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An outline of a pedagogical rhetorical interactional methodology – researching teachers' responsibility for supporting students' desire to learn as well as their actual learning

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ABSTRACT

Educational research in higher education needs a methodology for how to think and act in relation to how pedagogical interactions support learning. A methodology that can identify how pedagogical rhetorical qualities, such as confidence and a desire to learn, are embedded in a pedagogical interaction. This article presents an outline of a pedagogical rhetorical interactional methodology that enables us to elucidate the responsibility teachers in higher education have for supporting their students' desire to learn as well as for their actual learning. To illustrate how we can apply this methodological approach to empirical data, we present two examples I. A supportive learning context, and II. A non—supportive learning context. These examples illustrate that this methodological approach will contribute to a deeper understanding of what matters when teachers' expressions establish a pedagogical interaction.

Introduction

In this article, we present an outline to a pedagogical rhetorical interactional methodology that enables us to elucidate the responsibility teachers have for supporting their students' desire to learn as well as their actual learning. The methodology has been developed in a strategical research program in a master teacher education program at the University of South-Eastern Norway.

In the following, we use 'teachers' as equivalent with teachers in higher education/university teachers. The article argues that contemporary interaction theories in higher education lack a thoroughly *pedagogical rhetorical* perspective on interaction, and how this supports learning (Christensen et al. 2018).

Our aim is to explore pedagogical rhetorical qualities and how they function to support learning in pedagogical interactions. To do this, we present an outline for a pedagogical rhetorical interactional analytical approach with respect to human condition and contextual factors. In the human condition we include both the necessary and the potential factors. The necessary factors concern the variations in experience and knowledge that teachers and students bring to the situation. The potential factors reflect their existential need for meaning in the pedagogical interaction. The contextual analytical tool is inspired by the four interrelated causes for change in human learning developed by Aristotle (1993, 1998), that we describe as *contextual learning*. We have interpreted these causes as *the material, the formal, source of change,* and *the final cause*. Contextual learning is a relational view of learning, meaning that learning is dependent on and follows the support in the context in which it appears. This research is based on an assumption that a desire to learn is a basic human condition to be an active learner in a relationship with others (Kindeberg 2015a; Kristjánsson 2007; Luhmann 2017; Stillwaggon 2008).

The pedagogical interaction competence is acquired through education and training, and teachers need to have competence to analyze, communicate, and describe the students' desire to learn (Livingstone and Flores 2017). Teaching, by its nature, is supposed to influence others' learning. Thus, the question of how *this* competence brings about change and influences students' learning is fundamental in higher education.

The need for developing methodology in higher education

Educational researchers in higher education need a methodology that can also identify pedagogical qualities (e.g. feeling of trust, meaning, security) that might arise in a pedagogical interaction. Kahn's (2015, 452) critical review of methodology in pedagogical research in higher education suggested that 'new approaches should reflect the unique context of pedagogic research and teaching in higher education'. The claim supports the suggestion by Kelly and Brailsford (2013) that pedagogic research should be developed drawing on resources from the humanities at large as in more closely related disciplines like sociology, psychology and philosophy.

There have been few attempts to provide research-based knowledge about how we can give teachers feedback on their teaching as a means to supporting their academic development (OECD 2009; European Commission 2012). In 2004, Stierer and Antonio asked '[a]re there distinctive methodologies for pedagogic research in higher education?' They claimed that there was a need for deeper understanding of teaching practice to improve the quality of student learning in higher education (2004, 277). Stierer and Antonio (2004) pointed out several contextual reasons for the need for developing pedagogical research, such as the fact that much of the literature on adult learning is based on research on children and young people's learning.

In 2007, Koro-Ljungberg started a dialog on pedagogic research in higher education, and Kahn (2015) called for new approaches to pedagogic research that could build knowledge of and shape practice in higher education. His critical perspective showed a need for developing a research approach that could reflect the unique context of pedagogic research and teaching: 'Our analysis, for instance, suggests that relations between teachers and students, and others, should acquire a higher priority than is manifestly the case at present' (Kahn 2015, 452). One serious consequence is that there is a lack of research on teacher

interaction related to students' learning in higher education (Day and Lee 2011; Hoffman et al. 2015)

Contemporary theories might be neglecting the potential of the pedagogical rhetorical perspective when analyzing the relation between teachers and students. The research question we ask is: How can we develop a methodological approach to didactic research with respect to human condition and contextual factors in a pedagogical interaction?

