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## Rationale and aims of crosscurricular teaching and learning

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### 3 Rationale and aims of crosscurricular teaching and learning

For life, knowledge, and work

*Søren Harnow Klausen and Nina Mård*

#### Introduction

Perhaps more than any other teaching activity, cross- and transcurricular teaching needs a theoretical and normative foundation. Although cross-curricular teaching appears to be widely appreciated, it is also permanently called into question at different levels, from educational policy to teacher collaboration and interaction with students in the classroom. Moreover, its basic aims and rationale can seem unclear – what is it good for and is it worth the efforts. It can also relate to a variety of goals and functions, from securing employability and meeting societal challenges, over motivating students to learn, to fostering civic skills or critical thinking. Hence, there is a need for justifying it and providing systematic criteria for selecting among and balancing different aims and concerns. This is needed not merely to fill a theoretical gap but also to strengthen educational practice, where teachers are regularly confronted with the task of making the meaning of their activities transparent to their students and themselves, and to choose the relevant themes, methods, and materials.

However, the very idea of providing a normative foundation for teaching practices is likely to attract skepticism. Strong currents within educational research assume that it is only possible to describe how such practices have evolved and how different norms and conceptions are, as a matter of fact, applied and negotiated (see, e.g., Rothgangel & Vollmer, 2020). There is, admittedly, no point in espousing an educational ideal that is not compatible with the institutional framework or does not resonate with the values and beliefs held by teachers and curriculum planners. The norms must be grounded in, and sensitive to, reality. But when confronted with questions of meaning and justification, which inevitably arise, one cannot merely point to existing habits and conventions. We need criteria for determining which parts of the existing practices deserve to be further developed or need to be strengthened. Teachers must be able to give convincing answers to doubts raised by students and colleagues or arising in their own minds. They must also be able to deal with cross-pressures. Policies, recommendations, and curriculum documents may demand actions that clash with other interests and expectations or seem

to go against what the teacher finds best based on her own experience. To deal with such situations, an independent foundation is needed – not in the form of a rigid set of maxims, but in the form of a normative framework that provides tools for negotiating the different demands.

A normative foundation for crosscurricular teaching is needed. It should be genuinely normative and foundational – able to give substantial answers to the questions of why, what, and how to teach. But it should also be realistic. It must be compatible with other basic norms and interests in the relevant cultures and communities. A foundation for crosscurricular teaching must be sufficiently *comprehensive* – able to address a wide variety of relevant concerns and goals of teaching. It must be *ecumenical* rather than partisan – able to accommodate a wide range of approaches to teaching and learning, and knowledge obtained by different methods. Last but not least, it must be *unifying* – not just able to cover different goals and approaches but also to show that they are interrelated, and how. We think that the classical notion of *Bildung* meets these requirements, even though it is also far from uncontroversial and in need of improvement.

### **Bildung: its promises and discontents**

The notion of *Bildung* refers to a mode of thinking that came to the fore in Germany around 1800. It was anticipated and influenced by earlier ideas, notably the notion of *paideia* (comprehensive cultural education) in ancient Greece and the ideal of gentlemanly “politeness” espoused by the English philosopher Shaftesbury (Horlacher, 2015). *Bildung* refers to a process of self-cultivation, of personal and cultural maturation, in which a person continuously forms herself through her interactions with the surrounding world. This ideal was espoused in writings of Schiller, Humboldt, Goethe, and Schleiermacher (see, e.g., Bruford, 1975). In its classic form, *Bildung* is defined as a proportional development of all human powers, in their mutual interplay, and, at the same time, a linking of the self to the world (Humboldt, 1967, p. 22). This idea entails the following:

- (i) A human being can and must develop a self that is unique, coherent, and relatively independent (autonomous).
- (ii) Selfhood and autonomy have to be achieved, and this requires continuous effort, self-criticism, and self-restraint.
- (iii) Achieving autonomy is also a process of socialization, as the materials for developing the self must be taken from social and cultural traditions (as well as from encounters with nature).
- (iv) These materials must be individually appropriated and modified, making *Bildung* a process of mutual adaptation and attunement between the individual and its environment. And while they must, to some extent, be taken from the social and cultural setting in which the individual is embedded,

they should also include elements of other environments and traditions. Bildung requires effort and experiences of challenges and limitations.

