, the unambiguousness or limitation of perspectives, the consolidation of self and world relations, and, in particular, the focus on competencies and educational standards. Following his empirical studies, Gruschka (2011) presents a radical critique of current teaching practices, arguing that these practices hinder access to deeper understanding by emphasizing method training, quickly covering subject content, and maintaining narrowly focused teaching settings<sup>[23]</sup>. Although students often show signs of wanting to understand more precisely, they are merely ‘fed’ learning content. Gruschka (2011) argues that while teachers may orient themselves toward fostering understanding, they simultaneously undermine this goal through their practices<sup>[23]</sup>. As a result, the overall discourse is marked by skepticism regarding the potential for education in regular lessons.

Following this critique of teaching practices and their tendency to hinder transformative learning, the question arises as to whether such a limited perspective on teaching and teachers’ actions is actually beneficial. Furthermore, whether the concept of education itself—applied in teaching practice—should be questioned. The focus on education as a transformational process, triggered by moments of irritation and crisis, certainly has some blind spots, as discussed in educational theory discourse. However, in the context of teaching research and didactic translations, these perspectives remain important to explore. The concept of education as a transformational process can be problematized from two distinct perspectives. First, from an empirical perspective,

one might question the viability of transformational education as a heuristic tool for studying teaching and learning. Is it reasonable to focus solely on crises, thus limiting education to a subcategory of conceivable forms of dealing with the world, while disregarding other educational experiences?<sup>[21,37,38]</sup> For instance, it is questionable whether critical experiences are the sole cause of personality-forming processes. It is more plausible that they represent just one possible cause of education<sup>[39]</sup>.

If one assumes that the educational process entails not only change but also the construction and maintenance of self and world relations<sup>[40]</sup>, the question arises as to how these various educational dynamics<sup>[41]</sup> can be initiated and empirically observed. This narrowing of the concept of education thus also affects the pupils, whose identity development and not only the questioning of identity is disregarded. In this way, the pedagogical support of identity is generally support of identity is lost from view. This raises the question of whether crises of identity or upheavals only occur under certain conditions (e.g., privileged origins), and whether they can only be productively utilized under such conditions. These crises may also lead to blockages that make personal access to the subject matter more difficult<sup>[42]</sup>.

This also raises the question of the age at which such complex educational processes can take place at all. Wiezorek (2016), for example, surmises that processes of transformational education are probably to be expected in young adulthood at the earliest, whereas constitutive processes of world and self relationships in childhood and adolescence cannot be described as educational processes<sup>[43]</sup>. As a result, the design of self and world relations is often theorized as socialization or development. Theoretically, the concept of education as a transformation of self and world relations presupposes the formation of any kind of self-world relationship. Here, it is questionable to what extent or when it can be assumed that adolescents have access to this<sup>[43]</sup>.

The second perspective concerns the didactic-pedagogical orientation and the normative foundation of transformational education. This perspective emphasizes that pedagogical action cannot merely satisfy the formal requirement that teaching should provide opportunities for transformation; one must also ask which transformations

are pedagogically desirable. This raises awareness of the potential negative psychological effects that can accompany experiences of transformative discontinuity. The questioning of existential frameworks can lead to a loss of meaning and orientation, and may even result in serious identity crises <sup>[44]</sup>, which can jeopardize the maintenance of psychosocial health, mental integrity, and the self's ability to act <sup>[45]</sup>. From an ethical perspective, this brings up the question of to what extent it is desirable or justifiable to initiate such processes pedagogically. After all, coping with crisis experiences requires certain psychosocial resources, such as previous stabilizing experiences—because only a secure identity can remain open to new experiences <sup>[46,47]</sup>.

Furthermore, the construction of identity becomes a problem, especially in the acute contingency of late modernity, so that the pedagogical focus is less on the initiation rather than the appropriate processing and handling of crises must be focused on. This in turn implies certain resources and skills, which make it possible to interpret and articulate experiences of crisis <sup>[28]</sup>. In addition to questions of continuity, which become particularly important in times of uncertainty and discontinuity <sup>[48]</sup> it would also be necessary to critically reflect on the extent to which to what extent the willingness to change <sup>[49]</sup>.