First, we will present the pedagogical rhetorical perspective, and second the theory of interdependent human condition concerning the pedagogical interaction. Third, an analytical approach will be suggested.

A pedagogical rhetorical perspective on the pedagogical interaction

Our point of departure is that both pedagogical and rhetorical qualities are necessary components in the constitution of teachers' pedagogical interaction competence (Christensen et al. 2018). Pedagogy provides expertise on matters related to issues of education as defined by the political and moral goals of a particular society. Rhetoric provides knowledge about the ethical dimensions of expressions, as well as how language use influences the participants in an ongoing activity. Rhetoric is hence always present in teaching and learning situations.

The teaching-and-learning situation is a collective ongoing interactional activity that takes place in the present – something is happening. However, a pedagogical interaction is at the same time directed towards the past and the future. The past has a role in the interaction, since the participants use their earlier knowledge and values as a basis for interpreting and expressing ideas related to the issue at hand (a necessary condition). At the same time, the pedagogical interaction is directed towards the future through our fundamental desire to understand what is going on (a potential condition). As teachers, our task is to move the students forwards along a path of meaningful reasoning and to support their desire to learn (Aristotle 1967; Bachtin 1986; Grassi 2001). The crucial point is that teachers cannot force students to engage in an interaction. They *choose* to interact or not (Kindeberg 2015b).

The fundamental condition for learning is that the student has confidence in the teacher, that the subject matter is expressed in ways that make sense and feel meaningful, and that the student feels that her experience is significant. In essence, meaningfulness in the pedagogical interaction is realized only in the movement of active, responsive understanding between participants, as Volosinov writes (1986, 102–103). In other words, the teacher has to find the necessary pedagogical interaction with the students through their expressions and spoken words. To better understand the interaction and its pedagogical meaning, we need to consider the relational, moral and political conditions in the interaction. The relational condition refers to human dependency; the moral condition to people's mutual responsibility; the political condition to how habits are created.

The theory of human condition in the pedagogical interaction

In any educational situation, there are certain conditions that include all individuals, regardless of age, cultural background, and gender. Such conditions concern the students as relational, moral and political individuals. This is a notion already stated in *paideia* and

in the socio-philosophical writings of antiquity. In *paideia*, it is clear that pedagogy as a field of knowledge was created by a political expression of will and by insights about what man is in a biological sense and what, with the right education, she can become as a human in the moral and political sense (Jaeger 1946). We have chosen to focus on the notions of moral and political conditions, mainly because they are related to both individual and collective conditions of human development. These conditions are also an assumption that underpins UNESCO's (1997) recommendation concerning higher education and are in line with the main objectives for higher education (OECD 2018).

The students cannot be seen as only one of these three conditions without neglecting something genuinely human with relevance for their learning. In the face-to-face encounter, teachers and students are bound to these conditions, which can be expressed as the relational, moral, and political conditions of education. The prime interest in the present discussion is the idea that oral expressions create emotions, and therefore are seen as 'stitched to language', in the encounter between teachers and students (Kindeberg 2006, 2008). Even if the relational, moral, and political conditions are separated here, they cannot be abstracted from, without entailing the reduction of the student to a 'non-human' human being.

The relational condition

The *relational* condition is here understood as the innate dependence that any individual has to others, in order to evolve and feel well. We were born into a lifelong dependence on each other, and the will to evolve derives from a fundamental need to be a part of a community. In virtue of this dependence, the human being is *relational*. We do not have the ability to speak primarily in order to speak to ourselves, but to build relations with others (Cavarero 2005). Also, we are not dependent on the spoken words per se, but rather on the emotions that oral expression create, as also Nussbaum (1996) and Rorty (1996) discuss in relation to speaking and emotion in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.