- (v) Bildung is driven by a concern for wellbeing (one's own and that of others), and is a process which is itself experienced as fundamentally pleasurable, rewarding, or meaningful (i.e., intrinsically valuable and motivated).
- (vi) By requiring a proportional development of all human powers and a linking to the world, Bildung assumes that human abilities and the domains of human life are strongly interrelated and must be developed in concert. Hence Bildung entails a striving for unity, completeness, and connection.

This characterization of the general ideal of Bildung already indicates both why it is controversial and how the skepticism it has attracted can be answered. It is often criticized for being overly *individualistic*. The focus is on *self*-cultivation and on enabling the individual to flourish and develop according to her own interests. This might seem to clash with concerns for the welfare of the community or social cohesion.

To this, it can be replied that while Bildung does take the individual to be both the starting point and ultimate goal, it emphatically conceives of the individual as constrained and formed by the social context and societal norms. As for the suspicion that it is too closely wedded to modern Western liberal values, it is admittedly related to modernity in a broad sense. This is part of its justification: in the modern world, which is marked by changes and transformations, plurality and diversification, and where individuals do not have ready-made scripts for life, a probing attitude to life and a broad range of abilities and skills are needed. While Bildung was historically associated with a European bourgeois lifestyle, there is nothing in the notion itself that supports this. Indeed, with its emphasis on enculturation and mutual adaptation between individual and society, it is rather a corrective to radical forms of liberal individualism. Given that it entails that the individual forms itself by appropriating material and norms from its cultural and natural environment, it must be expected that the specific combination of values, knowledge, and skills which it results in will differ between cultural contexts; that Bildung will play out differently. This makes it ecumenical and flexible, and useful in a world with different cultural traditions and disagreement over specific norms.

A related criticism of Bildung has it that it is *elitist* and *exclusive*, often presented as requiring a detachment from the world (Horlacher, 2015, p. 60). It is true that some of the classical descriptions of Bildung depict it as a process requiring extraordinary cultural, material, and cognitive resources, making it *de facto* a privilege of the few. It has also been seen as requiring longer periods of contemplation and withdrawal from practical activities. But such withdrawal is understood in the Bildung tradition as a means for deepening understanding and sensitivity, with the aim of reestablishing the link to the world still more firmly. That there should be a place for reflection and creative thinking not constrained by narrow concerns for utility is almost a

commonplace and clearly compatible with promoting an engaged and practical attitude to the world. What remains valid in the criticism, however, is that *Bildung*, as a comprehensive and ambitious ideal, carries with it a risk of aiming too loftily, demanding too much, or expending scarce resources. And the historical manifestations of *Bildung* show that it can tend to privilege certain kinds of traditional elite culture and be less sensitive to broader societal concerns (Masschelein & Ricken, 2003). These tendencies are not entailed by the notion of *Bildung* and they have been corrected by subsequent developments of the tradition (see later). Yet they have proven sufficiently long-lived to merit sustained critical attention. Hence, it must be emphasized that *Bildung* is not just about development of all human capacities, but development *for* all (Sjöström & Eilks, 2020). Realizing this ideal is probably the most central challenge to contemporary *Bildung*-oriented teaching and a central task for crosscurricular teaching, which likewise has been criticized for benefiting students from strong backgrounds (Poulsen, 1997).