Finally, the focus on the initiation of crises goes hand in hand with the neglect of aspects of content. The transformational theory of education does not specify which objects and content are used to realize education. The significance and value of certain cultural practices and goods (apart from the other side of their irritating effect) is lost from view <sup>[50]</sup>.

Although this problematization has identified some of the blind spots and constrictions of the transformational teaching concept have been mentioned, it should by no means be concluded from this that the concept and experience of transformation should not play a role in an educationally orientated understanding of teaching. Transformational teaching and learning processes, if successful, hold unique significance for the development of each individual's self-interpretation and worldview, thus contributing to their self-realization. These processes expand the learner's horizon, allowing lesson content to be seen not only as 'food for the intellect' but also as

sources of inspiration for the expansion and enrichment of life plans <sup>[51]</sup>. In this sense, the attempt to explore the implications of a transformational educational concept for teaching research and practice is justified.

However, what is problematic is the prevailing one-sided view of educational transformations and the lack of reflection on the fact that other forms of transformational experiences are both possible and desirable, not always characterized by irritation and crisis. In the next section, we will explore how other genres of transformational experiences can be integrated into a convincing teaching concept and, ultimately, contribute to educational research.

### 3. Alternative approaches to educational experiences in the classroom

In the following, three genres of pictorial transformational experiences are presented and critically examined. These genres have gained attention over the last decade but have yet to establish a secure foothold in German educational science: the experiences of articulation, resonance, and aspiration. In any case, these are processes that describe not only a primarily constructive transformational experience but also phenomenological possibilities for initiating (transformational) educational processes beyond crisis and irritation.

#### 3.1. Articulation as a transformational experience

Following Taylor (1992, 1994, 2017), the transformational power of articulation can be considered as a process of the 'externalization of strong judgments' <sup>[52,53,54]</sup>. Strong judgments are understood as identity-forming frameworks 'within which I can try to determine what is good or valuable on a case-by-case basis' <sup>[53]</sup>. These judgements are primarily and implicitly accessible in the form of moral feelings, such as shame, reverence, or pride, which can be seen as emotional expressions of the recognition of certain values, even without explicit awareness of these standards' existence. The foundation for strong judgments is a social practice, which provides goods and, in doing so, shapes the subject's relationship with both self and the world. However, the formation of identity within a supra-individual framework does not occur as blind adoption and reproduction. Instead,

it offers the possibility of reconfiguring social orders. Strong judgments thus represent a positioning towards certain cultural goods, and the introduction of new, constitutive formulations is also possible <sup>[54]</sup>. For strong judgements to guide action and ultimately become the object of transformative experiences, they require (self-) reassurance, which, according to Taylor, takes place as a process of divestment: ‘A large part of our [...] judgments [...] are not simply given. We formulate them in words or images. Because we are linguistically gifted animals, our endeavours must be articulated in one way or another <sup>[54]</sup>. Humans are thus not only strongly judgmental beings but also feel the need for ‘explicit and reflexive self-interpretations’ by asking ‘what a situation really means to them, what they really want, what is really good or important, etc.’ <sup>[55]</sup>. It is about the ‘unstructured feeling of having to bring something important to light’ <sup>[54]</sup>. Without articulation, it is not possible to fully grasp the meaning behind a feeling. The aim of articulation is to establish a (temporary) balance between the values guiding action and their reflected visualization, in which the self attempts to articulate itself adequately in accordance with itself.

There is a transformative moment in these attempts at articulation. Even if we are talking about the realization of a self, this does not necessarily imply the realization of an essential, predetermined nature. Articulation occurs through recourse to intersubjective media, with language in particular playing a prominent role as both a reflexive and meta-reflexive medium. Although Taylor assigns a special significance to language, he adopts a broad understanding of articulation, encompassing a variety of expressive possibilities (such as images, gestures, movements, etc.), each of which enables different, logically distinct options for self-expression <sup>[56]</sup>.

