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Rauschenbach, Thomas; Steinhilber, Horst; Brunner, Ewald Johannes

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# THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER-PUPIL COMMUNICATION

## Some Preliminary Remarks on the Institution of School and Social Learning

by

HORST STEINHILBER, EWALD JOHANNES BRUNNER, THOMAS RAUSCHENBACH

*Neuhausen/Filder*

If we agree with Mollenhauer's assertion (1972a) that interrupted communication is the historical rule, we can proceed without further ado on the basis that this also applies to schools. Nowadays school is widely described and discussed as an institution of a compulsory nature and as the scene of competitive struggle, achievement pressures, conformity and alienated teaching and learning. Owing to the over-emphasis on *cognitive* achievements, the dimension of social learning is increasingly lost to view. In the past the overwhelming number of educational and training institutions were almost exclusively concerned with the manner and form of communication of subject matter. It is only recently that efforts have been made both in educational, pedagogical and training institutions to allot more significance to *social and affective learning*<sup>1</sup>.

Grundke (1975, p. 7) observes that "social learning – a long-neglected aspect of the school educational process – has for some years now been attracting increasing pedagogical interest. The development of *communications training programmes* for teacher-pupil interaction can be seen in association with this newly-arrived interest in social learning in schools. In this paper we will try to examine some selected programmes with regard to their principles, methods and aims.

The selected programmes (and by training programmes we mean general acting instructions, guidelines, planning, "recipes", etc.) are intended to act as a kind of survey *characteristic of different theoretical trends* (learning theory, behaviour theory, psychoanalysis, group dynamics) and at the same time to make some reference to the *multiplicity of theoretical approaches*.

### *Disturbances in Teacher-Pupil Interaction*

When communications training programmes make the claim that they contribute to the improvement of communications it can be assumed that a notion of what is meant by disturbed communication must be present. It must therefore be asked what concept of disturbance underlies the programmes in question. Mollenhauer (1972) distinguishes two levels on which disturbed communications can be detected: in the first place, factors on the *situational* level may evoke a disturbance in communication (e.g. a teacher dislikes a pupil and by-passes him in class), in the second place factors on a *supra-situational* level may be involved (e.g. the obligation to give marks, *numerus clausus*). *Supra-situational* factors indirectly affect the current situation and are difficult to change. Communications training programmes therefore generally begin with the alteration of factors on the situational level, since these can be more easily and substantially influenced.

If one is concerned with the problem of trying to improve communications in school, one can of course confront the teacher's or the pupil's conduct (see Note 2). In contrast to this, however, the programmes discussed in this paper consider, at least initially, *teacher-pupil interaction* in their individual mutual relationship. "Pupils disturb teachers, teachers disturb pupils, pupils disturb other pupils, teachers disturb other teachers – the power of disturbance hampers the creation and maintenance of a social field of teaching and learning" (Junker 1976, p. 57).

The usual point of departure for the selective programmes is the idea that the "teaching" of the teachers and the "learning" of the pupils is not practicable without the creation of a satisfactory relationship for both sides. Fritz (1975) who considers both situational and supra-situational factors in his analysis of disturbances in school, names five conditions which may contribute to a satisfactory teacher-pupil relationship:

1. Open communication,
2. Consideration and respect for the feelings of others,
3. Democratic decision-making,
4. Non-authoritarian communication,
5. Mutual esteem (*ibid*, p. 15f).

The fact that these five conditions do not obtain as a rule in everyday school is immediately enlightening.

Like Fritz (1975), Gordon (1977) – without considering supra-situational factors – comes to the conclusion that there is a great deal wrong in the classroom. Teachers exercise power, discipline their pupils and try

“in cases of conflict to score a victory over the pupils or at least not to be defeated” (ibid., p. 154). On the basis of these reflections Gordon considers that the most important thing is to develop methods which will help to produce a *good teacher-pupil relationship*. “Our course rests essentially on the assumption that the quality of the teacher-pupil relationship is crucial to good teaching, no matter what teachers teach” (ibid., p. 21).