We can elucidate the relational condition by observing the original meaning of the pair of concepts *active/passive*. These words were complementary in Aristotle's terminology in his discussion of the relation between body and soul in *De Anima* (1987), involving the notion of entelechy – human beings' possibility of cultivation. They were used to designate what a person *becomes* (active), and what she *is* (passive). Aristotle believed that people influence their social environment (*active*), while they are simultaneously influenced by it (*passive*). However, the classical tenor of this pair of concepts has more or less vanished from pedagogy, and today the terms are used separately, or as opposites to each other (Kindeberg 2013). It is not uncommon to write in pedagogical texts that the student is assumed to be an active individual, creating her own knowledge. Inversely, other theoretical strands are based on the assumption that the student more or less passively acquires the mediated knowledge that is offered, as Biesta (1998) points out in a convincing reconstruction of Mead´s understanding of reflective consciousness. Although the ideologically acceptable assumptions may vary historically, in practice every teacher knows that we are influential, just as much as those to whom we converse within a given moment, influence us. The will to understand is manifested whenever we recognize something, and meanwhile discover new aspects that are not yet part of our understanding. Realizing the significance of such new aspects opens our minds to be actively influenced by others. We are all familiar with how our dependency appears when we are lecturing. If the

students during a lesson show little interest in the teacher, it can easily undermine the teacher's role as orator, make her insecure, and reduce her own status in front of the students. If, on the contrary, the students show interest and pay attention, the teacher's own commitment rises, and she becomes a better orator.

The moral condition

The moral condition is a consequence of the relational condition and supplies an answer to the question *how should I act to feel good together with others?* Morality in this sense is universal, and a matter of people's mutual responsibility for their actions with words as well as with other means of expression (Broadie 1993). How the teachers' task is bound to the moral condition can be better understood through a further examination of how morality and ethics correspond to each other in the idea of *paideia*.

In *paideia*, morality is seen as universal, while ethics is situational. They direct each other, and teachers cannot disregard morals or ethics in any concrete educational situation. In morality lies the shared foundation for humanism. It presents itself in our actions towards each other as human beings. Ethics is bound by context and based on reason. It is knowledge-dependent in an intellectual sense, and always bound to (subject) content (Aristotle trans. 1967). Hence, a fundamental idea behind education is that our different experiences and habits will meet, and by necessity change through the impact of the idea of morality and ethics. This is the teachers' moral and ethical responsibility. Oral expression is a form of ethical activity, and should always be understood as ethical action, because those who speak can choose what to say, while at the same time the content and form of what is being said are always valued by the listener (Glenn and Carcasson 2009).

Ethics can be seen as variations of our actions in terms of 'good' and 'bad'. An ethical choice of action is thereby bound to its circumstances, and must always be judged from its specific context in order to enable us to make a judgment concerning what is to be considered 'good' or 'bad' (Aristotle, trans. 1967). Furthermore, what is 'good' for one student is not necessarily 'good' for another. In this example lies a statement of fundamental significance for what we refer to as the 'art of teaching'. The art of teaching is a matter of choosing oral expressions, at the right moment, that are motivating and suitable for those present, even if what is said is neither planned nor expected. It is not enough that a teacher is well prepared before a lesson; it is equally important to be prepared for the unknown and unexpected in the encounter with the students (Ramirez 1995).

The moral condition thus concerns the responsibility for how to act in order to feel comfortable in the pedagogical interaction. Environments for discussion and learning will not be better or worse than the atmosphere the participants are able to create. If there is a lack of confidence amongst the participants, this is likely due to a lack of understanding and knowledge about how they might contribute to influence the situation in a positive direction. In education, we cannot ignore the fact that humans choose to listen to and be affected by those in whom they have confidence (Kristjánsson 2007).