It is further common to contrast *Bildung* with institutionalized education. *Bildung* is seen as an essentially informal, free, and open process, pertaining to a person's whole life. While this is not a criticism of the notion per se, it might seem to undermine our proposal that *Bildung* could serve as a foundation for crosscurricular teaching. Even those who agree that *Bildung* is relevant to institutionalized education often ascribe to it a mostly negative significance, taking it to imply that teaching should not be closely planned and structured, and that schools should make room for personal development rather than foster specific competences (Rømer, 2015). It is indeed important to maintain that *Bildung* refers to a comprehensive process of cultivation and not particularly to activities at school or specific educational goals. But this does not make it incompatible with school education, nor does it mean that it has no implications for how such education should be. Teaching for *Bildung* means teaching primarily for life rather than for school while maintaining a view of the student as a whole human being even when teaching specialized knowledge or skills. This is not just compatible with, but seems to call for the kind of structuring and planning necessary for teaching the knowledge or skills in question. Receiving structured and planned teaching is arguably important, if not essential, to the process of self-formation. In modern societies, the process of socialization and enculturation entailed by *Bildung* cannot be conceived independent of school education.

Rather than criticizing the notion of *Bildung* directly, some might find it outdated and think that more appropriate and well-motivated theoretical foundations are at hand. Various forms of *constructivism* emphasize the active role of students in constructing new understandings and integrating new information (Steffe & Gale, 1995). A related approach known as *student-centered learning* advocates putting students' interests first and making them choose for themselves what to learn, how to learn it, and how to assess their progress (Jones, 2007). *Transformative learning theory* centers on the potential for perspective transformation in students brought about by critical reflection on

“disorienting dilemmas” (Mezirow, 2000; see also Chapter 13). Educational philosophies like *liberal education* (Nussbaum, 1997) or *democratic education* (or “progressivism”: Dewey, 2011) emphasize the value of critical thinking, self-reflection, and the promotion of democratic values and habits. Recently, *non-affirmative education theory* has been put forward with the intention of bridging different traditions in educational research and combining concerns for democratic citizenship with a respect for different cultures and value systems (Uljen & Ylimaki, 2017; see also Chapter 4).

All of these approaches are sensible and useful. However, they overlap or recapitulate central elements of *Bildung*, while being insufficiently comprehensive or basic to be able to serve as a complete normative foundation for teaching. Hence, they should not be seen as alternatives to *Bildung*, but rather as ways to elaborate and emphasize different aspects of it.

For example, *Bildung*, constructivism, and student-centered learning all view learning as an active process driven by individual interests. They partly agree on the justification, with constructivism referring to how human cognition is supposed to work and student-centered learning adding a normative perspective, implying that students have a right to be treated as responsible and autonomous beings. All three approaches assume that personal interest and experience of agency is necessary for motivation and for appropriation of knowledge and skills. Student-centered learning and *Bildung* also argue from a concern for human wellbeing, both as a value in its own right and because it promotes learning and strengthens motivation (see characteristic (v)). But *Bildung* takes a broader perspective, balancing the recognition of students’ interests and presuppositions with further concerns. It maintains that teaching should also represent general societal interests that may not yet be fully acknowledged as such by the students, and that it should foster resilience and social responsibility, even if this requires teaching in a way that does not squarely match students’ immediate personal interests (Goldman, 1999, p. 250). *Bildung* particularly emphasizes the value of recalcitrant experiences, being challenged and forced to expand one’s horizon. In this respect, it resembles transformative learning theory. This does not make teaching less student-centered, but adds an obligation to look beyond the present skills and needs. Neither does it contradict the principle that what is taught should always be *relevant* to students. However, from a *Bildung*-perspective, this should include matters of *potential* relevance. Such matters are no doubt taught most efficiently when they can be linked to something of more immediate relevance; but this should be seen more as a practical constraint.