Grundke (1975), who concentrates mainly on the dimension of social learning in teaching and attempts to reach a rational interpersonal conduct by means of his “therapeutic teaching” (cf. p. 21), places interpersonal disturbances in a more broadly defined field: “Pathological interactions in upbringing, family, marriage, working, learning and leisure groups are a constant source of frustration, alienation, suffering and despair. A real improvement in the quality of life cannot be achieved without improving interpersonal relationships” (ibid., p. 10).

Against the background of psychoanalytical and interactional theoretical approaches (e.g. Lorenzer 1972) Grundke indicates the defensiveness and repression of taboo subjects in the consciousness as a source of interaction disturbances. This would include: inadequate knowledge of milieu, defective training of skills, an absolutist view of moral conceptions specific to a culture or group, open or concealed mutual attempts at manipulation (cf. p. 41).

In the training programme by Lorenz et al. (1976) which we selected as a programme based on behavioural theory, it is interesting to note that the authors do not take the trouble to characterize theoretically conflicts or disturbances of teacher-pupil interaction. It is of course pointed out that problematical behaviour by pupils and teachers is not connected only with the situation in school, that socialization and learning experience may also play a part, as for instance external conditions (over-large classes, too little learning material, etc.), but basically these references are not expanded upon anywhere else.

### “Overcoming” Conflicts

Proceeding from the conflicts of teacher-pupil interaction briefly sketched above, we shall not outline the steps proposed by the authors of the individual training programmes for the solution of the problem. Every teacher employs *techniques of behaviour modification* (e.g. praise and blame) in his ordinary school work, without however being generally aware of the fact or of the consequences. Training programmes based on behavioural theory assume that upbringing and education must be seen in the sense of a planned structure and the purposeful control of selected,

precisely definable modes of behaviour. The *continuous correction of the previously devised behaviour plans* plays a decisive part in this. The starting point of behaviour modification programmes in school is the behaviour of the teacher and/or one or more pupils. "The method of the programme is psychological and begins with the individual. Its objective is to change the behaviour of one or more people" (Lorenz et al 1976, p. 27). The methods of behaviour modification begin here and now and are regarded as aids which can lead via behaviour changes in teachers and pupils to wider goals, e.g. solidarity of behaviour (ibid., p. 27). On the basis of their theoretical and methodological ideas the authors propose *four steps* by which to proceed in the training:

1. The teacher must first become aware of his own difficulties in contact with pupils and consider what in his behaviour might be disturbing to the pupils;
2. Basic principles of learning and behaviour theory should be worked out (what does learning mean from the standpoint of learning theory, the history of learning, reinforcement, punishment, reward, solution, etc.);
3. Teachers and pupils describe and define the undesirable and disturbing behaviour and clarify the conditions which control and maintain it;
4. Goal definition, reappraisal and transformation objectives, evaluation of disturbing and undesirable behaviour.

By means of systematic observation and recording of teacher-pupil interactions, the *disturbing behaviour of teachers and pupils* should be established as precisely as possible.

In complete contrast to the behaviour modification programme, mostly worked out in great detail, is the *group dynamic training* of Fritz (1975). He criticizes the composition of a catalogue of operationalized learning objectives and insists on the *process* between teacher and pupil, i. e. social learning in school cannot be "ordered", in his view, by a training programme.

He is not concerned with the operationalization of learning objectives because this would entail a limitation of those learning results which are measurable; he sees a "searching movement between the pupils as representatives of the concrete life situation and the teachers as representatives of the reference structure – independently of the learning progress of pupils and teacher" (Fritz, p. 113).

Group dynamic training (Fritz still uses this term, but in a distinctive way) makes use of certain techniques and methods aimed at "self-experience". The following *principles of group dynamics* are used here in teaching (see p. 115 et seq.):

### 1. *Here and now:*

The point of departure is the real, current needs and interests of teachers and pupils.

### 2. *Feedback:*

Teachers and pupils should become aware of how one affects others and how others affect one. Giving and receiving feedback is consequently both method and objective. The divergencies between self-image and extraneous image should be taken into account.

