



Bildung in einer sich wandelnden Welt /
Education in a Rapidly-Changing World

Transformations

Abstract:

Between Scylla and Charybdis: keeping balance in an age of extremes

Dr. Lita Crociani-Windland
University of the West of England

What should education be for? It should be for the development of the whole human being. It should be about not only learning notions, but about social, emotional and intellectual development. This presentation aims to outline some of the tendencies and challenges of what Zigmunt Bauman has termed 'liquid modernity', tracking the shifting relationships of structure and fluidity in family dynamics and school life. The problematic that emerges from looking at these two contexts central to a child's life is one of excess fluidity in family structure and excess structure in school environments. This points to the need for a balanced relationship between structure and fluidity. In such terms education should be about creating a containment of excess fluidity in our culture, so that the development of such capacities can be nurtured within a safe-enough ordered environment. Such containment, however, must not be one where the boundaries are rigid, bureaucratic and permeated with risk aversion and competitive anxieties. Creating such an environment is a real challenge: outside influences cannot easily be held back at the school or house gate. It requires educators to have a deep commitment to personal as well as professional development, to be able to nurture a relational approach, which relies on a capacity to be strong, yet flexible, so as to be able to gauge and respond to children and adolescents' potential for growth, but also vulnerability. It requires us to navigate our way holding between opposing tendencies towards too much attention to technical solutions or too much idealism and informality.