The political condition

The political condition derives from the fact that the teacher has been entrusted by society with a mission and a responsibility to influence the students' knowledge, skills and values, in accordance with established laws and regulations. The political conditions facilitate an

answer to the question: How are good academic thinking habits created, so that the students' character becomes a positive force that enables them to contribute to a humane and democratic society? (OECD 2005, 2018) The path that we are all familiar with since ancient times is based on the realization that character is formed by upbringing and habits. This is an idea already presented by Aristotle, and one that pedagogues of every generation have refined and passed on, as discussed more closely by Sokolon (2006). Both Aristotle (trans. 1967) and Dewey (1966) made formulations that refer to how education makes it possible to promote good academic thinking habits, ultimately aiming to shape a humane and democratic society (Dewey 1966). Like Aristotle, Dewey believes that habits represent continuity in life. Habits are actions reflected by actions in the past – earlier experiences affect current experiences (Aristotle, trans. 1967). However, as Dewey emphasises, habits are not to be confused with repetition. Every situation a person meets is new, and she cannot make use of earlier solutions without reflection or adjustments. Habits are active means, and form directions for desire and will of different qualities.

To sum up the theory of human condition in the pedagogical interaction: As human beings we are in a continuous state of change, in which we are formed and reformed by experiences expressed in verbal and non-verbal actions. From the moment we were born, we adapt to the people we meet, in accordance with *the relational condition*. The people whom we are dependent on either confirm or block certain activities, and so contribute to how we evaluate and experience each situation, in what we can refer to as *the moral condition*. These experiences are later expressed as our habits. Verbal and non-verbal habits affect how we think and act, in accordance with *the political condition*. When thinking and acting come to the point where they merge, habit has become part of character. To change a student's conduct or character is consequently linked to the change of academic thinking habits.

As there are seldom any definite criteria that we could apply to determine whether verbal and non-verbal actions are of the better or the worse kind, teachers must base their considerations on constant inquiries and continual revision. Morality, as well as politics, is in this way firmly rooted in human beings. If we were to adopt a different standpoint, it would be easy to assume that students simply receive the teachers' knowledge, and automatically transform the knowledge into adequate proficiency. On this view, teachers have no responsibility for the results of students' education.

We cannot disregard our mutual dependence on each other: the relational condition. We want to be part of the intellectual communities of others, but it is not indifferent whose community we are considering. We *choose* those whom we trust and have confidence in. However, we are simultaneously bound to the moral condition, since we cannot avoid being affected by the emotions that others, through their actions and spoken words, evoke in us, regardless of whether these emotions express admiration or the opposite. In any concrete learning environment in higher education, teacher and students meet not only in their formal role, but also as fellow human beings. The political condition concerns teachers' mission from society, and the responsibility for shaping students, through their education, to become academics with a certain character. Obviously, teachers themselves must be able to express this character in words and actions.

In order to research pedagogical rhetorical qualities in the pedagogical interactions, we need to better understand learning in its context. There is also a need to develop analytical

tools concerned both with the relational nature of the human condition and with the potential that language and actions have in order to support the pedagogical interaction. Our outline to an analytical approach combines human condition in a contextual analysis – with a four-causes analysis and a focus on the rhetorically active factors directed at change and meaning. This methodology then suggests an expanding analytical approach.

Pedagogical rhetorical interactional analytical approach

One fundamental characteristic of contextual analysis is that it approaches a phenomenon/case in an open manner, and searches for its delimitation in context (Svensson and Doumas 2013). In this investigation, the phenomena under consideration are examples of how the pedagogical interactions between the students and the teacher support or hinder the students' desire to learn and their actual learning. In our contextual analysis, the learning context is dependent on and follows the support in the context in which it appears, and thus the context is interwoven with the phenomenon learning. This contextual view of learning is fundamental to answering pedagogical questions about what pedagogical rhetorical qualities support learning, such as those arising in pedagogical interactions where someone (the teacher) is expected to know more than the other (the student) about the actual subject, and therefore has a mandate to influence.

Contextual factors as analytical tools

The analytical tool is inspired by the four interrelated causes, or reasons, for change in human learning developed by Aristotle (1993, 1998). The four causes are in this study interpreted in the following way: *the material cause* – the students' previous knowledge and experience of the actual subject that they bring into the pedagogical interaction with the teachers: *the formal cause* – the variation in the students' expressions of this knowledge and experience. The third cause, *the source of change,* concerns the impact the teachers' pedagogical interaction competence has on the students' experience of the relevance of the subject. *The final cause* meets the question – with what meaning for students' actual learning?