### 3. *Unfreezing:*

Ingrained, that is "frozen" behaviour patterns should be "thawed out" and removed. This calls for open communication, which in turn is possible only in an atmosphere of trust and mutual acceptance. The "unfreezing" is especially dependent on the thawing of the emotions.

### 4. *Self-determination:*

This item seems the most difficult to realize; Fritz points out "that the pupils must first learn by a gradual process to structure their system by 'self-determination' (ibid, p. 119).

### 5. *Processes of reflection:*

Here it is a question of discovering the causes of interaction processes. Reflection is necessary, more than feedback, for knowledge of oneself, one's situation and the world.

Fritz refers distinctly to the problems of the transference of group dynamic principles to the school class. "One must not expect too much at first and one must be prepared for a wearisome and difficult process" (ibid., p. 121).

Like Fritz, Grundke (1975) does not develop a complete training programme to be adhered to step by step. In the sense of an approach to action research "the very thing which must not be developed is a polished, theoretical concept which is then to be put on practical trial; theoretical and practical teaching work run more or less in parallel" (ibid, p. 67). For Grundke the theoretical basis is psychoanalysis, with special reference to Lorenzer for therapeutic teaching. Besides this, however, other therapeutic techniques (group dynamic laboratories, discussion psychotherapy, encounter groups) are included.

Minsel et al. (1976) also proceed on a "multi-dimensional" basis. Their training of teaching and educational behaviour comprises a combination of different theoretical models which may be described as: individualized

teaching, pupil-centred teaching, exploratory teaching, clinical teaching, behaviour modification techniques and other therapeutic procedures.

Grundke (1975), developing a model for therapeutic teaching, sets *three areas* in the forefront of his study: the aspect of the "Here and Now" (communication didactics), the aspect of the "There and Then" (teaching) and the aspect of "There and At One Time" (therapy). The categorization of these three levels undertaken by him is not theoretically justified by the author. It corresponds far more to the pragmatic procedure of a teaching experiment carried out by him, in connection with which his concept of therapeutic education was developed. The "There and Then" aspect is supposed to cover the concept of interaction theory, thinking and research into interpersonal action. "Learning fundamental concepts for the analysis of interaction processes with the objective of thereby encouraging enacted understanding must therefore be the starting point" (Grundke 1975, p. 68). The second aspect, "Here and Now", so to speak places the actual behaviour of pupils and teachers in the foreground. Here it is a question of the analysis and possible alteration of concrete interaction processes in school and classroom (*ibid.*, p. 69). On the model of Rattner's group psychotherapy, the therapeutic education comes to its full effect in the third aspect: "There and At One Time". This is concerned with knowledge of the essential factors of the subjects' own life history and their significance to their own socialization, the correction of their own irrational needs, reticence in the interpretation of biographical connections, capacity for helpful dialogue, support for others' efforts towards rational interaction (*ibid.*, p. 79).

The difference from other training programmes emerges in the fact that Grundke, besides communicative didactics (this term is adopted from Schäfer/Schaller, 1971) and teaching as a social event, considers the *biography* as well. "Biographical recall and processing of one's own socialization and education mark the therapeutic aspect of the concept of interaction education developed here" (*ibid.*, p. 14).

Consequently *interaction education* can be taken to cover three areas (cf. p. 17 et seq.):

1. Interaction education must have therapy as its intention (therapy, interpreted as a "re-learning" of a cognitive, emotional and behavioural nature [author's note]) and is therefore, in the sense referred to above, a *processing of the individual past*.
2. Interaction education must prepare the pupils for the requirements of future social interaction and supply the relevant skills and knowledge to this end.

3. Interaction education must contribute by the *treatment of current school interaction problems to altering the teaching organization of the sense of communicative didactics.*

Transferred in concrete terms to the school, Grundke holds that proceeding from the "There and Then" (teaching), i. e. beginning with the actual problems of the teacher-pupil situation via communicative didactics ("Here and Now"), seen as the analysis and processing of the existing interaction processes between teachers and pupils, there must be a gradual advance to therapy ("There and at One Time"). But not in the sense of a step-by-step advance: as a process where all three areas merge. Thus tasks similar to those of group dynamists and group psychotherapists are added to the traditional tasks of the teacher. At the least the teacher should reach the point where he can practise the *method of subject-centred group work* (TZI), as proposed by Ruth Cohn (1975) (Grundke 1975, p. 86).

