

POLITICAL MOVES

HOW TEACHERS CAN OPEN-UP OR CLOSE DOWN THE SPACE
FOR CONTROVERSY OVER SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Katrien Van Poeck & Leif Östman – Quito, Ecuador – 13 December 2017

RESEARCH ON TEACHERS' ACTIONS ('MOVES')

- **Epistemological Move Analysis (EMA)** (Lidar, Lundqvist and Östman 2006)
 - ‘**privileging**’: which knowledge, skills, values etc. are taken into account → gives the learning a certain direction
 - clarifying the actions that educators perform in order to **guide students in their learning process** and the effects of these actions in terms of learning and meaning-making
 - ‘**epistemological moves**’: interventions that cause a change or enforcement of the direction of students’ meaning-making
- From epistemological to **Political Move Analysis (PMA)** (Van Poeck & Östman 2017)



dit eiland staat op het punt
TE VERDWIJNEN

en het zal niet het laatste zijn



Beeld Zonder Klank
F.W. : in de grond gene slechte mens...
Alleen fietsers = Sleigs vir blanke
F.W. betekent niet Files Weg
11/11/2015 Dag van de WaGensbistand
We zulle WIJ eu ne kier knippen
Mo-how-vent nekt GENT
Is er ne MIS GENT

Alleenstaan energieeffin
...bedrijven

HET MOBILITEITSPLAN De stand van zaken

- 1. ...
- 2. ...
- 3. ...
- 4. ...
- 5. ...
- 6. ...
- 7. ...
- 8. ...
- 9. ...
- 10. ...

THE POLITICAL IN ESE

- Matters of public concern with diverse actors involved
- Entanglement of private and public interests
- Something at stake: passions, commitments, values, interests, concerns, etc.
- Confrontation of irreconcilable, emotionally invested attachments
- Inevitable decision of inclusion and exclusion (what to care about?)
- Undecidability: no universal ethical or rational foundation for decision-making
 - ever-present possibility that **conflicts and controversy** pop-up

POLITICISING MOVES

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Controversy creating move | makes the learners create, express and defend conflictual standpoints |
| Hierarchisation move | makes the learners prioritise amongst different alternatives and thus create a hierarchy of concerns by taking a stand on which concerns take precedence and which must give way |
| Excluding-including move | makes the learners contest a proposed decision of inclusion and exclusion regarding emotionally invested attachments |
| Public-private move | makes learners move back and forth between public and private concerns |

EXAMPLE: EXCLUDING-INCLUDING MOVE

- Farmer: **I don't receive any subsidies. And I also think that it would be very good to say that we are putting an end to them.**
- Student 2: But you also don't live from [agriculture]! (original emphasis)(raises her voice)
- Farmer: I do live from it. (original emphasis)
- Student 2: Oh, you said yourself that you don't pay yourself a wage! (raises her voice)
- Farmer: Yes but that's different. You don't need a wage to be able to live from it. I eat from it. That's a big difference. If you think I've got 2,000 euro on my account at the end of the month. I think I've got 900 euro or something like that on my account.
- Student 2: Yes but food alone doesn't get you far.
- Farmer: No, but yes, that's what we have to do. That's the transition we have to make. That's the change we have to bring about. I think some major steps are going to be necessary to consciously address or handle it.
- ...

EXAMPLE: HIERARCHISATION MOVE

The farmer introduces the idea of what he calls ‘the three Ps’, which stand for ‘Planet’, ‘People’ and ‘Profit’: three concerns that you must take into account when you work as a farmer. He tells the students that he believes that Planet should be the first concern, but that others might think People or Profit should be the first one.

- Farmer: Now I don't know if this ties in somehow with your vision of agriculture? ...
- (He looks around in the group. Students take notes, others look at him. Nobody answers his question.)
- Farmer: Shall I answer how I think you look at this. Then you can contest me if (inaudible)... (laughter)
- Student 1: Agriculture must be productive. So much... not as much as possible, it's still the intention, yes to produce food and to make sure there's enough.
- Farmer: **Yes, so for you the P for profit takes precedence?**
- Student 1: Yes (nodding)

EXAMPLE: EXCLUDING-INCLUDING MOVE

- ...
- Student 1: Not everyone can do it though. It is nevertheless...
- Farmer: Why not?
- Student 1: What would we eat? If everyone... There's more, I mean yes...
- Farmer: Then I'd say yes, ninety percent of farming throughout the world is managed like this.
- Student 2: Yes, there are also I don't know how many going hungry.
- Farmer: Yes, of course but that's because our onions and the chickens that are subsidised are exported to Benin, and to Toga and to the Gambia and wherever it is. (...)
- Student 3: But isn't that the fault of Africa's agricultural policy, that they have taken the wrong approach?