The transformation here refers to the translation of the implicit into the explicit, representing an educational process in which one’s relationship to self and world takes on a new quality. In this sense, articulations are not only descriptive and representative; they are also revealing and creative. It is only through recourse to a medium that something initially incomplete or confused can be formulated. However, such a formulation or reformulation does not leave its object unchanged. To articulate something is to shape our understanding of what we want or what we think is important in a particular way <sup>[52]</sup>.

The driving force behind this transformation does not necessarily come from external sources; it primarily arises from an inner need to increase articulation. This requires a cultural stock of interpretative patterns that are drawn upon during articulation. As Taylor (2017) writes, articulation refers to “free-standing realities” <sup>[54]</sup>. School objects can therefore provide access to cultural patterns of interpretation, assisting students in articulating themselves in relation to existing value interpretations. Joas (2002) suggests that encountering previously unknown interpretations can make past experiences expressible in a new way, highlighting the value of publicly established interpretations that inspire one to become more articulate and engage meaningfully with one’s social environment <sup>[57]</sup>.

The concept of articulation, therefore, has pedagogical relevance. Stojanov (2014), for example, emphasizes the need to mediate “between subjective, pre-cognitive intuitions and underlying life-world experiences on one hand, and objective conceptual propositions and argumentations on the other” <sup>[5]</sup>. This mediation is essential for educational processes, where the ideals and values of the life world are “propositionally differentiated” and questioned for their intersubjective justifiability <sup>[5]</sup>. Learners must engage with supra-individual knowledge and relate it to their life experiences, subjecting identity-forming values to critical reflection and transformation. As Stojanov (2014, p. 162) notes, academic content does not merely appear as neutral information but as a means of orientation in the search for a good and meaningful life <sup>[5]</sup>.

Giesinger (2010) also argues that normative definitions shape individuals’ identities and that processes of self-understanding help us understand how we position ourselves as actors and experiences in the social and natural world <sup>[58]</sup>. Schools, therefore, must introduce students to the practice of self-understanding by promoting the competencies, values, and knowledge necessary for successful engagement with their identity. Cultural products in education gain their value from initiating and supporting processes of self-understanding, helping to make implicit values, ways of thinking, and options for action more explicit. Engaging with cultural products—whether literature, the arts, or scientific concepts—can help learners become aware of their own orientations, fostering both familiarity and foreignness <sup>[58]</sup>.

From this perspective, transformative teaching

research, in line with Taylor's articulation theory, must focus on testing and exploring new concepts and theoretical perspectives for learners across all subjects. These linguistic experiments should not only be viewed as practices that lead to increased knowledge in a particular field. Instead, they represent unique opportunities for transformative attempts at articulation, provided they are appropriately supported pedagogically<sup>[51]</sup>. This applies not only to language-based articulations but also to creative and aesthetic forms of symbolic self-expression—through art, music, sports, etc.—which offer multifaceted opportunities for expressing and testing strong judgments<sup>[59,60]</sup>.

However, despite the various possibilities and advantages of articulation-sensitive teaching research, the concept of articulation alone is insufficient for fully understanding the transformative moments in teaching. Articulation theory tends to provide vague statements on the conditions for successful articulation, without offering concrete criteria for distinguishing between successful and unsuccessful articulation processes. According to Taylor, successful articulations depend on authenticity—on a correspondence between strong values and their interpretation by the individual—and on experiences of recognition, which he defines as the appreciation and confirmation of articulations in social practice<sup>[55]</sup>.

The reference to recognition is plausible but ultimately unsatisfactory because recognition processes can be fundamentally ambivalent and linked to practices of subjugation<sup>[61,62]</sup>. Therefore, the pursuit of social recognition may inhibit “authentic” articulations. As a result, intersubjective recognition is insufficient for determining the success of transformative educational processes, as it is essential to consider how “forms of address” can be reflexively appropriated—especially when their ethical content is itself ambivalent<sup>[63]</sup>. Finally, this overlooks the empowering experiences that must be located beyond intersubjective processes of recognition.