Proceeding from the idea that authoritarian teaching suppresses the *pupils* and anti-authoritarian or permissive teaching suppresses the *teachers* (pupils tyrannize the teacher), Gordon (1977) recommends the method of "conflict solution without defeat", in order to reach a satisfactory teacher-pupil relationship. This method "approaches a conflict situation in such a way that those involved in the conflict join together in the *search for a solution acceptable to both parties*, a solution in which no one is defeated" (ibid., p. 190). Like Fritz and Grundke, Gordon develops a method of procedure for conflict solving which should not be applied rigidly. Nevertheless it appears that Gordon is still rooted in the Here and Now and fails to consider fundamental biographical and social dimensions. Following Dewey, Gordon proposes *six "steps"* (ibid., p. 197):

1. Definition of the problem.
2. Collecting possible proposals for solutions.
3. Evaluating the proposals.
4. Deciding on the best solution.
5. Guidelines for implementation of the decision.
6. Assessment of the effectiveness of the solution.

The method is intended not only to mobilize talents, skills and information (ibid., p. 194) but is, in addition to this, unique, in that it desires to achieve a *real* problem-solving process. Using Gordon's method it should be possible to solve not only conflicts in school but also conflicts between "married couples, business associations and friendships, Trade Union representatives and managers and many others" (ibid., p. 190).

The universal claim thus made by Gordon for his conflict-solving pro-

gramme is a doubtful one, in our view, since school problems, for instance, cannot be directly compared with business problems.

By using this method in school the author intends above all to exclude the risk of manipulation by the teacher. This is supposed to be achieved by the fact that before being used the method is accurately explained to the pupils and its difference from other methods demonstrated and discussed. But in certain circumstances the impression may arise here that by this delimitation from other methods it is insinuated that these are manipulative (for instance because it is pointed out how "wrong" the others are), and his own method is being promoted as "good".

### *Learning Aims. What the Authors Want to Achieve*

Above and beyond the specific definition and establishment of the aims of a communication training programme, the following dilemma arises in checking its effectiveness: if the aims are put into operation precisely (without regard to the needs of the training participant) they may easily be being "trained" as it were in a vacuum. The effectiveness of this training can be appropriately clearly grasped methodically. But though the aims may be relatively obvious, in the sense of mere guiding ideas or targets, corresponding problems arise over the question of monitoring (cf. Brunner et al., 1977).

In relation to behavioural training, Signer (1977) asserts that "the demand for universally operationalized explanations of aims must be regarded as a double-edged postulate. If at present owing to defective formulation of aims there is a prevalent tendency for behavioural training to be determined by the additive and unselective use of current instruments, there exists on the other hand the risk that for the sake of methodological tidiness consideration can no longer be given to the participants' wishes" (ibid., p. 98).

The behaviour modification programme of Lorenz et al. (1976) should also be regarded in this light. In order to counteract the misapplication of behaviour modification techniques in school for disciplinary purposes, the authors insist above all on the inclusion of the pupils with regard to the development of personal initiatives as well as independent execution of parts of the programme. The sensible application of behaviour modification in school is possible only "if it is used within a democratic pedagogical overall concept, when it opens up wider behavioural scope for the participants and helps them to get rid of anxiety" (ibid., p. 25).

The following *desirable, attainable aims* are listed for pupils:

- a) Understanding acceptance of schoolfellows, making contact with each other, integrating outsiders, appropriate self-assertion, independent action on their own responsibility;
- b) An approach to independent problem-solving, planned activity, capacity to cooperate, mutual help, strengthening concentration, disciplined behaviour on the lines of not hampering others in their work, sensible organization of learning (ibid., p. 25 et seq.).