The progressivist, democratic, and nonaffirmative approaches can also be said to highlight particular aspects of *Bildung*. Fostering autonomy, participation, and critical thinking are central goals to all strands of thought. Yet human beings are more than democratic citizens. No matter how widely one extends and conceives of democracy, there will be important aspects of human life not covered by it. And while political participation and critical activity arguably also have an affective dimension, the progressivist tradition tends

to emphasize rational reflection and discourse, as if these were the defining traits of humanity or the most important activities of all. This tendency is exemplified by non-affirmative education theory that conceives of the curriculum as a “complicated conversation” and advocates that individual, cultural, and societal interests – and existing knowledge – should be recognized and critically reflected upon, but not affirmed (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017). *Bildung* entails that such meta-reflection must be supported by more direct encounters and experiences that enable students to appropriate what they are presented with, actively taking up, testing, and adapting the perspectives in question. For example, history should not merely be presented as an object of political interests and different uses and interpretations, important though this is, but also as a distinctive reality and dimension of human life (Bjerre, 2021).

It may seem that the notion of *Bildung* presented here is so broad and flexible as to be almost empty. How can it function as a normative foundation for crosscurricular teaching if it is compatible with so many different approaches and adaptable to different cultures, norms, and values? The answer to this is that *Bildung* does carry with it several non-negotiable fundamental commitments. It does rule out certain understandings and practices of teaching. Though it may be adapted to more collectivistic cultures, in which the individual is seen as more strongly dependent on her community and the wider social sphere, *Bildung* still requires that she is viewed and treated as an autonomous being with a potential for developing a unique self. Characteristics (ii) and (iii) may be balanced differently against characteristic (iv), depending on the context, but characteristic (i) cannot be ignored. Treating students merely as members of society, reducing them to specific social roles, or inducing them to uncritically adopt conventional norms, beliefs, and behaviors is incompatible with *Bildung*.

### **A contemporary conception of *Bildung* for didactics**

A contemporary conception of *Bildung* can and should maintain all the classical defining characteristics (i)–(vi), but it should be developed to meet further contemporary concerns. For it to function as a foundation for school teaching, it must be developed into a *didactic* theory. Traditionally, *Bildung* as an educational ambition has been and is still closely connected to the German, and Scandinavian, *Didaktik* tradition. As discussed earlier, *Bildung* is not only an aim of education but of human development in general since it refers to a lifelong process covering all spheres of life. However, according to *Didaktik*, school education plays a significant role in facilitating young people’s processes of maturity and formation, especially through the meeting with a culture’s resources presented as the teaching content (Westbury, 2000).

Wolfgang Klafki (1927–2016) developed the core ideas of contemporary *Bildung*-centered *Didaktik*. He used the classical theories of *Bildung* to form his own didactic theory, in which *Bildung* works as a double unlocking: the world opens to a student and the student opens to the world. This

understanding combines material Bildung theories, which focus on knowledge of a content canon, and formal Bildung theories, which prioritize personal development over content knowledge. This is in line with the original understanding of Bildung as an integrated and comprehensive process (see characteristics (iii) and especially (vi)). Klafki proposed a definition of Bildung as categorical, which means becoming part of an already existing society but doing so in a reflective way that enables thinking and acting critically in relation to the existing, thus overcoming the artificial dichotomy between material and formal Bildung (Klafki, 1998).

Transferred to teaching, the idea of categorical Bildung implies a dual process in which a student engages with and adopts a certain content, but always through personal reflection. Selecting content that gives students possibilities to better understand the world and interpret it critically is therefore fundamental in Bildung-centered Didaktik. The curriculum (or “Lehrplan” in German) prescribes the traditions and topics that provide the content of teaching. However, each teacher needs to understand this content as a reflection of the communal values it represents and critically examine it in relation to her own teaching context and students. Didaktik thus posits an autonomous teacher who reflects on the content in relation to the curriculum and other conditional factors, and develops her own approaches to teaching. The core of didactic teaching preparation is to analyze and interpret the curricular content, reduce its complexity, and transform it into educational matter that is meaningful and relevant for the students in the specific setting (Westbury, 2000).