DE-POLITICISING MOVES

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Reinstating move | makes the participants re-orient their attention from particular, emotionally invested concerns, commitments and experiences towards 'the lesson' |
| Norm installing move | makes the participants react and take a stand on the postulated standard about how to behave in a certain situation |
| Rationalising move | makes the participants take a stand concerning a factual justification for a proposed norm: accepting the justification or delivering a factual reason that justifies a divergent opinion |
| Closing move | makes the participants end their argumentation and agree on, in this case, one particular normative conclusion |

EXAMPLE: REINSTATING MOVE

- Woman 2: We also thought it interesting to reflect a bit. People in poor countries are on the look-out for drinking-water all the time
- Woman 3: Walk for miles to get water...
- Woman 4: Me too, formerly [she lived in Africa in the past]. Really. It doesn't matter now. (laughter) And we actually just stand in the shower and let all that water run down to us, what those people actually could drink. Well, if you give it a thought...
- Woman 3: We flush our toilet with it.
- Woman 2: But it would be very interesting if it would become more and more widespread to use rainwater for that.
- Educator: **Let's look at them, the behaviour clues.** (He shows the next slide of the presentation and starts to explain the several clues and their impact on the ecological footprint.)

EXAMPLE: NORM INSTALLING MOVE

- Woman 5: One obvious improvement would be to bike or walk short distances.
- Educator: What would you consider a short distance?
- Woman 5: Going to the bakery, for instance.
- Educator: How much is that in miles?
- Woman 5: One and a half?
- Educator: **No, let me help you out: in fact, we should bike any distance under 3 miles.**
- Woman 6: Hello-o!! (laughter)
- ...

EXAMPLE: RATIONALIZING & CLOSURING MOVE

- ...
- Educator: **Why 3 miles? Because cars consume most over short distances.** (...)
- Woman 5: Then we also had to say why we found it difficult. We found it can be time-consuming at times.
- Educator: **Remember the word I just used: planning?**
- Woman 5: Yes, but still... Our kids, too. (...) That's why we thought it's not so convenient when you've got kids. In our view, a cart like that is more dangerous and a delivery trike is expensive. We've agreed among ourselves to use our bikes once our kids have grown.

PRIVILEGING

2 different **directions**: what is privileged as important to take into account?

1. E.F. workshop: specific norms, facts and behaviour guidelines to reduce the ecological footprint, well-known and determined in advance by the educator and subsequently transferred to the learners through the workshop
2. CSA-farm: the diversity of actors involved, the passions, commitments, values, interests, ideals, concerns, etc. at stake for them, the entanglement of irreconcilable private and public interests, the mutual exclusiveness of emotionally invested attachments, and the need to make decisions that imply inclusion and exclusion

LEARNING – MEANING-MAKING

2 different kinds of **transactions**:

1. E.F. workshop: **normative and consensus-oriented deliberation**: the educator decides over inclusion and exclusion (which concerns and commitments, knowledge, factual and moral guidelines... count?) → “schooling”, *education as politics* (with other means)
2. CSA-farm: **conflict-oriented deliberation**: collective meaning-making process, educator and learners deliberate together instead of the educator prioritising dominant values and norms and excluding all others → *the political within education*

EXERCISE:

EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT POSSIBLE MOVES?

DIFFERENT DIRECTION FOR LEARNING?

REFLECTIONS

- **Context matters!** design of the activity – students' reactions
- Educators can create a **space for 'the political'** but can never guarantee or plan that it will become manifest
- Moves \neq recipe for predetermined scenario \rightarrow **reflective tools**, 'backpack' of insights in different possible ways of intervening
- Being **better prepared** to be surprised, to think and decide by themselves how to react (always 'ad hoc')

DISCUSSION:

USEFUL IN TEACHER TRAINING?

RELEVANT? PRACTICAL ENOUGH? UNDERSTANDABLE?

PRECONDITIONS? OPPORTUNITIES? DIFFICULTIES?

Katrien Van Poeck

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

E katrien.vanpoeck@ugent.be

T +32 9 264 82 07

M +32 475 59 05 54

www.ugent.be

www.cdo.ugent.be

Leif Östman

UPPSALA UNIVERSITY, DEPT. OF EDUCATION

E leif.ostman@edu.uu.se