The above aims relate to a change within the social structure of the school class. Behaviour modification, according to Lorenz et al (1976) is, as an individual behavioural change, limited in its possibilities: "The alteration of the material circumstances of life – that is including conditions in school – is not achieved by psychology" (ibid., p. 31). The authors have no illusions with regard to the range of psychological behavioural training in school. Behaviour modification programmes cannot replace progressive teaching content and political action, but, on the other hand, they can make it possible to experience the limitations which, for instance thanks to the defectiveness of material circumstances, oppose the desire for change of the individual personality (ibid., p. 31).

Under the critical target term "rational interpersonal activity" Grundke (1975, p. 21), in contrast to Lorenz et al. (1976), would like to enable young people on the one hand to see through their own socialization process and be aware of psycho-social connections, able deliberately to control social relations in school and life, and on the other hand, by practising and realizing democratic structures in the microsphere (school) to master democracy on the level of society. Here, Grundke says, the question must be put as to whether "this learning is a learning in the sense of emancipation, maturity and democracy or whether the natural reproduction of social forms of interaction spoils these chances" (ibid., p. 10).

Therapeutic teaching has the aim of putting the pupils into a position of becoming more and more emancipated from the object role in the area of interpersonal activity (ibid., p. 105).

Here it is basically a question of the *following general aims*:

- a) The capacity for wide background understanding, which includes the capacity for concordant and complementary identification, for context orientation, social awareness accessible to experience and disposition of research methods;
- b) Disposing of a repertory of routine forms of interaction;
- c) The capacity for measured feedback, bringing in already tried and tested psychotherapeutic patterns of activity;
- d) Interest in and orientation towards the rationality of interaction;

- e) Mastery of a metalanguage of interaction theory as the most important medium of thought, speech and understanding with regard to interaction processes (ibid., p. 63).

Like Grundke, Fritz (1975) is not concerned only with the improvement of the communicative capacity of teachers and pupils; his chief goal is more the emancipation of the individual *and* of society. Training based on group dynamics can be used to attain this goal since it "can potentially bring about the capacity for self-reflection, that is to see through to deformities of awareness, consciousness and actions, to anticipating (if only in fragmented form) the creation of a reasonable society in the communication forms of the group, and to action, that is the achievement of legitimate and repressed interests by means of political struggle" (ibid., p. 21). Bearing in mind institutional conditions and those of school organization and determinants of the teacher-pupil interaction as well as the inclusion of society as a whole (Fritz, p. 90: "Besides the system of the school class, the school and the institutions surrounding and influencing school, it is ultimately society itself which makes certain interactions possible and excludes others") the group dynamic training of Fritz directs attention far beyond the customary Here and Now programmes. Its demands are explicitly *political*. At the same time the author is aware that one should not stop at changing the consciousness; it is only through a change in behaviour, that is only through concrete practice, that a real change can come about. Criticism and theoretical reflection alone are not sufficient, the opportunities for *action* must be offered. Group dynamic training makes such instruments of action available and can contribute to emancipation.

Gordon (1977) describes his "conflict solution without defeat" as an alternative to the "truly progressive and complicated science of behavioural modification or behavioural manipulation" (ibid., p. 26) which would put a manipulative tool into the teacher's hand, giving him various opportunities to exercise power in order to make children do what he wants.

In order to eliminate the abuse of power by the teacher, Gordon concentrates on the following educational aims:

- a) Dismantling the power of the teacher, i. e. transition from a teacher-centred teaching to a pupil-centred one;
- b) Creating a "good" relationship between teacher and pupils;
- c) Reducing conflicts between teachers and pupils;
- d) Helping the learner towards wider knowledge, awareness of responsibility and genuine maturity;
- e) Giving the teacher more time for the real communication of knowledge.

According to Gordon the causes of conflict disturbances are the “wrong” methods used by teachers. In fact, there is a brief survey of the institutional restrictions on the teacher under the heading “Realities of school life which entail problems for teachers”, yet the teacher has a firmly circumscribed sphere of competence. This covers, among other things, noise in the classroom, order, distribution of jobs, distribution of work, use and care of materials, curriculum, etc. (ibid., p. 235). It is not up to the teacher to alter regulations stemming from a superior authority. This makes it understandable that Gordon remains locked within the existing order of the school or social system and looks upon the creation of a “good” teacher-pupil relationship basically only in the sense of making the existing one effective.