The Bildung-related didactic idea of content as a fundamental principle of any teaching practice has recently been challenged by goal-oriented educational ideas, defined in terms of competences and skills that would be relevant for students to learn. In this genre of competence-based education, crosscurricular teaching is advocated as an approach that supports the development of students’ transversal competences. Besides not only diminishing the question of content, competence-based education focuses on competences and skills needed for citizenship in contemporary and future society. The latter can also be said, however, to apply to Klafki’s didactic theory as it is grounded in democratic theory and an idea of human existence as consisting primarily in citizenship. Klafki suggests self-determination, co-determination, and solidarity as central abilities that Bildung-centered teaching should promote (Klafki, 1998). In more recent works (see, e.g., Sjöström & Tyson, 2022), the idea of citizenship is presented as a global citizenship and Bildung as a means of taking responsibility for the planet together.

A contemporary conception of Bildung for didactics must acknowledge citizenship as one central aspect of being a human and taking part in society. Yet, it must expand the view to consider other aspects of humanity as equally important, aspects that traditionally have gained too little attention such as affect, bodily activity, and wellbeing. In this book, several chapters offer examples of crosscurricular teaching that take into consideration not only students’

cognitive development and formation as citizens, but also new modes for learning in supporting students' maturity as whole persons.

### **Bildung-centered Didaktik as a foundation for crosscurricular teaching**

How, then, can Bildung function as a foundation for crosscurricular teaching? In which ways does it call for, or justify, such teaching? And how is it related to its more specific aims and goals? Bildung entails that teaching is fundamentally for life and not for school. It has the development of students as whole persons, of the "totality of their powers," as its ultimate aim and demands that the student be linked to, and interact with, the world. This means that she must be presented with it *as* the world; not just with topics or learning contents but also with real and interconnected things, tasks, and phenomena. Because the different human powers are likewise interconnected, they must be developed in concert. Therefore, it is necessary to look across and beyond the different school subjects.

However, Bildung does not preclude working with subject-specific topics or concentrating on fostering specific skills or the acquisition of specialized knowledge. It only requires that one does so in a particular way – with at least an implicit concern for overall development (and (i)–(vi)). Bildung emphasizes appropriation and immersion, and this is hardly possible without providing spaces for concentrated work or helping students with acquiring language and other means and media for relating to the world.

Crosscurricular teaching is usually justified with reference to putative benefits and goals. These goals are manifold and seem to differ widely, sometimes even to contradict each other, and so they have been a source of confusion and controversy. Using Bildung as a fundamental and comprehensive framework can help to integrate and provide some guidelines for balancing them. In policy documents and educational research, one typically finds the following notions of what crosscurricular teaching might be good for (see also Savage, 2010):

- (A) CCT prepares for meeting grand societal challenges.
- (B) CCT prepares for higher education.
- (C) CCT prepares for future work and employment.
- (D) CCT fosters collaborative skills and a flexible mindset.
- (E) CCT strengthens motivation.
- (F) CCT fosters citizenship.
- (G) CCT fosters creativity.
- (H) CCT fosters critical thinking.

Some of these notions imply that crosscurricular teaching is a means for tackling external situations, adapting students to societal conditions, or making them conscious of and prepared for meeting societal challenges like climate change, inequality, migration, or civic disaffection – notably (A), but also (C)

and to some extent (B) and (F). Others focus on its ability to foster more personal (“internal”) and generic dispositions and skills, notably (D), (E), (G), and (H). Some relate it to material challenges and needs (notably (C)), others to normative issues (F) and (H). This has led to controversies about more or less instrumental or critical approaches to CCT (Klein, 2010, p. 22f.).

Viewed from the comprehensive perspective of *Bildung*, the different notions appear compatible and even interrelated. *Bildung* demands a joint focus on internal development and societal conditions and norms. It requires a specific matter (content, case, or task) on which to work, forging a connection between the generic personal dispositions (D), (E), (G), and (H) which cannot be acquired in abstraction from concrete tasks, and more specific themes and goals (A), (B), and (C). In this respect, crosscurricular teaching merges the ideas of content as fundamental in *Bildung*-centered teaching with more recent principles of competence-oriented education.