These four causes are related to both necessary human condition – our experiences and knowledge, (the material and formal cause), and potential human conditions – our existential need for meaning, (the source of change and final cause). Since the separation of Rhetoric from Pedagogy, these human conditions have not been used to analyze what goes on when teacher and students interact (Johnson 2008; Garver 1994; Waterlow 1984). Modern educational science today often ignores three of these causes, not because they are not valid, but because educational science today has somewhat narrowly studied *cause and effect* (the third cause) of used methods, hoping to discover effective teaching methods (Kindeberg 2008; Kreber 2013; SOU 2008; Svensson and Doumas 2013).

Aristotle uses the term 'confidence' (in Greek: *pistis*) for the feeling that arises when you trust another person. He believes confidence is the foundation for all meaningful communication. In his *Treatise on Rhetoric* (Aristotle, trans.1995) he divides the *pistis* into *ethos*, the trustworthiness of the speaker; *logos*, the reasonability of the subject; and *pathos*, the emotions experienced in the relationship. Thus, a fundamental condition for learning is that the student has confidence in the teacher, that the subject matter is expressed in words and actions that make sense, and that the student chooses to take

part in the interaction (Kindeberg 2013). Meaning, in essence, writes Bachtin (1986, 100), means nothing; it only possesses potentiality, the possibility of having meaning within a concrete theme. In rhetorical terms, it is a matter of how the active factors *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos* harmonize and support the student's will to be influenced by the teachers.

The suggested analytical approach considers the following mutually dependent contextual factors:

- Human conditions are seen as necessary factors, in the interaction between teachers and students (i.e. students' previous experience and knowledge).
- The four causes take into account potential factors for change in the interaction (i.e. students' existential need for meaning).
- The rhetorical active concepts are used to elucidate the supportive factors related to students' actual learning in the interaction.

These contextual analytical factors exhibit a reciprocal dependency in the pedagogical interaction and can be analyzed in its parts.

How to apply the analytical approach – examples

To illustrate how the suggested approach can be used to discern contextual factors with relevance for students' actual learning, we have chosen two examples with presumed pedagogical interaction from two different subjects in higher education.

Our point is, as we have argued for through the text, that knowledge and understanding on how to think and act upon pedagogical interaction is a fundamental generic competence for all teachers in higher education regardless of the subject. Due to teachers' common mandate and responsibility for influencing the new generation academics' knowledge, skills and values through pedagogical interaction (OECD 2018).

The empirical data in these examples are based on 17 reflection notes and 4 group interviews with 17 students in their second year at differentiated teacher education programs in Norway. These programs are classified as five-year integrated master's degree programs at a university. The empirical data material is part of a strategical research program at a Norwegian university, and approved by the NSD – the Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

The structure of the examples

First, we present examples of *the material cause* – the students' preunderstandings of and expectations for the pedagogical interaction with teachers, and how these are expressed in their reflection notes – *the formal cause*. Next, we present two different examples of the students' experiences of a pedagogical interaction with two different teachers in two different subjects. The focus is on how the students' experience of the pedagogical interaction with the teacher is a source of change to support the students' learning (the final cause), or not.

The students' preunderstanding – the material and the formal cause

According to the students, they expect that 'the teacher listens' to them if they have suggestions or 'something to complain about' with regard to the teachers' teaching and lessons at

the university (Refl. note 1–4). These statements show that the students expect and want to be active parts of the pedagogical interaction with the teachers. The students also expect that the 'teachers and supervisors on campus and in the practice schools have the necessary knowledge in the subjects they are teaching', and that the teachers should 'support /their/ learning' (Refl. note 1–10). The students also expect that the teachers should equip them with 'theory and methods, training, and supervision' in order to support the students' aim to be 'the teacher /they/ want to be for the children' (Refl. note 1–6). This indicates that the students focus on the importance of the teachers' responsibility for how the subject knowledge can be taught and learned in a way that can support their future teaching practice. The students also want 'good communication between us as students and the teachers' (Refl. note 1–4) and they expect 'enthusiasm and engagement' in the classroom (Refl. note 1–10). In these statements, the students express a desire to be engaged in their learning activities and to be influenced by their teachers.