### *Prospects*

An attempt has been made to describe some examples of selected communication training programmes of teacher-pupil interaction in relation to their principles, methods and aims. All the programmes presented here lay claim to contributing to the improvement of school communication and interaction. Yet they differ both as regards their claims and as regards their methods of procedure in relation to the aims set. Whereas the programme of Lorenz et al (1976) based on principles of behavioural theory, and Gordon’s approach termed “conflict-solving without defeat” (1977) refers more to the situational level, to the interaction processes taking place in the Here and Now, Fritz (1975) and Grundke (1975) also consider supra-situational factors, Fritz with an eye more to the direct social factors, while Grundke passes so to speak indirectly via the biographical and psychological manifestations of the individual to society.

Fritz, the only one in the four selected programmes who concerns himself in great detail with communication, comes to the conclusion that the “linguistically pragmatic, functional approach (Watzlawick), restricted to system-functionality in the Here and Now is not sufficient in itself” (Fritz 1975, p. 66). Since the human being must be regarded as the product of social work, relative to a particular stage of development – and not, as is usually the case in empirical social research, as a “pure” individual – the aim of communication training must be to *bring pupils and teachers to the point where they do not submit without contradiction to the prescribed and prevailing effects of communication structures*, “but rather place action and interaction under the necessity of emancipatory communication (ibid., p. 66).

Assuming that the ideas set out above appear to be right, this means, as far as the positions of Gordon (1977) or Lorenz et al. (1976) are concerned, that they have *only a limited scope* and can scarcely serve as the model for a newly developing training programme intended as an emancipatory one. At best a few concrete exercises in the sensitization of mutual awareness at the situational level between teacher and pupil (passive listening, confirmatory reaction, "door-opening", active listening, noticing, ego-messages, in Gordon) or certain techniques to improve communication (controlled dialogue, role-playing, partner-centred conversational behaviour, in Lorenz et al.) can be turned to account.

With a view to a new training programme to be developed, based on system theory, it can be observed that the authors of the selected training programmes do certainly indicate more or less that teachers *and* pupils must be looked at together (they mostly distance themselves from the monadic, teacher-centred approach) yet it becomes apparent that teacher-pupil interaction in its mutual relationship is principally regarded as a sequence (causal chain) in the stimulus-reaction relationship.

According to Watzlawick (1969) the point of departure of a training programme for teacher-pupil interaction based on system theory is the idea that communication must be seen as interaction within a *system*; i. e. a communication system is not explained by the sum of what the individual communicating partners contribute to the system but develops a kind of dynamism of its own with the system rules specific to the case.

This outlook has its consequences for the improvement of disturbed communications: the attempt to eliminate disturbances in a communication system by a solution of the first order<sup>3</sup> is not successful because the system itself, or the reference structure, is disturbed. In certain circumstances these disturbances may be resolved by means of metacommunication (solution of the second order). As far as we know Watzlawick's *systems theory* has been applied in the sphere of family therapy but no attempt has yet been made to transfer it to the school within a communication training programme of teacher-pupil interaction. There is a more detailed report elsewhere (Brunner 1977) on what the concrete meaning of a training programme guided by systems theory might mean in the school. Considering the emancipatory educational aims formulated below, this form of communication training avoids the purely individualistic search for the causal factors of, for instance, behavioural disturbances, disciplinary problems, etc. Via its use as a decorative appendage in some other training programmes, metacommunication moves on to become the central point of departure in the system-oriented training. If metacommunication becomes the obligatory condition of every attempt to improve

teacher-pupil interaction, then this means at the same time that the relationship between the participants takes on a new quality (cf. Rauschenbach et al. 1977). Thus Fritz (1975, p. 62) takes up Watzlawick's systems theory and moves into confrontation with it (with regard to its practicability and usability for group dynamic training), yet without consistently maintaining it in the strict sense within the training.