Regarding contents of teaching, crosscurricular teaching brings renewed light on the question of content selection. The crosscurricular teaching content is often, in contrast to subject-specific academic content, an undefined issue in curricula. Thus, the reflective process of teachers to select meaningful content that span across subject areas becomes highly relevant (cf. Arnold & Koch-Priewe, 2011; Mård, 2021). Bringing content back into teaching has recently become an argument among several scholars, who stress the potential of fostering students’ overall edification of both knowledge and skills/competences through the meeting with different contents (Deng, 2021; Ryen & Jøsok, 2021; Willbergh, 2016). The question of content selection in crosscurricular teaching contributes to this movement of creating new understandings of the classic *Bildung*-oriented didactic theories. For example, Mård and Hilli (2020) developed a didactic model for crosscurricular teaching, with the aim of supporting teachers in reflecting on content and other factors related to teaching across and beyond school subjects. The model uses the ideas of not only Klafki but also Paul Heimann and Wolfgang Schulz (Berlin/Hamburg Didaktik) to develop a new didactic framework that considers contemporary challenges and ideas in education. In Chapter 5, the authors present a revised version of the didactic model for crosscurricular teaching.

Grand societal challenges are closely similar to what Klafki (1998) termed epoch-typical key problems and proposed as core contents of *Bildung*-centered teaching. Epoch-typical key problems are aspects of the contemporary world a person must respond to as part of her general personal development. They are, moreover, characterized by extraordinary complexity and unpredictability; they are literally *challenging*, also in the sense that they must be approached in a creative and open-minded way (connecting A with D, C, H).

Many policy documents and research publications describe crosscurricular teaching as a means for fostering specific competences, as already discussed. Most of the goals and benefits listed earlier ((A)–(H)) are thus commonly described in terms of competences, such as study competence, innovation competence, and critical thinking competence. The notion of competences is,

however, controversial; many see it as wedded to an instrumental understanding of education that conflicts with the ideal of *Bildung*. It has been promoted as a part of OECD and EU policies for securing competitiveness and employability (OECD, 2022). Critics of the “competence agenda” worry that it will reduce knowledge and skills to a mere means for fostering competences, and that it requires fixed goals and learning progressions that leave little room for teachers’ and students’ autonomy (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2008).

There is, however, much in the notion of competences that sits well with both *Bildung* and crosscurricular education. Competence-oriented teaching requires the teacher to maintain a focus on the wider relevance of the knowledge and skills being taught and make it transparent to the students. While some competences are subject-specific (like English communication competence), they are always related to real-world tasks, and most often conceived as abilities relevant to a wide section of the curriculum. The focus has been increasingly on “metacompetences” or “transversal competences” (Eronen et al., 2019), thus relating competences directly to crosscurricular teaching.

Nonetheless, this might again give rise to worries that we are concerned with qualities too general and formal, putting process before substance, and ignoring the value of studying a particular subject in depth without having to think about its particular applications or usefulness. This is indeed a genuine risk. However, it should serve to highlight the importance of the *Bildung* perspective and of didactic considerations, not as a reason to discard the very notion of competences. Like *Bildung*, competence-oriented teaching requires a constant *double focus*. The overall aim of furthering personal development or general competences must be kept in mind and used as a principle for structuring and selecting contents and tasks (in the case of *Bildung*, this includes creating spaces and occasions for autonomous student activity, reflection, and discovery, and allowing for unpredictability). But it should be pursued by engaging in concrete activities that are given due attention and appreciated for what they are. Reading a novel can be a means to personal development and fostering reading and perhaps also social or ethical competences; but it can only function as such if the reader becomes absorbed in it and comprehends it. Similarly, mathematical representation competences cannot be acquired independent of the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to, for example, equations and graphs, which in turn requires learning to solve and understand specific equations and working with specific functions or quantities.

