

Erwin Rauscher

**Research potentials and common interests in humanities,
education and teacher training in Iran and Austria**

Kharazmi University, Tehran, I.R. Iran // Sunday, 15th January 2017

Ladies and Gentlemen,
before I speak about humanities, I would like to ... and I
have to say a big "thank you" for your humanity and your
hospitality here in Tehran!

And thank you to all of you from Austria, who have made
this educational journey possible, who are engaged in this
project and have supported us with the cooperation
contract that has been finalised yesterday.

Etymologically, "thanks" is a derivation of "think": My
thanks are an expression of my thinking (and my believe): I
am thankful, not because it may be profitable, but because
it is a pleasure! You brought pleasure to us!

Today, I would like to wish us all a nice, pleasant Sunday!
For you in Iran, Fridays are holidays. But for us Austrians,
today is a holiday, Sunday. If we had no holidays, there
would only be working days. If we had no festive clothes,
we would be animals. Bees don't know Sundays or
holidays. The best thing about Sunday was Saturday
evening. And on Monday we have time to recover and
relax from that.

And so I came to give a "Sunday-speech". In Austria, we
call these sermons, these grand and pretty soapbox-
speeches "Sunday-Speeches". Everybody is bound to
listen, but nobody needs them. A sermon is a moral
suasion that will be already forgotten by Monday.

Today I am not going to give more information about
structures and statistics of teacher education, because of
my major is mathematics, and yesterday some of you
heard it even twice. However, this session is about
humanities, education and about teacher training. And it's
about partnership. A partnership we enter with a promise
and trust and should not forget about. A good partnership
is not intended to promote competition (or to try to be
better than the partner). Instead, it aims at promoting
cooperation, at improving together. And that's what we
aim for in the field of education!

Yesterday I invited some of you, in this regard, and now I
would like to repeat and render the invitation more
precisely. This invitation is something like a ticket, an
entrance card to a partnership in the context of teacher
training, which I am jointly responsible for in Austria.

My first invitation referred to the "International Week" at

the Monastery of Melk, which is located about 100 km
west of Vienna. It will take place from May 29th until June
2nd and is called STEAM. In this context, S is for Science / T
is for Technology / E is for Engineering / A is for Arts and M
for Mathematics.

Just a few kilometres from there in Krems, the Danube-
University will host the symposium that is subject to my
second invitation. A representative of the Danube-
University is here with us, Mr. Ennsfellner.

The symposium is about E-learning and will be held in
connection with the annual EDU-DAYS. It will take place
even earlier than the first invitation, that is on the 5th and
6th of April. This year's topic focuses on school and is
headed: "*Chances and risks of a digital childhood. Digital
competences for a digital society. Coding, robotics.*" Details
and further information are available at: www.edudays.at

My third invitation has been arranged last night on the
phone: I called a friend of mine, he is Chief Liaison for
International Academic Affairs at the Long Island
University in New York, and he is a Former Dean and
Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the City University
of New York. We have a long-term cooperation and run
numerous joint research projects. This friend of mine will
also be in Melk at the International Week. He would be
happy to welcome you in New York and he would be glad
if the three of us could initiate a teacher training project.

So if we really want to work together, we have to discuss
issues about Teaching, Mentoring and Research in and
across the Disciplines. And I have seen that you are
promoting the integration of Language, E-Learning,
Technology, Arts and Culture ...

I would like to add: Education creates culture.

However, Austria is a small country, and so we only have
one word in German that is the same for both, education
and culture.

We just call it „Bildung“. What we simply call „Bildung“ in
German – maybe you call it "education" as well as
"culture" – is a word full of magic power: It enables us to
look beyond the horizon. It has implications for our health.
It helps us to attain self-determination and freedom. It is
the anchor of modern societies. It connects languages and
the languages connect people.

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And in my sermon (in Austria we would call it “Sunday-speech”) I would like to convey some thoughts on education regarding the students of our trained teachers – Some thoughts that are important to me, true and sincere: Education is the fire brigade that helps us fight indifference. Education is the police that help us prevent indoctrination. Education is the ambulance that saves us from opportunism.

Opportunism is tempting us to float with the current – a current that is created by others. Education is wellness for the mind. Education promotes a reflective attitude towards and dealing with heterogeneity. Education is successful intertwining of knowledge and conscience

But before we drift too much into ethics and morals, I would like to point to an aspect that may be connective and joining as well: joint research activities.

Research is the inhalation of education. A child who builds wind wheels will set sails against the wind of uniformity and navigate against predetermined opinions.

Curiosity is the nucleus for research. Curiosity is the root for the investigative spirits in a child’s tree of life. Curiosity is the expectant fear of miracles, the first step to knowledge, a wick in the candle of learning.

Research disposes of the inexplicable. If you don’t research, you have to believe – or worse – you think you know it all.

Researchers are humans who still like to question things just like children do. And children who learn how to research are human who take responsibility for the future. And that should be one of our common goals for teacher education!

Because good teachers are “giving trees” ... that sometimes serve as scratching posts, provide shade and peace and the opportunity to climb upwards, and in this way widen the children’s horizon through offering deep insight, understanding and visions.

Insights create understanding. Understanding develops into decisions. And visions encourage leadership.

Pupils who try to see beyond the subject matter and who also ask for the reasons for already given solutions learn to look beyond the horizon.

Therefore, I would like to phrase my fourth invitation – for today, it will be the last: Let us research how to bring culture into school, how to make culture part of our education.

Yesterday, we made a proposal in this respect, and this offer is talked about in details right now by the “Arts and Culture”-team. So let me sum up and conclude: Education and Culture ... together they create freedom. Because Education and Culture start at schools and in societies, in which people do not hunt for prey but for acknowledgement!

Together they also appreciate the dispensable. They take care of the useless, and also develop the unnecessary.

Now my last thesis: „Bildung” as education and as culture requires vision. The famous Italian film maker Federico Fellini said: *“The only real realist is the visionary.”*

Utopia is seeking to see the invisible, and vision deems to make it visible. And maybe you will now use the words “education” and “culture” as you like it.

But ... If someone may think: research is dangerous ... something new might be discovered! We should reply: The art of teaching is the art of helping to discover.

And I hope today we are at the end of the beginning of discovering each other. There is a saying: “All is well that ends well.”

But this is a good start! And who gets to the end may start all over. And to formulate it in mathematical terms: “All is well at the end”, says the circle.

Not the end, but the future will be the touchstone of our cooperation. For that, I wish us all the best and thank you very much for everything!