Furthermore, a focus solely on Taylor's considerations would limit the educational-theoretical exploration of self-theorization and interpretation. The concept of resonance can help further differentiate the possibilities and the transformative character of educational experiences, providing a clearer understanding of the inspiring moments that can stimulate a broadening of horizons and reinterpretation.

### 3.2. Resonance as a transformative experience

Rosa (2016) represents another way of theorizing the nature and significance of formative transformations. Resonance describes a relationship towards and within the world in which the individual experiences a special form of connection with their environment<sup>[65]</sup>. According to Rosa (2016), this interaction is a desirable state, a world relationship that can be described as successful, as resonant relationships can strengthen the characteristics (or voices) of all those affected especially<sup>[64]</sup>. In the mode of resonance, the individual feels connected to their environment through a ‘vibrating wire,’ which is recognized as an expansion or intensification of their sense of value<sup>[64]</sup>. This form of connectedness should be distinguished from a ‘control’ or ‘domination’ of the environment, as such world relationships lack the cooperative character of resonance<sup>[64]</sup>. At the same time, it should form an antithesis to alienated and silenced world relationships.

According to Rosa (2011), a resonant relationship to the world is ultimately also what motivates Taylor's work: it is about conceptualizing the “social world not as a world of isolated entities, but as an energetically charged, vibrating network, which the subject does not simply confront, but in which it is ‘responsively embedded,’ as it were”<sup>[65]</sup>. Taylorian articulation processes can thus be understood as resonance experiences, provided that the former actually leads to increased articulation and a real intensification of intersubjectivity.

For the definition of the concept of resonance as a genre of experience in distinction to other forms of transformative experience, the process of transformation is fundamental, which should unfold in resonance relationships. Transformation consists not only in a transformation of the experiencing subject but also in the objects with which it engages in response. A successful transformation in the context of a sporting event, for example, leads to the familiar feeling that the various associated elements - fellow players, ball, net, other relevant game objects and equipment - become a coherent whole. You feel directly connected to your environment, but not in the form of a loss of self or a dissolution of self, but rather in the sense of an empowerment and enrichment of the self. It is important to note that creating this holistic experience does not necessarily lead to better

performance. The value and good of resonance does not lie in what is gained from the activity of transformation, but in the transforming experience itself.

It becomes clear that a moment of transformation is also concealed here, but it has a different quality than a transformation through articulation. Resonance contains a positive quality of experience, but at the same time, it also refers to a pathic moment of being seized. In this way, both the subject and the world are transformed and brought into a reciprocal relationship with each other, which has a strong bodily sensory dimension.

In principle, experiences of resonance can occur in many areas of human activity and endeavour: for example in loving relationships, in challenging sports, in professional contexts and also in particularly successful teaching situations <sup>[5]</sup>. According to Beljan, who transfers Rosa's considerations into an educational science context, the concept of resonance in educational contexts is intended to sensitize people to the fact that educational processes at school require experiential spaces in which holistic confrontations and experiences with subject-related learning content are made possible <sup>[5]</sup>. Resonance stands for a certain quality of the teacher-pupil relationship as well as the relationship to the subject matter. 'In resonance relationships, students and teachers have contact with each other, the teachers can become enthusiastic about the subject matter and something takes place between the students and the subject matter that Wolfgang Klafki called 'opening up' <sup>[66]</sup>. He also suggests that the physical and spatial conditions of the school also play a significant role in enabling educational processes, as teaching and learning processes are also affected by a certain physicality.

There is therefore great potential in the practical research significance of resonance theory, which is expressed above all in addition to articulation theory. Rosa (2016) establishes the link to Taylor by pointing out that resonance is inconceivable without reference to strong values: resonance succeeds with sections of the world that carry their values within themselves and do not simply appear to be useful or practical <sup>[64]</sup>. Ultimately, the concept of resonance provides an orientation for determining which articulation processes can be considered successful or unsuccessful. Accordingly, an articulation attempt is considered successful if the learner

can now adopt a responding attitude towards the domain of experience that the articulation concerns. For example, if a pupil attempts to reinterpret an experience based on the concept of consumer society and is sensitized to live more ecologically and cultivate a rich relationship with nature, this is an articulation that favors resonance. If a pupil becomes embarrassed and resigned in the face of the ubiquity of consumer thinking and behaviour in contemporary societies, then it is imperative to speak of a failed attempt at articulation.