This example brings forth the students' expectation of how *ethos*, their trustworthiness of the teacher, *logos*, their experience of the teachers' reasonability of the subject, and *pathos*, where the pedagogical interaction gives them a feeling of enthusiasm and engagement, should harmonize in order to support their desire to be influenced by the teachers.

The students' experiences – the source of change and the final cause

The students' preunderstandings and expectations, and their expressions of these, are always a part of the pedagogical interaction with the teacher, and will be disclosed in the students' choice of words and actions in the classroom. In the contextual analysis, we elucidate through the two examples, (I) *a supportive learning context* and (II) *a non-supportive learning context,* qualities in the pedagogical interaction that either support, or not, the students desire to learn, and their actual learning.

The first example is based on data material from a group interview with three students, referred to with the gender-neutral names Luca, Mica, and Nica. The theme of the conversation is the students' experiences of the pedagogical interaction with a teacher who sees the students as active learners, and includes them in the pedagogical situation.

Example I: A supportive learning context
In the beginning, the students remember the theme 'Embodied learning and teaching' from their lessons last year: 'the first time we had a lesson on "the bodily thing" with the teacher, was last year' (Mica). They are bringing in their previous experiences with meeting the subject a year later: 'When we arrived in the room my only thought was: why should I do this? It's embarrassing' (Mica). The statement shows that previous understandings and emotions related to experiences with the subject are reactivated in the pedagogical situation. Based on their previous experiences, the students thought the lesson would be 'scary', and that they would not manage to 'do this' (Mica). But, when the teacher entered the room, 'she was very friendly and supportive' (Mica) and 'harmless' (Luca), so 'it turned out to be ok. It was actually a bit fun' (Mica). When the students met the teacher, they experienced that she 'is very good at explaining things, so it becomes so easy, and she is showing through her own body' (Luca). The description indicates that the teacher had managed to establish a pedagogical interaction by focusing on explaining the subject in words the students understand, and with actions that made them

comfortable in the situation. This confidence motivated the students to be aware of the impact that embodied perspectives might have on their own teaching practice. Nica describes it the following way:

> I am more aware of the way you walk into a room. I do it differently now than I did before we had this subject. I am more aware of small things like / … / I notice eye contact when walking into a room. I am not only focused on the things I am going to do, but on how to actually be a good figure coming into the room. I am going to teach the pupils, it is not only me teaching alone, but it is about welcoming, being supportive, and making a good learning environment together with the pupils. I haven't thought of that earlier, before we talked about it and actually practiced how to enter the classroom … those things. Who is thinking about things like that?

This description illustrates the opportunity teachers have to find a pedagogical interaction and to influence the students' experiences and expectations of the subject. This pedagogical interaction makes the subject both meaningful in the situation at the university, and influences the students' own teaching practice in schools. The example illustrates a learning context that supports and influences the students' desire to learn and their actual learning.

This example brings forth how the teacher's pedagogical interactional competence manages to change the students' previous experiences and attitudes in a subject, towards a meaningful experience that changes the students' teaching practices.

The next example is based on data material from group interviews with four students, referred to with the gender-neutral names Andrea, Daniele, Frøy, and Håp. The theme of the conversations is the students' experiences of the pedagogical interaction with a teacher who uses a teaching method in which the teacher is the active part and presents the subject for the students, who are seen as passive in the learning context.

Example II: A non-supportive learning context

In the classroom, the students met a teacher they experience as 'very cold', who has not learned or showed interest in learning 'the students' names, even though /they/ were only a few in the class' (Andrea, Gr. Int. 2). Expressing distance to the students, either by not wanting to connect with them in the classroom or by not knowing their names, influenced the students' desire to participate in a pedagogical interaction with the teacher. The students also experienced that the teacher lacked competence in how to teach them how to teach in the subject. Håp says:

> I feel that the teachers in the subject, they said it themselves: "We have a lot of subject knowledge, but we are not very good at teaching the subject ourselves". It becomes a bit contradictory when they say that they are not good teachers. They should also teach us to become good teachers … . (Gr. Int. 3)