The ideas briefly sketched out above are in need of further reflection. Over and above the philosophy of the system, in our opinion, a communications training programme should – in order to counteract a one-sided viewpoint – take just as much account of supra-situational factors or objective pressures as of the Has-Been (biography) and the Still-to-Come (future). This seems to us to be present in Fritz (1975) and Grundke (1975). Such communications training programmes are sensible and necessary, since they can make a concrete contribution to self-determination and self-realization in the sense of individual and social emancipation. The educational aims stated in the various programmes must be examined to discover whether and to what extent they do justice to these aims. Training schemes intended to fulfil these claims should not simply be put into operation without consultation with those concerned (teachers *and* pupils here); *the active and autonomous cooperation of the participants* must be a constituent factor. The ideas and concrete proposals for the alteration of the classroom social system in relation to social learning, as adduced by Schreiner (1975), for instance, also apply to the communications training programmes for teacher-pupil interaction. Schreiner looks to a “new collective-pedagogical approach” (ibid., p. 118) in the school in order to achieve – against the background of Bloch's philosophy – the realization of the “concrete Utopia of interhumanity and co-humanity” (ibid., p. 116). Here the school is supposed to represent a kind of training ground, enabling teachers and pupils to regard their common experiences “as a new opportunity, an anticipatory stage, and to work towards a point where this opportunity becomes universal in our society” (ibid., p. 116). This notional aim can be achieved by means of *the following “rough learning aims”*: *Solidarity*, as the union of all those participating in the interaction process in the school, against exploiting, repressive and anti-progressive social forces; *Cooperation* in learning and working; *Mutual sensitivity* to the feelings and needs of interaction partners and the ability to convert this sensitivity into personal action.

It is also necessary, when faced with communications training programmes, to think them through and to consider their difficulties and effects at the same time. For instance, Fittkau (1972, p. 51 et seq.) indicates the possible problems of training programmes:

- a) inadequate monitoring of results (cf. Brunner et al 1977);
- b) training principally improves the domination techniques of the already powerful;
- c) training disguises social problems and contradictions.

In order to avoid these dangers, the principles, methods and aims of training programmes must be examined to determine whether they point in a critical sense *beyond the existing situation*, with the intention of improving on clarification and information, or whether in fact their tendency is to *stabilize the existing situation* and to support, by means of behavioural and communications techniques, a smoother implementation of anti-emancipatory interests.

*Author's address:* Dr. E. J. Brunner, Schellingstr. 47, D-7400 Tübingen 1,  
Thomas Rauschenbach, Goethestr. 7, D-7401 Dusslingen,  
Horst Steinhilber, Lettenstr. 75, D-7503 Neuhausen/Filder.

If the reader wishes further reading on the various scholars' thoughts quoted in this article, we refer him to the detailed list of notes and references which is appended to the German original of the article ("Die Deutsche Schule", 7-8/79, p. 423-433, Hannover: Schroedel Verlag).

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> SCHREINER (1976) provides a survey.

<sup>2</sup> Approaches such as DOMKE (1973), GRELL (1974), KERN (1974), ZIFREUND (1966) and SCHLEIN (1976), which are strongly oriented towards teacher-behaviour, have not been considered. This also applies to the experiments aimed at changing the classroom situation by means of alternative forms of teaching, i. e. a completely new educational structure (cf. Wagner 1976, Le Bon 1972, Ritter 1973). In the selection preference was given to those programmes concerned in part at least with teacher and pupil behaviour. This seems to us to apply to the following authors: Gordon (1977), Fritz (1975), Grundke (1975), Lorenz et al. (1976).

<sup>3</sup> A teacher's attempt to deal with a disturbance in class by means of a solution of the first order can be described in terms of the following situation: the pupil disturbs the class by talking to his neighbour, the teacher reprimands the pupil, leading to more conversation with his neighbour, the teacher reacting with increased "pressure", and so on. Only disclosure of the structure of relationship between teacher and pupil can lead to a real solution. In certain circumstances this may be achieved by metacommunication.

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