At the same time, the idea of resonance can be used to comprehend other phenomena of learning and world understanding that are not primarily of a linguistic-articulative nature. When one is confronted with new concepts, perspectives, values, and forms of thought, for example, the experience often has further phenomenological facets that express themselves in a non-linguistic, meta-articulative way, such as experiences of fascination, amazement or inspiration. Through the lens of resonance theory, for example, the posture of the students in the classroom can become relevant, thus the fascinated sitting at the edge of the chair with shining eyes or a tired leaning back with a bored look as well as an excited conversation or an absent, even distracted chatter become important indications that also belong to a comprehensive research perspective that is intended to understand and reconstruct teaching transformations.

Even if the articulation and resonance theories are promisingly compatible with each other, they are not sufficient to fully understand the transformative nature of teaching and learning. Following Rosa's considerations, it becomes clear that the lack of resonance is not always a sign of an unsuccessful experiential process. Especially in teaching contexts, a perspective is necessary that can recognize the importance of, for example, challenge, effort and self-overcoming, which cannot yet be experienced in a resonant form. In particular, when it comes to expanding and broadening the previous horizon of experience by engaging with (initially somewhat alien) academic and technical content, it will not always be possible to speak of complete resonance experiences. For example, learners will need time and support before they can perceive the solution of a difficult problem in maths as a source of resonance or as an opportunity for self-articulation. A theoretical vocabulary that can differentiate

between encounters with challenges and obstacles to learning that favor and hinder transformation therefore appears to be necessary.

Resonance theory thus describes a desirable state of relating to the world, which can in principle arise through engagement with lesson content, but not the nature of the psychological process through which the individual achieves this state. This process, which cannot consist solely of resonance experiences, is further specified by the concept of aspiration.

### 3.3. Aspiration as a transformative experience

Another educationally significant genre of transformative experience is illuminated by the concept of aspiration. According to Callard (2018), the concept of aspiration stands for ‘the characteristic form of agency that is orientated towards the appropriation of values’<sup>[67]</sup>. It refers to the experiential process whereby the intrinsic value of an activity or way of life is recognized and subsequently pursued. An aspiration is, therefore, a form of striving or endeavoring, but not towards a pre-planned goal or good. It describes an expansion of what we consider to be desirable goals and goods. If, for example, hearing a composition by Tárrega for the first time leads to the decision to learn to play the guitar; if experiencing a painting by Albrecht Dürer makes you want to try your hand at painting yourself, or if seeing the plight and dignity of a person leads to voluntary work in the railway station mission - then you experience being moved by this aspirational form of value-bound striving.

According to Callard (2018), the emergence and recognition of value in aspirational processes go hand in hand with experiencing the previous evaluation perspective as narrowed, corrupted or defective. Aspiration thus arises not only from the inspiration of a value but also from an ‘awareness of defectiveness about the understanding of the relevant value’<sup>[67]</sup>. Thus, aspirants have two motivations for their endeavors: firstly, the ‘proleptic’ motivation<sup>[67]</sup>, which is linked to the expected advantages and possibilities of the aspired object; secondly, the negative motivation that the aspiration process gradually frees them from their now problematic stage of evaluation. What is special about the concept of aspiration, then, is that a discrepancy is opened up between our current value framework and the one that

would integrate the new value. This initial discrepancy and distance to the value motivates as it is orientated toward an object that is now perceived as valuable.