This illustrates how the students' confidence decreases when they experience that a teacher lacks competence in teaching how to teach the subject. In addition, this lack of knowledge about how to teach the subject has consequences for the students' own teaching practice:

> Yeah, so when I came out in practice schools and taught this subject, I felt helpless, even though we had really talked about the subject on campus. Because I had no idea how to make this subject motivational for the pupils, because although we had had the subject, we had not learnt how to teach it. (Daniele, Gr. Int. 4)

The consequence of the learning context was that the students chose not to come to the lessons – as Andrea describes it: 'I had no motivation for going to the lessons. I do not come to these lessons anymore' (Andrea, Gr. Int. 2). Frøy emphasizes that the classroom is not 'a good place to be' for the students:

> No, we are not coming, we cannot be bothered, it is no point for us to come to these lessons. We do not understand any of what the teacher presents in the classes, and the teacher hangs students out during the lesson. (Frøy, Gr. Int. 4)

This comment reveals that the teacher lacks a language and an awareness that can support the students' learning, and indicates that the students do not want to participate in a pedagogical interaction with the teacher.

This example illustrates how shortcomings related to the teacher's pedagogical interaction competence may prevent the creation of a pedagogical interaction with the students. The teacher in question does not manage to influence the students' experiences and expectations of the subject, and makes the subject neither meaningful nor relevant for the students.

From a pedagogical rhetorical perspective on interaction, we indicate that by using a pedagogical rhetorical interactional analytical approach we are able to distinguish contextual factors in a pedagogical interaction that either support or do not support a learning context. The analysis shows that when ethos, logos, and pathos harmonize in the pedagogical interaction, they support the feeling of meaning and trust, which is fundamental for a pedagogical interaction to occur. Under these conditions, the students are willing to listen to and be influenced by the teacher, which creates conditions for supporting the students' learning. If there is a dissonance between the students' expectations and the teacher's practice, the pedagogical interaction will not occur. The students will *not* choose to be influenced by the teacher.

Why a pedagogical rhetorical interactional methodology matters in researching teaching in higher education

We have outlined a pedagogical rhetorical analytical approach to didactic research with respect to the reciprocal dependency between human condition and contextual factors in the pedagogical interaction. From this pedagogical rhetorical perspective, we investigate how the pedagogical interaction supports the students' desire to engage with the teacher, and to be influenced by his/her knowledge of the subject. Through developing an outline for a pedagogical rhetorical interactional analytical approach, we have identified contextual factors within the pedagogical interaction that support or hinder students' desire to learn, as well as their actual learning.

Even though the examples above derive from teacher education, we have reason to believe that this methodology would reach similar results and conclusions also in other subjects in higher education – in seminars as well as lectures. We have in previous studies from a pedagogical rhetorical perspective showed, that the educative character of the teacher in higher education has crucial impact on how willing students are to interact and share the teachers' knowledge, skills and values (Kindeberg 2013, 2015a).

In a previous empirical study on seven seminars in postgraduate education from different departments (biology, psychology, theology and religious studies) at Lund

University (Kindeberg 2008), the analysis showed how the four causes and the rhetorical factors helped to distinguish three different interaction characters: the mediating, the commenting and the exploratory character. The three interaction characters were present in all research seminars. What distinguished them was, that the mediating and commenting characters occurred more frequent than the exploratory character. The analysis shows, how differences in the participants' oral expressions can affect participants' opportunities to learn together.

A pedagogical rhetorical perspective has also been used to analyze what happened when a university class in social science sociology lost confidence in the teacher during a lecture (Kindeberg 2015b). The situation as reported from the students is here shortened:

After a while during the lecture, the teacher asks: – Can anyone name a famous person who can be associated with Protestantism? Christian, who is a committed and knowledgeable student, immediately thinks of Martin Luther. However, he feels that the name is too obvious, and that the teacher probably is looking for other names. He thinks further, and after a while he says – Martin Luther King. The teacher looks at him, ignores the answer and turns away his eyes. He continues to talk as if Christian never said anything. It becomes obvious to the course group that Christian's proposal was incorrect. But on what grounds did not emerge. Christian feels stupid and badly affected by the teacher's nonchalant attitude. He, who was accustomed to being active in lessons, never expressed himself any more during the course. More than that, the rest of the group also became silent. The course group lost trust for the teacher.

