
6 Democracy and children's rights: we get involved! (*understanding the concept of justice and democracy*).

Many of these themes relate to students' personal experiences, observations and attitudes. Dealing with these topics in class demands of the instructor a great deal of sensitivity, confidentiality and a classroom climate characterized by trust and acceptance. Without these important prerequisites, it is quite possible that the students will not open up and that the above referenced goals will either not be attained or only partially.

3. Competence orientation in HLT education

The competence orientation as an important principle of current pedagogy is described in detail in the handbook "Foundations and backgrounds" (chapters 2, 5 and 9. For the topic of the present volume, three competences in particular are of central importance:

- a) The *perceptual competence*, here expanded with the recognition competence: this involves the cognitive development of the sensual – emotional ability to perceive the outside world and the inside world with all senses, to develop internal images, and to view oneself as a part of the communicative processes. The learners are taken seriously and recognized with their emotional worlds and forms of appropriation.
- b) The *reflection competence* deals with the development of the cognitive ability to make increasingly significant connections through language, i.e. abstracting notions, and to discuss and reflect on them.
- c) The (communicative) *competence to act* expresses that which is perceived and reflected upon through communicative action in one's own living environment. As a result, the individual can influence his/her own living environment and develop new forms of expression and new perspectives for acting.

According to Holzbrecher (1999/2009); see bibliographic references, the concept of intercultural competences implies a linking of the subject level with the level of the living environment and society, so that children and youths can experience self-efficacy themselves. Only this fourth category allows for the development of new perception patterns, reflection patterns and behavior patterns.

4. The living world concept as an important foundation

The importance of orienting pedagogy and teaching on the actual living world of the students was referenced multiple times in the handbook "Foundations and backgrounds"; see most of all chapters 5.4 and 2.3. The orientation to the living world occupies a central role as well, particularly in view of interculturality and intercultural competences. Incidentally, this also concerns the language aspects of the multilingual society: everyday life multilingualism – living in, with, and between different languages. This is a lived reality which should be examined and appreciated (compare particularly Unit 3 "our languages").

The HLT child as a subject of his/her living world is also always a member of a society. As such, s/he moves along a plane of subject, living world, and society. With these levels connect multiple intercultural overlapping and interaction situations. These require intercultural learning, examining of identity processes and social framework conditions. At the same time, they ensure that people experience themselves as subjects capable of functioning and self-acting. The following elucidates this important principle more closely.

Subject and living environment orientation

Children and adolescents move about in different contexts: family, public school, spare time, relatives, neighborhood, peer group (circle of friends) etc. Every one of these social contexts represents its own little living world with its own values and norms; their sum total comprises the living world of the individual. The living world orientation as a pedagogical principle means the orientation of the child as a subject in the here and now with his/her previous knowledge, attitude, different roles and internal images.

For children to perceive themselves as self-efficient subjects, capable of acting and able to assume the responsibility for themselves and the shaping of their living environment, they must deal with their identity and with their self-image as well as the perception of others. In doing so, they must develop sensibility for self-awareness and external perceptions and for dealing with inner resistance and external challenges. The orientation to living conditions also means that children and adolescents gain experience as participants in their immediate surroundings that are to be traced back to their temporally, spatially and socially structured living environment. In working with HLT students, one has to expect to deal with at least two kinds of cultural and ethnic backgrounds: those Here and those There. The former are spatially within current range, in the immigration destination country. The living worlds in the country of origin lie within a potential range, owing to the students' assurance that there too – e.g. among the relatives there – experience can be gained that they can revert to as resources.