Aspiration can thus be defined on the basis of four central characteristics. Firstly, it arises from an intimation of value. Although this intimation - which can be interpreted as a kind of ‘resonant’ experience - sets the value-based appropriation process in motion, it is not enough to make the newly recognized value fully accessible. Thus, the suggestion of value is closely linked to another characteristic of aspirational value learning: the recognition of an ethical distance. One confronts the fact that unlocking value requires work. However, this work on oneself does not only involve practice and repetition, it requires a transformation in order to arrive at the desired value. This third feature - the recognition of an ethical difference - is necessary, firstly, to loosen the grip of the existing (and now perceived as limited) value framework, and secondly, to appropriate the new tasks, forms of relationship and perspectives of the aspirational object. Since such aspirational transformations are difficult and almost inevitably associated with setbacks, aspiration at the individual level involves a decision to become different, which must also be supported by meaningful relationships with others<sup>[47]</sup>.

Although the concept of aspiration arose in the context of a debate on questions of rational agency in philosophy<sup>[68,69]</sup> and was only sketchily presented in the above form, it is obvious that it can also be understood as a pedagogical category. This is because the value of lesson content is often difficult for learners to grasp at first, even under optimal teaching and learning conditions. The concept of aspiration can be used to describe the psychological process by which learners overcome the initial strangeness of the subject matter and ultimately recognize it as enriching the ‘quality of immediate, everyday experience’<sup>[70]</sup>. Learning without aspiration, i.e. without a connection to the intrinsic value of the subject matter that is perceived as meaningful and thus motivating, leads<sup>[71,72]</sup> to a superficial or purely pragmatic relationship to subject-specific learning content. In this case, learners are tied to extrinsic concerns such as grades, degrees, or career prospects or receive only fleeting glimpses of intrinsic sources of value that quickly slip away. If the concept of aspiration can explain how

teachers can establish lasting contact with the intrinsic sources of value in their disciplines, then this points to one of the central tasks of education-oriented teaching<sup>[73]</sup>.

A second and perhaps even more fundamental link between aspiration and pedagogical practice concerns how the concept of aspiration addresses the relationship and interaction between teachers and students. Looking through the lens of aspiration sensitizes us to the fact that teachers must establish a connection to the intrinsic value of subject-specific educational content to initiate aspirational rather than merely ambitious learning processes. The distinction previously made between intrinsic and extrinsic sources of value is actually too blurred here to be able to empirically describe and observe such mediation processes. An aspirational transfer of values implies an existential connection to intrinsic sources of value. According to the thesis, subject-specific learning content must be perceived by learners as valuable in the sense of deepening their perception and enriching their horizon of experience, so that they are also determined to pursue the value of the learning objects further and change themselves in the process. In other words, the four characteristics of aspirational experience point to potentially observable moments in the learning situation that allow us to reconstruct the aspirational character of teacher-student interaction.

The concept of aspiration thus appears to complement resonance theory and the concept of articulation in a decisive way. This is because the process by which the individual moves, for example, from preresonant intimations of a value to living out the promised resonance relationships is further specified on the basis of the concept of aspiration. In other words, aspiration provides information about the psychological conditions that must be present for resonance to emerge as an existing relationship to the world (and to the subject matter). The same applies to articulation theory: articulations are meaningful if they are linked to the intrinsic values that are present in the respective subject context or can be uncovered by engaging with subject content. The concrete implications of the conceptual triad of articulation-resonance-aspiration for teaching research will be explained in the next and final section.

#### **4. Outline of transformation research in the classroom**

The above sketches were intended to show how transformative experiences in the classroom can be conceived in their diversity and beyond disruptive experiences in the confrontation with specialized subjects. Three different experiences emerge, each with a specific transformative quality, which points to possibilities for enriching and expanding relationships with the self and the world. The highlighted relationships, in turn, make it clear that education cannot be reduced to an educational dynamic, but must be conceptualized as a complex and multidimensional event<sup>[41]</sup>.

While the concept of articulation stands for attempts at self-design in which strong judgements are interpreted and specified as media of self-understanding in connection with subject-specific objects, resonance stands for experiences of self-efficacy that can arise from successful articulation. Resonance, which also refers to the physical and emotional dimensions of education, can also mark the beginning of an educational process in which a broadening of horizons occurs, whereby the concept of aspiration is suitable for describing how subjects open themselves up to experiences of new values and how new forms of articulation can emerge from this.