*Bildung* as such does not embody a concern for employability or higher education ((B) and (C)). However, being able to find and manage a sufficiently rewarding job is arguably a part of mastering life in contemporary societies, and the practices and norms of higher education and research have become constituents of the world with which many students will have to come to terms, including those who will not themselves embark on higher education. These specific goals are, in any case, compatible with the overall aim of *Bildung* and can function as a material on which to work with the formation

of more generic social and personal qualities (see Chapter 16). Employability is very much about adaptability, creativity, self-discipline, and knowledge of one's own strengths and weaknesses. In this, it overlaps with central elements of *Bildung*. This is an example of how “instrumental” goals can be compatible with the more “intrinsic” goals associated with *Bildung*. That qualities which are pursued for their own sake can also have instrumental value has been noted by philosophers since antiquity, but tends to be ignored in polarized debates over education.

How to evaluate crosscurricular teaching in regard to students' learning has long been a challenge: neither sufficiently discussed in the literature, nor much empirically researched. According to *Bildung*-centered *Didaktik*, teaching is not a process of transmitting content or knowledge but rather a meaning-making process. Because *Bildung* happens within an individual, the teacher cannot fully foretell what meaning a student will create in the meeting with a certain matter. The teaching, or educational, matter of a content is therefore never the same as the educational meaning a student derives from this matter. Given the openness of how different students give meaning to specific contents, the question of evaluation of students' learning is uneasy. If autonomy is a prerequisite for teaching and students' meaning-making processes, the outcomes of learning can only be measured partly and never captured entirely (Ryen & Jøsok, 2021). However, being open-minded to the different routes students' *Bildung*-processes can take in the meeting with the content does not contradict that the teacher sets certain goals for what she intends with her teaching. Quite the opposite, a teacher should always make the intentions of teaching clear to both herself and her students (cf. Bengtson & Qvortrup, 2013). In crosscurricular teaching, defining goals that relate both to subject-specific and subject-transcending curricular guidelines ensures academic progress in students' learning that can be evaluated. Nevertheless, the teaching should also be open to possible outcomes that do not only relate to students' cognitive development but also to their overall formation, as discussed earlier.

### **Conclusion: a framework for cross- and transcurricular teaching based on *Bildung***

We have argued that the classical notion of *Bildung* provides a strong rationale for crosscurricular teaching. It is capable of unifying and balancing a whole range of interests and approaches, as it requires not only a fundamental concern for the personal development and wellbeing of students, but also sensitivity to issues of contemporary societal relevance; and it is compatible with an interest in fostering competences. Although *Bildung* calls for teaching across and beyond school subjects, it maintains an important role for the teaching of particular subjects, but requires that it be done with a focus on how specific knowledge and skills contribute to personal development and a general understanding of the world.

In spite of its broad and flexible nature, the ideal of *Bildung* is distinctive enough to serve as a guideline for balancing different concerns and criticizing and correcting existing forms of teaching. It entails that instrumental goals or the reproduction of societal norms must never override the concern for autonomous personal development. Yet the general notion of *Bildung* only provides very general guidelines. It must be worked out in more detail in order to be constructively applied to school teaching. This requires both the development of a *Bildung*-oriented didactical theory and still more specific investigations into particular topics, methods, and approaches (though it can be known in advance that these must have relevance across and beyond the curriculum). The subsequent chapters are attempts to show how the ideal of *Bildung* can be implemented in actual school teaching, and to identify affordances and obstacles to such teaching in different fields and contexts. It should be noted, however, that even these more specific investigations still only provide a flexible and dynamic framework for crosscurricular teaching, and not a recipe for success or a fixed set of instructions. *Bildung* requires constant experimentation, adjustment, and contextualization. What precisely the concern for *Bildung* means, and how crosscurricular teaching is best done, in a specific educational context, is something each teacher eventually has to find out for herself, albeit not without a foundation or clear direction.

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