This situation illustrates how the pedagogical interaction as educational support is lost through the absence of confidence and the sense of trust. The students' desire to participate in the teacher's subject knowledge is not realized. It is obvious that the teacher did not use the ongoing activity as an educational rhetorical resource. Christian met the teacher's question 'a known Protestant' (the present), sought in his experience for an answer and found Martin Luther King (the past), a suggestion that can be seen as Christian's desire to move forward in his understanding of Protestantism (future-oriented). The teacher here had the opportunity to curiously ask Christian how he thought. A beginning of a pedagogical interaction could then have been initiated and the teacher as well as the others in the group had the opportunity to use and test their varied knowledge and together think further. The rhetoric's contact seeking and attention-focused function was lost which prevented its educational purpose. More than that, the students' desire to become involved in the teacher's subject knowledge was closed. What the situation with Christian shows is, that when we express ourselves, a readiness for and a willingness to take care of our words also begins. This in turn means that we are genuinely interested in how others respond according to the active/passive principle.

In this article, we have pointed at the significance of a methodological approach that can elucidate how the teachers' pedagogical interactional competence influence students' learning in higher education. The examples show that the teaching-learning situation is a reciprocal situation in which the teachers' oral expressions are experienced and valued by the students (active/passive). Furthermore, we also show that the pedagogical interaction with the teacher supports the students' learning (moral condition), and that the students choose to listen to, and be influenced by, the teacher (political condition). We can also specify the importance of students' confidence in the teacher's subject knowledge (ethos), the importance of the subject matter being expressed in a way that makes sense

and feels meaningful (logos), and the importance of the students' feeling that their experiences are significant (pathos). As such, the methodology explicates how the pedagogical interaction supports the students' desire to be influenced by the teacher, and their actual learning (political condition). This analysis brings forth the importance of the teachers' competence with regard to analyzing, communicating, and describing their support to the students' learning, as a means to fulfilling their mandate as teachers in higher education today (OECD 2018; UNESCO 1997).

To conclude

Bringing the theory of the human condition into research methodologies and research methods will help us develop knowledge that can also take into account the importance of feelings embedded in pedagogical interactions in higher education. In this way, a pedagogical rhetorical interactional methodology and the outline to a pedagogical rhetorical interactional analytical approach can contribute to a deeper understanding of how teachers' knowledge, skills, and values concerning the human condition and their interdependencies interplay in a pedagogical interaction, and how these contextual factors influence (or not) students' learning.

Educational research often focuses on the cognitive and socio-cultural context of learning (Christensen et al. 2018). In these traditions, it is not learning that can emerge but rather a presumed context. The point of departure for this discussion is by no means a wish to diminish the significance of such theoretical approaches to learning. But, simply to shed light on certain qualities in the pedagogical interaction. Our aim is to suggest a methodological approach that, in line with Kahn (2015), focuses on the pedagogical interaction involving the students and the teachers. Our article aims to meet the need for methodologies that can help us gain better understanding of adult learning in higher education in general (Clegg and Stevenson 2013; Kahn 2015; Tight 2013), and the pedagogical interaction between teachers and students specifically. Our approach is in line with Stierer and Antonio (2004), who claim that the distinctiveness of methodologies in higher education pedagogical research might derive from the very diversity of purposes and contexts that exist. According to Kahn (2015), methodologies employed in research into teaching in higher education subsequently influence both knowledge and practice. Our outline to a methodological approach has a potential for identifying human factors that supports students' learning that may have an influence on teachers' development. In agreement with Kahn (2015), we argue that there might be a close connection between methodologies employed in higher education research and the students' preunderstanding and experience of higher education.

We propose a pedagogical rhetorical interactional methodology on how to think and act in relation to how pedagogical interactions support students' desire to learn as well as their actual learning. This is an important key issue for future educational research and a key competence for future academics in all subjects in higher education (OECD 2005, 2018).

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