This heuristic ultimately focuses less on irritating moments or failure and more on imaginatively designed subject-specific contexts and arrangements that make it possible to articulate preferences and judgments when dealing with learning objects and to examine their potential for expanding and enriching experiences. This heuristic thus serves to focus teaching and learning processes that establish a two-sided relationship between individual-subjective moments of growth and academic-technical sources of values. This seems helpful to us insofar as such formative relationships are all too often excluded in favor of more instrumental relationships to learning objects, through technocratic over-shaping. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that heuristics in this form naturally cannot do justice to all educationally significant events in the classroom. In particular, the inherent structure and character of various non-linguistic educational processes and their potential for transformational teaching research need to be explored more systematically<sup>[74-76]</sup>. Furthermore,

thematically oriented educational programs of central social importance have not yet been addressed within the framework of this heuristic. How these can be thought of or researched differently through the conceptual triad of articulation-resonance-aspiration is reserved for further work.

Following these considerations, we would like to propose transformative classroom research based on an integration of different formative experiences<sup>[51]</sup>. In this sense, articulation, resonance and aspiration refer to different forms of transformative experiences that can complement each other dynamically, but can also appear empirically in their own right. This proposal is based on the assumption of the openness of educational processes that can in some way lead to changes in the relationship to the self and the world, but whose outcome cannot ultimately be finalized. The significance and impact of the world and the results of education cannot be determined philosophically or even in educational criticism, but require an assurance of reality<sup>[21]</sup>.

The possible relations and interactions only hinted at here must ultimately be pursued in empirical studies with a view to their empirical concretization in school interaction processes, whereby a methodological approach is required that is sensitive to different moments of education with equal attention (Freud) and finally: not to forget, also allows for irritations through the dignity of the practice itself.

It would be interesting to broaden the view of teaching methods and to ask which levels of learning, forms of knowledge, subject-specific practices and school-cultural forms prove to be particularly “educationally favorable.” The role played by pupil characteristics and aspects such as social inequality (in interaction with other categories of difference) and available resources and vulnerability risks, as well as age and stage of development, and the extent to which this is associated with a certain affinity to certain patterns of experience (tendency to stabilize or opening up to new formations) also appear to be relevant.

These initial considerations on a heuristic vocabulary must be expanded in a next step to include

methodological considerations. In doing so, it is necessary to consider the phenomena of articulation, resonance and aspiration not only conceptually, but also methodologically more systematically concerning aspects of corporeality<sup>[74,76]</sup>. Even if the presentation suggests that such constructive educational processes do not only have to take place in the medium of language, for example by trying out new concepts, it is increasingly important to further differentiate other forms of articulation in connection with the three dimensions of transformational education<sup>[77-79]</sup>. Even if the focus of considerations is more on qualitative teaching research, it also seems promising to relate these considerations to questions of teaching quality and effectiveness<sup>[1]</sup> and to supplement existing models with the proposed observation categories, so that the connection to quantitatively oriented research programs already initiated by Pugh (2002) can be further developed<sup>[70]</sup>.

Finally, this concept of education cannot avoid reflecting on the relationship between description and normativity. If education is understood not only as a heuristic for empirical teaching research, but also as a pedagogical concept, the question of content-related orientations arises: Which articulations appear pedagogically desirable and tolerable and to what extent can experiences of articulation, resonance, or aspiration also favour problematic developments?<sup>[80,81]</sup>

Even if it seems productive for empirical research to initially leave out normative evaluations<sup>[82]</sup>, this does not mean that evaluations cannot or must not be made for didactic considerations<sup>[83]</sup> and that educational processes can be evaluated from different normative-evaluative dimensions<sup>[84]</sup>. For empirical research into educational processes, however, it is first necessary - without completely getting rid of the normative baggage of educational research - to avoid a purely evaluative perspective on empirical reality (which often only appears deficient from this perspective)<sup>[85]</sup> and to first openly ask about the interplay of different educational moments and their respective concretization in educational practice, which can contribute to educational theory formation.

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